

What themes around behavior emerged in the Strategic Framework Engagement sessions?

To answer this question, RPEO staff examined notes from the Strategic Framework engagement sessions that took place from September 2017 through June 2018. In Phase I of the Strategic Framework Engagement sessions, participants responded to this prompt: *Imagine a time in the future when we are celebrating our progress – with dramatically more students on track to graduate college, career, and community ready. Imagine the actions we took to get there. Then they answered: (1) Where did we built on our previous success?, and (2) Where did we make bold moves?*

These conversations culminated a few major themes identified through thematic analysis, one of which was **Create safe, supportive environments** (mentioned in 8% of coded comments). Topics around **safety**, **behavior**, and **mental health** resided in that theme, and the analysis below emerged from a key word based analysis of that **Create safe, supportive environments** theme.

- **Students need to feel physically and emotionally safe in order to learn.** “Kids have to feel safe to learn,” stated one participant. “We need to provide environments for students where they feel safe and welcome,” another began, “We made gains in improving physical safety and emotional safety; preserved a conducive learning environment for all students.” “We made safety for students and staff a priority by making sure every student learned in [a] safe environment with considerations to how their particular disability manifests.”
- **The community wants a behavior plan that emphasizes fair consequences, consistent high expectations, and adequate resources and support for implementation.** Participants wanted the BEP reexamined, especially for those with repeated behaviors. Others wanted **consequences** to reflect behavior and **consistent high expectations** held across students. One participant said, “Clear direction, policy, real world consequences for poor choices,” while another asked for a “Universal behavior system and expectations across all grade levels.” To successfully implement the BEP, participants solicited additional **support and resources**. A participant said, “I think we also need to make some bold moves in increasing allocation to be able to implement the BEP with fidelity,” while another said, “I’m hearing from colleagues and people in the trenches. They need support right now.”
- **Mental health supports, resources, and training are a key concern moving forward.** Participants stressed the need for mental health resources and support for students, families, and staff. Participants believed additional mental health **resources and support**, including **staff training**, would be beneficial for the success of the district. Participants recognized the need for mental health services to meet the needs of the students and to reflect the district’s vision: “The framework should highlight the need and importance for mental health supports for students. Part of being a career and college-bound ready, is being academically prepared, and also having stable mental health or having the providers and interventions in place to help stabilize mental health.” In order to do this, one participant observed, “Mental health issues in schools continues to rise, please increase support staff allocations to meet those needs.” One way that participants saw this coming to fruition was through more **community schools and relationships with the Madison community**. One participant suggested, “Community schools citywide – with support from business, medical and government groups/agencies to assist with, particularly, mental health needs of our students and their families. Perhaps in-house clinical care.”

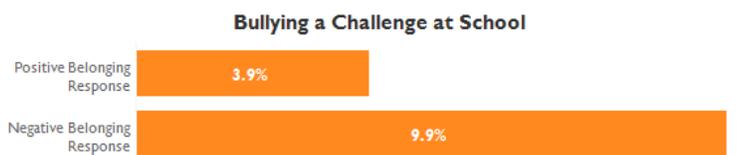
How, if at all, are varying levels of belonging or safety on the 2017-18 climate survey associated with perceptions of student behavior?

To answer this research question, RPEO staff examined data from the Climate Survey administered in Spring 2018. RPEO staff first split staff, student, and parent responses into two groups – those who positively responded to two climate survey questions: *I feel safe/I feel safe at my school department/This school is a safe place for my child* and *I feel I belong/I feel I belong at my school/department/My child feels a sense of belonging at this school*, and those who negatively responded to those questions. RPEO staff further split these groups based on their responses to the open-ended questions: *What is your school's greatest strength? What is your school's greatest challenge?* We explored word frequencies of open-ended question responses to dive into patterns between the different groups. We sought out trends on how responses to the open-ended questions varied by responses to the closed-ended questions. The themes we elaborate on had at least a 5% difference between the groups that responded positively and that responded negatively.

Generally participants are positive in their perceptions of belongingness and safety at their schools. Over four times as many participants felt positively than negatively about the safety of their (child's) school (69% versus 15% of participants). Six times as many participants felt positively than negatively about if they (their child) belonged at their (child's) school (73% versus 12%).



Bullying is a challenge facing our schools, but it is perceived and written about as a challenge more by students who feel negatively about their sense of safety and belonging. Specifically, participants who felt negatively about their belonging cited bullying as a challenge more (in 9.9% of coded comments), compared to participants who felt positively about their belonging (3.9%). Some comments covered inappropriate responses to bullying by both staff and students.



Bullying was also cited as a challenge more by participants who felt negatively about their safety (10.6%) than those who feel positively about their safety (3.3%). These challenges were associated with concerns of personal safety or safety of others.

Participants with negative perceptions of the safety of their school identified behavior as challenging (identified in 15% of coded comments), more so than participants who had positive perceptions of safety (7.5%). The effect of others' behavior is profound in its association with perceptions of safety.

