



A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF HCPS INITIAL BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SURVEY ANALYSIS (MARCH 2023)

HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

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The HCPS Department of Research and Program Evaluation values its collaboration with Hanover Research. This final report integrates various findings from the Hanover Report on open-ended response analysis, albeit with some modifications by HCPS.

INTRODUCTION

Overview And Background Information

Over the past few years, Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Blueprint Committees and workgroups have been working through various requirements of legislation known as the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Over one-hundred and fifty (150+) people serve on these committees with approximately a third of the members representing central office stakeholders, a third participating as school-based stakeholders, and a third representing community partners. As a result of this work, HCPS drafted a Blueprint Implementation Plan.

To inform this process, the HCPS Office of Strategic Initiative collaborated with the Office of Research and Program Evaluation and administered a multi-stakeholder survey in February and March of 2023. This survey was designed to gather feedback on the Blueprint Implementation Plan from several stakeholder groups.

Respondents were first presented with the complete written draft implementation plan, a short video about the implementation plan, then asked to complete the feedback providing guidance about the implementation plan. Finally, respondents were given an opportunity to write comments regarding which aspects of Blueprint implementation HCPS demonstrates exemplary progress and which aspects of Blueprint implementation HCPS demonstrates a need to improve planning for better progress.

The Office of Research and Program Evaluation collaborated with Hanover Research to analyze the responses to the survey's open-ended questions. This report details the results of the analyses of both closed and open-ended questions. For a detailed accounting of questions and responses to closed-ended, please refer to the "Closed-Ended Survey Question Results" section at the end of this report.

Research Questions

Through an analysis of open-ended responses, this report addressed the following research questions:

- What is exciting about what HCPS is working on to implement the Blueprint requirements?
- What is challenging about what HCPS is working on to implement the Blueprint requirements?
- For which aspects of Blueprint implementation is HCPS demonstrating exemplary progress?
- For which aspects of Blueprint implementation does HCPS need to improve planning for better progress?

Methodology

This report presents findings from an analysis of closed-ended and open-ended responses to HCPS' stakeholder survey on the Blueprint implementation plan.

To keep findings as salient as possible for HCPS' decision-making, the research team removed blank responses and invalid responses from each response pool and also removed responses such as "not applicable" (N/A) in favor of responses that share meaningful perceptions. By contrast responses such as "not sure" or "none" are retained as these responses could indicate a lack of understanding of the plan and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with all or none of the elements of the plan.

The research team manually coded the open-ended responses to identify the topics most frequently discussed by respondents and analyzed the open-ended responses by first coding them based on core themes that emerged within the data and refining those themes as analysis progressed. The research team counted the number of times each theme is coded to a response and calculated the frequency thereof. To note, themes are not mutually exclusive, so calculated percentages may sum to over 100 percent due to survey responses that contain more than one theme.

In addition to overall key findings and recommendations, this report also provides key findings by respondent group including employees (i.e., staff, school-based, central, board members) and non-employees (parents, community, or business partners). The following figure summarizes the total number of coded responses for each question and the total number by stakeholder group—employees, non-employees, or other/prefer not to say.

Number of Coded Responses by Subgroup and Aggregate

Survey Question	Number of Cleaned Open-Ended Responses			
	Aggregate	Employees	Non-Employees	Other/Prefer Not To Say
Question 1: What is exciting about what HCPS is working on to implement the Blueprint requirements?	148	60	87	1
Question 2: What is challenging about what HCPS is working on to implement the Blueprint requirements?	141	59	79	3
Question 3: For which aspects of Blueprint implementation is HCPS demonstrating exemplary progress?	103	42	61	0
Question 4: For which aspects of the Blueprint implementation does HCPS need to improve planning for better progress?	124	49	75	0

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNICATION



Stakeholders are broadly excited about many aspects of the Blueprint implementation plan, including all five pillars.

Themes that align to the pillars are present across all questions. Many responses reflect impactful district communication, as respondents often explicitly mention components of the pillars, such as the “Career Ladder.” In general, both employees and non-employees feel HCPS is performing well on various plan elements, but they would like to see more specific strategies and practices in place to ensure successful implementation. There is a small portion of stakeholders not satisfied with the plan, which may be related to what is perceived as insufficient communication regarding detailed implementation plan.

