



Our District Culture

SY25 GOAL AREA 1:
We Learn, Lead and Celebrate Together

Oct. 8, 2024
D97 Board of Education Meeting

What's our big idea?





Meet the Goal 1A Team

Dr. Ushma Shah
Superintendent

Lonya Boose
Director, Superintendent's Office

Amanda Siegfried
Senior Director of Communications and Engagement

Dr. Natacia Campbell Tominov
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
and Equity



Goal 1A Update: Our District Culture

October 2024

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|----|---|
| 01 | EQUITY POLICY ALIGNMENT AND
SY25 PRIORITY OVERVIEW |
| 02 | BUILDING TRUST THROUGH
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION |
| 03 | ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION AND
TRANSPARENCY |
| 04 | ENHANCING TWO-WAY
COMMUNICATION WITH LET'S TALK |
| 05 | WHAT'S NEXT |

Equity Policy Alignment and SY25 Priority Overview





Goal 1A Equity Policy Alignment

D. Stakeholder and Community Engagement

District 97 cannot achieve equity without **effective, robust stakeholder engagement**. Student and family voice, along with teachers, staff, and other community stakeholders, shall play a prominent role in implementing this policy.



District 97 shall welcome and empower families, including underrepresented families of color, those whose first language may not be English, and parents and guardians of students with disabilities and different learning needs as essential partners in students' education, school planning, and District decision-making. In addition, D97 will include other partners who have demonstrated culturally-specific expertise in meeting its educational outcomes. D97 will work with community partners and families to provide **intentional, targeted outreach** that ensures families and students **feel welcome and understand the services available** to them and how to access information as well as provide opportunities for engagement with teachers and staff at times and places that are consistent with needs of all families.



2024-25 District 97 Transformation Goals

We Learn, Lead and Celebrate Together

Our District Culture
ALL Employee Professional Learning

We Design for ALL

Elementary Core Instruction Foundations
Middle School Redesign

We Align Resources

Master Facilities Plan
Comprehensive Safety Plan

We Learn Everywhere

Portrait of an Oak Park 8th Grade Graduate
Early Childhood Education



District Communications, Culture and Engagement

Transparency and access for all through translation and new communication tools.

District-wide customer service to families and staff (e.g., Let's Talk).

Community-responsive communications and engagement mapping.

KEY ACTIONS 2024-25

How We'll Get There

Annual Identity and Recognition Calendar to promote inclusion, representation and culturally-responsive celebrations.

Employee and family handbooks to provide clear guidance on district policies, expectations, procedures, and available resources.

Audit of team culture fund use and continue to develop new ways to promote team-building and staff recognition across D97 buildings.

Building Trust through Effective Communication





Communication Guidelines and Who to Contact

WHO DO I CONTACT?

These guidelines are designed to create open and direct communication between students, families and staff. Our goal is for questions and concerns to be addressed quickly and collaboratively, starting at the classroom/school level.

District 97 Staff Directory:

op97.org/about/district-97-directory

Let's Talk: op97.org/about/lets-talk

Let's Talk offers an easy and convenient way to connect directly with D97 administrative staff from any device, in your preferred language. You can also share feedback to help improve our customer service!



Questions/concerns related to your STUDENT:

Examples include classroom policies or lessons, grades, homework, or student behavior.

Contact the teacher:

Using the District 97 Staff Directory, start with an email to your student's teacher. The teacher is your first contact to assist with questions or concerns.

If you still have concerns or are seeking a resolution after speaking with the teacher, contact the school administration via [Let's Talk](http://op97.org/about/lets-talk) to continue the conversation.

Questions/concerns related to your SCHOOL:

Examples include school programs or procedures, student/school safety, and general school-wide questions.

Contact the school's main office for general assistance or inquiries. Use [Let's Talk](http://op97.org/about/lets-talk) to start the conversation.

The school's team will work with you and your family, along with your child's teacher, to address your concerns.

If you still have concerns or are seeking a resolution after speaking with school administration, contact the district administration.

Questions/concerns related to the DISTRICT:

Examples include district programs, policies or procedures, curriculum, registration, facilities, or communication.

Contact District 97's main office for general assistance at (708) 524-3000. You can also send a message via [Let's Talk](http://op97.org/about/lets-talk), and a district staff person will get back to you ASAP.

