

District 97 Middle School Redesign Update

2024-25 School Year
Sept. 10, 2024





What's our big idea?





Tonight's Presenters

September 2024

Dr. Luis Fernando De León
Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools

Michele Capio
Director of Universal Design for Learning

April Capuder
Principal of Brooks Middle School

Nick Filipowski
Principal of Julian Middle School

Dr. Denise Gildon
Associate Principal of Brooks Middle School

Adrienne Court
Interim Associate Principal of Julian Middle School

Angela Cataldo
Brooks Middle School Teacher

Brooke Sefcik
Brooks Middle School Teacher

Courtney Southward
Julian Middle School Teacher

Raul Reynoso
Julian Middle School Teacher

Agenda

Topics Covered

D97 Middle School Connection

D97 Middle School-Wide Expectations

Middle School Student and Staff Panel

Appendix

District 97 Middle School Connection



PURPOSE



*District 97 Middle School Connection was built on the belief that, together, we can **better support** our incoming sixth-graders as they **transition** to middle school.*

OVERVIEW



Middle School Connection is a **3-day transition program** for sixth-graders, designed to ease the transition from elementary to middle school.

PROGRAM	WHAT	WHERE	WHEN
D97 6th Grade Middle School Connection	3-day summer transition program for sixth-graders designed to ease the transition from elementary to middle school	Brooks and Julian Middle Schools	August 13-15 9 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

GOALS



Foster a sense of belonging and community among incoming sixth-grade students.



Provide opportunities for students to develop social-emotional skills and build positive relationships with peers and teachers.



Equip students with strategies to support success in sixth grade and middle school.



Introduce students to the academic expectations of middle school.



Address any anxieties or concerns students may have about transitioning to middle school.

IMPLEMENTATION

Morning Meeting



Locker Relay



Tie Dye



Scavenger Hunt



Tent Building



Lunch and Social Time



BY THE NUMBERS

Over **500** Sixth-Graders
(~79%)

50 Teachers/Staff

24 Seventh-and Eighth-
Grade Student
Ambassadors

(12 per middle school)



PROGRAM EVALUATION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

PROCESS-RELATED QUESTIONS

What were the main factors contributing to **families' decision not to enroll** in the program?

What were the main factors contributing to **families' decision to enroll** in the program?

How much **training or professional development** did staff receive prior to delivering instruction?

What **% of invited students enrolled** (Take-up rate)?
Are there differences by demographics?

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

To what extent did **teaching staff** feel
a) the training and professional development and
b) resources sufficiently prepared them to deliver effective instruction?

To what extent did **families** agree that the program provided sufficient supports in:
a) providing instruction that supported the student's learning level
b) preparing the student
c) engaging the student
d) communicating about student's progress
e) making students feel welcomed and valued in the classroom

To what extent did **students** agree that:
a) they were supported by their teacher
b) connected to their peers
c) the program was helpful in preparing the student for the next school year
d) the program has helped the student feel confident in their skills
e) they feel successful in the progress they made
f) the daily schedule was appropriate
g) the program timeframe was appropriate

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Is there a **higher rate of sense of belonging** among the incoming sixth-graders compared to prior cohorts?

→ TAKEAWAYS



Students, families, and staff expressed high levels of satisfaction with the program and appreciate components which facilitated familiarizing students with middle school routines, environment, people, etc.



Students developed relationships with peers and trusted adults as a result of the program.



Students and families would benefit from **the program being scheduled and announced earlier in the year.**



