

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH AUTHENTIC STUDENT VOICE

November 12, 2024



Welcome!



Dr. Ron Gorman
Superintendent
Kent ISD



Dr. Jenny Fee
Assistant Superintendent of
Instructional Service
Kent ISD

Addressing a Growing Crisis in Youth Mental Health

1 in 3 high school students report experiencing “persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.”

Almost **70%** of students who are members of the LGBTQ+ community report experiencing “persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.”

Approximately **1 in 5** high school students have considered suicide.

Start by listening

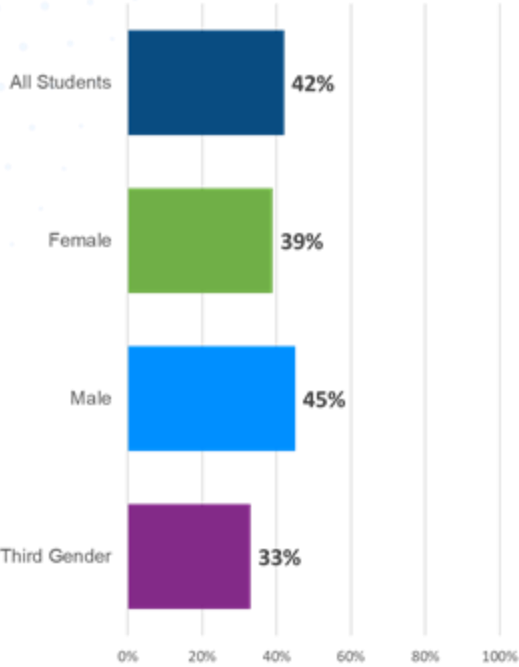
“Even after teaching for a decade, I find myself attempting to temper their voices, fearful of losing control, of not having the answers. After all, I’m the teacher, the grown up, I am supposed to be the pinnacle of knowledge in this space, right? Wrong. **It is imperative that we, the adults, challenge our own fears and admit that even in the rooms where we are the experts, we might not know everything.** Our students have unique skills and viewpoints and it is time we leverage them. When it comes to their education, our students deserve a seat at the table where decisions are made on their behalf. We should encourage them to bring their own chairs whenever one is not offered.”

- Mercedes Harvey-Flowers

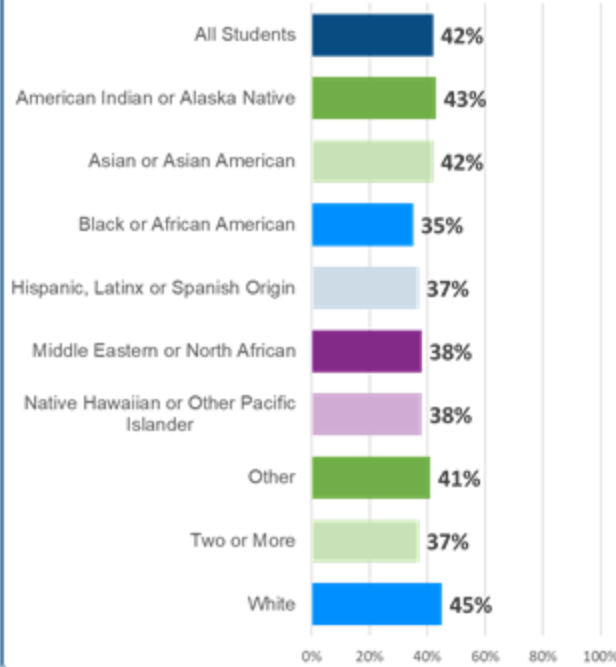
Teacher at Crestwood High School, Dearborn Heights, Michigan

“Do you feel connected to the adults at your school?”