If you are reaching out about a classroom- or school-level concern, please include the names of staff you have spoken to and the dates of the conversations. This will help us all work together toward a resolution for your family.

If you have feedback or questions related to board policy or governance, you may email the D97 Board at d97board@op97.org.



CORE INSTRUCTION TEAM 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR



If you would like to contact us about any of the following, please scan the QR code or visit www.op97.org/teach-learn



ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS >>> Patrick Robinson

- Role description
- Role description
- Role description

- Role description
- Role description
- Role description



ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS >>> Dr. Luis Fernando De León

- Role description
- Role description
- Role description

- Role description
- Role description
- Role description



SENIOR DIRECTOR OF TEACHING & LEARNING >>> Dr. Tawanda Lawrence

- Role description
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Communications and Engagement Mapping

The communications landscape in D97 is vast and multi-layered. We want to be sure our strategies are responsive to the needs of our community.

We will conduct a **communications audit** during the 2024-25 school year to:

- Assess effectiveness of current strategies;
- Identify gaps, strengths, and weaknesses;
- Develop recommendations to strengthen communications and engagement across D97.



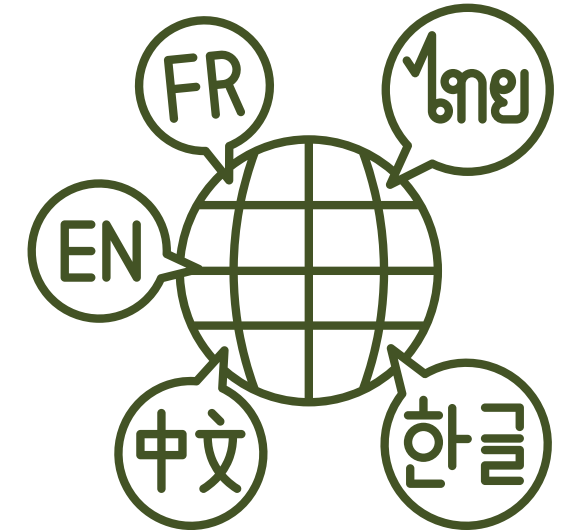
Ensuring Accessible Communication and Transparency





Translation and Language Support

District 97 is committed to ensuring all families, including non-English speakers, can access critical information and engage fully with the school community.