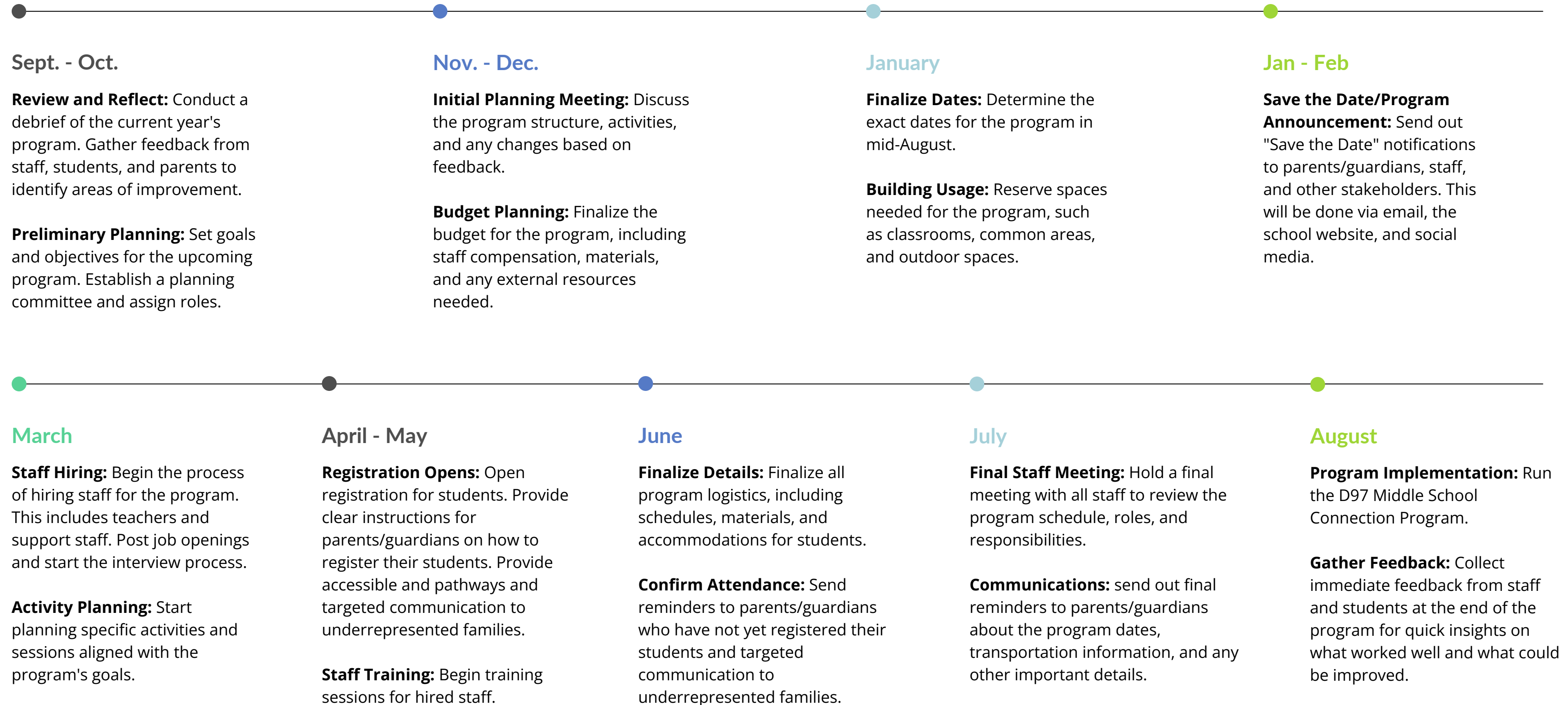
Students and families would benefit from more actively involving fifth-grade teacher teams in promoting the program, particularly to **target underrepresented demographic groups.**



The program team can improve outcomes by **engaging more directly and personally** with underrepresented students.

