

2025-26 ACPS 2030 Climate Survey



Introduction

In the 2025-26 school year, ACPS administered the ACPS 2030 Climate Survey for the first time to gather stakeholder perceptions of progress towards strategic plan goals as well as school and division climate. The survey will be administered annually to students in Grades 6-12, staff members, and families. The five ACPS 2030 strategic goals are:

- Safe, Caring & Inclusive Environment
- Academic Excellence
- Students Prepared Postsecondary
- Recruit, Develop & Retain
- Community Engagement & Communication

Data that follow reflect findings from the 2025-26 survey administration. Prior to this survey, ACPS had administered an annual survey aligned with the previous strategic plan with some survey items carried over into the new survey.



Survey Participation

The ACPS 2030 Climate Survey garnered significant engagement with a total of 7,278 respondents. This represents more responses than any previous strategic plan annual survey. It should be noted that the total number of responses on any given survey question will vary based on response patterns of individuals and overall if a question was asked to all stakeholders. Secondary students represented the largest number of participants at 4,249; followed by 1,558 staff members; and 1,471 family respondents. Additional details on survey participation and participant demographics are provided below.

While overall sentiment is largely positive, important differences did emerge between groups that can be used to inform specific follow-up activities for a deeper understanding and targeted strategies to seek improvement.

Survey Respondents by Role

Affiliation	N
Student	4249
Staff member	1558
Family/Guardian of a student	1471
Total	7278

Survey Respondents by Grade Band

Grade Band	%
Pre-K & Elementary	22%
Middle	31%
K-8	6%
High	40%
Other	<1%

Survey Respondents by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%
Asian	8%
Black or African American	20%
Hispanic	22%
Middle Eastern or North African	2%
Multi-Racial	15%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%
White	31%

This table excludes the 21% of respondents who declined to share their race/ethnicity.

Areas of Strength and Focus

Areas of Strength

The division demonstrates significant success in fostering inclusive environments and strong professional relationships, with high levels of agreement across several key metrics:

- **Inclusion and Respect:** A primary strength is the culture of respect, with 91% of all respondents agreeing that adults at school respect students from diverse backgrounds (race, ethnicity, culture, and gender).
- **Teacher-Student Relationships:** There is strong consensus (90%) that teachers effectively motivate students, making them feel capable of succeeding in school. Additionally, 89% of respondents agree that teachers encourage students to learn from their mistakes and persevere.
- **Staff Professional Environment:** Staff report exceptionally high levels of internal cohesion, with 95% reporting positive relationships with their colleagues and 90% stating they have a positive relationship with their direct supervisor.
- **Student Growth Mindset:** A notable 91% of respondents believe that students can improve their skills through effort and learning, indicating a strong division-wide belief in student potential.

Areas of Focus

The data also highlights critical opportunities for improvement, particularly regarding organizational transparency and closing the "perception gap" between different respondent groups:

- **Division Transparency and Leadership:** Transparency is the lowest-rated area, with 58% of families and staff agreeing that the division is transparent about decision-making. This is especially acute among staff, where only 48% agree. Furthermore, only 51% of staff feel that division leaders are well-informed about school-level issues.
- **Staff Support and Recognition:** Significant gaps exist in how staff feel supported by the Central Office. Fewer than half of staff members know who to contact when they need support from the Central Office, and only 64% feel the division does a good job of recognizing exceptional service.
- **Safety Perceptions:** While safety agreement is high at the elementary level (90-92%), a gap exists in secondary schools, where safety perceptions by students falls to 73% in Middle School and 78% in High School. This indicates that safety perceptions are driven more by grade-level band than by stakeholder group.
- **Academic Engagement and Expectations:** Daily engagement remains a challenge, as only 73% of respondents feel students are engaged every day. Additionally, while the community believes in student potential, only 79% agree that ACPS sets high academic expectations for *all* students.

Comparisons to the 2024-25 Equity Climate Survey

By comparing similar items from the **2024-25 Equity Climate Survey** and the **2025-26 ACPS 2030 Climate Survey**, several key metrics show notable shifts in community perception over the last year.

Academic Environment and Quality

Perceptions of educational quality have greatly improved, particularly among families and secondary students:

- **High-Quality Education:** In 2024-25, 68% of families and 66% of secondary students agreed they were receiving a high-quality education. In the most recent survey, these numbers increased to **79% for families** and **83% for students**.
- **Support for Success:** The belief that teachers make students feel they can do well in school remains a strength, increasing slightly from 87% to **90%** overall.

Safety and Inclusion

Safety & inclusion continue to be areas showing steady improvement with key areas of notable improvement in stakeholders' perceptions over the past year.