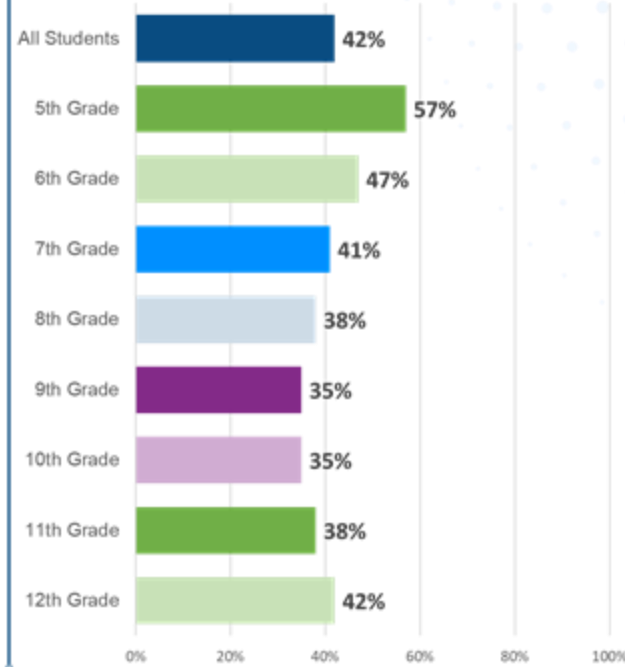
Gender Identity



Race/Ethnicity



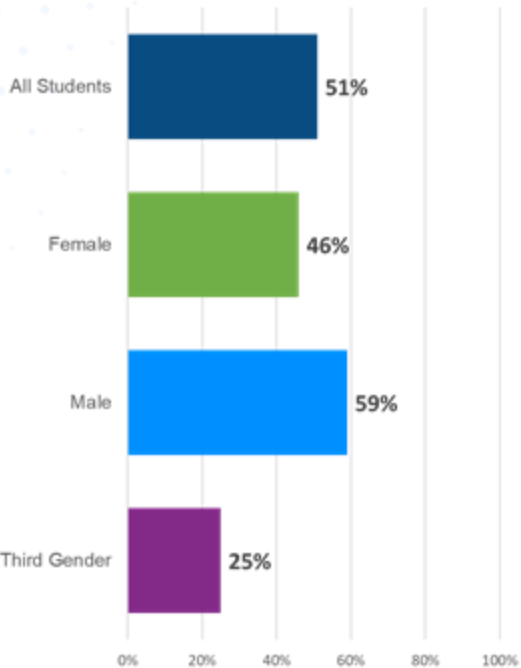
Grade



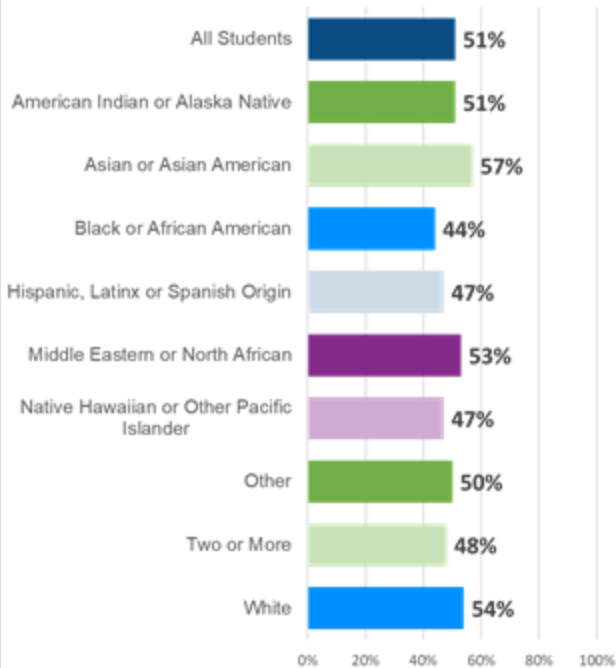
*Charts do not include students who chose “Other (Prefer to self-describe)” or “Prefer not to answer”

“Do you feel connected to the students at your school?”

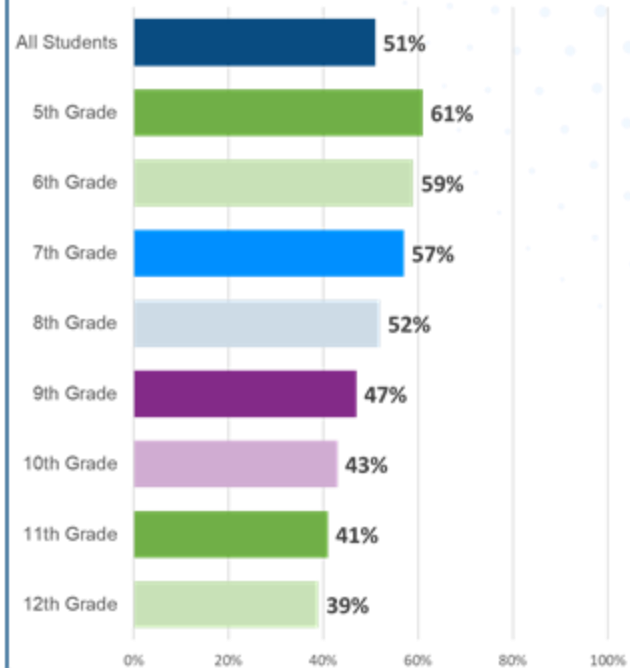
Gender Identity



Race/Ethnicity

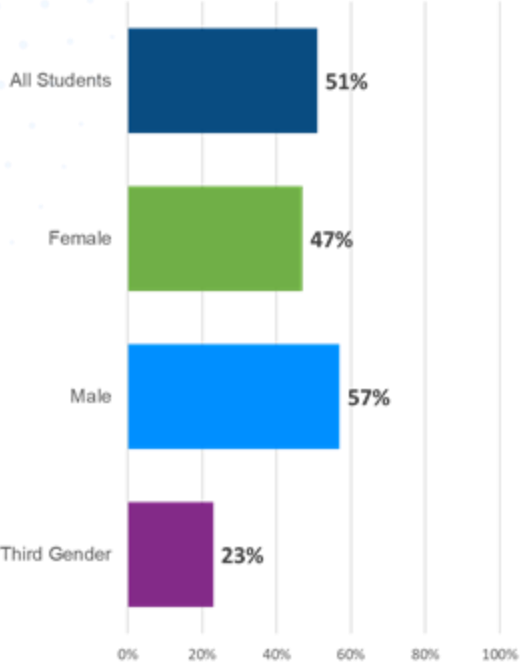


Grade

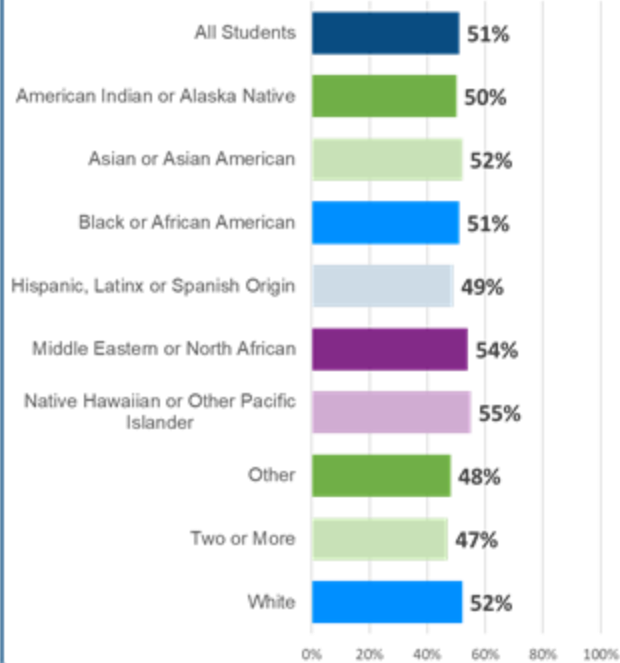


“Are your thoughts mostly helpful (for example, thoughts that make you feel confident and happy, instead of thoughts that make you feel worried and sad)?”