- Respondents categorized as non-employees make up a significant portion of those who are less satisfied with the plan and express lower levels of excitement about it. Similarly, some respondents feel the plan is not particularly innovative when compared to practices the district has already implemented.



Seek to communicate with high levels of transparency in all phases of implementation. To that end, it is recommended HCPS broadly and regularly disseminate Blueprint implementation plan details in layperson’s language across a range of modes (e.g., websites, emails, news articles) to provide clarity around how HCPS is going to use resources to implement pillars with fidelity. Many employees and non-employees appreciate the goals outlined by this plan but are concerned about whether HCPS has the funding, resources, and strategies in place to effectively implement all components of the plan. Among parents and community members, some are additionally skeptical of the accountability measures in place. These groups would likely benefit from access to additional details and opportunity for dialogue to offer greater transparency and to increase buy-in.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION



Stakeholders are most excited about the increase in educational opportunities for students, specifically highlighting two related Blueprint pillars: College and Career Readiness (CCR) and Student Support.

Thirty-three percent of respondents highlight exciting elements related to “College and Career Readiness (North Star),” such as career pathways and dual enrollment. Meanwhile, 26 percent of respondents often praise the move towards Community Schools and other strategies to equitably support diverse student groups (*Question 1*). These themes of CCR and Student Supports are also identified as areas demonstrating exemplary progress by 26 and 19 percent of respondents, respectively (*Question 3*). Respondents do highlight the challenge of building an equitable and respectful environment within the overall plan of improving both CCR and Student Supports. Examples include supporting specific student populations (e.g., gifted and talented, English learners, students of color) and adjusting the implementation (e.g., diversity in curricular topics) or accessibility of programs (e.g., dual enrollment).

- Both employee and non-employee stakeholder groups express excitement about these topics, especially for pathways that prepare students for postsecondary options other than college.
- Employees highlight a desire for the district to pay particular attention to how the plan is implemented to ensure equitable impact.



While identifying areas of improvement, both stakeholder groups view supporting teachers and leaders as exciting and important for Blueprint implementation.

Twenty-eight percent of all respondents feel excited that the plan supports teachers and leaders, and 19 percent feel HCPS is demonstrating exemplary progress in this area. This theme is aligned with the pillar, Elevating Educators, which emphasizes the importance of hiring and retaining effective teachers for all students. Stakeholders highlight the importance of valuing educators through adequate compensation, professional development, and teaching resources. Equity is a component of many themes referenced in responses, including equitable practices for hiring and compensating teachers. Some respondents feel HCPS could improve its efforts to recruit staff with diverse backgrounds and identities. Additionally, several respondents feel the district provides support for *new hires* but lacks support for *current* teachers.

- Likely because employees are more directly aware of and impacted by these decisions, employee respondents more frequently provided responses related to this topic than non-employees.



The most frequently reported areas of challenge and improvement relate to the “Accountability/Foundation” Blueprint pillar. Respondents highlight concerns with the specific resources and implementation elements of the plan, including funding, staffing, and alignment/accountability.

Respondents express concerns that the district will be able to carry out all aspects of the plan and hold staff and leaders accountable for the changes. The question of whether HCPS has sufficient funding is a frequent concern, as stakeholders feel the plan has a wide and ambitious scope. For example, stakeholders worry whether there will be sufficient staffing and physical space to support various Blueprint initiatives, such as the new ECE programming. In addition, respondents cite teacher compensation as an important limitation in recruiting and retaining high-quality educators and remain concerned about attainment of the desired outcomes. Many stakeholders seek better alignment with desired practices that meet student and staff needs.

- Notably, non-employee respondents are more concerned regarding alignment and accountability as they indicate receiving fewer details on plan implementation.



Ensure there are specific goals or outcome measures in place which prioritize equity regarding the implementation of the plan.

