

MI Student Voice Perception Survey – What Contributes to Welcoming School Environments?

Basis Policy Research

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This research brief uses data from the spring 2023 administration of the MI Student Voice perception survey to explore factors associated with welcoming school environments in Michigan schools.

Key findings include:

- Less than half of students feel people in their schools understand them as a person.
- Asian and White students are more likely to hold positive views of teachers' respect towards students, teachers' encouragement of students, and the adequacy of resources the school provides as compared to other racial and ethnic groups.
- A larger share of students in the most welcoming schools report feeling like they belong as compared to students in other Michigan schools.

Recommendations include:

- Leverage resources in the Student Perception Planning Guide to support local districts and schools in creating more welcoming atmospheres for all students.
- Support the implementation of belonging and peer connectedness efforts in local districts and schools.

Introduction

A welcoming school environment is a multi-dimensional construct comprised of characteristics, norms, and values that impact students' learning and social development (Ross et al., 2020). Factors associated with a welcoming environment include the school's physical environment and safety, interpersonal relationships between students and educators, instructional practices and supports, and behaviors and social norms, among others (Hanover Research, 2022). Research has demonstrated that welcoming school environments enhance students' sense of belonging and positively contributes to behavioral engagement and improved academic performance (Korpershoek et al., 2020; Niehaus et al., 2012).

Given the demonstrated impact of the school environment on students' perceptions of belonging and academic outcomes, the MI Student Voice survey included environment-focused questions on the statewide perception survey. The questions gauge students' (a) sense of belonging among peers and staff, (b) perceptions of how fairly peers and faculty treat students from different races and ethnicities, and (c) perceptions of the learning environment. The Kent Intermediate School District (Kent ISD), through a grant funded from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, contracted with Basis Policy Research (Basis) to analyze survey results and produce three research briefs covering topics of interest to Kent ISD¹. The current brief explores factors associated with welcoming school environments. Findings from this brief will inform schools' and districts' efforts to continuously improve the student experience and their perceptions of the school environment.

¹ Kent ISD developed and administered the student perception survey. Basis did not contribute to the development or administration of the survey. We were contracted to independently analyze survey data following the spring 2023 administration.

Research Questions

This research brief examines the following research questions:

1. To what extent do students' perceptions of welcoming school environments vary by race and ethnicity?
2. What features are common to schools with the most welcoming environments?

Methods

Sample. This research brief draws on data from the spring 2023 administration of the MI Student Voice perception survey. Fifty-six districts in Michigan participated in the survey. At the conclusion of the survey window, 33,233 students in grades 5 through 12 completed the survey. We restricted the sample to 26,990 students who had non-missing district and school data and who had completed all survey questions. The sample of students included in this report are enrolled in 50 districts across Michigan. Appendix A describes the sample, including response rates by participating districts.

Measures. This research brief uses constructs (henceforth titled “factors”) derived from the MI Student Voice perception survey validation report. In the validation report, Basis researchers applied an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine patterns in students’ survey responses. This statistical technique explores relationships between survey items and groups items with common themes into underlying factors². Factors derived from an EFA include multiple questions that “hang together” because of similar patterns of responses. For example, students’ sense of belonging in school is a factor one cannot measure directly. However, one can measure whether students (a) feel connected to peers, (b) feel understood by peers, and (c) feel like they belong in school. The items all relate to the underlying factor of “peer connectedness”. The four factors derived from the validation report and used in this research brief include:

- **Learning Environment:** Survey items associated with this factor include teachers’ respect towards students, teachers’ encouragement of students, the adequacy of resources the school provides, the time teachers take to help students understand the material, and how excited students would be to have their teachers again (See Appendix B, Table B1 Rows 2-11).
- **Peer Connectedness:** Items related to this factor inquire about how connected students feel to other students, how well peers understand them, and how strongly students feel like they belong in school (See Appendix B, Table B1, Rows 13-15).
- **Social Awareness:** The four survey items related to this factor inquire about whether students care about other people’s feelings, think about how their actions affect others, respect other people’s point of view, and would be willing to report students or adults who treat others poorly. (See Appendix B, Table B1, Rows 26-29).
- **Fair and Inclusive Environment:** The two items related to this factor inquire about whether adults and students fairly treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures (See Appendix B, Table B1, Rows 40-41).

For the purposes of this brief, we focus the analysis on factors contributing to a welcoming school environment based on the grouping of items from the MI Student Voice survey validation report. We recognize that a welcoming environment is a multi-dimensional construct that includes more than the factors included here, particularly items related to diversity. However, we do not include the “Diverse School Environment” (Alpha = 0.64) and “Addressing Race-Related Topics” (Alpha = 0.54) factors in this brief due to their questionable or poor reliability. These levels of reliability suggest the items associated with the respective factors likely do not measure the same thing consistently.

² Appendix B includes all factors and the list of questions in each factor.

Finally, we rated schools on the four welcoming factors. To do so, we calculated the percentage of students responding with the top two answer choices³ on the five-point survey scales. Selecting the top two answer choices is treated as “positive responses”. We then averaged positive responses across factors to create an overall welcomeness rating. Basis researchers subsequently classified the five elementary, middle, and high schools with the highest overall ratings as the most welcoming schools in the sample. Appendix C describes response rates and student demographics for the most welcoming schools and all other schools in the sample.

Analytic Strategy. Below we describe the analytic strategy used to answer the research questions included in this brief.

RQ 1 | To what extent do students’ perceptions of welcoming school environments vary by race and ethnicity?

