DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS | CollaboRATE

Strengthening Our DPS Schools, Together

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Discover a World of Opportunity™

CollaboRATE Thrive Guide

Taking strategic action on CollaboRATE results

2020 Edition

Table of Contents

Part One:

Taking Action on Your Engagement Feedback

WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

What is Engagement?

Strategy without an engaged workforce has no momentum. Engagement without strategy has nowhere to go.
DPS recognizes the value of educator* engagement. Engaged employees are more loyal and productive. Our own internal DPS research shows that high engagement leads to higher performance and higher retention. The enthusiasm and commitment of engaged educators can positively impact our strategic goals identified in the Denver Plan 2020 and help us to reach our vision of Every Child Succeeds. **In DPS, all employees are considered educators*

We ask educators about their engagement with their individual school or department as well as their engagement with DPS as a whole. This provides a view of how strong your engagement and culture is within your team and in DPS overall.

The more engaged our teams are, the more likely our vision can become a reality. Culture is developed by values. Our CollaboRATE engagement survey asks how DPS as a whole and how your school or department is living our Shared Core Values. These results inform how well your team is aligned with DPS mission, vision and values.

As a leader, it will be important that you:

- **Identify a priority** that can improve your team's culture through your CollaboRATE data.
- **Model the way** and use the Shared Core Values Behaviors to guide discussions with your team.
- **Recognize and celebrate** your team for accomplishments.

This CollaboRATE Thrive Guide lays out the process for using employee engagement data strategically, not necessarily for the sake of improving engagement alone, for the sake of **advancing as a leader to improve team performance for our students**.

Balancing Results and People

Creating an engaged workforce requires the balance of two forces: valuing people and our district effectiveness. Valuing people requires a focus on engaging and inspiring our educators. Effectiveness is focused on getting results. Any successful organization needs to be both effective and value people; if either side is out of balance, the organization will struggle.

CollaboRATE Overview- School/Department and DPS Overall

At Denver Public Schools, there are factors that are measured at a School/Department level and DPS overall.

Factors in CollaboRATE School/Department:

- Engagement
- Personal empowerment and benefit
- Perception of how DPS values are lived
- Team Function

Factors in CollaboRATE DPS:

- Engagement
- Personal empowerment and benefit
- Perception of how DPS values are lived throughout the district
- Personal belief in direction of district

HOW DO I MAKE SENSE OF MY COLLABORATE DATA?

Survey Rating Scale

Employees are asked to respond to each item using the rating scale below. Most survey results are presented in terms of the percent favorable, which is the percent of employees who responded with a four or a five.

Unfavorable		Neutral	Favorable	
1 – Strongly Disagree	2 – Disagree	3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 – Agree	5 – Strongly Agree

Interpreting Your Results

Based on normative data from 1,600 organizations and 1.8 million survey responses, the following guidelines can be used for interpreting data:

Survey Result	Interpretation
% Favorable	> 70% favorable is a good score > 80% is very good > 85% is best-in-class
% Neutral	> 20% neutral responses or higher represents a significant group of respondents that are either unsure or on-the-fence.
% Unfavorable	> Organizations are considered to be best-in-class when their unfavorable scores are 10% or lower

2020 DPS CollaboRATE Results Dashboard

The 2020 DPS CollaboRATE Results Dashboard on the Qualtrics platform provides the information needed to take strategic action on the survey results. In order to leverage the dashboard fully, please read through and follow the instructions located at the top of each page on the Qualtrics platform. An email will be sent to you with a link to access this dashboard. Click on the link and use your DPS username and password to log in. *Please note: Data will only display for responses of 5 or more.*

School/Department and DPS Engagement Index

Your CollaboRATE results provide you with engagement at your school/department as well as at the overall DPS level.

School/Department Engagement:

- I enjoy my work at school/my department.
- I feel valued as an employee of my school/my department.
- I would recommend my school/department to others as a good place to work.
- My job has a positive impact on my school/department.
- I am proud to tell people I work for my school/department.

Overall DPS Engagement:

- I enjoy my work at DPS.
- I feel valued as an employee of DPS.
- I would recommend DPS to others as a good place to work.
- My job has a positive impact on DPS.
- I am proud to tell people I work for Denver Public Schools.

NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND MY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS, WHAT'S NEXT?

Taking strategic action on CollaboRATE data requires connecting feedback to key priorities. This requires leaders sharing the data and guiding teammates towards action. Below you will find suggestions on how to identify your focus areas, a suggested process, examples, tools and tips.

Where Should I Focus?

Key Drivers

Survey items were ranked to determine which items have the biggest impact on engagement in both school/department and in DPS overall. Specifically, the key driver analysis looks to see which items have the biggest correlation with the Engagement Index.

Focus your improvement efforts on the highest ranked items to see the biggest improvement in engagement. Remember, engagement drivers are not the things you are not doing well, rather, they are the areas that will have the biggest impact on improving engagement. Consider:

- Which two items are top-ranked? These items will have the biggest impact if improvements are made.

- What items are low ranked? These items may have a lower percent favorable, but employees indicate that they are less important to making them feel valued and effective.

We recommend taking action based on the drivers for your school/department if applicable. As a Chief, Executive Director or Director of a larger department made up of small teams, you can share the department engagement drivers to help guide teams as they create their specific team goals. The DPS engagement results can help you as a leader identify opportunities for better engagement with DPS as well as how to focus on your team engagement.

Please Note: Drivers are not shown for teams who have fewer than 30 responses. The statistics used in the driver analysis do not function properly with smaller teams. If you have fewer than 30 responses, please go to the high/low scores dashboard in Qualtrics to guide you in setting a goal with your team.

The Process

1) **Discuss with the direct supervisor.**

2) **Share the results with your team.**
   - Celebrate strengths with the team and thank them for their input.
   - Ask: are there any surprises in the data?
   - Using the 2020 DPS CollaboRATE Dashboard, ask:
     - Do the engagement drivers (if included) or Neutral/Unfavorable items feel like the most important things to work on?
     - What are some of the barriers or roadblocks that get in our way of being effective?

3) **Identify ONE team priority stemming from the Denver Plan 2020. Ask:**
   - What is the most important thing we need to accomplish in the next 3 to 6 months?
   - What barriers get in our way of accomplishing this goal?
   - What key assets do we bring to the achievement of our team priority?