Some respondents express frustration with the school environment, citing situations of disrespect or times in which the needs of some students are given less attention than others. Leaders should ensure student supports are meeting the needs and interests of all student groups, including gifted students, English learners, and students of color. Similarly, HCPS can evaluate the extent to which all teachers (e.g., grade levels, backgrounds, identities) feel supported through this plan. Stakeholders also share concerns regarding the disparate impacts of the plan on various groups (e.g., pre-k programming on community workforce).

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



Moving forward, respondents recommend HCPS continue to expand its intentional community engagement efforts to ensure the plan's ultimate success.

Stakeholders affirm many of HCPS' current efforts to positively impact all members of the community through the Blueprint plan. For example, many respondents share positive perceptions of the Community School model, in that the services and resources offered through the model and other partnerships will provide more opportunities for students and families (e.g., mental health services, accessible ECE programs). As HCPS continues to develop and implement the Blueprint plan, respondents recommend the district improve its communication and engagement with the community through gathering more advisory support from a range of stakeholders. Specifically, stakeholders acknowledge the importance of buy-in for different groups (e.g., diverse families, community and business partners, staff) and feel sharing more details and hearing more perspectives to inform roll out could build buy-in and enhance the chances of success.

- Interestingly, employees seem to value and demonstrate concern around community engagement more than non-employees. Across most questions, employee respondents more frequently mention broad community engagement and the plan's ability to impact the community equitably than non-employees.



Considering the widespread endorsement of the goals and vision outlined in the Blueprint, despite varying levels of comprehension regarding implementation specifics, it is advisable for the district to persist in collaborating with the current stakeholder steering committee to gain insights and guide the process.

Across all groups there were relatively high levels of excitement for the plan. Questions remained across groups about the actions and logistics called for to enact the plan and how it will meet the needs of all members of the community. Some groups expressed further questions regarding viability and accountability. Inviting dialogue and stakeholder involvement may help bridge these concerns. Consider offering a series of town hall style listening sessions to offer forums for clarification of the specifics of implementation and accountability. From these meetings, a representative steering committee could be recruited to offer the district periodic stakeholder perspective throughout the course of implementation.



Continue to engage stakeholders in discussions regarding the logistics of expanding Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. In general, stakeholders are very excited about the potential for accessible, high-quality ECE but feel they are not privy to the logistics of implementation. Staff and parents are concerned about the resources needed for implementation, raising questions about staffing, physical space, and materials. Community or business partners express concern regarding the impact of programming on the community, including the private workforce.

OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESULTS

This section presents the analysis of the open-ended responses from the survey. All responses are quoted verbatim with minor modifications for clarity if needed. Researchers only reported themes with over 9% response frequency rates.

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS EXCITING ABOUT WHAT HCPS IS WORKING ON TO IMPLEMENT THE BLUEPRINT REQUIREMENTS?



What is exciting about what HCPS is working on to implement the Blueprint requirements?

Among the 148 coded responses, the most cited theme related to exciting elements of the Blueprint is **College and Career Readiness (CCR)**. Specifically, 33% of respondents provide responses that celebrate students' current academic opportunities and how these can support students' postsecondary pathways. For example, a few respondents praise HCPS for providing dual enrollment opportunities for high school students. Comments within this theme also focus on general curriculum and instruction matters. **Both employees and non-employees are excited about CCR opportunities**, as 33 percent of the employee responses and 33 percent of the non-employee responses for this question were related to this theme.

The second most frequently cited theme is **Elevating Educators**, with 28 percent of responses coded under this theme. Many respondents explicitly reference the "Career Ladder" which is highlighted under this pillar and other concepts that fall into this category, such as hiring and retention practices for staff. Specifically, respondents are excited about increased diversity in hiring teachers and staff, increased compensation that recognizes the value of teachers, and increased professional development and incentives to support educators. In particular, a lot of respondents comment on increasing teacher salaries and adjusting staffing to support teachers and their hard work. **Employees seem more excited about changes related to teachers and leaders when compared to non-employees, but both stakeholder groups value these practices.**

Twenty-six percent of respondents identify exciting Student Support elements of the Blueprint. Several respondents reference disparities across students and are excited by the efforts to secure a successful academic future for all students, especially historically underserved groups. Further, responses coded under this theme relate to student autonomy and support for struggling students and specific student groups (e.g., English learners). Respondents also identify family involvement, engagement, and community collaboration as exciting outcomes of the Blueprint, often due to the shift towards a Community Schools model. For example, one employee stated, "*what I am most excited about is the potential impact that the Community Schools model will have on students, families, and the communities that comprise Harford County.*" **Employees and non-employees are similarly excited about the plan's positive impact on students and families** with 30 percent of employees' responses and 23 percent of non-employees' responses related to this theme.