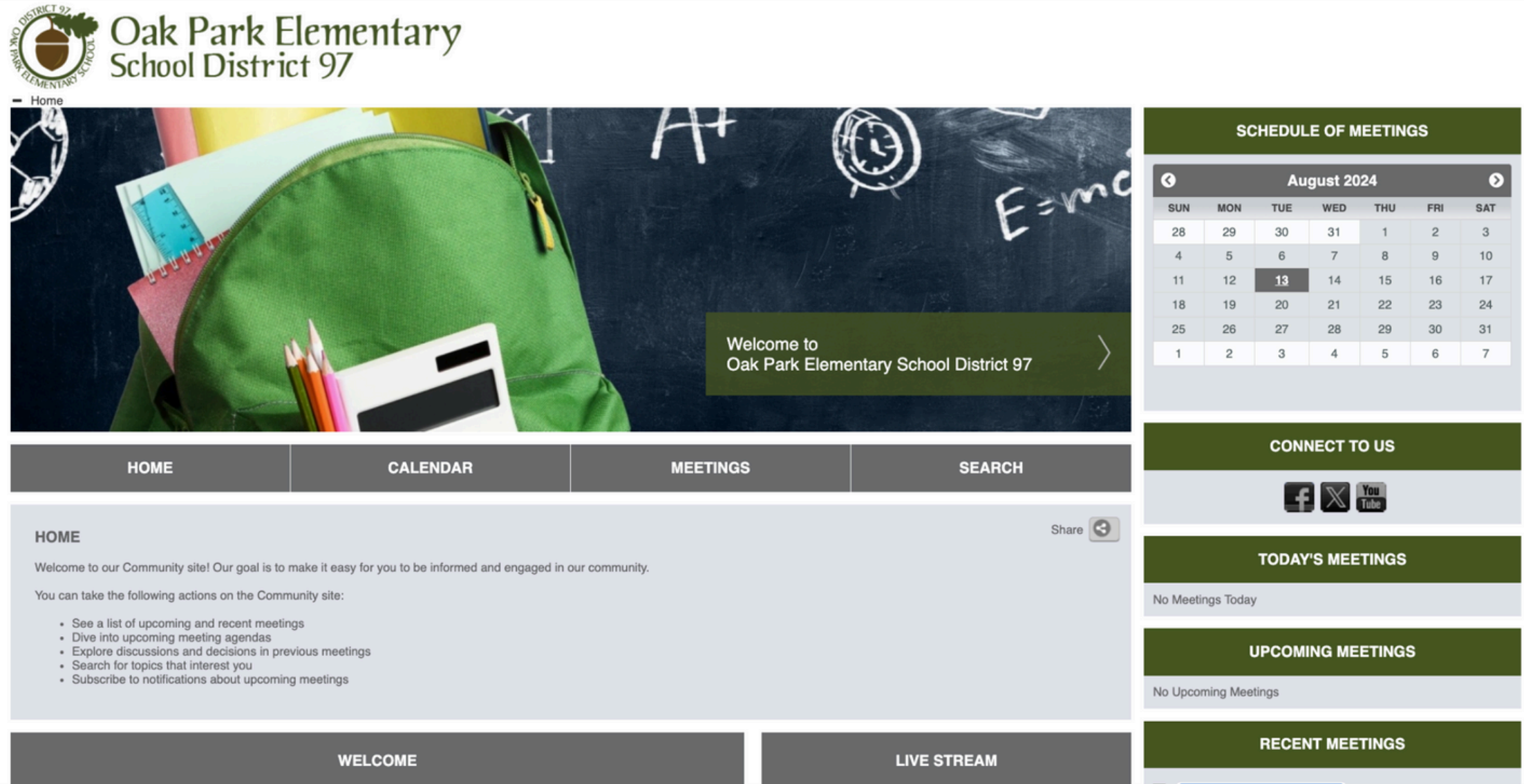
Language Access Expanded in 2023-24:

- **Let's Talk platform** now supports multiple languages, including text-based and voice communication options, as well as a drop-down translation menu.
- **Portrait of an Oak Park 8th Grade Graduate** materials were created in English and Spanish.
- **Multilingual registration assistance** is available throughout the year.
- District-wide **digital newsletter account (Smore)** to provide staff with platform that can be easily translated.



Increasing Transparency: New Tools for Board Updates

Diligent Board of Education Meeting Platform



Our new board platform, **Diligent**, makes it easier than ever to stay connected. The platform provides quick access to meeting packets, presentations, calendars, and video recordings, ensuring that the public has all the information they need at their fingertips.

We'll be introducing additional features as we build out the platform over the next few months.



Increasing Transparency: New Tools for Board Updates

Board Highlights Newsletter

In August 2024, we launched "Board Highlights" our new D97 Board of Education newsletter designed to enhance transparency and make it easier for our community to stay informed about the decisions and initiatives that impact our students and schools.

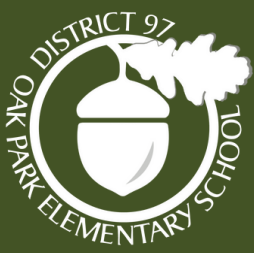
Sept. 10, 2024 Edition: 10,258 views

Sept. 24, 2024 Edition: 9,051 views



Enhancing Two-Way Communication with Let's Talk





Strengthening Customer Service

Key Benefits of Let's Talk!

- **Improves Customer Service:** Streamlines responses, tracks inquiries, allows communication in multiple languages and methods (including texts and calls), and ensures timely follow-ups.
- **Builds Trust and Transparency:** Promotes open dialogue, making it easy to provide feedback and receive clear, consistent information.
- **Supports Positive Culture:** Encourages collaboration and responsiveness, fostering a welcoming, inclusive environment.