- **Sense of Safety:** Last year, 54% of secondary students reported feeling safe during school. The most recent survey shows this has increased to **76%**, a notable increase of 22 percentage points.
- **Feeling Welcome:** Overall agreement on feeling welcome at school remained strong, moving from 86% for families and 66% for secondary students to **88% for families** and **87% for students** this year.

Comparisons to the 2024-25 Equity Climate Survey CONTINUED

Staff Workplace and Support

Staff perceptions of their professional environment show a mix of positive professional relationships, improvement in professional growth opportunities, and a continued desire for better organizational support:

- **Professional Growth:** Staff agreement that ACPS offers opportunities for professional growth improved from 62% in 2024-25 to **76%** in the current report.
- **Supervisor Relationships:** Already a strength last year at 87%, positive relationships with direct supervisors increased to **90%** among staff.
- **Leadership Input:** Last year, 47% of staff felt division leaders valued their input. This remains a focus area, as **51%** of staff currently feel division leaders are well-informed about school-level issues.

Communication and Transparency

Communication metrics showed improvement over the past year and remain a point of focus for the division, with transparency remaining lower than general communication:

- **Effective Communication:** Family perceptions of effective division communication improved from 68% last year to **76%** in the most recent survey.

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Mission and Vision

Mission: We nurture, educate and inspire each student for success.

Vision: Each student prepared to thrive in college, career and community.

With the ACPS 2030 strategic plan a new mission and vision was set. ACPS retained its core values of welcoming, equity-focused, empowering, innovative, and results-driven from the previous plan. Survey respondents were asked their level of agreement on whether ACPS is achieving its mission as well as living the core values.

There is a strong sense of alignment with the division’s core purpose as 82% of all respondents agree that ACPS is successfully achieving its mission to Nurture. Educate., and Inspire. This is supported by a high level of trust in educators, with 90% of the community agreeing that teachers make students feel capable of success.

% Agree + Strongly Agree

<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers make students feel like they can do well in school. (All)	90%
Family/Guardian of a student	91%
Staff member	96%
Student	88%
<input type="checkbox"/> ACPS is achieving its mission. (All)	82%
Family/Guardian of a student	83%
Staff member	81%
Student	82%

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Core Values: Welcoming, Equity-Focused, Innovative

While the environment is overwhelmingly viewed as welcoming (89%) and inclusive (91%), there is room for growth in academic expectations; 79% of respondents feel the division sets high enough standards for all students. For the value of innovation, 85% of staff respondents agreed staff take the initiative to solve problems, a new survey item this year.

% Agree + Strongly Agree

<input type="checkbox"/> I feel welcome at my school/department. (All)	89%
Family/Guardian of a student	88%
Staff member	91%
Student	87%
<input type="checkbox"/> Adults at school respect students from different backgrounds (e.g. race/ethnicity, culture, gender). (All)	91%
Family/Guardian of a student	91%
Staff member	94%
Student	91%
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers encourage students to challenge themselves. (All)	88%
Family/Guardian of a student	83%
Staff member	91%
Student	88%
<input type="checkbox"/> ACPS sets high academic expectations for all students. (All)	79%
Family/Guardian of a student	74%
Staff member	75%
Student	83%
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff take the initiative to solve problems. (Staff)	85%

Core Values: Empowering & Results-Driven

Under the empowering value, students reported the highest level of agreement among groups that they believe they can improve their skills through effort and learning at 92%. Students reported high levels of agreement that teachers encourage students to learn from their mistakes and keep trying at 87% compared to 95% of teachers and 89% of family respondents.

% Agree + Strongly Agree

<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers encourage students to learn from their mistakes and keep trying. (All)	89%
Family/Guardian of a student	89%
Staff member	95%
Student	87%
<input type="checkbox"/> Students believe that they can improve their skills through effort and learning. (All)	91%
Family/Guardian of a student	90%
Staff member	88%
Student	92%
<input type="checkbox"/> Students are receiving a high-quality education. (All)	82%
Family/Guardian of a student	79%
Staff member	82%
Student	83%

Safe, Caring, & Inclusive Environment

Goal: Create a safe, caring and inclusive school environment where students feel connected, supported, and respected.

Creating a supportive atmosphere remains a focus of the ACPS experience, with 91% of respondents agreeing that adults at school respect students from all backgrounds. While 80% of the total population feels safe at school or work, a closer look reveals differences in perceptions based on student grade band. Between 90-92% of families and staff at the elementary school level felt safe while 73-77% of middle school and 72-78% of high school respondents reported feeling safe. Further, secondary student perceptions of feeling safe increased from 54% to 76%; a notable 22 percentage point increase. Overall, 79% believe that adults truly care about students, though students themselves are slightly more reserved in this area, reporting 75% agreement compared to the 85% reported by both staff and families.