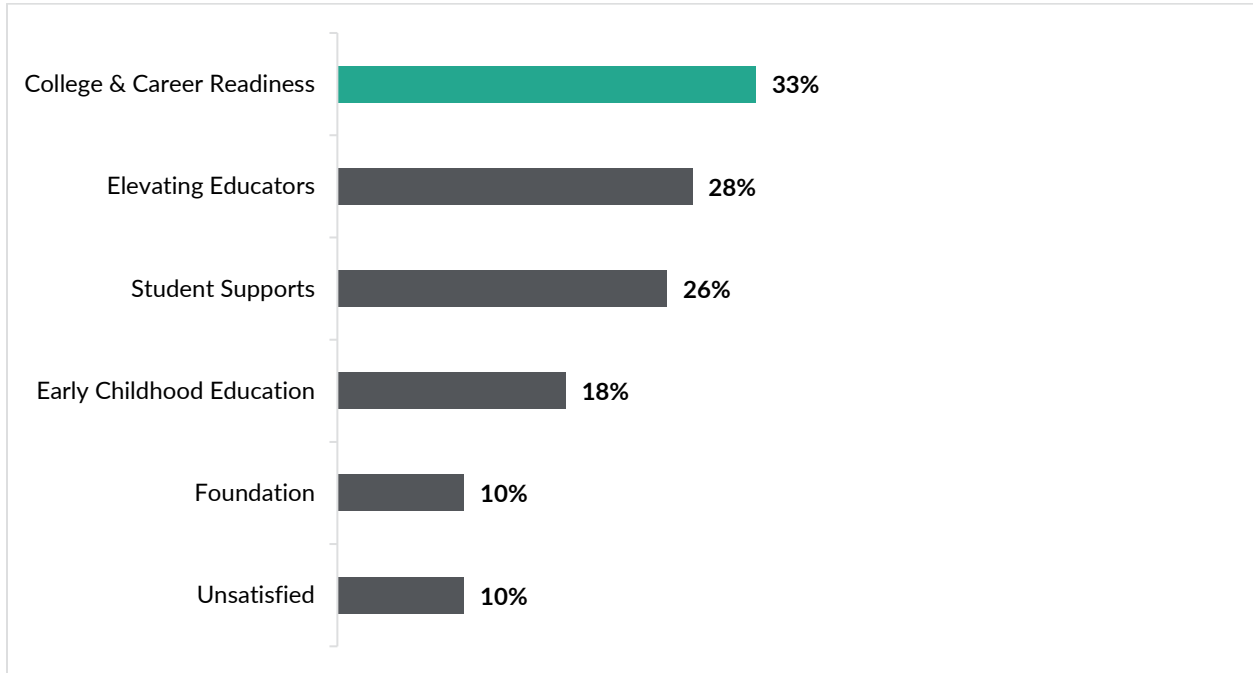
Early Childhood Education (ECE) emerged as a theme across 18 percent of responses as well. This theme aligns with the Blueprint pillar of ECE which describes the expansion and support for high-quality, accessible public and community-based early education programs. Respondents mention the increase in options for pre-K (i.e., half-day and full-day) and the accessibility through income requirements that provide a greater number of children the opportunity to receive high-quality early education. Employees and non-employees emphasize the importance of building foundational support structures early on to set up students for success later in their educational career.

Ten percent of respondents identify exciting elements related to the **Foundation** pillar. This theme includes comments regarding the practical aspects of the plan such as community resources and services, funding, and the commitment to the plan (i.e., implementation and accountability). The importance of this theme does not significantly differ across stakeholder groups, but employees' responses have a slightly higher frequency of responses relating to this theme.