A screenshot of the "Let's Talk!" website interface. The header is dark blue with the District 97 logo on the left and the "Let's Talk!" logo on the right. Below the header, the text "Welcome to Let's Talk!" is displayed. A paragraph explains that "Let's Talk" is a tool for communication between parents, staff, students, and the community. Another paragraph instructs users to select topics, departments, and schools to ask questions or share successes. A search bar with a magnifying glass icon and a "Search" button is present. Below the search bar, a section titled "Buildings" lists several schools in a grid: Beye Elementary School, Brooks Middle School, Hatch Elementary School, Holmes Elementary School, Julian Middle School, Lincoln Elementary School, Longfellow Elementary School, Mann Elementary School, Whittier Elementary School, and Irving Elementary School.

Welcome to Let's Talk!

Let's Talk is a tool that helps District 97 open the lines of communication between parents, staff, students and our community. It's important that we make it easy for you to reach us at your convenience—anytime, anywhere.

Select from the topics, departments and schools below to ask a question, submit a comment or share a success. Your message will be sent directly to the appropriate district employee for follow-up. Please provide as much information as possible, and please be sure to include your contact information if you would like a direct response.

We look forward to hearing from you!

How can we help?

Buildings

Beye Elementary School	Brooks Middle School	Hatch Elementary School	Holmes Elementary School
Julian Middle School	Lincoln Elementary School	Longfellow Elementary School	Mann Elementary School
Whittier Elementary School	Irving Elementary School		



Connecting Families Directly with D97 Staff



Nidia Acosta - District 97 Registrar

START

FALL 2023



Let's Talk!

CURRENT/FUTURE

FALL 2024

Inconsistent use of Let's Talk across all schools and departments.

Lack of consistent training and resources provided to all users.

Lack of awareness about Let's Talk tools and functionality.

Barriers to accessibility (e.g., language and technology).

Long response time on some dialogues, leading to poor experiences with the district.

Administration has not effectively tracked concerns and/or follow-up.



School and department leaders work collaboratively to respond to concerns.

We build our communication and customer service capacity through regular coaching.

We leverage Let's Talk tools for forms, data, website chatbot, etc.