4) **Identify ONE engagement driver or item to focus on.**
   - Ask: Which engagement driver or item has the most potential to help us reach our goal? (from #3)

5) **Identify specific actions that address the team priority AND the engagement driver/ item.**
   - Ask: What could we do to get better at the driver/item that would help us meet our goal?
   - If we were to get better at that driver/item, what would it look like?

6) **Create a specific plan to implement ONE idea. (see Strategic Action Planning template below)**

7) **On a quarterly basis, revisit progress on the plan. Add new action steps as progress is made.**

School Example:

- **School goal:** Increase graduation rate by 10%
- **Barriers**: Ability of relevant staff to meet with each junior and senior frequently enough to keep them on track toward graduation.
- **Related driver/item**: School Collaboration
- **Identify actions that address the DPS priority AND the driver/item**: Live the Shared Core Value of Collaboration as a school, get staff engaged in meeting with each junior and senior every month to help them keep on track, and meet with parents/guardians as often as needed to provide support at home.

Central School Support Example:

- **Department goal**: Improve customer service score by 5%.
- **Barriers:** Not enough staff/time to respond to customers in a timely manner.
- **Related driver/item:** Department Accountability.
- **Identify actions that address the DPS priority AND the driver/item**: Live the Shared Core Value of Accountability, hold a brainstorming session with the team and customers to identify strategies and actions for timely customer service in order to meet customer expectations given team demands.

Tips for Successful Engagement Follow-Up

- Improving engagement is not the responsibility of management alone. Involve employees in identifying solutions. Doing so will demonstrate that you value their ideas.
- Incorporate updates and action taken from your survey into regular operational reviews and goal setting. For example, share progress on the action plan during regular update meetings or include it as a goal during performance reviews. By treating engagement as any other goal, you will increase the likelihood that action will be taken.
- Connect the dots. Continuously remind educators that you heard their feedback and what actions were taken as a result.
- Seek best practices. Talk to other leaders to understand what they have done to drive success on their engagement drivers.
- Share success stories. Let teammates and other leaders know what action has been taken and what the results were. Doing so can be a source of recognition for your team and provide other leaders with ideas for improvement.
- Explicitly link action to the DPS values and mission.
    - Create one-on-one dialogues. Engagement happens at the individual level. Talk to employees about what they personally need to feel valued and effective.
- Reach out to your strongest contributors. Talk to them about their level of engagement and ask for their ideas to make improvements.
- Link educator engagement results to other metrics such as turnover, productivity, or additional DPS survey results (i.e.: student perception survey, customer service survey). Doing so will allow you to see what engagement drivers have the biggest impact on your team and DPS outcomes.

Engagement Strategic Action Planning Template

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC ACTION PLANNING

The most impactful way to use the results from your engagement results is to link it to one DPS priority you are already focused on. Talk through the results with your team. Next, discuss the questions below to identify the areas of focus that will be the most beneficial in driving strategic change.

List the top priority for your school/department in the next year? How does the priority align to a Denver Plan 2020 goal?

Which engagement driver/item (from the CollaboRATE report) will enable you to have the biggest impact on achieving that goal? In what way? (Choose the driver/item that is most relevant to your team while noting that the most highly ranked drivers are most likely to have the biggest impact on engagement.)

In terms of this driver/item, what could be done better/differently to make you more effective in accomplishing your goals? What should you start, stop, continue?

START:

STOP:

CONTINUE:

What is the one thing we commit to doing? By when? Who is responsible? What does success look like?

One Thing	OWNER	DUE DATE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Engagement Strategic Action Planning Example

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC ACTION PLANNING

The most impactful way to use the results from your engagement results is to link it to one DPS priority you are already focused on. Talk through the results with your team. Next, discuss the questions below to identify the areas of focus that will be the most beneficial in driving strategic change.

List the top priority for your school/department in the next year. How does the priority align to a Denver Plan 2020 goal?

Increase graduation rate by 10%. Aligned to Ready for College and Career.

Which engagement driver/item (from the CollaboRATE report) will enable you to have the biggest impact on achieving that goal? In what way? (Choose the driver/item that is most relevant to your team while noting that the most highly ranked drivers are most likely to have the biggest impact on engagement.)

Engagement Driver = School Collaboration

Barriers: Ability of relevant staff to meet with each junior and senior frequently enough to keep them on track toward graduation

In terms of this driver/item, what could be done better/differently to make you more effective in accomplishing your goals? What should you start, stop, continue?

START: Living the Shared Core Value of Collaboration as a school by creating an action plan to ensure each student has one point of contact (teacher, counselor, or school leader) throughout the year.

STOP: Being reactive to the day-to-day needs *without* monitoring progress on our plan.

CONTINUE: Meeting with parents/guardians as often as needed to support students at home.

What is the one thing we commit to doing? By when? Who is responsible? What does success look like?

One Thing	OWNER	DUE DATE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Committee creates a plan and executes the plan to ensure every student has a touch point on progress toward graduation.	Committee Lead	4/5	Principal, AP and a group of teachers review the plan and provide feedback. Revisions occur by 5/5/19

Part Two:

Taking Action on Your Leadership Feedback

THE VALUE OF TEAM MEMBER FEEDBACK

In this process, you will also receive feedback on your leadership behaviors. Getting performance feedback is not always easy, yet it is an essential component of ongoing growth and development as leaders. An open mind and a commitment to the process will help you:

- Look for celebrations and opportunities for growth. What are your areas of strength and where do you have opportunity to improve?
- Find a balance between building a committed, enthusiastic and energized team and accomplishing impactful results.
- Consider how the feedback connects to what you received via the LPI at DPSLeadership or the simulation in DPSManagement.
- Focus on what will help you further your career and achieve your personal and work goals.
- Open a dialogue and improve working relationships that are critical to your success.
- Create a specific development plan and hold yourself accountable for improvement.

BEFORE YOU DIVE IN

Receiving feedback on your leadership can be personal, emotional, and an extremely powerful catalyst for development. The best way to digest feedback is to start by understanding a few key aspects of leadership, your strengths and how we work through change. Review the concepts below as you take in your survey feedback.