To answer this research question, Basis researchers disaggregated the factor scores in two ways. First, we explored the percentage of positive responses across the items associated with each factor. Next, we examined the percentage of positive responses across items by race and ethnicity.

RQ 2 | What features are common to schools with the most welcoming environments?

For this research question, we disaggregated the percentage of positive responses across the items associated with each factor for the most welcoming schools and other Michigan schools included in the sample. We focus on select welcoming factors in this section.

³ The top two answer choices across the three scales used in the survey are quite and extremely, frequently and almost always, and quite willing and extremely willing.

Results

RQ 1 | To what extent do students’ perceptions of welcoming school environments vary by race and ethnicity?

This section compares the likelihood that different student racial and ethnic groups report positive perceptions of the four welcoming school environment factors – social awareness, fair and inclusive environment, learning environment, and peer connectedness. We disaggregate responses across factors by racial and ethnic groups to answer this research question.

Less than half of students responded positively to questions about peer connectedness.

Figure 1 displays the percentage of students selecting the top two answers choices (henceforth titled “positive responses”) for items associated with the welcoming factors. Results indicate between 71 and 80 percent of students responded positively to social awareness, fair and inclusive environment, and learning environment items. This means students are more likely to indicate they care about others’ feelings and acknowledge how their actions impact others. Conversely, only 46 percent of students responded favorably to items related to peer connectedness. This implies students are less likely to report feeling connected to other students, how well peers understand them, and how strongly students feel like they belong in school.

Figure 1: Percentage of students with positive responses on items associated with welcoming factors.



Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author’s analysis.

Asian and White students responded more favorably to welcoming environment factors than other racial and ethnic groups.

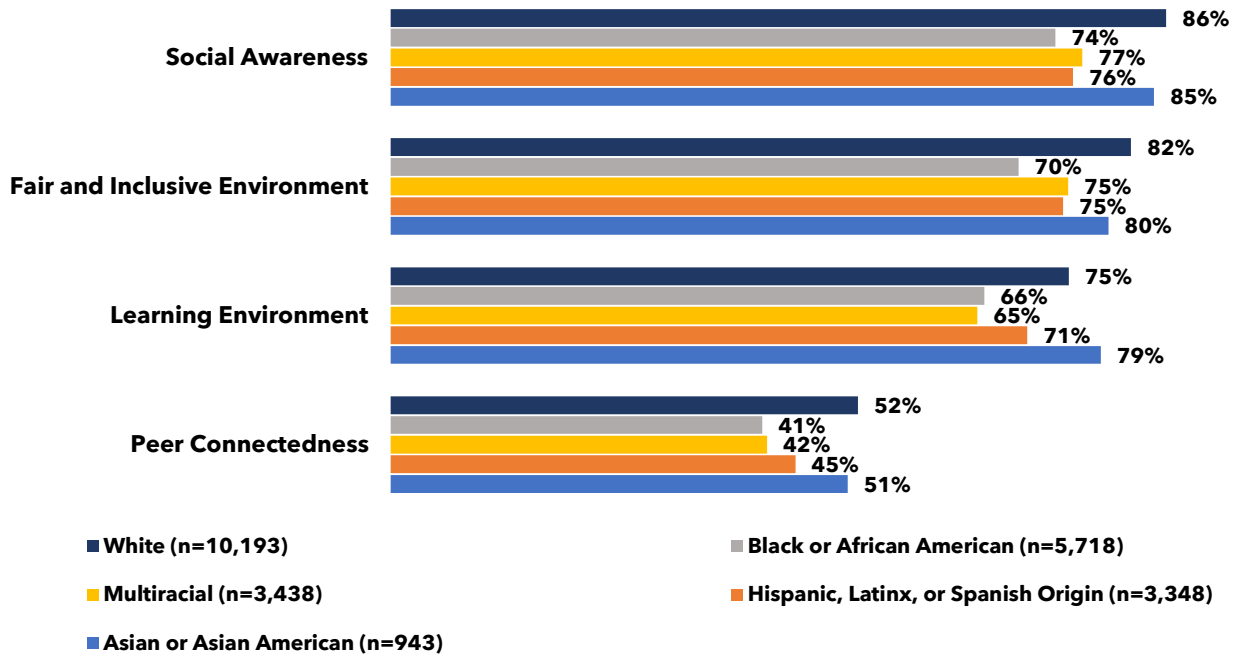
Basis researchers also investigated whether the percentage of students with positive responses for items associated with each welcoming factor varied by race and ethnicity⁴. Figure 2 displays the percentage of students by race and ethnicity with positive responses across factors. Across all factors, Asian or Asian American (henceforth titled “Asian”) and White students responded more positively than other racial and ethnic groups. For example, between 85 and 86 percent of Asian and White students responded positively

⁴ We limited our analysis by race and ethnicity to the five largest racial/ethnic groups responding to the survey.

to questions about social awareness, whereas between 74 and 77 percent of Black or African American (henceforth titled “Black”), Multiracial, or Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish Origin (henceforth titled “Hispanic”) students responded positively.

Further, the largest gap between racial and ethnic groups is a fourteen percentage point difference between Multiracial and Asian students regarding positive perceptions of learning environments. This implies Asian students are more likely to hold positive views of teachers’ respect towards students, teachers’ encouragement of students, the adequacy of resources the school provides, and the time teachers take to help students understand the material, amongst others. Finally, the factor with the least amount of variation between subgroups was peer connectedness, which had a range of eleven percentage points between Black (41 percent) and White students (52 percent).