Ten percent of responses were coded as "Unsatisfied." This theme suggests a portion of respondents are not satisfied with the Blueprint and feel that "nothing" is exciting, or the plan is the same as what the district is already doing. Other responses suggest frustration with the plan or a lack of endorsement in the proposed outcomes. Notably, 18 percent of non-employees were "Unsatisfied," whereas only two percent of employees responses were coded under this theme, suggesting that **parents and community members may feel more unsatisfied** with the Blueprint plan.

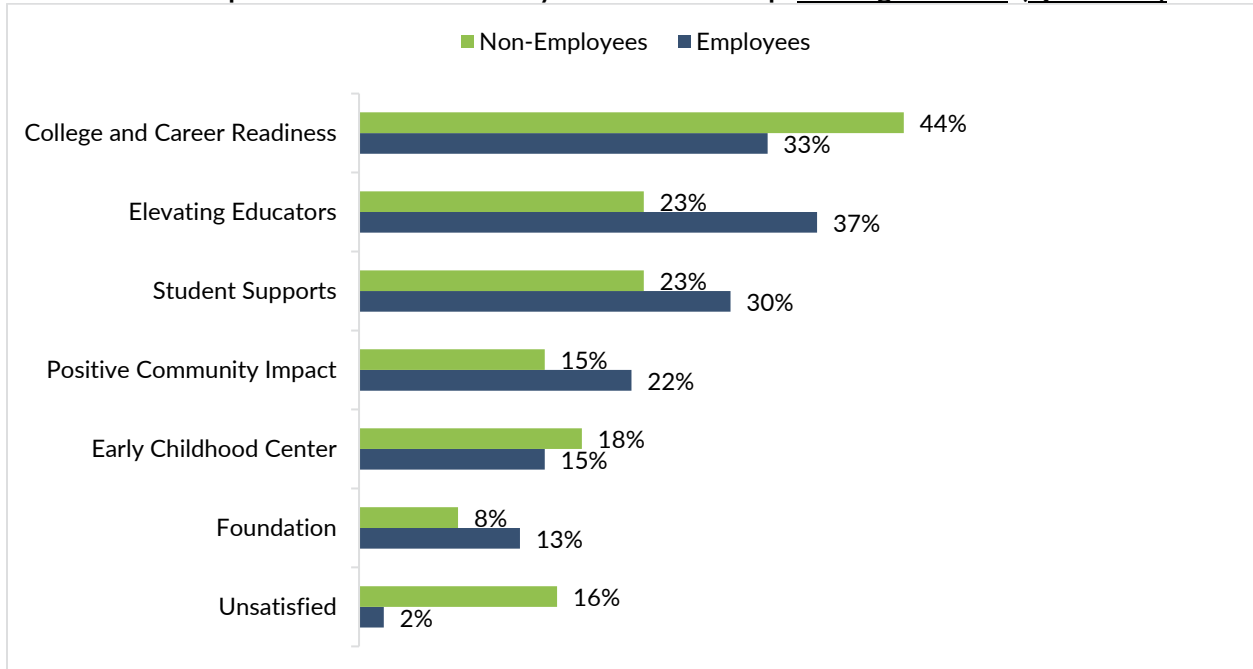
In contrast, four percent of respondents suggest that all pillars are exciting and express general approval of the plan. For example, one employee mentioned “all of the Blueprint areas have one or more part that is exciting for students.”