NEXT STEPS & TIMELINE

District 97 Middle School Connection SY 25



District 97 Middle School-Wide Behavior Expectations

**WE ARE
ALL GOOD**



**MS.
HOSKINS**

**Mr.
Villa**



WHERE WE ARE

Collective Commitment



Institute Day

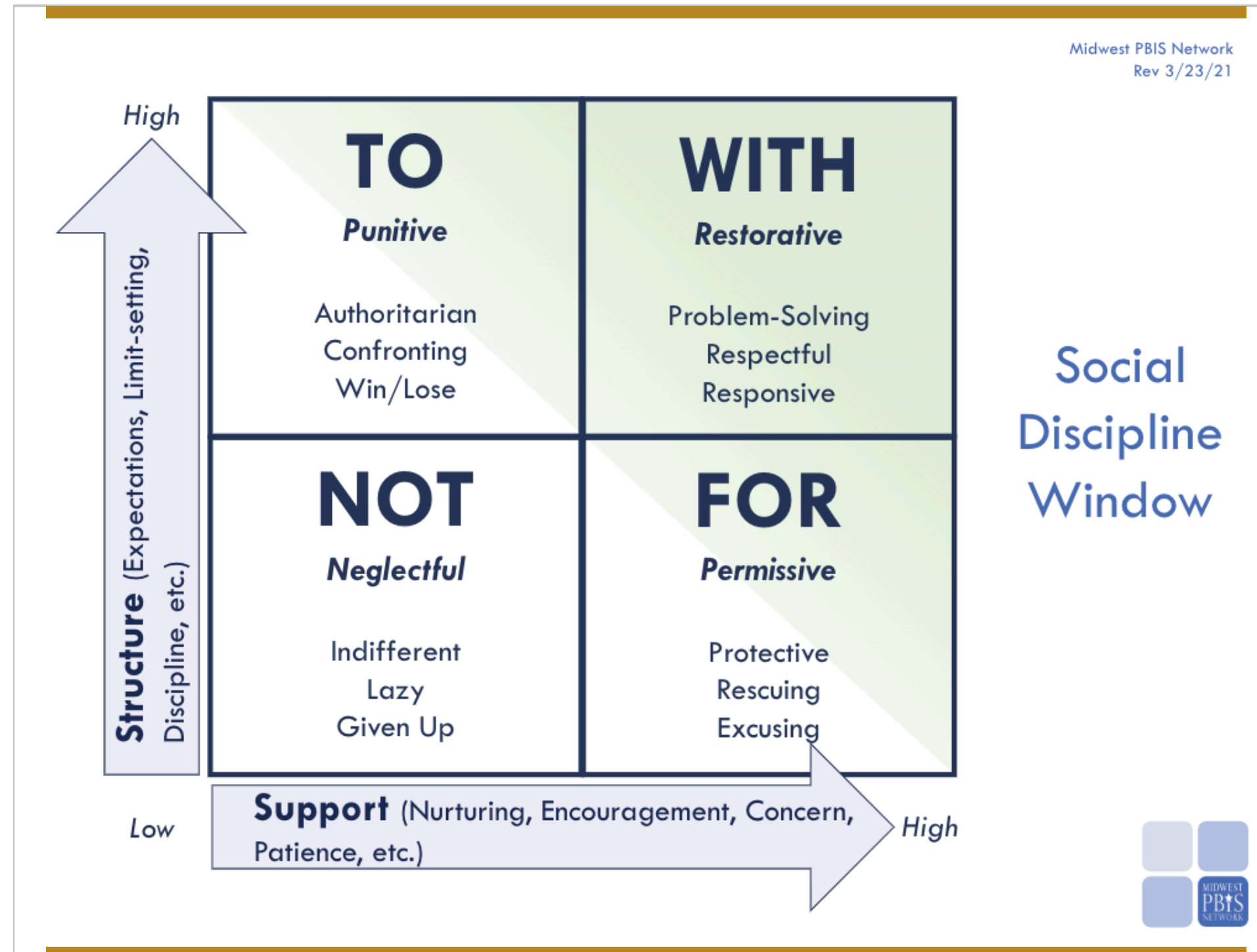


First Day



Two Weeks
and Two Days

SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW



🕒 WHERE WE ARE GOING

Collective Commitment



Walk-Throughs



MTSS -Data-Driven Support



Student & Staff Focus Groups

Pass the Mic





Tonight's Student Panel

September 2024

Mara McLaughlin

Brooks Middle School Sixth-Grade Student

Olivia Minish-Murray

Brooks Middle School Sixth-Grade Student

Natalie Madja

Brooks Middle School Student Ambassador

Ian Edenfield

Julian Middle School Sixth-Grade Student

Madi Poe

Julian Middle School Sixth-Grade Student

Mia Gage

Julian Middle School Student Ambassador



MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT PANEL

Q: What were you most nervous about when you came into sixth-grade?

Q: What has been most helpful for you as you've started the school year?

Q: What have been some challenges you've faced starting the school year?

Q: What advice would you give our staff for supporting sixth-graders next year?

Q: What did you find most rewarding about helping the incoming sixth-graders during the Middle School Connection program?

Q: What skills or lessons did you gain from your experience as a leader in the Middle School Connection program?



Thank you!