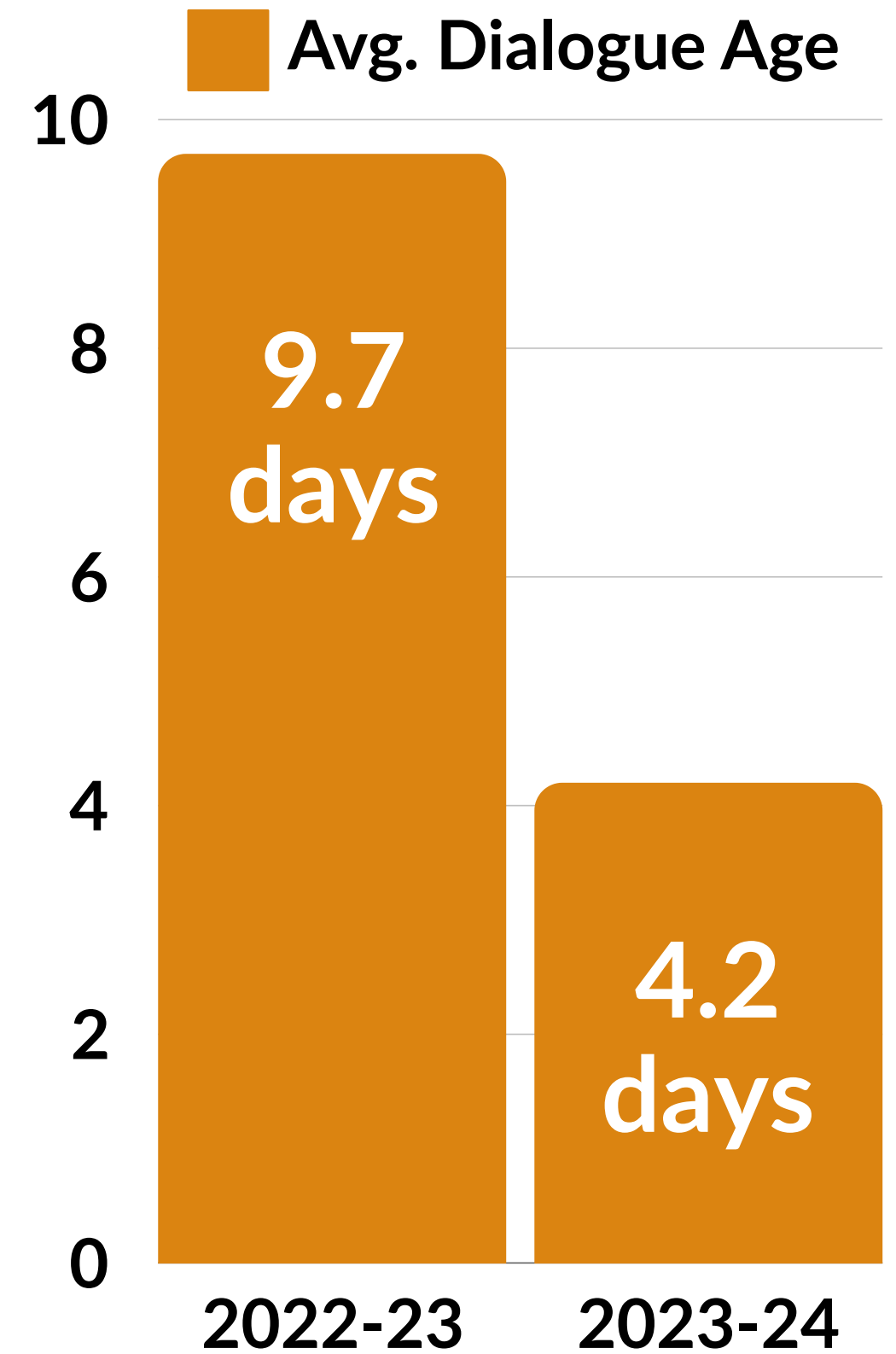
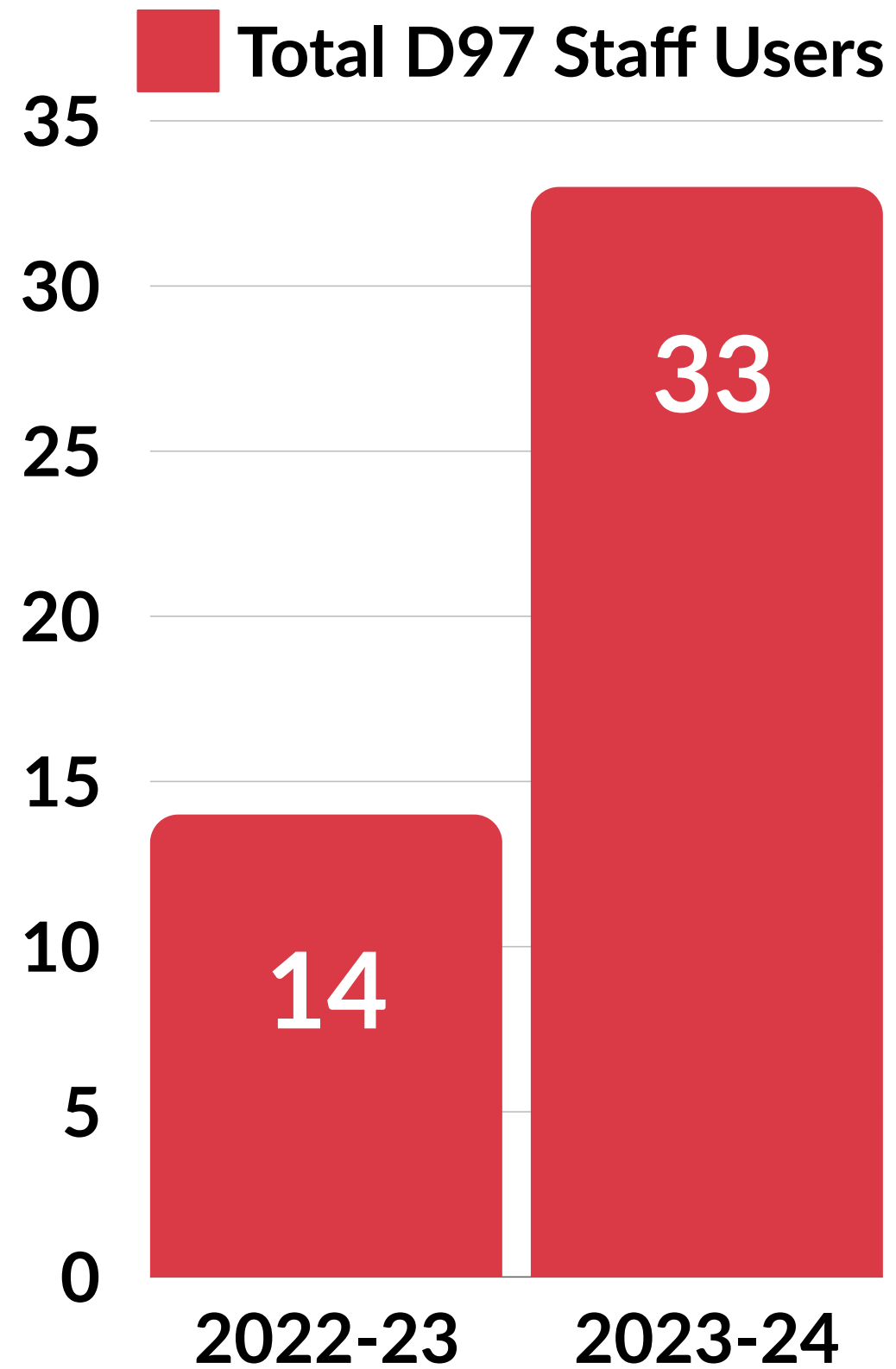