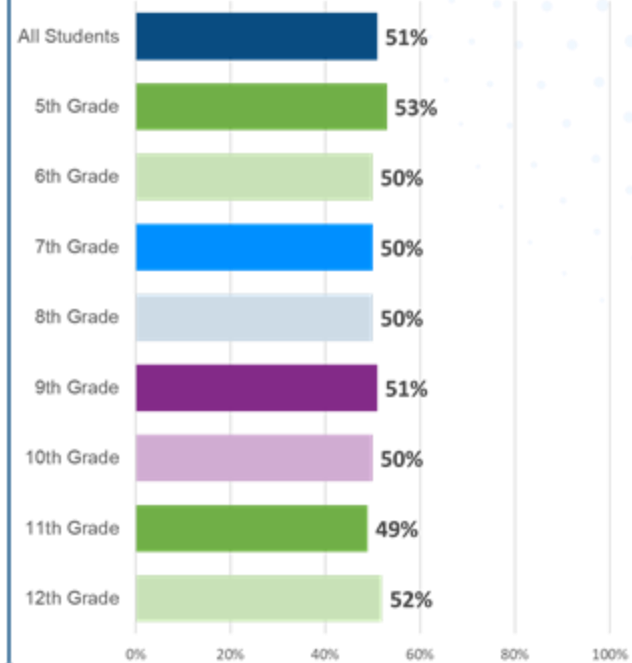
Gender Identity



Race/Ethnicity



Grade



Putting our money where our mouth is

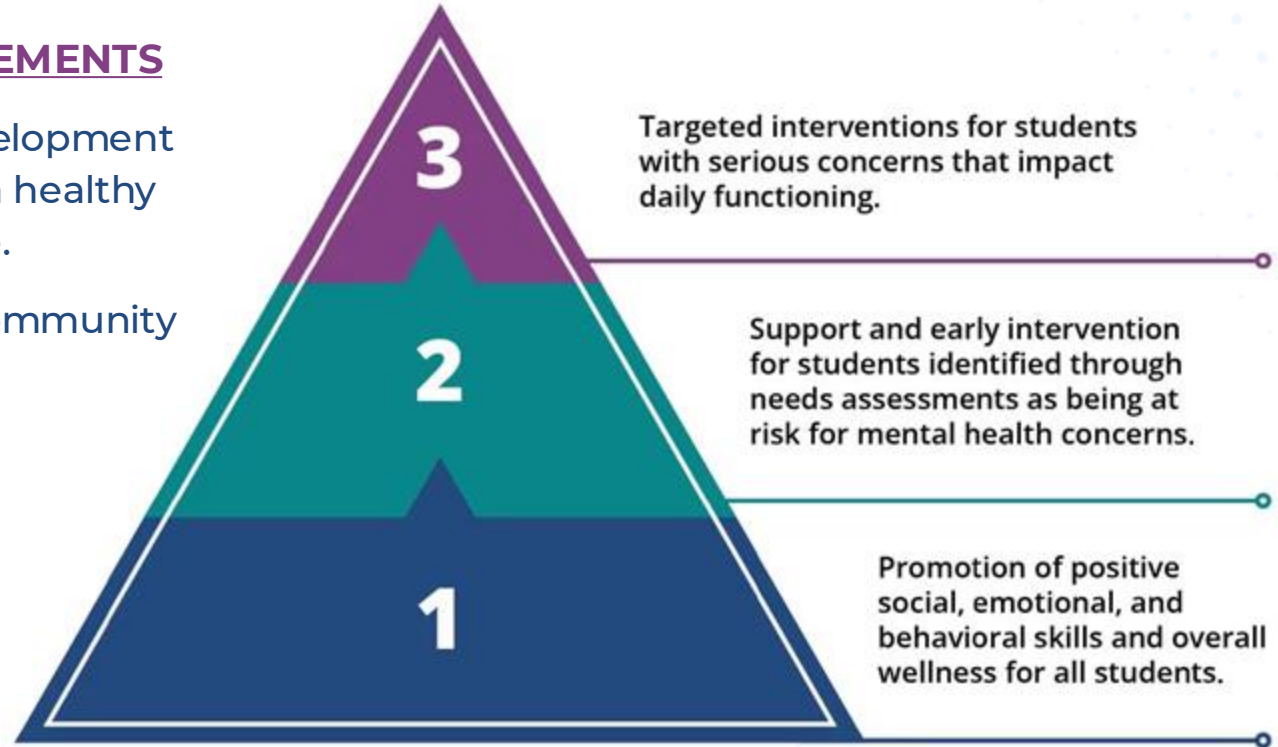
“Students often feel adults ask young people for input,
but don’t make changes based on what they say.”