Theme Frequency: Top Themes Regarding Exciting Elements (Question 1)



Note: This figure indicates the top six themes of the 148 coded responses. The theme with the highest frequency is highlighted in teal. Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

Relative Importance of Each Theme by Stakeholder Group: Exciting Elements (Question 1)



Note: Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

Sample Responses from Survey Feedback: Exciting Elements (Question 1)

Theme	Sample Responses	
	Employees (staff, school-based, central office, board members)	Non-employees (parents, community or business partners)
College and Career Readiness (CCR)	<i>"Expanding career options and offering college and apprenticeship credit programs to students."</i>	<i>"Dual enrollment in college (especially if it remains to be free). The advancements in computer science and other stem programs. Apprenticeship programs for those students not wanting to go to college."</i> <i>"I am excited about the emphasis on College and Career Readiness."</i>
Elevating Educators	<i>"Increased educator pay and opportunities articulated in the Career Ladder."</i> <i>"It is exciting to witness HCPS putting forth a strong effort to incentivize educators, positively recognize educators, attract educators, and retain educators through competitive and balanced pay."</i>	<i>"Compensation for teachers; increased salary for new teachers."</i>
Student Supports	<i>"It is also exciting that HCPS is identifying more schools as community schools. This provides a staff person to assist the families and the community in which they work."</i> <i>"There is much work around Behavioral Health Services with support for our students and families provided by School counselors, School Psychologists, Social Workers, and Nurses. We have provided District-wide training to staff on trauma informed practices, QPR, Handle with Care, ACES, The Brain Architecture Game and Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences."</i>	<i>"Impacting positive change in my community and for my family."</i> <i>"I am excited that they are finally putting something in affect for students, teachers and staff, as well as with the parents that I think we were all looking for."</i> <i>"I am excited for the additional focus on mental health, well-being, and DE&I. Providing additional supports and resources for students who need it to improve equity is so important."</i>
Early Childhood Education (ECE)	<i>"The overall picture, building an environment where students are provided the foundation for success from day one in early childcare – putting in the structural supports early on will create a stronger future."</i>	<i>"I think the early childhood initiatives of preschool for all Harford County children is incredibly important. Preschool has been hard for parents that fall outside of the income requirements by HCPS but struggle still to afford private options."</i> <i>"I think that it is a great idea to start offering full time Pre-K. This is great for so many reasons especially for early intervention."</i>
Foundation	<i>"Title 1 schools are only at the elementary level. The Blueprint now provides additional resources under Priority Schools."</i> <i>"What is exciting is how much time and money is being invested in writing such a comprehensive blueprint."</i>	<i>"It's exciting to witness the commitment HCPS is making to all aspects of the Blueprint."</i> <i>"The budget will be in more of an alignment with Blueprint, as it more clearly identifies the pillars."</i>

Theme	Sample Responses	
	Employees (staff, school-based, central office, board members)	Non-employees (parents, community or business partners)
Unsatisfied	<p><i>"Nothing. HCPS is simply repackaging what they are already doing."</i></p>	<p><i>"These have been done for years in multiple other districts throughout multiple states. This is a rework of previous standards and requirements."</i></p> <p><i>"It doesn't seem that different on the surface from the existing curriculum. And the existing curriculum needs a lot of work."</i></p>

QUESTION 2: WHAT IS CHALLENGING ABOUT WHAT HCPS IS WORKING ON TO IMPLEMENT THE BLUEPRINT REQUIREMENTS?



What is challenging about what HCPS is working on to implement the Blueprint requirements?

Forty-five percent of the 141 coded responses for Question 2 identify challenges related to the theme of **Compensation, Funding, and Staffing**, which aligns to the Blueprint pillar, Foundation. A large portion of employees and non-employees express concerns regarding funding to implement all of the goals outlined in the Blueprint. Specifically, stakeholders are worried about the breadth and sustainability of the funding. Similarly, responses highlight concerns around recruiting and retaining enough staff to implement the plan effectively. Although stakeholders may be excited about the many components of the plan, they are wary of the feasibility around implementation and funding structures to carry it out. Several respondents also share concerns regarding additional staff and physical space for the ECE programs. **Analysis across stakeholder groups suggests employees feel strongly about this area of challenge** with 63 percent of employees' responses coded under this theme compared to only 33 percent of non-employees' responses.

The second most frequently reported theme also relates to the Foundation pillar; 28 percent of responses relate to the theme, Accountability and Alignment.