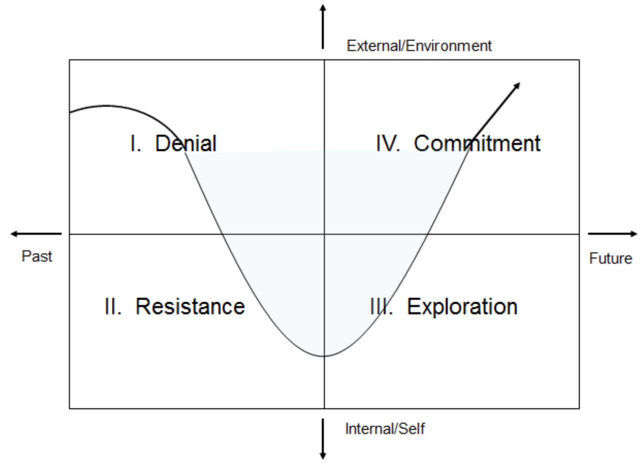
The Balance of Leadership

Effective leaders balance achieving results and valuing employees. Focusing too much on results can lead to a team of employees that burn out or turnover. Leaders that put an over emphasis on valuing people fail to accomplish the goals of DPS. The ideal leader brings out the best in others to drive results, foster innovation and achieve the organization’s mission.

One key outcome of receiving performance feedback is becoming more mindful of how well you balance both people and results to optimize your effectiveness.

Change Is A Process

Originally conceptualized by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, the change curve represents the steps we all go through when faced with change. Being aware of the change curve can be helpful in processing where you are in your response to feedback.



- **Denial:** Our first response to change is often shock or denial. We focus on the past and the external environment as reasons for our behavior.
- **Resistance:** Once the reality of the feedback sets in, we may feel angry, anxious, or fear the impact of the feedback. We may respond with thoughts like, "this feedback is not accurate or it is an unfair assessment."
- **Exploration:** Pessimism and resistance give way to acceptance of the feedback and optimism as to how it can lead to personal development.
- **Commitment:** Not only do we accept the feedback but we embrace it to help us improve. We have a clear understanding of what we need to work on and how to go about it.

Any personal transition that is impactful has its challenges and growing pains. Understanding where you are in the change curve can bring self-awareness to your emotions and reactions and help you process feedback at the pace that is right for you.

HOW DO I MAKE SENSE OF LEADER DATA?

Depending on your role and number of responses received, you will be able to view leader data on the "2019 Leader Results" Dashboard. Leaders must have five or more responses to receive a "2019 Leader Results" Dashboard.

2020 Leader Results Dashboard

The "2019 Leader Results" Dashboard on the Qualtrics platform provides the information needed to take strategic action on the survey results. In order to leverage the "2019 Leader Results" Dashboard fully, please read through and follow the instructions located at the top of each page on the Qualtrics platform. An email will be sent to you with a link to access this dashboard. Click on the link and use your DPS username and password to log in.

Note: Please pay close attention to selecting the **corresponding role** on the left side of the dashboard to view both your own leader results and if applicable, results for those who report to you.

Please also ensure that you use the "Direct Reports" only checkbox and the filters to further explore your data. Instructions on how to do so are provided in the dashboard.

NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND THE LEADER RESULTS, WHAT'S NEXT?

Reviewing your feedback is a process of self-awareness and reflection, clarification and focused action. Use the steps below to help you get the most out of the feedback.

The Process

Step 1. Self-awareness: find meaning in the data
Using the data from your feedback report, answer the following questions:

- Is the feedback from my team consistent with how I view my performance? Were there any surprises?
- Is my leadership balanced: do I focus on both valuing people and getting results?
- What are my strengths and opportunities for growth?
- What feedback do I not yet understand?

DIG DEEPER:

IDENTIFY PATTERNS

A leadership survey is just one piece of information about your performance. In reviewing your report, consider how the feedback supports or is different from other types of feedback you have received in the past. Consider the following sources of information to help identify patterns:

- *Performance evaluations*
- *Development conversations*
- *DPSL LPI, DPSM Simulation or other 360s*
- *Personality assessments*
- *Previous CollaboRATE survey results*
- *Additional survey results from the Parent Satisfaction, Student Satisfaction/Perception, and Customer Service survey*
- *Anecdotal feedback*

Step 2. Reflect: How does the feedback relate to my goals?
To get the most out of feedback from the survey, think about which areas are the most critical to accomplishing your current and future goals.

- What do I need to accomplish as a leader to accomplish my UIP/LEAD/LEAP/LIFT goals?
- Which behaviors/competencies are most important to accomplish the goals listed above?
- How can I fully leverage my strengths?

Step 3. Share results and ask for input
Sharing your survey results with your supervisor and team is highly encouraged. Leaders who do so often benefit because they get a deeper understanding of the feedback and have support in the development process. Such conversations open a dialogue focused on performance and help your supervisor and team understand what you need to be successful. In sharing your results with your supervisor and team, discuss the following:

- What are my strengths? How could I more fully utilize these strengths on a regular basis?

- What is my area of growth? How could this limit progress in achieving the goals for my current role? In my career? How would I be more effective if I were to significantly improve in this area?

- Ask for examples to clarify feedback that you do not fully understand.

- How does the feedback relate to what I need to accomplish this year?

- What's one area I should focus on? Seek clarity. What would it look/sound/feel like if I made progress on this area? How can your manager support you and hold you accountable?

DIG DEEPER:
SUPERVISOR & TEAM

Sharing results with your supervisor and team can give you further understanding of your feedback. In this conversation, ask:

- *For examples to help you better understand your strengths and areas of opportunity*
- *Ideas to help you leverage your strengths*
- *If they would be willing to help hold you accountable on your action plan*

Step 4. Focus on one specific area for growth.
Use the worksheet below to help create an action plan.

- Pick ONE area to work on and set one goal for improvement that is aligned with your UIP/LEAD/LEAP/LIFT goals.

- What steps will you take to make improvement (how can you focus on this area on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis)?

> **DIG DEEPER:**
> **BUILDING ACCOUNTABILITY**
> Sharing your goals with your mentor, coach, supervisor or team is often the best way to drive accountability. Give your supervisor, coach, mentor, or trusted teammate "permission" to give you feedback on your development goal. Set up a plan to check in quarterly with your "coach" to discuss progress and challenges.

- What resources do you need to be successful? (See supports section for some ideas on resources available.)