Figure 2: Percentage of students with positive responses on items associated with welcoming factors by race and ethnicity.



Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author’s analysis.

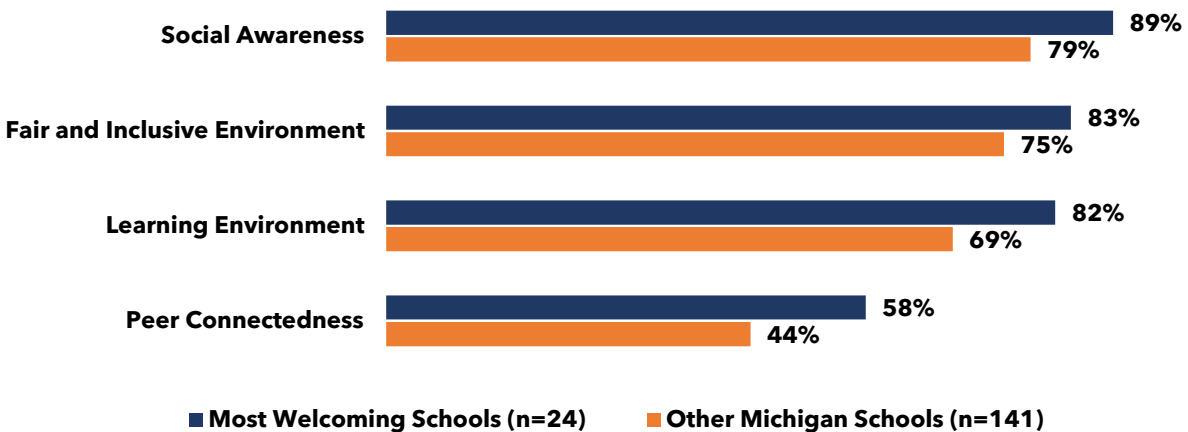
2 | What features are common to schools with the most welcoming environments?

To answer this research question, Basis researchers compared the percentage of students with positive perceptions of the four welcoming environment factors in schools with the highest overall ratings (n=24) and the remaining schools included in the sample (n=141). For the remainder of this report, we use “school classification” to refer to the most welcoming schools and all other Michigan schools participating in the survey.

The share of students in the most welcoming schools responding positively to the learning environment and peer connectedness factors are between 13 to 14 percentage points larger.

Figure 3 displays the percentage of students with positive responses for items associated with welcoming factors by school classification. The difference in percentage of positive responses between the most welcoming schools and remaining Michigan schools ranges from between 8 to 14 percentage points. Peer connectedness (14 percentage point difference) and learning environment (13 percentage point difference) have the largest differences between school classifications. Conversely, fair and inclusive environment had the smallest difference (8 percentage points) between schools with the highest welcoming ratings and the remaining Michigan schools. This implies students in the most welcoming schools are more likely report feeling a sense of belonging within the school environment and hold perceptions that teachers treat students with respect and encouragement.

Figure 3: Percentage of students with positive responses on items associated with welcoming factors by school classification.



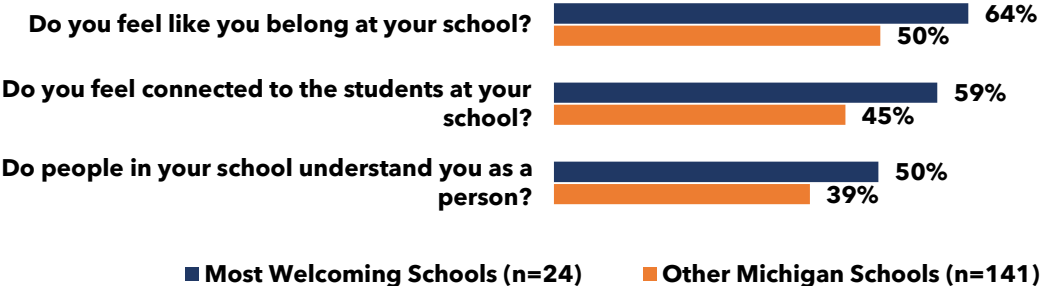
Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author’s analysis.

The share of students in the most welcoming schools feeling like they belong is 14 percentage points larger than other Michigan schools.

We also investigated whether the items comprising the four welcoming environment factors demonstrated differences between school classifications (See Appendices D1 and D2 for additional results by item). Figure 4 displays the percentage of positive responses for survey items comprising peer connectedness. Peer connectedness received the least favorable responses of the four factors associated with welcoming

environments. The three survey items under this factor have between an 11 and 14 percentage point difference when looking across most welcoming schools and the other Michigan schools in the sample. For instance, there is a 14 percentage point difference between the most welcoming schools (64 percent) and other Michigan schools (50 percent) in the share of students reporting they feel like they belong in their school. We also find a 14 percentage point difference in responses regarding the extent to which students feel connected to other students within their schools, with 59 percent of students in the most welcoming schools responding favorably. Further, 50 percent or less of students in both school classifications feel people in their schools understand them as a person.

Figure 4: Percentage of students with positive responses on items associated with peer connectedness by school classification.