Appendix



EVALUATION FEEDBACK SUMMARY



Student Feedback (n=397)

- High agreement on program support across 7 key areas.
- Positive responses to the program's structure, schedule, and preparation for the upcoming school year.
- Median ratings:
 - Support from teachers: 4/5
 - Connections with peers: 4/5
 - Confidence navigating middle school schedule: 4/5
- Most students could identify at least two trusted adults and peers at their middle school.



Family Feedback (n=177)

- Families rated high agreement on program benefits, including student engagement, relationship-building with staff and peers, and confidence in navigating school routines (e.g., schedules, lockers).
- Median family response on key areas: 4/5.
- Some families indicated late invitations as the primary reason for not enrolling.



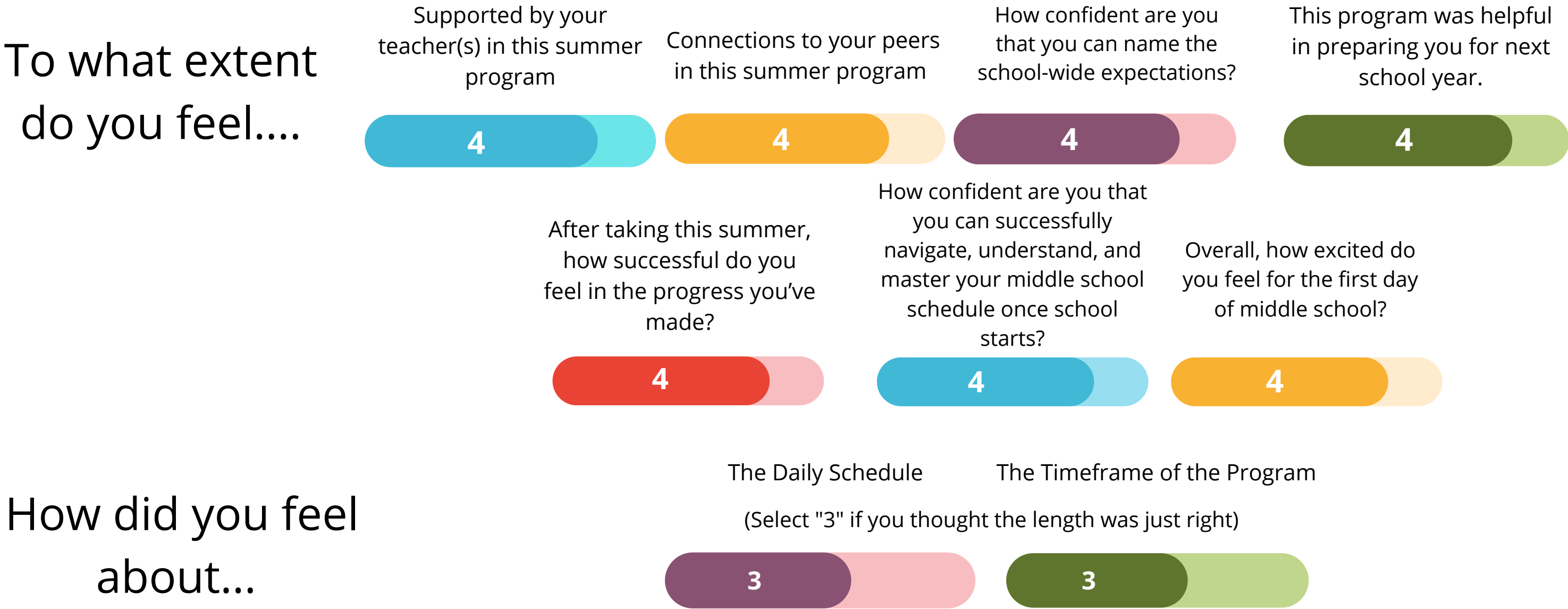
Staff Feedback (n=24)

- Staff felt well-prepared for delivering instruction and engaging students, with median ratings between 4/5 and 5/5.
- Teachers identified useful strategies like daily circles and student activities for building relationships.
- Most staff felt capable of supporting students' sense of belonging and readiness for middle school structures.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

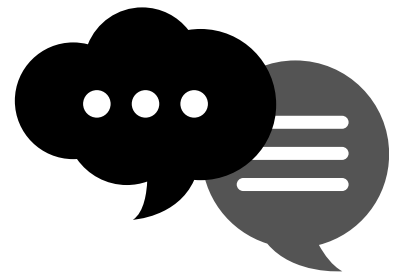


Students (n=397) report **high levels of agreement** that the program provided sufficient supports in 7 key areas and that the timeframe and schedule were just right.