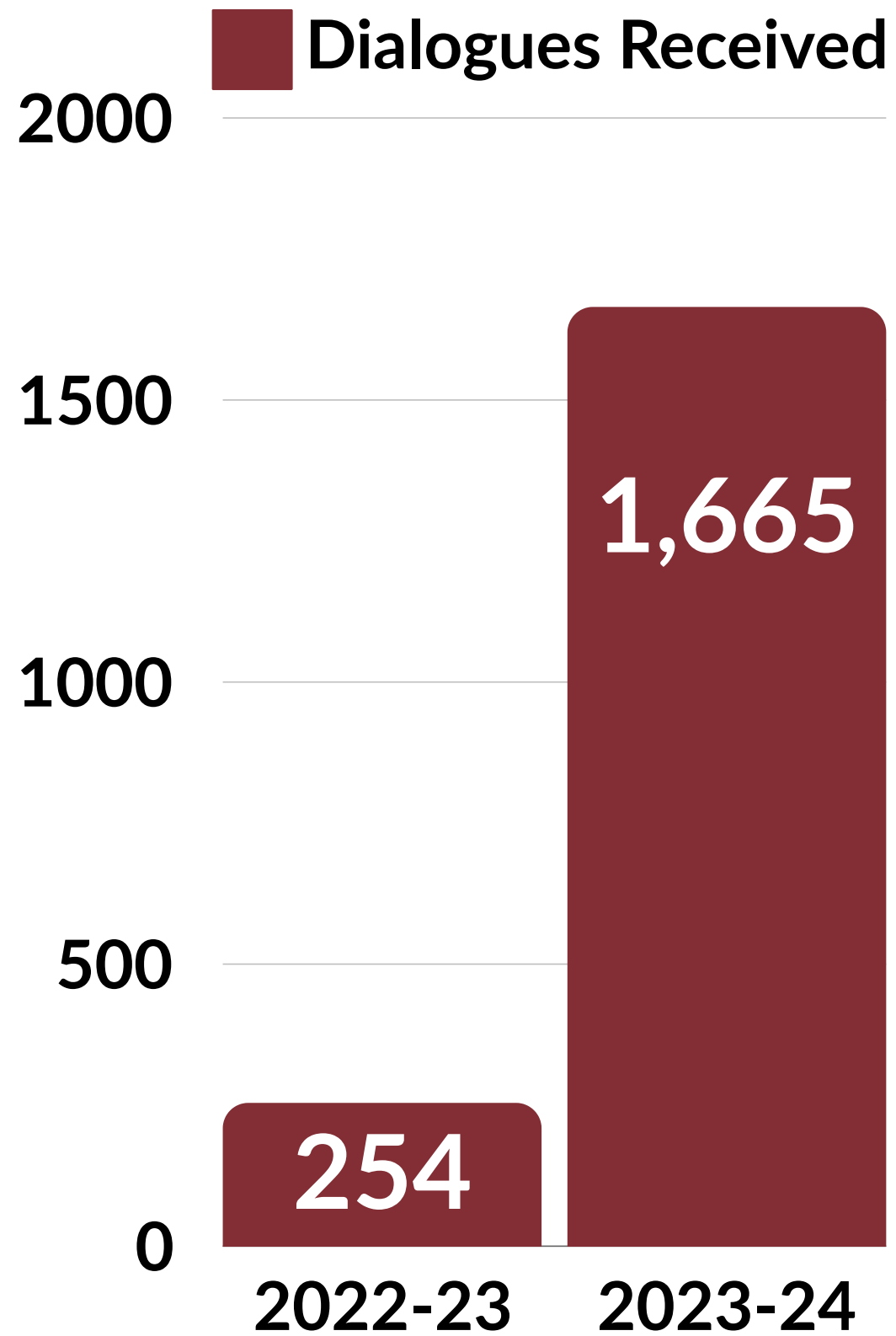
ALL D97 families have access to Let's Talk, regardless of language or device.