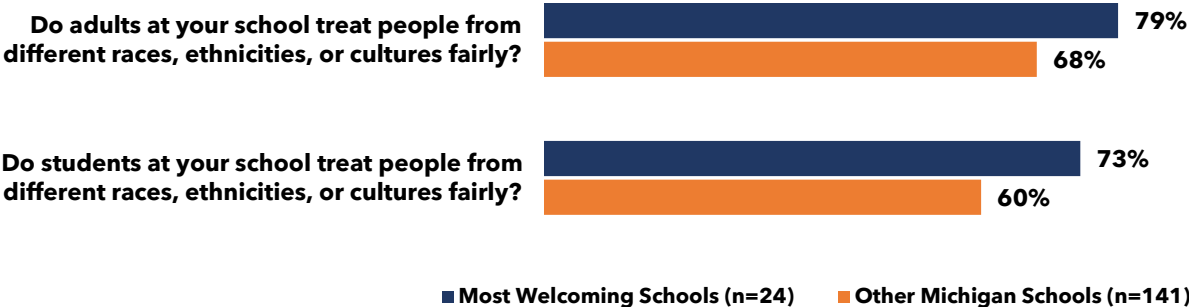


Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author’s analysis.

Seventy-three percent of students in the most welcoming schools report students in their school treat people from different races, ethnicities, and cultures fairly.

Figure 5 displays the percentage of positive responses for items corresponding to fair and inclusive school environments. The share of students with positive responses to items associated with a fair and inclusive environment are between 11 to 13 percentage points larger in the most welcoming schools as compared to all other Michigan schools in the sample. For instance, there is a 13 percentage point difference in the share of students in the most welcoming schools (73 percent) reporting students treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures fairly as compared to other Michigan schools (60 percent).

Figure 5: Percentage of students with positive responses on items associated with fair and inclusive school environment by school classification.



Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author’s analysis.

Discussion and Recommendations

This research brief sought to explore factors influencing welcoming environments in Michigan schools. We identified four factors – social awareness, fair and inclusive environment, learning environment, and peer connectedness – associated with welcoming school environments. We found that between 71 and 80 percent of students responded positively to items associated with social awareness, fair and inclusive environment, and learning environment items. In contrast, less than half of students responded positively to questions about peer connectedness. This implies students are more likely to feel supported by their teachers and believe people from diverse backgrounds are treated fairly, however less likely to report feeling connected to other people in school. Results also indicate Asian and White students responded more favorably to welcoming environment factors than other racial and ethnic groups. Finally, we identified 24 elementary, middle, and high schools in the sample with the highest percentage of positive responses across welcoming factors. The share of students in the most welcoming schools responding more positively to learning environments and peer connectedness items is between 13 and 14 percentage points larger as compared to other Michigan schools in the sample. Considering these findings, we suggest stakeholders consider four recommendations. The first three recommendations focus on steps districts and schools could take to support efforts to improve school environments, while the final recommendation focuses on suggestions for future research. Two recommendations in the district and school section were included in last year’s welcoming environment research brief but warrant inclusion here given their continued applicability.

District and School Recommendations

1 | Leverage resources in the Student Perception Planning Guide to support local districts and schools in creating more welcoming atmospheres for all students.

Kent ISD developed a [Student Perception Planning Guide](#) for districts and schools to use when analyzing local survey results. The planning guide provides guiding questions, recommended resources, and Kent ISD technical assistance associated with Social-Emotional Learning, Student Engagement, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Districts and schools may use the guiding questions across all areas of the guide when analyzing welcoming environment-related survey data to consider why certain results are present in the data. For instance, if a school notices students are indicating students at their school do not treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures fairly, the school may turn to the guiding questions and ask, “what systems and strategies are you utilizing to ensure student belonging?” The school can then turn to the recommended resources and Kent ISD technical assistance for ideas on how to ensure student belonging and support with implementation of strategies.

2 | Support the implementation of belonging and peer connectedness efforts in local districts and schools.

Abraham Maslow’s infamous hierarchy of needs places a sense of social belonging as foundational to esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1962). Under this framework, it is concluded that confidence, goal setting, ambition, and achievement can only be fully realized once the need for belonging has been met. Research shows this is true in the case of education. School belonging has been found to have a positive correlation to many student outcomes including course grades, standardized test scores, goal setting, and student engagement and behavior (Korpershoek et al., 2020; Niehaus et al., 2012). Given the growing body of evidence, along with the above findings, it is imperative schools and districts consider ways to

build deeper connections among student peers and staff. We recommend districts and schools consider implementing new or continue to implement existing research-based interventions supporting students' sense of belonging and connectedness to peers and staff. For stakeholders considering new interventions, the [Caring School Community](#) and [Connect with Kids](#) programs have been found to have potentially positive effects on student socialization and behavior. Further, Kent ISD could work with schools in the county with the with the highest reported levels of belonging and peer connectedness to identify and disseminate proven strategies to other schools.

3 | Support the implementation of diversity and inclusion efforts in local districts and schools.

As detailed in the above results, there is considerable difference between the most welcoming schools and remaining Michigan schools in the sample on questions related to fair and inclusive school environments. Given these differences, it is increasingly important for stakeholders to continually monitor the implementation of diversity and inclusions efforts in local districts and schools. Focusing on implementation will provide stakeholders with insight into why differences might exist, where implementation deviates from expectations, and what barriers impede local implementation. Understanding implementation challenges and barriers will provide stakeholders with useful data that could be used to inform how resources and supports are used to successfully implement diversity and inclusion efforts in local districts and schools. The National Education Association's [Racial Justice in Education](#) Toolkit offers a collection of resources, tools, suggested reading materials to support these efforts in education communities.

Recommendations for further research

4 | Consider adding additional items associated with diverse school environment and cultural awareness to improve factor reliability.