Students (n=283) responded on a 5 point scale to the above questions. The median response by program is indicated.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS



Students report being able to name **trusted adults and new peers**.

Our goal was for students participating in the program to know **at least two** trusted adults and **two peers** after the program. Students reported that, as a result of D97 Middle School Connection program, they could name....

3

Trusted Adults
at Brooks or Julian
Middle School

4

New Peers
at Brooks or Julian
Middle School

FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES



Families (n=177) report high levels of agreement that the program **provided sufficient supports in 7 key areas.**

The summer program provided my child instruction that supported their current learning level.



My child was able to create relationships with staff as a result of this program



I feel that my child was engaged in the learning during this summer program



My child feels confident navigating their middle school schedule within the building



My child felt welcomed and valued in the classroom



My child feels confident in operating their locker



My child was able to create relationships with other students as a result of this program



Families (n=177) were asked to indicate their level of agreement [1=Strongly Disagree... 3= Neutral....5 = Strongly Agree] to the above series of questions. The median response is indicated above

FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES



For most families (n=18), **late invitations** contributed to their decisions to not to enroll MS Connections.

Families were asked “**What is the main reason your student did not attend this program?**”

Over half of respondents indicated that they did not participate in the MS Connection program due to being invited too late.

FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS



Staff (n=24) report **high levels of satisfaction** with various components of the program.

"To what extent do you feel the TRAINING AND/OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT sufficiently prepared you to deliver effective instruction for this summer program?"



"To what extent do you feel the RESOURCES you were provided prepared you to deliver effective instruction for this summer program?"



Overall, how prepared were you for this summer program?



Overall, to what extent do you feel MS Connection students demonstrated D97 values (Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful) during the program?



Overall, to what extent do you feel MS Connection students are ready to follow middle schools structures and procedures in the fall?



How confident do you feel in your ability to support colleagues in developing a Sense of Belonging among incoming 6th graders throughout the school year?



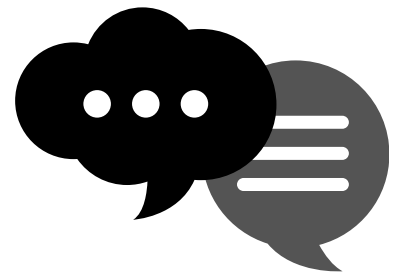
Thinking about the session that you taught, overall, how engaged were students?



MS Connections staff responded on a 5 point scale to as series of questions. The median responses are indicated.

[e.g., 1=I felt totally unprepared to deliver effective instruction....5 = I felt totally prepared to deliver effective instruction]

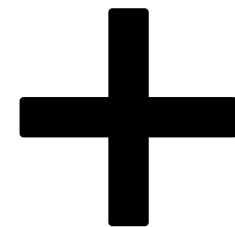
FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS AND STAFF



Teachers reported **successful strategies and program components** that facilitated relationships with students

Useful Program Components

Travelling with students
Home Base
Completing activities together



Useful Strategies

Answering/asking questions
Sharing about myself
Daily circles

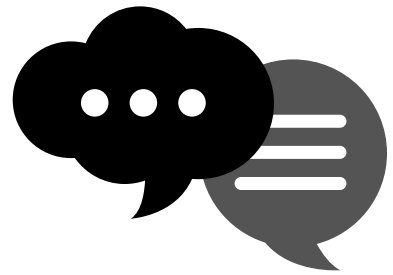


Staff reported that, as a result of MS Connections program, they could serve as a **trusted adult** for

10

Sixth-Grade Students

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS, FAMILIES, & TEACHERS



Open-ended responses from teachers, students, and families about each program offer additional insights into what worked well and what can be improved in each program. Sentiments repeated more than once across stakeholder surveys are summarized here.