We provide an initial response to all messages with 48 hours and send feedback form.

Concerns shared with the superintendent's office are logged in Let's Talk to ensure follow-up.



Measuring Let's Talk Progress





New in SY25: Internal Human Resources Platform

The screenshot shows the "Let's Talk!" page for District 97 staff. At the top, there is a language selector set to "English". Below the header, the page welcomes staff to the "D97 Staff Resources and Operational Excellence Let's Talk Page". It explains that "Let's Talk!" is a direct way to connect with the District 97 Operational team for specific staff services and issues. A search bar is located below the introductory text. The page is divided into two main sections: "Frequently Ask Questions" and "Benefits". The "Frequently Ask Questions" section contains eight buttons for topics like Benefits Guide/Questions, Direct Deposit Change, Employment Verification, Exception Request - Time Off Adjacent to Holidays, Pay Check Questions, Pay Schedule, Request for Tuition Reimbursement/ Course Approval, and View/Print Pay Stubs. The "Benefits" section contains four buttons for Employee Work Related Injury Form, Family and Medical Leave Act, Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, and Open Enrollment.

Select a Language English

Let's Talk!

Welcome to the D97 Staff Resources and Operational Excellence Let's Talk Page!

Let's Talk! is a direct way to connect with the District 97 Operational team about specific staff services and issues. The platform allows you to ask questions, access common staff related resources, forms, or simply ask a question, make a comment or provide feedback. Each submission is sent to the appropriate team member for follow up.

We have included common forms and topic areas below. Please choose your topic and complete the form or dialogue. If you would like a response, please be sure to include your contact information. A team member will follow up with you as soon as possible.

Thank you for being part of our District 97 community. We look forward to hearing from you!

How can we help?

Search

Frequently Ask Questions

Benefits Guide/Questions	Direct Deposit Change	Employment Verification	Exception Request - Time Off Adjacent to Holidays
Pay Check Questions	Pay Schedule	Request for Tuition Reimbursement/ Course Approval	View/Print Pay Stubs

Benefits

Employee Work Related Injury Form	Family and Medical Leave Act	Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund	Open Enrollment
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Improving Employee Support

Our Human Resources and Business Office teams are connected to Let's Talk and ready to support D97 staff!

We've created a new internal HR page that's broken down by key topics—allowing staff to find important information, links and forms, or send in their question/concern to the HR team.

What's Next

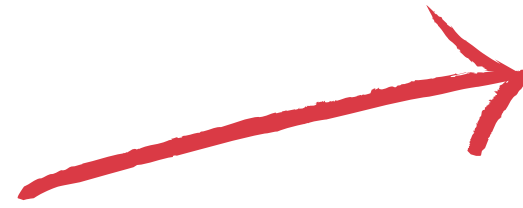




Other Key Actions for 2024-25

GOAL 1A: OUR DISTRICT CULTURE

Fostering a positive district culture through two-way communication, authentic community engagement, celebrations and shared learning.



Employee and family handbooks to provide clear guidance on district policies, expectations, procedures, and available resources.



Annual Identity and Recognition Calendar to promote inclusion, representation and culturally-responsive celebrations.



Audit of team culture fund use and continue to develop new ways to promote team-building and staff recognition across D97 buildings.

Questions?