As previously mentioned, a welcoming environment is a multi-dimensional construct that includes more than the factors outlined in this brief. Two factors derived from the validation report – diverse school environment and cultural awareness – were excluded from this brief due to questionable or poor reliability. However, we recognize diversity and cultural awareness are contributors to a welcoming school environment. One method for improving the reliability of these factors is to increase the number of items associated with each construct. As it stands, there are only two questions associated with the diverse school environment and cultural awareness factors in the current survey. Thus, we recommend stakeholders associated with the development and administration of the survey consider additional items that could be included in a more robust depiction of these constructs. This will enable future to research to further explore the relationship between diverse student populations, cultural awareness, and students' perceptions of welcoming environments.

References

Korpershoek, H., Canrinus, E. T., Fokkens-Bruinsma, M., & de Boer, H. (2020). The relationships between school belonging and students' motivational, social-emotional, behavioural, and academic outcomes in secondary education: A meta-analytic review. *Research Papers in Education*, 35(6), 641–680.

Maslow, A. H. 1962. *Toward a Psychology of Being*.

Niehaus, K., Rudasill, K. M., & Rakes, C. R. (2012, August). A longitudinal study of school connectedness and academic outcomes across sixth grade. *Journal of School Psychology*, 50(4), 443–460

Appendices

Appendix A: Data & Methods

Data Sources. This research brief draws on data from the spring 2023 administration of the MI Student Voice perception survey. The Kent Intermediate School District (Kent ISD) developed the survey using validated items from publicly available instruments. Survey items sought to inquire about students’ experiences at school, including perceptions of engagement, social-emotional learning, and belonging. Appendix E includes a copy of the survey instrument. Kent ISD administered the survey through Qualtrics.

Sample. Fifty-six districts in Michigan administered the survey in spring 2023. At the conclusion of the survey window, 33,233 students in grades 5 through 12 completed the survey. Table A1 provides an overview of survey responses by participating district. We restricted the sample to 26,990 (81 percent of responses) students with non-missing district and school data and completed all survey questions. The analytic sample by district ranged from 0 to 95 percent of students completing the survey.

Table A1: Survey Responses by Participating Districts

District Name	Full Sample	Analytic Sample	% Analytic Sample
Advanced Technology Academy	96	60	63%
Avondale School District	1,333	1,192	89%
Beecher Community School District	43	36	84%
Berrien Springs Public Schools	374	0	0%
Buchanan Community Schools	353	312	88%
Caledonia Community Schools	741	626	84%
Coloma Community Schools	379	345	91%
Comstock Park Public Schools	123	117	95%
Countryside Academy	172	144	84%
Dansville Schools	260	226	87%
Dearborn Heights School District #7	472	412	87%
Decatur Public Schools	130	123	95%
Detroit Edison Public School Academy	492	442	90%
East Lansing School District	398	358	90%
Eau Claire Public Schools	255	236	93%
Flint Cultural Center Academy	92	75	82%
Garden City Public Schools	624	527	84%
George Washington Carver Academy	20	17	85%
Godfrey-Lee Public Schools	320	278	87%
Godwin Heights Public Schools	252	205	81%
Gogebic-Ontonagon ISD	65	0	0%
Grand Blanc Community Schools	1,367	1,235	90%
Grand Rapids Public Schools	3,807	3,332	88%
Grandville Public Schools	1,428	0	0%
Grosse Ile Township Schools	531	488	92%
Henry Ford Academy	341	312	91%
International Academy of Flint	168	140	83%
Kelloggsville Public Schools	415	351	85%
Kenowa Hills Public Schools	1,120	986	88%

District Name	Full Sample	Analytic Sample	% Analytic Sample
Kent City Community Schools	207	171	83%
Kent ISD	233	217	93%
Kentwood Public Schools	4,083	3,553	87%
Madison Academy	130	115	88%
Maple Valley Schools	173	157	91%
Martin Public Schools	70	63	90%
Mason Public Schools (Ingham)	1,396	1,197	86%
New Paradigm College Prep	32	23	72%
New Paradigm Glazer-Loving Academy	42	34	81%
Northview Public Schools	1,201	1,093	91%
Redford Union Schools, District No. 1	561	484	86%
Rockford Public Schools	931	815	88%
Romulus Community Schools	463	377	81%
South Lake Schools	370	310	84%
South Redford School District	890	788	89%
Sparta Area Schools	164	0	0%
Summit Academy North	518	461	89%
Taylor School District	424	335	79%
The New Standard Academy	228	194	85%
Thornapple Kellogg School District	268	240	90%
Van Buren Public Schools	572	515	90%
Walkerville Public Schools	22	0	0%
Watervliet School District	182	159	87%
West Shore Educational Service District	228	216	95%
Westwood Community School District	427	0	0%
Wyandotte, School District of the City of	1,543	1,382	90%
Wyoming Public Schools	1,704	1,516	89%
Total	33,233	26,990	81%

The percentage of students in grades 5 to 12 ranges from between 8 to 16 percent of the sample. Ninety percent of students identify as male or female while seven percent preferred not to answer or left the response blank. Further, 38 percent of students in the analytic sample are White while Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin, multiracial, and Black or African Students comprise 46 percent of the sample. Students were identified as multiracial if they selected more than one race and ethnicity included in the survey. Table A2 provides descriptive statistics for students in the analytic sample.