- *Nick Ironside for ACSD Educational Leadership*

Schools as intersection of practice and policy

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

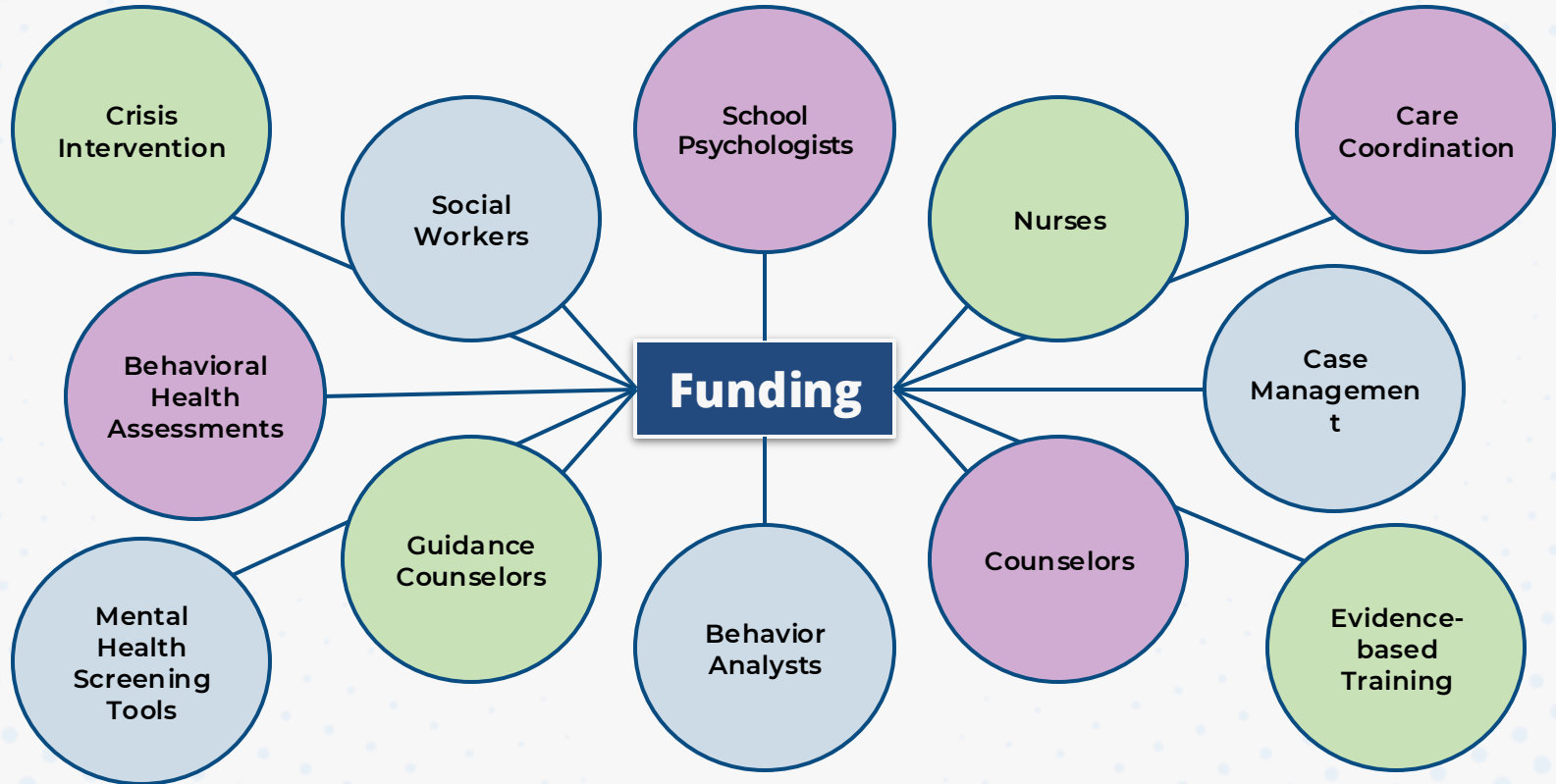
- Professional development and support for a healthy school workforce.
- Family-school-community partnerships.



Our Call to Action

- 1 Champion policy that promotes intentional connections, reduces unnecessary stressors, and promotes digital detoxes
- 2 Encourage student-led initiatives and peer support programs
- 3 Endorse implementation of comprehensive social-emotional learning and mental health literacy programs
- 4 Increase the number of professional and school counselors, social workers, and psychologists available to students

Thank you for your support





Survey Background

Survey Creation

- Superintendents across Kent ISD gathered to create the Student survey.

2019

Pilot Testing

- The Student survey was pilot tested with **13** Kent ISD schools.

2021

13

Year 1

- The Student survey was launched with **22 districts** across the state participating.

2022

22

Year 2

- The Student survey was modified with **58 districts** across the state participating.

2023

58

Year 3

- **108 districts** across the state participated in the Student survey.
- The Educator and Parent/Guardian surveys were pilot-tested.

2024

108

Year 4

- Districts are currently signing up throughout the state.
- The Educator and Parent/Guardian surveys are officially launched.

2025





STEERING COMMITTEE

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Daveda Colbert, PhD

Superintendent, Wayne RESA

Jenny Fee, PhD

Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, Kent ISD

Ron Gorman, PhD

Superintendent, Kent ISD

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Superintendent, Ottawa Area ISD

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Philip "Ric" Seager

Superintendent, Watervliet Public Schools

John Severson, PhD

Executive Director, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators

Steve Tunnicliff, PhD

Superintendent, Genesee ISD

Sean Williams, PhD

Superintendent, Eaton RESA



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Wayne RESA*

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Jen Rotach

*Research & Data Analyst,
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Davie Store, PhD

*Director of Research and Continuous
Improvement,
Kent ISD*

Applying data from MI Student Voice to drive change



Kenyatta Hill-Hall
*Principal, Grand Rapids
University Preparatory
Academy*



Dr. Katherine Bertolini
*Superintendent, Maple
Valley Schools*



Using the MI Student Voice Survey to Create a Sense of Belonging for All Students



