

Listening to Our Community: Participant Feedback Summary

Eckstein MS | March 17, 2026



What Is Going Well

Summary:

Participants shared appreciation for strong educators, growing clarity in communication, and the role of choice and community in rebuilding trust and engagement.

Key points raised by participants:

- Dedicated classroom teachers and principals who anchor school culture
- Strong parent engagement, arts, music, and extracurricular offerings
- Choice schools and neighborhood schools both viewed as important community assets
- Improved transparency, frequency, and tone of district communication
- Curriculum work beginning to feel more intentional
- Increased optimism and hope tied to new district leadership

Example quotes (from posters):

- *“Local classroom teachers* & our principal.”*
- *“Transparent clear communication ↑ frequency, quality = ↑ agency – responsive.”*
- *“Ben! Solid start...!”*

What Is Not Going Well

Summary:

Families raised concerns about how the district defines equity versus equality, inconsistent academic rigor, funding inequities, unclear pathways for HC, and a sense that district systems prioritize scale over student needs.

Key points raised by families:

- Widespread confusion between “equity” and “equality,” resulting in one-size-fits-all decisions
- HC services inconsistent and often unavailable in neighborhood schools
- PTA fundraising covering core services (librarians, nurses), creating inequities
- Too much focus on school closures instead of enrollment, growth, and the future
- Declining academic rigor and insufficient differentiation
- Overuse of technology without clear policies or instructional purpose
- Policies and decisions change frequently, contributing to “policy whiplash”
- Mental health supports insufficient relative to student need

- Difficulty navigating SPED and district systems

Example quotes (from posters):

- *“PTA pays for librarians & nurses — NOT EQUITABLE. Not every school can buy these positions up.”*
- *“Misunderstanding equity vs. equality.”*
- *“Too much focus on school closure vs. enrollment.”*

Ideas for Improvement

Summary:

Participants offered practical, student-centered solutions focused on strengthening academic quality, restoring trust, reducing reliance on technology, and investing equitably in schools and staff.

Key points raised by families:

- Remove restrictions that prevent teachers from teaching above grade level
- Make a clear plan and stick to it to stabilize enrollment and trust
- Grow popular programs (DLI, HC, Walk-to-Math) instead of limiting access
- Reduce screen time and shift back to hands-on, experiential learning
- Establish a clear, districtwide cellphone and AI policy
- Reinvest savings from devices and district-level administration into staffing
- Fund base-level services at every school before relying on PTAs
- Strengthen training for differentiation, SPED, dyslexia, and neurodivergent learners
- Leverage community-based organizations and state-level advocacy
- Focus more intentionally on student voice, agency, and engagement

Example quotes (from posters):

- *“Remove restrictions on teachers from teaching above grade level when applicable.”*
- *“Maintain rigor while ensuring equity.”*
- *“Grow popular programs — DLI, HC, Walk to math.”*
- *“Cellphone bans are FREE.”*