Table A2: Descriptive Statistics for Students in Analytic Sample

Demographic Characteristic	n count	% of Sample
Grade Level		
5 th Grade	3,489	13%
6 th Grade	3,149	12%
7 th Grade	4,221	16%
8 th Grade	3,541	13%
9 th Grade	4,167	15%
10 th Grade	2,846	11%
11 th Grade	3,423	13%
12 th Grade	2,154	8%
Gender		
Female	12,220	45%
Male	12,217	45%
Non-Binary/Third Gender	328	1%
Other (Prefer to Self-Describe)	328	1%
Prefer Not to Answer	1,124	4%
Blank/Missing	773	3%
Race and Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	215	1%
Asian or Asian American	943	3%
Black or African American	5,718	21%
Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish Origin	3,348	12%
Middle Eastern or North African	262	1%
Multiracial	3,438	13%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	35	< 1%
Other	1,336	4%
Prefer Not to Answer	1,502	6%
White	10,193	38%

Measures. This research brief uses concepts or constructs (henceforth titled “factors”) derived from the MI Student Voice perception survey validation report. In the validation report, Basis researchers applied an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine patterns in students’ survey responses. This statistical technique explores relationships between survey items and groups items with common themes into underlying factors. Factors derived from an EFA include multiple questions that “hang together” because of similar patterns of responses. For example, students’ sense of belonging in school is a factor you cannot measure directly. However, you can measure whether students feel (a) connected to peers, (b) understood by peers, and (c) like they belong in school. The items all relate to the underlying factor of “peer connectedness”. The four factors derived from the validation report and used in this research brief include:

- **Learning Environment:** Survey items associated with this factor include teachers’ respect towards students, teachers’ encouragement of students, the adequacy of resources schools provide, the time teachers take to help students understand the material, and how excited students would be to have their teachers again (See Appendix B, Table B1 Rows 2-11).

- **Peer Connectedness:** Items related to this factor inquire about how connected students feel to other students, how well peers understand them, and how strongly students feel like they belong in school (See Appendix B, Table B1, Rows 13-15).
- **Social Awareness:** The four items related to this factor inquire about whether students care about other people’s feelings, think about how their actions affect others, respect other people’s point of view, and would be willing to report students or adults who treat others poorly. (See Appendix B, Table B1, Rows 26-29).
- **Fair and Inclusive Environment.** The two items related to this factor inquire about whether adults and students fairly treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures (See Appendix B, Table B1, Rows 40-41).

Finally, we rated schools on the four welcoming factors. To do so, we calculated the percentage of students responding with the top two answer choices on the five-point survey scales. Selecting the top two answer choices reflects and is treated as “positive responses”. We then averaged positive responses across factors to create an overall welcomeness rating. Basis researchers subsequently classified the five elementary, middle, and high schools with the highest overall ratings as the most welcoming schools in the sample. Appendix C describes the student demographics for the most welcoming schools and all other schools in the sample.

Analytic Strategy. Below we describe the analytic strategy used to answer the research questions included in this brief.

RQ 1 | To what extent do students’ perceptions of welcoming school environments vary by race and ethnicity?

To answer this research question, Basis researchers disaggregated the above factor scores in two ways: 1) percentage of positive responses from participants across items in each factor, and 2) percentage of positive responses from participants across items in each factor by race and ethnicity.

RQ 2 | What features are common to schools with the most welcoming environments?

Basis researchers further disaggregated the four welcoming environment factor scores to answer this research question. In doing so we examined: 1) percentage of responses across items in each factor by the most welcoming schools and other Michigan schools in the sample, and 2) percentage of positive responses by survey item in the most welcoming schools and other Michigan schools.

Appendix B: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Table B1: MI Voice Student Survey Factor Loadings

Question Text	Question Number	Factor Loading
Factor 1: Learning Environment		Alpha = 0.89
Are your teachers respectful towards you?	Q_38_1	0.88
Do your teachers encourage you to do your best?	Q_42_1	0.76
Does your school provide enough resources for all students to do well?	Q_111_1	0.75
Do your teachers take time to make sure you understand the lesson?	Q_42_3	0.72
Would you be excited to have your teachers again?	Q_38_3	0.71
Does your school make all types of people feel welcomed and included?	Q_111_4	0.69
Are you given the same chances as other students to do well in school?	Q_107_4	0.68
Would your teachers be concerned if you walked into your class upset?	Q_38_2	0.63
Is your school a place where you are able to try and do your best?	Q_107_5	0.53
Do you feel connected to the adults at your school?	Q_52_2	0.44
Factor 2: Peer Connectedness		Alpha = 0.80
Do you feel connected to the students at your school?	Q_52_3	0.90
Do people in your school understand you as a person?	Q_52_1	0.82
Do you feel like you belong at your school?	Q_52_4	0.73
Factor 3: Growth Mindset		Alpha = 0.79
Do you feel like you are capable of learning anything?	Q_47_2	0.86
Do you feel like you can do well on all your tests, even if they are hard?	Q_47_3	0.82
Do you feel like you can get smarter with hard work?	Q_47_1	0.76
Factor 4: Academic Engagement		Alpha = 0.71
Do you wait until last minute to get your work finished?	Q_50_3	-0.80
Do you put effort into paying attention in class?	Q_46_2	0.76
Do you put effort into learning at school?	Q_46_4	0.71
Do you come to class prepared?	Q_50_1	0.58
Factor 5: Social Awareness		Alpha = 0.70
Do you care about other people's feelings?	Q_51_1	0.81
Do you think about how your actions affect others?	Q_51_3	0.76
Do you respect other people's point of view, even if they disagree with you?	Q_51_2	0.71
If you saw students or adults at your school being treated poorly because of their gender, race, ethnicity or culture, would you be willing to report it?	Q_37_2	0.54
Factor 6: Self-Management		Alpha = 0.74
Are you able to stay calm when things are going wrong for you?	Q_49_6	0.81
Are you able to control your emotions when you need to?	Q_49_8	0.79
Are you able to stay calm when people around you are angry?	Q_49_5	0.76
Are you able to ignore distractions to pay attention in class?	Q_114_1	0.47