WHAT WORKED WELL

- Chance to familiarize students with middle school, other students, commute, and routines
- Lots of activities
- Expand morning meetings



WHAT CAN BE IMPROVED

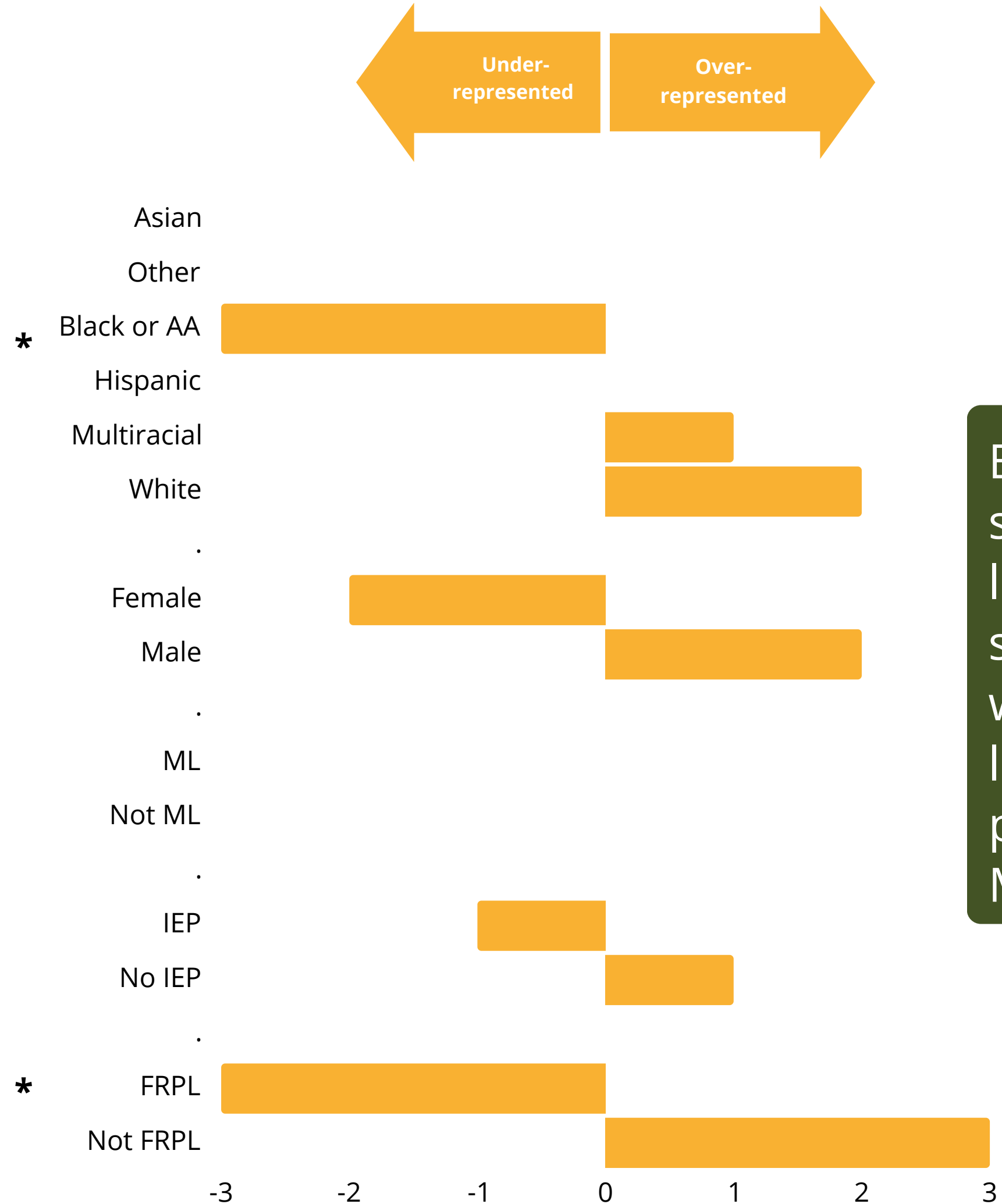
- Remove passports
- Include run-through of schedule
- Difficult to manage distribution of devices
- Too rushed; fewer activities are needed
- Expand beyond 3 days
- Free time
- No electronics rule
- Quality of lunch



D97 MS Connection Overall Take Up Rate 79%

Graph indicates the
difference in the % of
enrolled versus invited by
demographic group

*Indicates statistically significant
differences ($p < .05$)



Black
students and
low income
students
were less
likely to
participate in
MSC.