Respondents express concern with the follow-through of the plan as well as alignment with desired or best practices. For example, one non-employee respondent states a challenge of *“following through on so many initiatives to completion.”* Stakeholders seem concerned whether HCPS will implement different goals across the large scope of the plan and do so with fidelity. Additionally, many comments relate to a lack of alignment with high-quality curriculum or teaching practices/supports, such as the curricular alignment with the Science of Reading and lack of adequate support for gifted students. The lack of curricular alignment appears to be particularly important to non-employee respondents. Thirty-seven percent of non-employees' responses fall under this theme whereas only 17 percent of employee responses are related to Accountability and Alignment.

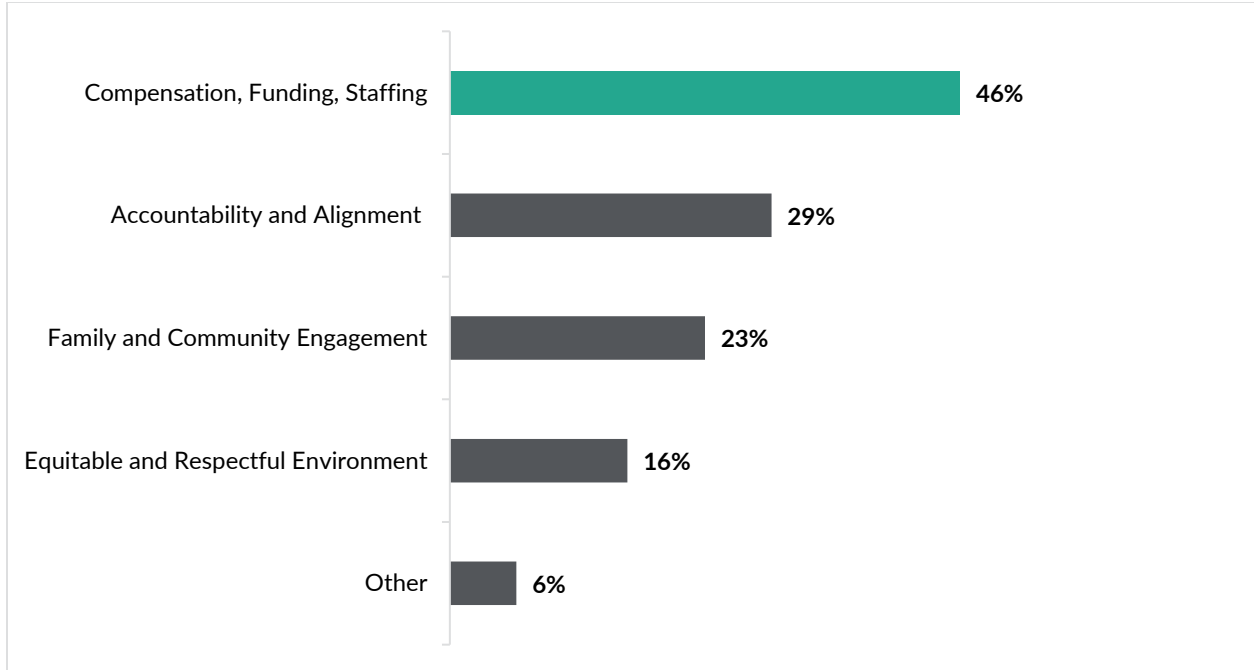
About a quarter of responses (23%) highlight the challenge of Family and Community Engagement, including issues with the communication and involvement with families and community members. Many responses emphasize the challenges of hearing different voices, gaining buy-in, and overall satisfaction among stakeholders. In general, these respondents recognize the difficulty in getting many diverse groups on the same page to support and carry out this plan. Both employees and non-employees feel Family and Community Engagement is a challenge for plan implementation. However, a larger percentage of non-employees' responses suggest challenges related to family and community engagement. Families may be less directly involved in plan implementation, requiring a higher level of communication and effort to gain buy-in.

Sixteen percent of responses relate to creating an Equitable and Respectful Environment for stakeholders.

Several stakeholders identify aspects of the school community that are disrespectful or not inclusive of all backgrounds and identities. For example, responses demonstrate frustration with diversity in the curriculum and among staff as well as a lack of opportunities for all students.