- How will you track your progress and hold yourself accountable?

- How will you know that you have been successful?

Leadership Acceleration: Action Planning Worksheet

Summarize your learnings from the feedback

Opportunities: Where do I have the biggest opportunities to develop my leadership skills?	
Areas of Strength: What are my greatest strengths?	
Critical Competencies: What competencies/behaviors are most important to achieving my goals (UIP/LEAD/LEAP/LIFT)?	

Define Your Goal

Personal Development Goal: Pick ONE area of focus that will have the biggest impact.

How will development in this area help you achieve your goals (either in your current role or for your career)?

Measure of success: What will success look like?

Identify Specific Action Steps

Steps to Improve (What you can do daily, weekly, monthly, yearly?)	**Time frame**	**Resources Needed**

Part Three:

Supports

CULTURE, EQUITY AND LEADERSHIP TEAM (CELT)

The following opportunities are designed to help you and your team learn, grow and have a positive impact (For all CELT offerings, please see http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/celt).

To improve **individual** alignment and if members of your team are not feeling connected to the DPS' vision and mission, consider attending:

- **DPS Creating Connections** is an engaging, fun and informative opportunity to build personal and professional skills while connecting to other educators from across the district for a greater appreciation of each other and the contributions we all make to DPS. All team members are encouraged to attend.
- **DPS Skills** offers a variety of professional development workshops designed to support all DPS team members. During these workshops, individuals will have the opportunity to focus on personal and professional development, while sharing experiences with educators from across DPS.

To continue developing as a **leader**, it is suggested that you attend:

- **DPS Aspire** is a 2–day, values-based leadership program that is designed to be engaging, reflective and fun. DPS Aspire supports leaders with identifying their individual leadership capacity and style, learning how to lead change and transition through the lens of cultural responsiveness and equity, and how to leverage their sphere of influence and core strengths. DPS Aspire is open to all team members.
- **DPS Management** supports supervisors, managers, directors, assistant principals and deans to hone their leadership skills, to influence and engage those they lead, facilitate change and develop a performance-based, team culture.
- **DPS Leadership** a 4–day, values-based leadership experience designed to inspire, engage and support leaders in developing the skills needed to improve their leadership effectiveness. Leaders deeply examine Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, as well as use the Leadership Practices Inventory (360 feedback tool) to strengthen and amplify their impact as a leader. DPSL is open to principals, executive directors, directors and instructional superintendents.

To improve **engagement** and if your team is not feeling connected to the DPS vision and mission, consider attending:

- **DPS Equity Boot Camp** is a 1–day program that provides the opportunity to build skills and deepen the ability to infuse equity, inclusion and culturally responsive practices into schools and department teams throughout DPS.

- **DPS Teams** is a 3-day, 2-night, values-based leadership program that provides the time, space, skills and tools for teams to continue developing high performing cultures. This program is designed to support intact teams of 5–12 people in creating a compelling purpose, structures and processes that drive high performing teams. Additionally, teams have the opportunity to develop skills in giving feedback, managing conflict and engaging in dialog.

CollaboRATE Coaches are highly skilled and experienced leadership coaches available to support you in your efforts to move forward with your CollaboRATE results. Our coaches support you as a DPS leader to help identify your priority areas for growth, along with strategies and approaches that you identify in order to successfully achieve your goals. If you are interested in a coach, please contact your supervisor.

PEOPLE SUPPORTS

- Your direct supervisor
- HR Business/School Partners
- Coaches/Mentors
- CELT

SUGGESTED FLOW CHECKLIST TO MODEL THE WAY

Team members will complete surveys and provide meaningful feedback when they know their voice matters. The meetings outlined below are an essential way to demonstrate you value their input.

March–April 2020

- [ ] Schedule 45 minutes with school/team to review your 2019 DPS CollaboRATE Results Dashboard and begin Engagement Strategic Action Planning.

- [ ] Within the next 2 weeks, schedule 30 minutes with your entire school/department team to review leadership results and begin Leadership Acceleration Action Planning.

- [ ] Within two weeks of that, have each assistant principal/administrative assistant/dean/ Senior/Team Lead schedule the same type of meeting with his/her own smaller teams.

- [ ] Share the final Engagement Strategic Action Planning and Leadership Acceleration Plan with your team and supervisor.

HOW DO I INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND MY LEADERSHIP?

Use the questions below as conversation starters to generate solutions related to the priority identified by your team:

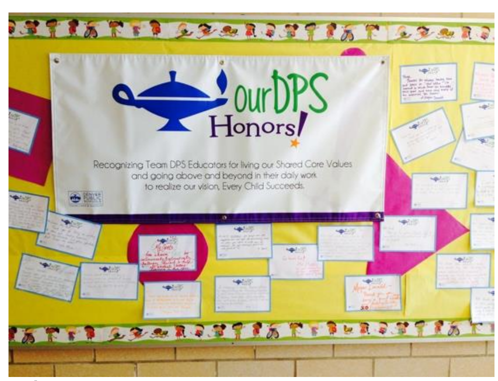
Contribute to DPS Goals

Questions to Ask:
- Do you have a clear understanding of the DPS goals/strategy/vision? If not, what is unclear? What could be done to provide further clarity? What information do you need? Who do you need it from?
- Do you see alignment between your work and the Denver Plan 2020 goals? Why or why not? What could we do better to ensure work is aligned?
- How well do we do at staying focused on the work that most contributes to DPS goals? What sidetracks us? Is there work we are doing that does not contribute to those goals?
- Are we recognized for our contributions to meeting the goals of DPS? In what ways? How could this be improved?
- How could your supervisor help to ensure there is a clear connection between our work and the goals of DPS? What can DPS do?

Best Practices:
- Meet one-on-one with employees regularly to discuss workload and priorities and discuss how they connect to what DPS is trying to accomplish.
- Give employees permission to place projects that are not directly related to organizational goals on the back burner.
- Structure staff meetings so that discussions focus on key DPS goals and how the work of each person is (or is not) lined up with these goals.
- Identify processes/work that used to be valuable but no longer contribute to DPS goals. Remove that work where possible.