Factor 7: Discussions on Responsible Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution		Alpha = 0.75
Do your teachers talk about how your actions affect others?	Q_41_2	0.82
Do your teachers talk about ways to resolve disagreements?	Q_41_1	0.74
Factor 8: Fair and Inclusive Environment		Alpha: 0.76
Do adults at your school treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures fairly?	Q_31_2	0.91
Do students at your school treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures fairly?	Q_31_1	0.90
Factor 9: Diverse School Environment		Alpha = 0.64
Do you have classes with students from different racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds?	Q_30_1	0.84
Do students from different backgrounds hang out with each other at school or during school-related activities?	Q_30_2	0.80
Factor 10: Cultural Awareness		Alpha = 0.54
Do students at your school have conversations with each other about race?	Q_27_1	0.81
Are you encouraged to think more deeply about race-related topics with other students at your school?	Q_27_2	0.80

Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author's analysis.

Appendix C: Additional Tables

Table C1. Descriptives of Most Welcoming Schools

	Number of Schools	Enrollment	Male	Historically Marginalized Groups	Economically Disadvantaged	English Language Learners	Special Education
Other Michigan Schools	141	753	51%	59%	65%	14%	13%
Most Welcoming Schools	24	718	50%	29%	35%	4%	9%

Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author's analysis.

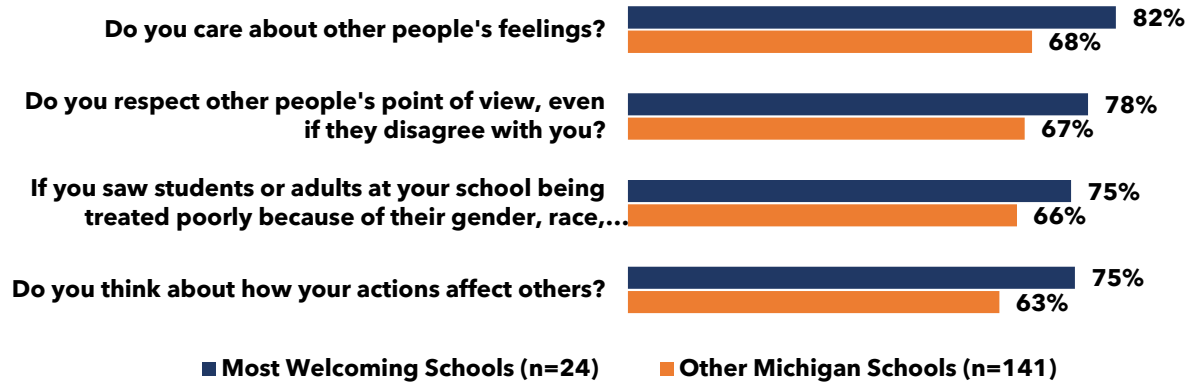
Table C2. Descriptives of Most Welcoming Schools by Grade Band

	Enrollment	Male	Historically Marginalized Groups	Economically Disadvantaged	English Language Learners	Special Education
Upper Elementary Schools	502	51%	62%	71%	18%	14%
Most Welcoming Upper Elem. Schools	386	52%	30%	38%	5%	11%
Middle Schools	579	51%	55%	63%	12%	13%
Most Welcoming Middle Schools	709	48%	29%	29%	4%	8%
High Schools	1010	51%	60%	62%	13%	12%
Most Welcoming High Schools	893	50%	28%	35%	4%	7%

Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author's analysis.