Kenyatta Hill-Hall

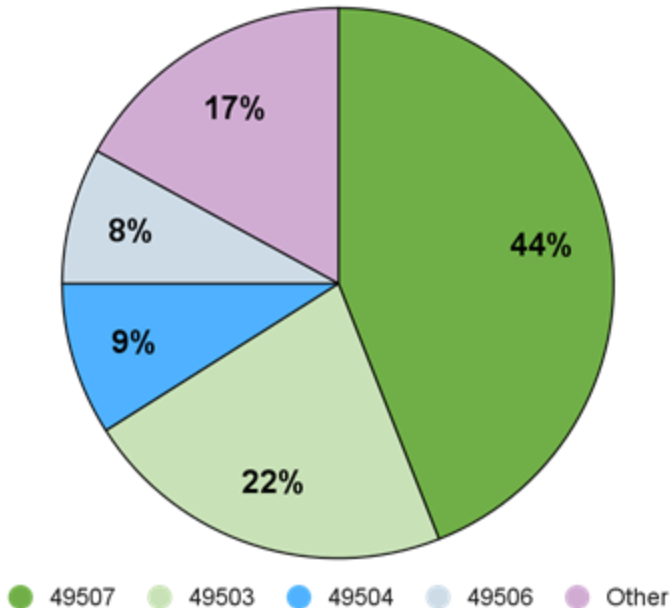
Principal

Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy



Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy Data Snapshot

Zip Code



Scholar Demographic Breakdown

Hispanic - 209
African American - 229
Two or More - 24
White - 30
Asian - 2

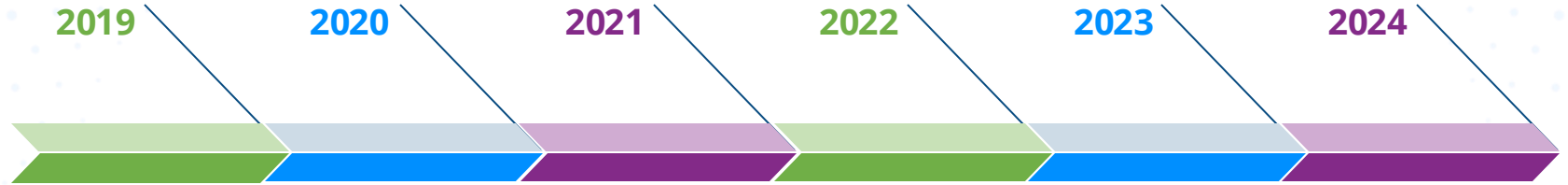
Total: 494 scholars

Staff Breakdown

33 Instructional Staff
14 Support Staff



Diving into the Data



Pandemic

- ❖ Decrease in attendance
- ❖ Inconsistencies in college career readiness
- ❖ Increase in anxiety
- ❖ Learning loss

New Normal

- ❖ Continued decrease in attendance
- ❖ Increase college and career readiness
- ❖ Increased awareness of anxiety with scholars
- ❖ Gradual return to a new norm

Connecting the Pieces

- ❖ Started Cohort of Practice for attendance
- ❖ Formed SEL team
- ❖ New framework for PBIS
- ❖ Participated in Panorama & MI Student Voice Survey
- ❖ Implementation of Promise Neighborhood



Current State: Strengthening Our Roots

1. **Advisory**
2. **SEL/PBIS**
 - a. Panther Panel & Culture Team
 - b. Restorative Practices
 - c. SEL Room (2022)
 - d. Office Hours & 8th Hour
 - e. Peer Mentoring
 - f. Tier 2 Wheel Supports
 - g. Sunshine Squad
3. **Data Reviews**
 - a. Focus: Sense of Belonging
 - b. ILT & Culture Team
4. **Instructional Rounds**
5. **Surveys**
6. **Instructional Non-Negotiables**
 - a. Clear Expectations



Average of favorable responses of 12 questions in the "Belonging" category

Maple Valley Schools Advisory As Mental Health Support

The power of unconditionally supportive adults

Dr. Katherine Bertolini



**Maple Valley
Schools**

How do we make MI Student Voice Data Actionable?

- Advisory was created 3 years ago with a goal to reconnect our students and staff post Covid.
- We saw evidence of increased detachment and less hope for the future in Tiers 1, 2 and 3 students, so we imagined HOW we could greatly increase Tier 1 supports for all students at the Jr. /Sr. HS level.



**Maple Valley
Schools**

Vision and Values for Advisory

Vision: Advisors and Advisees will create a safe space to make lasting relationships and skills while fostering belonging, engagement and fun.

Values:

- Direction and hope for students' futures
- Engagement in class, social life of school and extracurricular activities
- Creation of an unconditionally supportive adult to student relationship
- Focus on the soft skills of being an effective person
- Lifelong memories made and celebrated
- Learning and responding to student interests to put them at the center of our schools



**Maple Valley
Schools**

Structure of Advisory

- 7th & 8th advisories and 9-12 advisories (15 students on average)
- 5 days a week for 30 minutes
- Focus is relationships, goals, Trails, hobbies, soft skills and life skills
- Groups cannot change and as one group graduates, the incoming grade rises to complete the group
- Sophia and Will may use some examples from Advisory during their panel as illustrations for you.



**Maple Valley
Schools**

Do's

- Poll for student interests, passions, fun
- Create Norms for your time together
 - Make plans to split advisory if sub is not available! Buddy teachers.
- Allow for flexibility in your time together
- Stress that these kids are "YOURS"
- Fulfill all requirements of the time: Goals, TRAILS, Attendance, keep kids in class
- Set Expectations for Growth in all ways
- Bring Enthusiasm to every Session
- Have back up activities in your pocket
- Look for trends, habits in your kids
- Talk to each other about things kids need to improve and do
- Tap into counselors for support

Don'ts

- Allow kids to transfer to other groups, build the group
- Slide into study hall mode or homework time, busy work that steals relation time
- Minimize the value of this time
- Forget to use PLC time to grow with your colleagues
- Get discouraged if some kids are withdrawn or apathetic or resistant, they are the ones who need this the most



**Maple Valley
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TRAILS

- These are held on Tuesdays with scheduled thematic lessons
- Execute these lessons with fidelity.
 - Our students need this knowledge, permission to experience these things.
 - Put your own spin on it based on your relationships with your students.
 - Journals can be housed as an assignment/support materials can be uploaded in your courseshell.
- Acknowledge this is challenging for teachers
 - For some of our students, we are the only people in their lives who will give them these skills. Maslow's Hierarchy!
 - Reconnections with my Summit students as thirty and forty year olds reinforces this.