Recognition

Questions to ask:
- What types of things are teammates rewarded for? Given our top priority, are these the right things? If not, what should they be? Are we using the recognition wall? The DPSHonors program?
- Are you "encouraging the heart" as you recognize your team? Revisit your DPSL resources for ideas.
- What does "excellent" work on our priority look like? Do we agree on expectations and standards? If not, why?
- What gets in the way of recognizing people for excellent work? What barriers do we face? After the team responds, ask "why" those things get in the way. Keep asking why until you get to the root of the issue.
- How can we tie recognition to meeting our priority? If we accomplish those goals, what recognition will be most meaningful?
- What non-monetary types of recognition could we implement when we meet our goal? Consider public recognition, skill development opportunities, a note of thanks, peer feedback, etc. Of the ways you like to be recognized, what are we currently doing and not yet doing?
- What are a few formal (e.g., performance review) and informal (e.g., say thank you at a meeting) ways we could provide recognition?



- Think of a time when you were recognized for excellent work. What made the recognition meaningful to you? How can we relate this type of recognition to performance that helps us meet our priority?
- What can we do within this group to be better at recognizing each other's work?
- What types of recognition do different members of your team like? Do we have enough diversity in how we recognize people to respect their different preferences?

Best Practices:

- Offer on-the-spot recognition. Recognition that is unexpected or outside of "formal" channels can be even more meaningful.
- The way people like to be recognized is not one-size-fits all. Take time to ask employees how they like to be recognized and tailor your approach accordingly.
- Identify ways for peers to recognize peers and give them the tools to do so in an ongoing basis.
- One of the best ways to show that you value an employee is to ask them to share their opinion and contribute to new ideas. Doing so is a recognition of their talents and contribution.
- Never underestimate the value of sharing time and building a relationship with your employees. Make time for the employee to run ideas by you, talk about concerns, and just to get to know each other. Doing so will make it more authentic when you provide recognition and more effective when you need to provide constructive feedback.
- Often times "support" work goes unnoticed. Take the time to recognize the hard work and effort that makes the work of others possible.

Team Trust

Questions to Ask:

- Think of a time when people within our team were not working toward the same big picture goals (there is no need to share the specific situation). Why did that happen? What was the impact?
- Is there a clear understanding of how our team works together to accomplish our business priority? If not, why is there is lack of clarity?
- As a team, what are the 2-3 things that we must be focused on to make sure we accomplish our priority?
- How do we make sure everyone in our work group is on the same page when it comes to accomplishing our goal on time and to quality standards? How do we keep each other updated?
- Within our team, is there a clear way of identifying priorities and responsibilities? If no, what is unclear?
- Are there things that we do within our team that do not contribute to accomplishing our priority? Why do we do those things?
- Think of a time when our work group was unified in working toward a common goal. How did we make sure we were all working toward the same outcome? What specific things made us successful? How could we apply those best practices to our current priority?
- How can we keep the top priority of our work group front-of-mind? How can we hold each other accountable for delivering on our responsibilities?
- Do we have clear standards for how we will work well together? What are they?

Best Practices:

- The leaders of effective teams focus energy on articulating clear goals for the team, encouraging change where change is needed, and building on the talents of group members in accomplishing goals.
- Set clear "norms" for behavior that are agreed upon by the team. For example, how do we communicate critical information? What is our response time? How do we address conflict? How do we share feedback? Set expectations for how work will get done and call on the team to hold one another accountable.

- Work on creating an environment that fosters relationships and makes it ok to speak up and hold each other accountable. As the leader, demonstrate this value by openly admitting mistakes, sharing that you don't know something or acknowledging that results are better when you work together.
- Provide time for team members to share their concerns or ideas about expectations, responsibilities, or outcomes.
- Involve team members in decision-making, process creation, and policy implementation when possible.

Decision-Making

Questions to ask:

- What does it mean to you to have input into decisions? What does it look like? Of those things, what do we do well? What do we not yet do well?
- In regard to our priority, what types of decisions do you want to have input into? What are the implications of not having input?
- Is it clear who should be involved in which decisions related to this priority? Why or why not?
- What gets in the way of giving people the opportunity to have input into decisions? What barriers do we face? After the team responds, ask "why" those things get in the way. Keep asking why until you get to the root of the issue.
- Think of a time when we did a good job getting the right input into a decision. What made that a positive situation? Why were we successful?
- How do we balance involving the right people in decisions, with not involving everyone in everything?
- What are a few formal and informal ways we could seek input before decisions are made around this priority?
- What can we do to make sure we always consider the impact of the customer in our decision making?
- What could the organization do to leverage the knowledge of employees to make better decisions? How would that support DPS in meeting its strategic goals?
- How well are we doing in communicating the why behind the decisions we make? Why does this matter? How can we improve?

Best Practices:

- Review decisions that are made on a regular basis. Who makes those decisions? Is there an opportunity to shift the decision-making as close as possible to where the work happens?
- Identify who needs to be involved in what kind of decisions and then give as much autonomy to employees for all other topics.
- Create a framework as a guide for decision making that includes your values, key stakeholders and priorities. Teach employees to use this framework when making decisions.
- Begin building decision making skills by presenting scenarios to employees and ask them how they would respond. What factors would the employee consider? Use the dialog as an opportunity to provide coaching.
- When making key decisions, it is important to include employees with a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and skills if possible. Ensure input comes from diverse viewpoints.

Adequate Resources and Information

Questions to Ask:

- What types of resources or information do you need to be able to accomplish our priority? What information do we communicate well and where do we have opportunities to improve?
- How do you like to receive info? In-person, email, newsletter, etc.? How do we do at these different methods?
- What are the channels for sharing information? Is there a regular method of communication? Is it effective? If no, why?
- What do you do when you do not have the information or resources that you need to accomplish our priority? Do you know how to get it?
- What gets in the way of effectively sharing information in regard to accomplishing our priority? What barriers do we encounter? After the team responds, ask "why" those things get in the way. Keep asking why until you get to the root of the issue.
- Think of a time when DPS did a good job sharing information. What specific things made that communication successful?
- As a group, what can we do when we don't have all of the information or resources that we need/want? How will we know if we are doing this well? What would success look like?