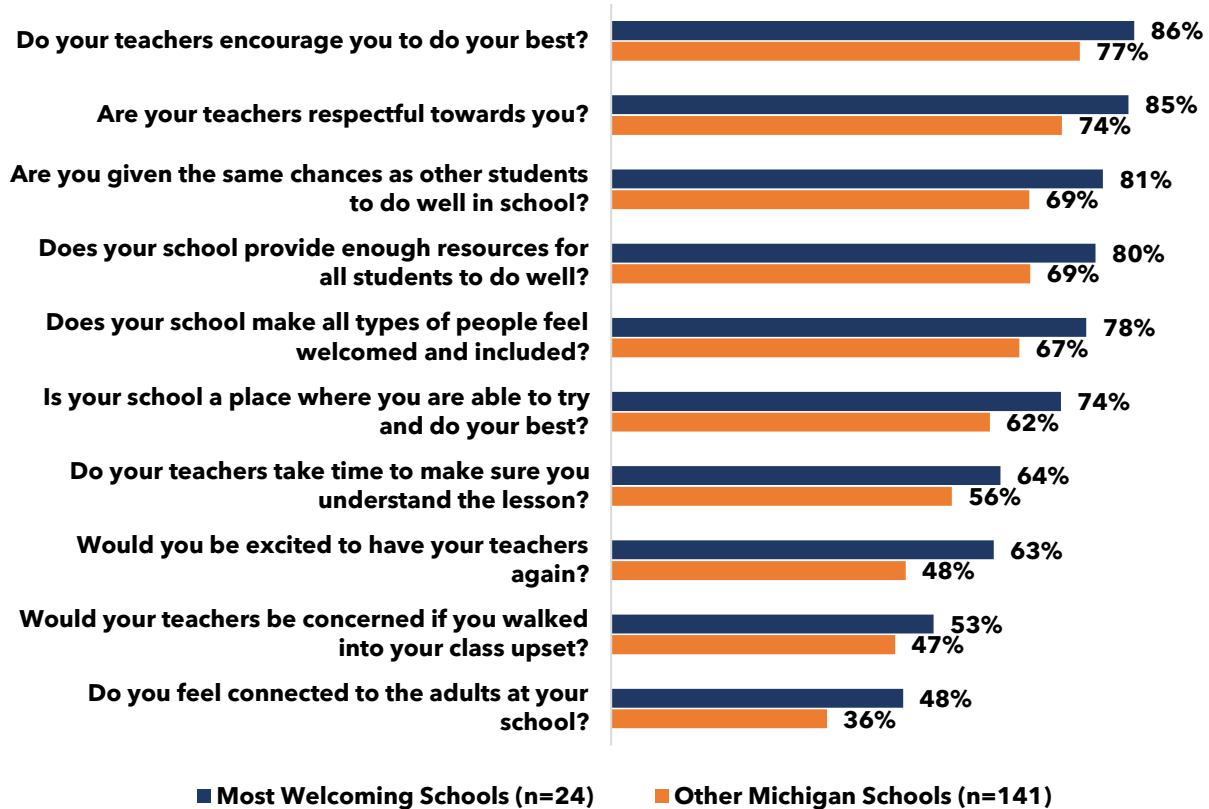
Appendix D: Additional Figures

Figure D1: Average percent of students with positive responses on items associated with social awareness by school classification.



Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author's analysis.

Figure D2: Average percent of students with positive responses on items associated with learning environment by school classification.



Source: MI Student Voice perception survey; author's analysis.

Appendix E: MI Student Voice Perception Survey Instrument

Student Perception Survey 2023

Thank you for participating in the Student Perception Survey. Survey results will help us learn about your experiences and perceptions of school.

Participating in this survey is voluntary and will not affect your grade. Your answers are very important and will help us make school a better place for you and your classmates. Please read each question carefully and answer it based on what you really believe.

Your answers are private. Responses from the survey will never be reported by name or class. Pick the response that best describes what you want to say.

Leave any question blank that you do not feel comfortable answering. **If you don't know the answer to a question, please leave it blank rather than guessing.** Make sure you check all your answers before continuing to the next page.

Once you finish the survey, your answers can't be changed.

The survey takes 10-15 minutes, please take your time.

Thank you for participating.

What is your grade level?

Social and Emotional Learning

Q1 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Are you able to stay calm when things are going wrong for you?	1	2	3	4	5
Are you able to control your emotions when you need to?	1	2	3	4	5
Are you able to stay calm when people around you are angry?	1	2	3	4	5

Q2 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do you come to class prepared?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you wait until last minute to get your work finished?	1	2	3	4	5

Q3 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Not at all" to "Extremely"?

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite	Extremely
Are you able to ignore distractions to pay attention in class?	1	2	3	4	5

Q4 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do you care about other people's feelings?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you respect other people's point of view, even if they disagree with you?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you think about how your actions affect others?	1	2	3	4	5

Q5 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do people in your school understand you as a person?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you feel connected to the adults at your school?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you feel connected to the students at your school?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you feel like you belong at your school?	1	2	3	4	5

Student Engagement

Q6 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Not at all" to "Extremely"?

	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite	Extremely
Are your teachers respectful towards you?	1	2	3	4	5
Would your teachers be concerned if you walked into your class upset?	1	2	3	4	5
Would you be excited to have your teachers again?	1	2	3	4	5

Q7 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do your teachers talk about how your actions affect others?	1	2	3	4	5
Do your teachers talk about ways to resolve disagreements?	1	2	3	4	5

Q8 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do your teachers encourage you to do your best?	1	2	3	4	5
Do your teachers take time to make sure you understand the lesson?	1	2	3	4	5

Q9 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do you put effort into paying attention in class?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you put effort into learning at school?	1	2	3	4	5

Q10 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do you feel like you can get smarter with hard work?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you feel like you are capable of learning anything?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you feel like you can do well on all your tests, even if they are hard?	1	2	3	4	5

Belonging

Q11 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do students at your school have conversations with each other about race?	1	2	3	4	5
Are you encouraged to think more deeply about race-related topics with other students at your school?	1	2	3	4	5

Q12 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do you have classes with students from different racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds?	1	2	3	4	5
Do students from different backgrounds hang out with each other at school or during school-related activities?	1	2	3	4	5

Q13 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do students at your school treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures fairly?	1	2	3	4	5
Do adults at your school treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures fairly?	1	2	3	4	5

Q14 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Do experiences at your school help you to do well as a student?	1	2	3	4	5
Are you given the same chances as other students to do well in school?	1	2	3	4	5
Is your school a place where you are able to try and do your best?	1	2	3	4	5

Q15 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Almost Never" to "Almost Always"?

	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Does your school provide enough resources for all students to do well?	1	2	3	4	5
Does your school make all types of people feel welcomed and included?	1	2	3	4	5

Q16 How would you rate the following on a scale of "Not at all" to "Extremely"?

	Not at all willing	Slightly willing	Somewhat willing	Quite willing	Extremely willing
If you saw students or adults at your school being treated poorly because of their gender, race, ethnicity or culture would you be willing to report it?	1	2	3	4	5