% Agree + Strongly Agree

<input type="checkbox"/> I/My child feel(s) safe at school/work. (All)	80%
Family/Guardian of a student	85%
Staff member	86%
Student	76%
<input type="checkbox"/> I have opportunities to share my thoughts about things that are important to me at school. (All)	77%
Family/Guardian of a student	81%
Staff member	77%
Student	75%
<input type="checkbox"/> Adults at my school care about students. (All)	79%
Family/Guardian of a student	85%
Staff member	85%
Student	75%

Academic Excellence

Goal: Engage and challenge each student, every day to achieve academic excellence

The commitment to academic excellence shows consistent results, with 82% of the community agreeing that students receive a high-quality education. However, daily engagement levels present an opportunity for improvement, as 73% of respondents feel students are engaged every day, and secondary students specifically report the lowest level of engagement at 70%. While engagement lags slightly, 77% of respondents feel that students are being challenged academically on a daily basis, suggesting that while the work is rigorous, it may not always be consistently engaging for the student body.

% Agree + Strongly Agree

<input type="checkbox"/> Students feel engaged every day. (All)	73%
Family/Guardian of a student	80%
Staff member	77%
Student	70%
<input type="checkbox"/> Students feel challenged academically daily. (All)	77%
Family/Guardian of a student	71%
Staff member	81%
Student	77%

Students Prepared Postsecondary

Goal: Prepare each student for life after high school by providing the guidance, skill and support they need for college, careers and other future goals.

Optimism for the future is high within the division, as 82% of respondents feel positive about students' future prospects. This is supported by an 80% agreement rate that ACPS is effectively preparing students for life after high school through the necessary guidance and skills. Notably, secondary students are the most optimistic group regarding their own readiness and future outlook at 84%. Staff members are more cautious, with 70% agreeing that the division is sufficiently preparing students for the transition out of high school.

% Agree + Strongly Agree

<input type="checkbox"/> I feel positive about my/students futures. (All)	82%
Student	84%
Staff member	72%
Family/Guardian of a student	85%
<input type="checkbox"/> I feel like ACPS is preparing students for life after high school. (All)	80%
Student	84%
Staff member	70%
Family/Guardian of a student	77%

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Recruit, Develop, & Retain (Staff Only)

Goal: Recruit, develop, and retain a diverse team of talented professionals by fostering a supportive and growth-oriented workplace.

Staff feedback indicates a workplace defined by strong professional relationships, with 95% of staff reporting positive interactions with their colleagues and 90% reporting a positive relationship with their direct supervisor. While strong collegial relationships is a major strength, there is a desire for more functional support; 76% of staff feel they have the tools and resources needed to do their jobs effectively, and an equal 76% agree that the division provides sufficient opportunities for professional growth.

% Agree + Strongly Agree

▼	
My school/department provides opportunities for peer collaboration and support. (Staff)	87%
I have what I need to effectively do my job. (Staff)	76%
I have positive relationships with the majority of staff members at my school/building. (Staff)	95%
I have a positive relationship with my direct supervisor. (Staff)	90%
ACPS offers opportunities for my professional growth. (Staff)	76%

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Community Engagement and Communication

Goal: Cultivate trust by engaging and communicating clearly with our community to achieve our vision.

Communication and transparency represent areas for continued focus within the division. While 70% of families and staff believe ACPS communicates effectively, 58% feel the division is transparent about its decision-making processes. Among staff members, 48% feel the division is transparent, compared to 68% of families. Furthermore, internal staff support needs attention, as about half of the staff feel that division leaders are well-informed about school-level concerns (51%) or know who to contact at the Central Office for support (49%).

% Agree + Strongly Agree

<input type="checkbox"/> The division is transparent with families/staff about division decision-making. (Staff & Family)	58%
Family/Guardian of a student	68%
Staff member	48%
<input type="checkbox"/> ACPS effectively communicates with families/staff. (Staff & Family)	70%
Family/Guardian of a student	76%
Staff member	65%
<input type="checkbox"/> ACPS ensures feedback from families is included and valued in the ACPS decision-making process. (Family)	73%
<input type="checkbox"/> I feel appreciated for the work I do in my school/department. (Staff)	71%
Division leaders are well-informed about school-level issues and concerns. (Staff)	51%
ACPS does a good job of recognizing staff who provide exceptional service. (Staff)	64%
I know who to go to when I need support from Central Office. (Staff)	49%