Best Practices:

- Often messages get lost as they are repeated throughout the organization: for critical messages, consider using short and concise written communication or providing talking points to leaders as a reference as they talk to their teams.
- People have different preferences for methods of communication. Consider using more than one form of communication (e.g. Email, newsletter, town hall meeting, team meeting, video communication, social media).
- Employees can handle "bad" news, but struggle with no news. In the absence of information, we fill in the missing pieces, which can lead to inaccurate messages or rumors. Consider this when crafting communications. If you don't know, say so.
- Ensure employees know that is acceptable to speak up when adequate resources are not available and the proper channels to do so.

Supporting Employee Well-being

Questions to ask:

- What is our team currently doing to support each other's well-being?
- Is there a clear understanding surrounding expectations around email response time? If so, are we demonstrating those behaviors? (e.g. Not emailing on the weekends, verbally telling your team you are not expecting a response, taking vacation time).
- Have we set expectations of team members outside of work hours?
- Do we have work flexibility to support demands outside of work? (e.g. Flex time- leaving early to pick up children, appointments, attending after-school events, exercise classes?)
- Are we encouraging our team to take breaks to recharge?
- Are you aware of district opportunities and resources that support your personal well-being?
- What resources are available to you, to help cope with the stress of work? Are they helpful? Why or why not?
- What are the major issues or areas that are causing work-related stress?
- What challenges do you experience with balancing your work and personal life? How can our leadership better support your well-being?
- Are we recognizing employees for healthy behaviors? (e.g. not emailing during vacation, attending a workout class, eating away from their desk?)

Best Practices:

- Embody wellness and lead by example. (eat lunch away from your desk, not emailing during your vacation).
- Encourage employees to take intermittent energy breaks throughout the day. (e.g. five-minute walk around the building, eating in the staff lounge, catching up with co-workers).
- Set clear expectations on email response time after work hours.
- Advertise district health and wellness and offerings/supports through email and during team meetings.
- Communicate the importance of achieving and maintaining good health.
- Connect well-being to performance and productivity.
- Reward and recognize safety and health performance achievements.
- Incorporate well-being into yearly goals.
- Create systems to enable people to engage with wellness.

Workload

Questions to ask:

- What does it mean to you to have a reasonable work load? What does it look like? Of those things, what do we do well? What do we not yet do well?
- What things get in the way of us managing our work load? What challenges do we experience? After the team responds, ask "why" those things get in the way. Keep asking why until you get to the root of the issue.
- How do we prioritize what gets done? How could we do this better?
- How do we communicate when work is busy? Are you comfortable asking for help? How do we support one another as a team? How could we be better about helping each other?
- Do we approach our work in the most efficient way possible? Why or why not?
- Do we have the skills and resources we need to accomplish our priority? What additional skills or resources would help us be more effective?
- In regard to our top priority, what are one or two things that could save us time if we were more efficient?
- How could your supervisor support you in managing your work load so you are able to focus on our priority?
- What things do we do that don't add value or contribute to accomplishing our priority? What can be taken off your plate or done differently?
- Do we leverage the strengths of our team so people are working on what they are best at? How could we do this better?
- How can we be better about planning and preparing for our work to stay ahead of the curve?
- Is there an opportunity for cross-training or skill development so people can help one another?

Best Practices:

- Review workloads/projects with employees regularly and be open to putting lower priority projects on the back burner or eliminating them altogether. Ensure employees know it is ok to say, "yes, at a later time" or "yes, and that means something else needs to come off my priority list" in reference to requests.
- Provide opportunities for employees to learn how to manage time more effectively.
- It is important for leaders/managers to lead by example in maintaining work-life balance by taking time off, leaving work on time, and not checking email while on vacation, for example.

Growth and Development

Questions to ask:

- Do we have the skills we need to be able to accomplish our priority? What are we missing that people would like to learn?
- What is the current process for making sure we have the skills we need to be effective? What aspects of this process work well? What does not yet work well?

- What gets in the way of skill development? What barriers do you encounter? After the team responds, ask "why" those things get in the way. Keep asking why until you get to the root of the issue.
- What resources are available for employee development that relate to our priority? What resources would you like to have that you currently do not?
- What is the employee's role in skill development? What is the role of his or her leader? What is the role of the organization?
- Think of a time when you were provided with a meaningful development opportunity. How did the opportunity come about? What made it a positive experience? How did it benefit the organization? How could this help us be more effective at meeting our priority?
- What can we do within this group to provide each other with more development opportunities (consider cross-training, mentoring, peer feedback, etc.)?
- What could your supervisor do differently to be more supportive of your development?

Best Practices:

- Skill development can come in many forms. On-the-job training (managing a project, taking on a new task, serving on a cross functional team, and job shadowing), training through interaction with others (mentoring, coaching, and leading a staff organization), or formal training (seminars, podcasts, webinars, and conferences.)
- Emphasize ways to develop that are less formal: opportunities to work on innovative projects, peer-to-peer teaching/mentoring, increase in the variety of work, opportunities to share ideas.
- Provide a clear avenue for employees to share their developmental needs and explore ways in which this training can be provided. Determine whether this is an individual need or training that could be provided at the group level.
- Have regular one-on-one conversations with employees: what is going well? Where are you having challenges? How can I help?
- Attend CELT opportunities. Look for cost-effective training opportunities such as webinars, free training or networking events, book clubs, lunch-and-learns, podcasts, etc.

Being Reflective

Questions to ask:

- What do you know for sure?
- What could you do to add value?
- What do you want, and what are you willing to do to get that?
- What would great look like in this moment?
- What could I do to help?

Best Practices:

- Use self-reflection questions to examine what we know for sure to be real, separate that from the story our ego is telling us and find places where we can have impact. Ego is a human condition, and we all have one.

- **Resource**: “No Ego- How Leaders Can Cut the Cost of Workplace Drama, End Entitlement and Drive Big Results” by Cy Wakeman

Constructive Feedback

Questions to ask:

- What kind of feedback do you need to meet our priority?
- How do you know if you are meeting your expectations around this priority? Is this effective? If not, why not?
- Think of a time when you were given feedback and it helped you perform better at your job. What about that situation made it positive?
- What can we do within this group to provide each other with more feedback so we all have the opportunity to develop and accomplish our priority?
- What can we do within this group to get better at the skill of giving feedback?
- What can your leader do differently to get you the feedback you need?
- What resources will help your team or your supervisor to be more effective at giving feedback?
- What can be done to provide more opportunities for providing informal feedback (rather than waiting for a performance review)?
- How can you embed more formal and informal opportunities for teammates to give each other feedback?