**Maple Valley
Schools**

HOBBIES & FUN

- Student input and buy in for the hobbies are important, but don't accept no interests as an option. If they are struggling, you may need to set the hobby initially.
- Play with the students, learn with them, join them in the process. You are an equal partner in this, not the sage on the stage. Your enthusiastic modeling of doing something fun gives them permission to do something fun.



**Maple Valley
Schools**

Plans for MI Student Voice Data

Advisory

- Advisors have been trained on how to process and review our data from the survey
- Expectations that Advisors will bring our results to their advisees to engage in discussions with them about how they feel and think about our local results
- Use those results with SWOT analysis frameworks to build some goals for our student body in conjunction with staff to make some positive changes in our schools.

Strategic Planning

- Use our data to inform our portrait of a graduate as we work on our strategic plan for the next 5 years.



**Maple Valley
Schools**

Thank You for your investment in the
welfare and mental health of our kids!

Dr. Katherine Bertolini
Kbertolini@mvs.k12.mi.us



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STUDENT PANEL Q&A

Anari Roberts

Kentwood Public
Schools

Andrew Hinds

Northview Public
Schools

**Marlee-Ami
Sierz**

Grand Rapids
Public Schools

**Nick Ladamato-
Fisher**

Grand Rapids
Public Schools

Sofia Rose

Maple Valley
Schools

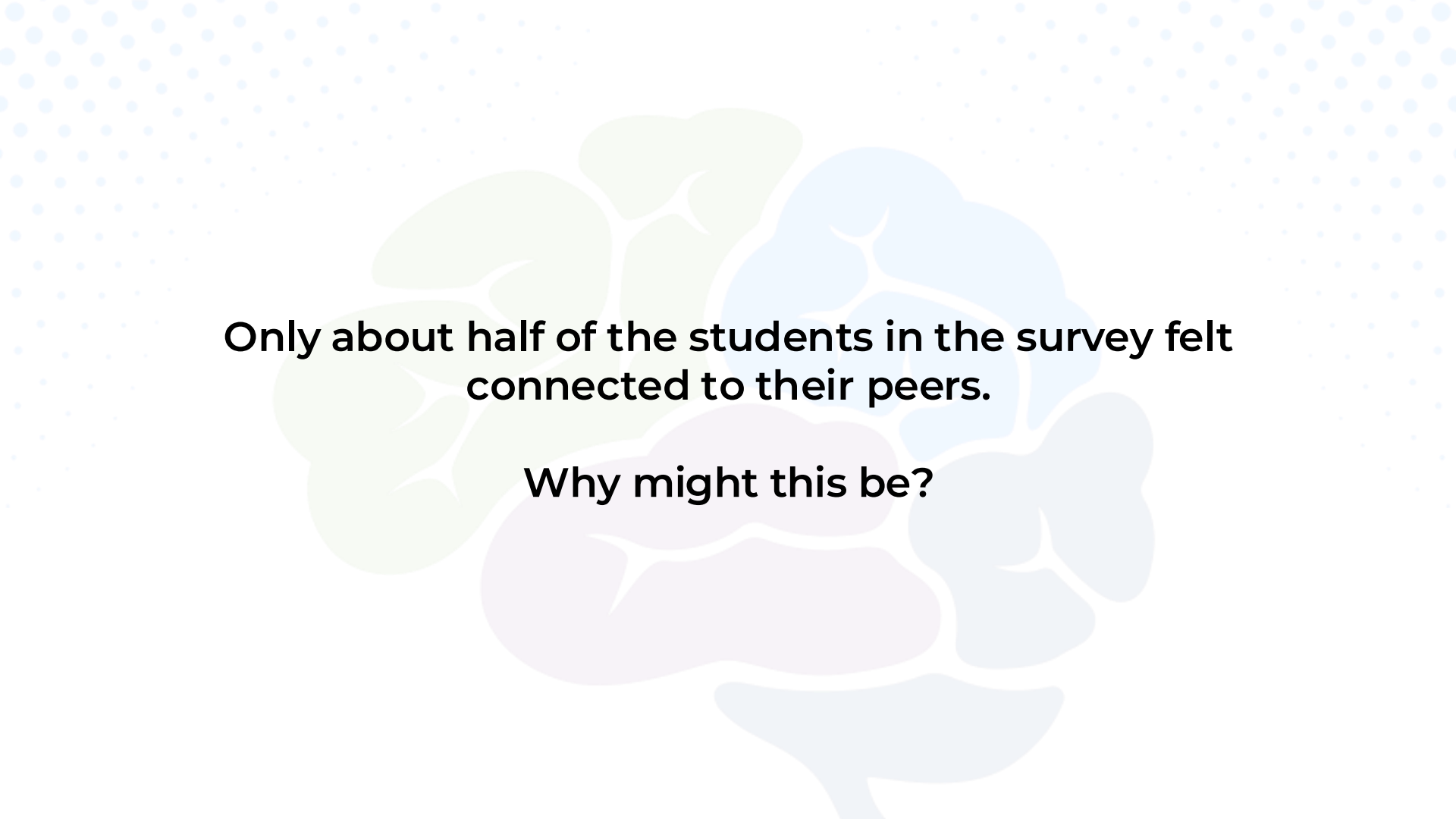
Will Whitford

Maple Valley
Schools



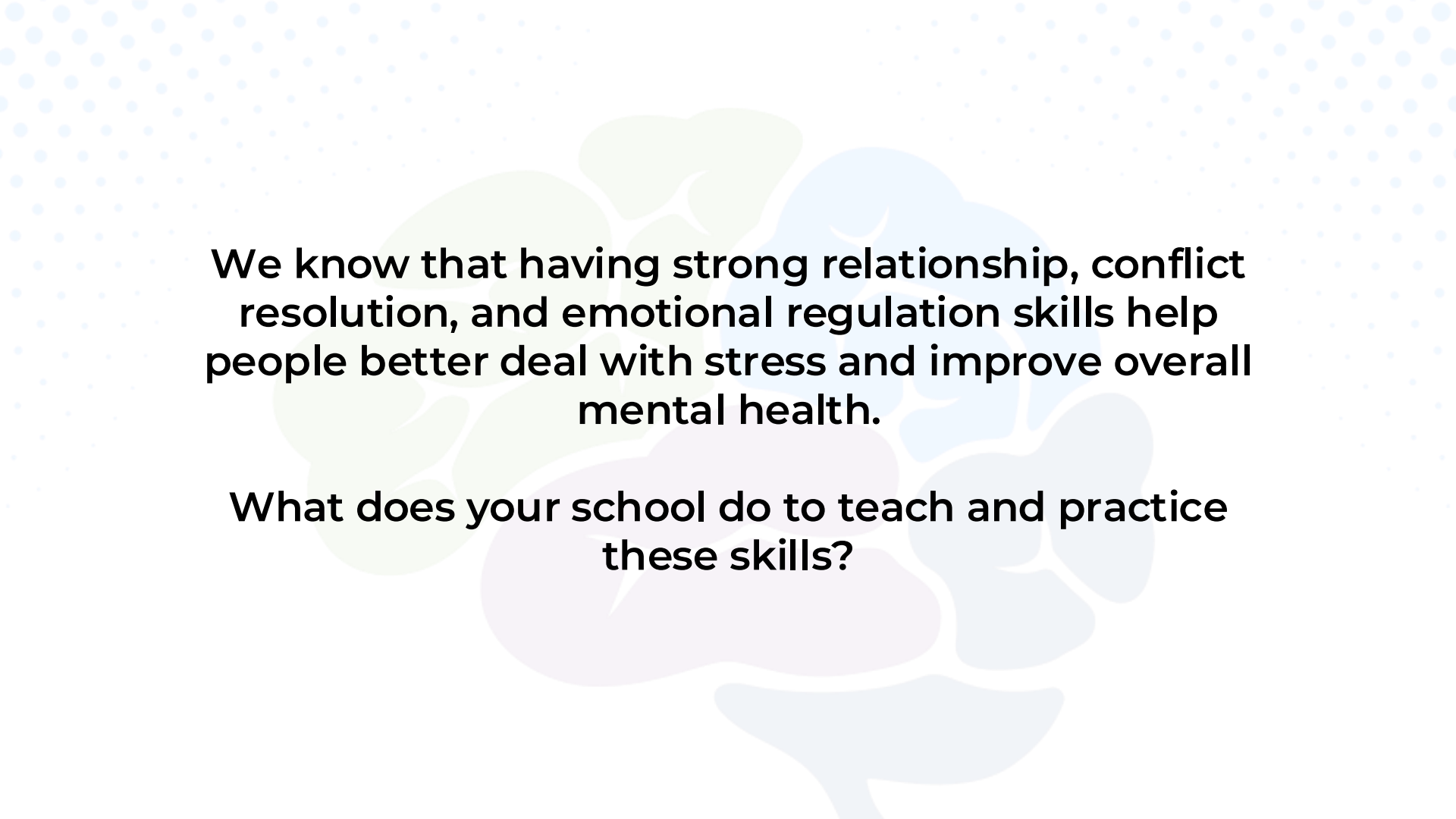
Only 42% of students surveyed felt positively about their connection with adults at their school.

What would allow students to better connect with staff?



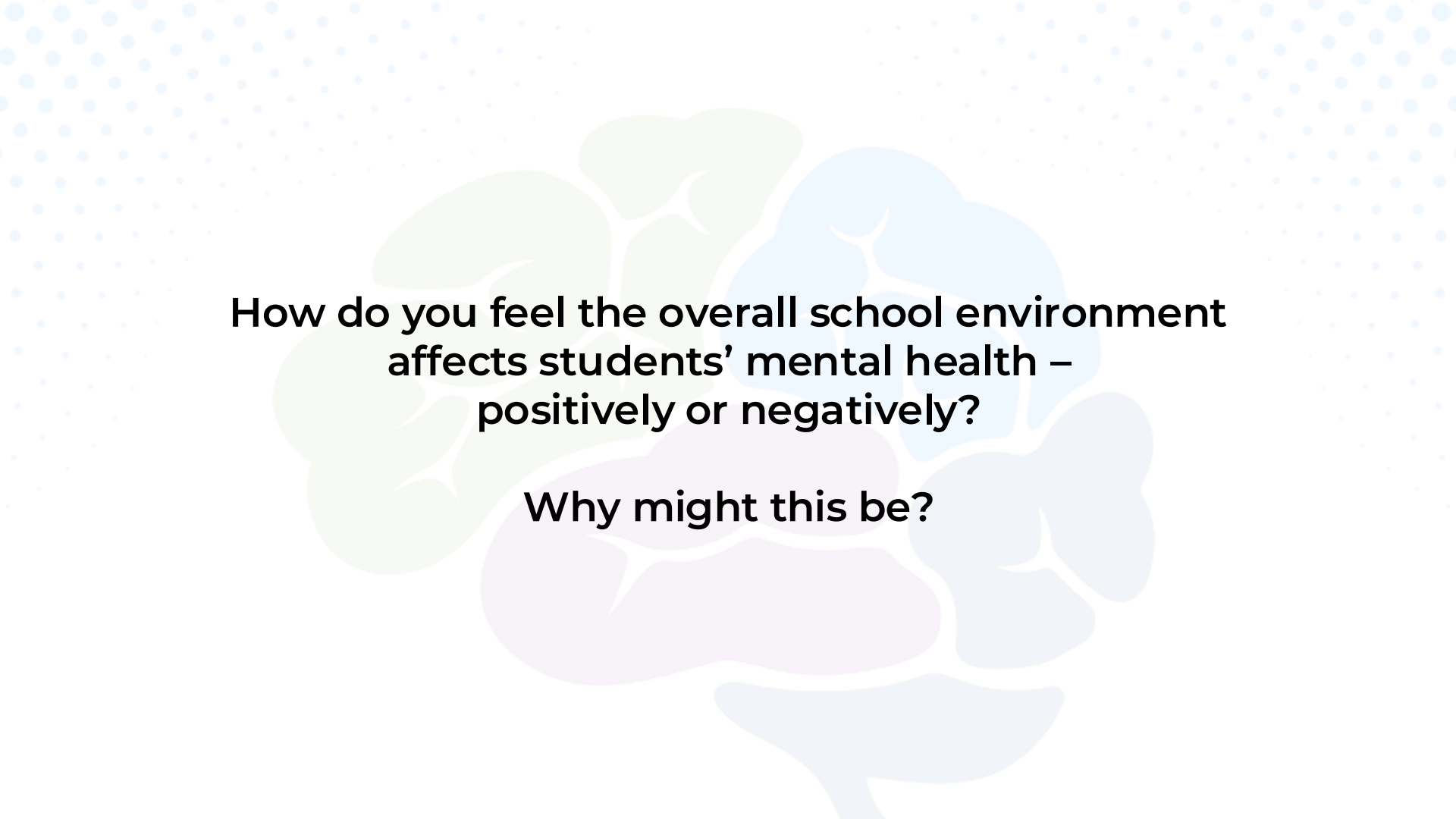
Only about half of the students in the survey felt connected to their peers.