Best Practices:

- Do not wait for the annual review process to give feedback. Time feedback so that it matches the cadence of the work (e.g., after an important customer interaction, at the end of a project, after taking on a new responsibility).
- Give feedback in a future-orientated manner. Rather than lingering on the past, ask the employee to consider what went well that could be done again and what could be done differently next time.
- When giving constructive feedback, focus on the behavior rather than the person.
- When giving feedback, do less telling and more asking. Ask the employee questions like:
    - How do you think that went?
    - What are you proud of?
    - What did you learn?
    - What would you do differently next time?

Resolve Conflict

Questions to ask:

- When it comes to accomplishing our priority, what are common causes of conflict in our department/school? What is behind this?
- Do people on our team address conflict when it arises? Why or why not?
- Do we have an environment where people feel safe to discuss their concerns? Why or why not?
- Who is accountable for resolving conflict? What is the role of the employee? What is the role of the supervisor?
- Are there formal channels and a written shared process for resolving conflict? If no, would that be helpful? If yes, how are they working?
- Do you create a memorandum of understanding, (MOU), when a conflict has been adequately resolved? What kind of accountability do you build into the MOU to make sure this issue has been addressed? How could we do this better?
- Think of a time when a conflict was handled well. What specific behaviors things were occurring to make it a positive experience?
- How do you prefer to be approached when someone has a conflict with you?

- As a department/school, what would help us feel more comfortable with addressing conflict? Coaching in conflict management? A formal process? Team building? Clarification of roles/responsibilities?
- How can your supervisor support you more effectively in the process of resolving conflict? How can the organization help you?

Best Practices:

- Not all conflict is counterproductive. Groups that debate ideas generate better solutions. Viewing conflict as an opportunity to learn and generate better solutions can remove some of the fear around facing conflicts.
- Encourage employees to address conflict directly with one another before seeking intervention. Creating a dialogue and working through solutions together often strengthens relationships.
- When working through a conflict, identify the motivations and goals of each individual involved. Discuss how all goals can be accomplished, rather than one or the other.
- Seek out areas of potential conflict and proactively intervene. Identifying and understanding natural tensions can help avoid unnecessary conflict. Having clearly defined job descriptions, expectations, and a chain of command can help prevent conflict as well.
- Time invested in team building (creating open lines of communication and trust) can produce a productive environment for conflict management.
- Encourage the assumption of positive intentions. Knowing that each of us is trying our best, how can we find common ground?

Collaboration

Questions to ask:

- Think of a time when people within our team were not working toward the same big picture goals. Why did that happen? What was the impact?
- Is there a clear understanding of how our team works together to accomplish our priority? If not, why is there is lack of clarity?
- How do we make sure everyone in our team is on the same page when it comes to accomplishing our goal? How do we keep each other updated when there are changes to our focus?
- Within our team, is there a clear way of identifying priorities? If no, what is unclear?
- Are there things that we do within our group that do not contribute to accomplishing our priority? Why do we do those things?
- Think of a time when our team was unified in working toward a common goal. How did we make sure we were all working toward the same outcome? What specific things made us successful? How could we apply those best practices to our current priority?
- How can we keep the top priority of our work group front-of-mind? How can we hold each other accountable for staying focused on this goal?
- How will we know if we are doing this well? What would success look like?

Best Practices:

- Encourage leaders to discuss their goals/priorities and seek alignment. Leaders should focus their approach to leadership from an "organizational" view vs. a "department or team" view.
- Encourage shared ownership and a commitment to the success of the collaboration by asking team members to agree to the objectives (or better yet, help define the objectives) and discuss the benefits to the organization.
- It is important for members of the collaboration to understand their role and responsibilities at each stage of the collaboration.
- Keep lines of communication open throughout the collaboration for individuals to voice frustrations, concerns, needs, and suggestions for improvement.

- Facilitate a conversation with another team/department and ask: 1) How is our customer service? 2) How do we make your lives easier/more difficult? 3) What would you like our team/department to know about how we work together?
- Set "norms" of behavior for how teams/departments will work together. In other words, agree upon how we will communicate, what happens when there is change, what resources are needed, etc.

Changes Announced

Questions to ask:

- What kinds of changes impact our ability to meet our goal/ priority? What do you need to know? How do you like changes to be communicated?
- What does good communication about change look like? What behaviors would you like to see? What do we do well and where do we fall short?
- Think of a time when a change and how it would affect you was communicated well. What specific things made that communication successful?
- How well do we communicate before, during, and after significant changes? Where do we need to make the biggest improvement?
- As a group, how can we be proactive about getting the information that we need to accomplish our priority? What can we do to be better at adapting to change?
- What can your supervisor do better to help you work through changes that impact your ability to accomplish our goal/ priority?

Best Practices:

- Be proactive in communicating changes from multiple channels (e.g., blogs, newsletters, team meetings, town halls). Within your message, communicate "what's in it for employees" and other key stakeholders (customers, etc.).
- Ensure that important messages are delivered consistently to all members of the organization (rather than a select few). Check-in with employees to make sure they heard the message and heard it accurately.
- If you don't know they answer or a decision has not been made, say so. Communicate when you expect to know more and then be sure to follow-up.
- Gain commitment to change by connecting them to the values and goals of the organization. Spend time explaining the reason behind why decisions are made.
- Help employees understand that changes are happening not because the way things were done before were inferior, but because the business is evolving and changes are necessary to keep up with the new environment.
- Fostering a collaborative climate with open communication is especially important when going through change. Set aside extra time for discussion, questions, and concerns to be shared.

Encourage New Ideas

Questions to Ask:

- What gets in the way of working on new and better ways of doing things in relation to our business priority? What barriers do we face? After the team responds, ask "why" those things get in the way. Keep asking why until you get to the root of the issue.
- What types of things do we need to work on improving or innovating so we can better accomplish our goals?
- What happens when a new idea is expressed? Are people receptive? Do we take action? Why or why not?
- How is creativity/innovation rewarded? How could we be better about encouraging new ideas to be better at accomplishing our priority?
- What happens when someone tries a new idea and fails? How could this be improved?

- How could your work be structured differently to allow more time for making improvements?
- What are formal and informal channels for sharing new ideas? How could we make it easier to share?
- What could the organization do to leverage the knowledge and experience of employees to make our organization more innovative?