Why might this be?



We know that having strong relationship, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation skills help people better deal with stress and improve overall mental health.

What does your school do to teach and practice these skills?

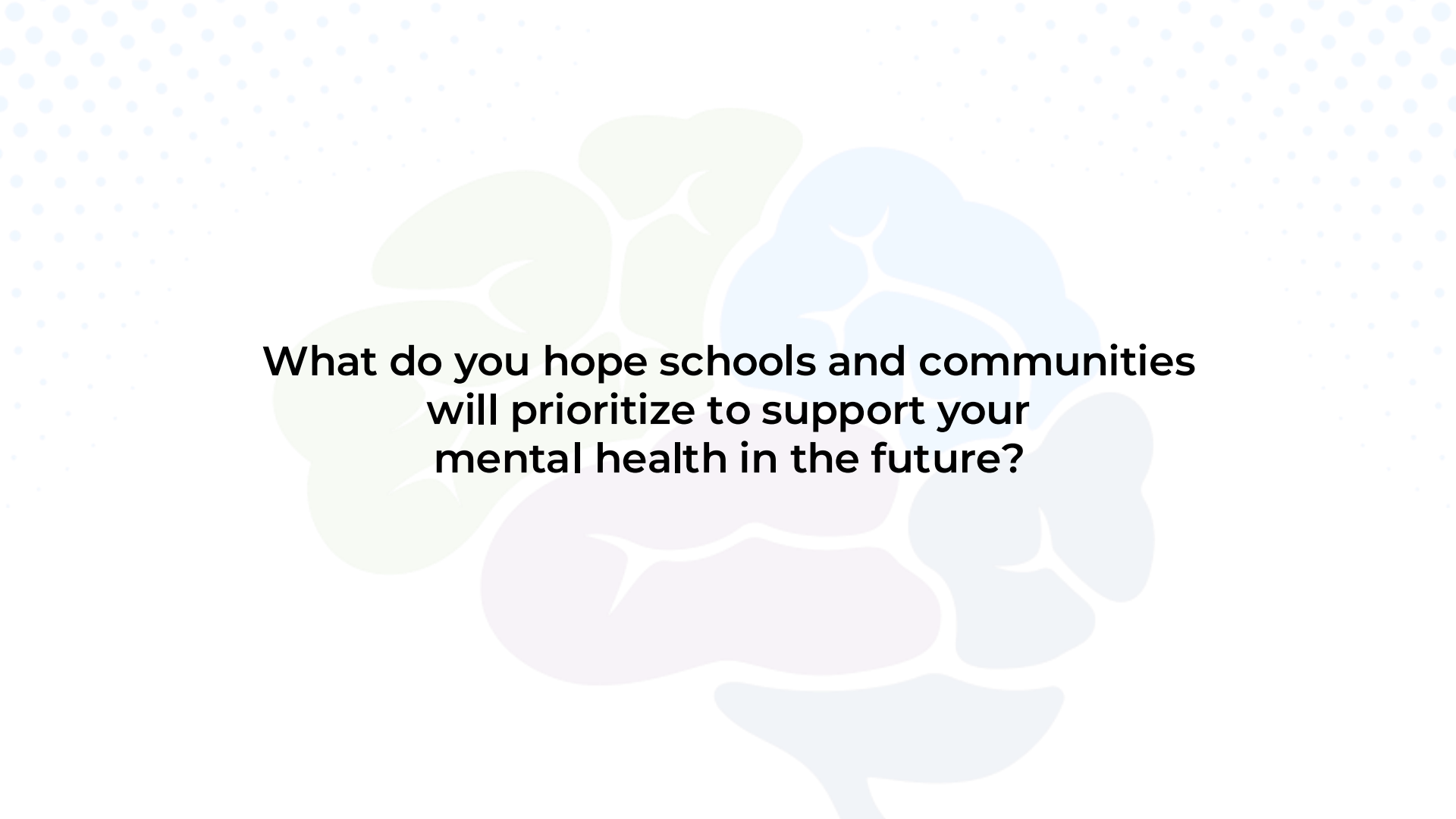


**How do you feel the overall school environment
affects students' mental health –
positively or negatively?**

Why might this be?



How do you think elective and extracurricular activities contribute to or alleviate mental health challenges?



**What do you hope schools and communities
will prioritize to support your
mental health in the future?**

THANK YOU



<https://MIStudentVoice.org>