Best Practices:
- It is important to create an environment where new ideas are welcome, personal risk taking is encouraged, and creativity is valued. Stress the importance of creativity and set aside time for brainstorming in meetings.
- When new ideas are being generated, practice giving the additive feedback of "yes, and…" in response to an idea rather than "no, but…" This can unleash positive energy that builds a collaborative climate.
- Having fun with colleagues and trying new activities together can help us to reshape our approaches to problems and look at things in a new way. Create competitions to generate new ideas.
- Use social media as a way of posing questions and ask for solutions. Ask employees to vote on the best idea.
- Building a diverse team provides a variety of perspectives, experiences, and insights to accelerate problem solving.
- Provide the resources needed to implement the ideas worth acting upon and recognize those responsible for generating the idea.
- Ensure employees understand what happened with the ideas that are shared. Are they being adopted? If no, why?

Clear Expectations

Questions to Ask:
- In regard to our top priority, where is there a lack of clarity around expectations?
- What challenges get in the way of having clear expectations?
- What is our formal or informal process for setting expectations around this priority? Is it effective? If not, why not?
- How do we do at goal setting for our priority? Do we have clear timeframes, milestones, and expected outcomes? What do we do well? Where can we improve?
- How do we communicate when expectations change around this priority?
- Think of a time when you had very clear expectations for your performance. What made this situation successful? What can be applied to helping us accomplish our goal?
- How do we prioritize where we should spend our time? How would this help us better achieve our goal?
- What formal or informal processes would help you better understand what is expected of you?
- How can your supervisor do better at communicating expectations?

Best Practices:
- Create SMART goals to document and ensure clear understanding of expectations (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-framed)
- Check-in as priorities shift to make sure expectations are clear
- Ensure role clarity through team conversations
- Ensure expectations are specific and tied to the organization's goals and values, they are more likely to be fulfilled.
- It is important that expectations are high, but also realistic. Setting expectations too low does not challenge abilities and setting them too high can guarantee failure. Ensure there is adequate training for tasks and recognition given when expectations are met.
- Ask for employee input when setting goals and expectations

- Ensure written documentation (job descriptions, standard operating procedures) are up-to-date and distributed

Confidence in Leadership

Questions to Ask:

- What makes you feel confident about where we are headed as an organization? Where are your concerns?
- Do you understand the DPS vision and strategic goals? If no, what is unclear?
- How could Senior Leaders communicate or vision and strategy for the future better? What communication methods work well? What would you like to know more about?
- Think of a time when you felt very confident in our Senior Leaders. What was it that gave you confidence?
- If you were to rate this question a "5" what would be different?
- How could your supervisor do better to help you feel confident in the direction of the organization?

Best Practices:

- **Review communication practices.** Are the consistent and transparent? Does information cascade to all levels of the organization? Use a variety of communication channels and repeat, repeat, repeat. Keep others informed about big picture goals and the plan for success.
- **Show concern for others.** Rather than working to accomplish your agenda, start by asking employees what they are focused on. Demonstrating that leaders understand the work and challenges of employees builds confidence that decisions will be made with this in mind.
- **Be transparent.** Employees can handle bad news, but struggle with no news. In the absence of information, we fill in the gaps with assumptions and stories. Proactive communication keeps the rumor mill at bay.
- **Take the long way in and out of the office.** Casual conversations that demonstrate a genuine interest in people and allow people to get to know senior leaders strengthens relationships.
- **Be intentional about connecting.** Create a schedule that involves each member of the leadership team going on a "listening tour" to connect with employees, build relationships and hear about employees' ideas and challenges. Leaders can spend 5 minutes sharing and the rest of the time asking questions to build a connection to that part of the organization.
- **Give others the credit.** Good leaders take responsibility for failures, and give others credit for success.
- **Demonstrate trust in others.** Trust in leadership can suffer when employees don't feel trusted by leaders. Micromanaging and controlling all decisions can lead to feelings of lack of control of autonomy and control – two important factors that drive employee engagement. Leaders should challenge themselves to empower someone to do something they normally do, or allow decisions to happen as close as possible to where the work is actually taking place.
- **Review organizational policies.** Organizational policies like social media, travel, work home during a blizzard, vacation, etc. set the tone for a two-way trusting relationship. Treat employees like adults and expect them to use good judgment and that's what you'll get in return.

Equity

Questions to ask:

- Who are you surrounding yourself with? Are you creating a diverse and inclusive team?
- How are others values/behaviors/experiences/worldviews different than yours? How can you flex your behavior in order to be more inclusive?
- Who is at the decision-making table? Who is not?
- What barriers are present that should be removed for more equitable access?
- What are your biases and blind spots?

Best Practices:

- Keep the "Like Me" phenomenon in mind- are you surrounding yourself with people who have similar values/experiences/worldviews?
  - Your favorite students
  - Those you hire
  - Those you work with
  - Those who are at the decision-making table
- Continually work to make sure you are following the platinum rule. Rather than the golden rule that suggests you should "treat others as you would like to be treated", work to follow the platinum rule and "treat others as they would like to be treated." Look for ways in which your communication style/ expectations/values differ and try to "flex" into their style.
- When making policies or rules, look for who is missing from the conversation and work to include their perspective.
- When trying to "fix an issue", look at barriers before assuming it is an individual issue. How could the system better support your goals?
- Recognize your biases and work to decrease their impact on your decision making (go to Equity Bootcamp!)
- Ask those you feel comfortable with if there are blind spots or biases you may not recognize but may have an impact on your behavior and ability to equitably work and create an inclusive environment.

HOW TO RESPOND TO ALARMING FEEDBACK

There are occasions in which open-ended feedback provided in the CollaboRATE survey may warrant an elevated response. This includes, but is not limited to, comments regarding discrimination, harm to self or others, and harassment.

- **Harm to self and others** feedback would result in identifying the person and notifying the HR Partner for response.
- **Discrimination and harassment** claims would result in NOT identifying the person, but would identify the location/school and notify the HR Partner. The instructional superintendent would be copied for school instances.
- **Mandatory reporting obligations**: If an employee shares concerns that trigger your mandatory reporting obligations, please make a mandatory report or contact Kristin Bailey for consult.