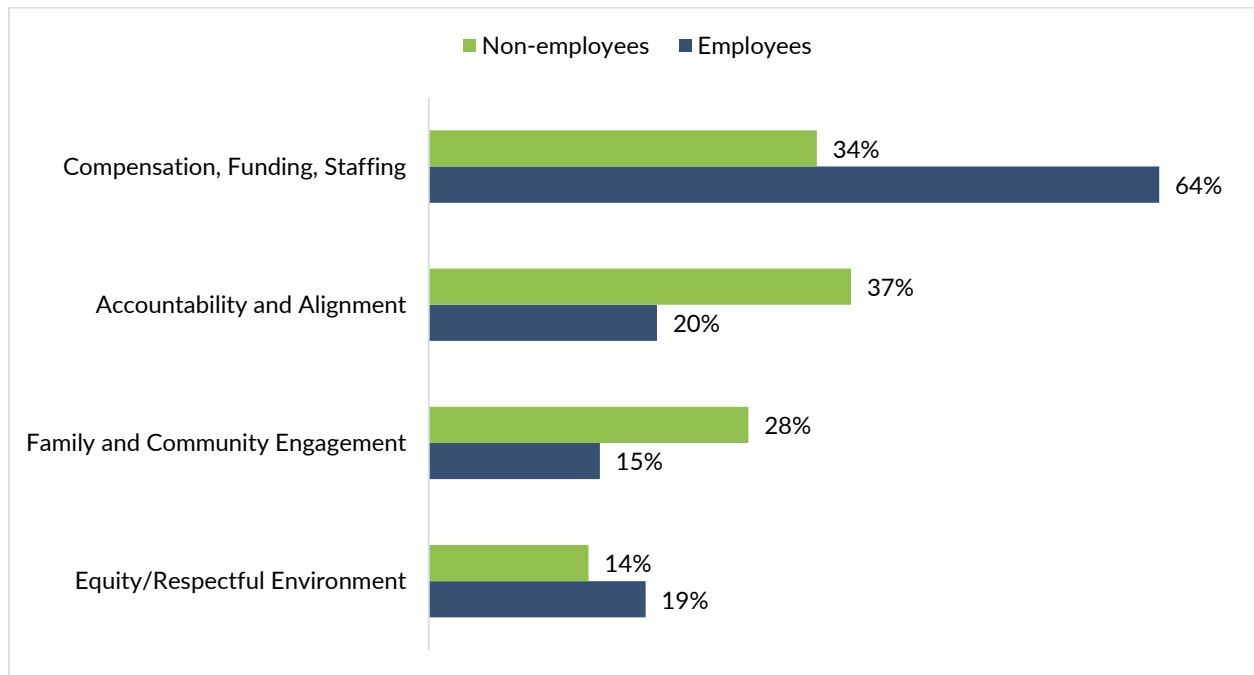
A small portion (6%) of respondents did not align with the above four themes and were coded as “Other.” Responses under this category typically express uncertainty (e.g., “not sure”) or general negative comments. The frequency of “Equitable and Respectful Environment” and “Other” themes are relatively similar for both stakeholder groups (i.e., employees and non-employees).

Theme Frequency: Top Themes Regarding Challenges (Question 2)



Note: This figure indicates the top five themes of the 141 coded responses. The theme with the highest frequency is highlighted in teal. Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

Relative Importance of Each Theme by Stakeholder Group: Challenges (Question 2)



Note: Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

Sample Responses from Survey Feedback: Challenges (Question 2)

Theme	Sample Responses	
	Employees (staff, school-based, central office, board members)	Non-employees (parents, community or business partners)
Compensation, Funding, Staffing	<p><i>"Funding to ensure the goals and plans can be implemented."</i></p> <p><i>"Physical space for early learners: The classrooms are not large enough in some buildings to implement the curriculum in a safe and effective manner, particularly programs/classrooms with special needs students who may have assistive devices"</i></p>	<p><i>"Although there are School Counselors in the building, there is a huge need for therapeutic mental health professionals and social workers in ALL school buildings on a regular basis. The increased instances of serious mental health issues are more than School Counselors can handle."</i></p>
Accountability and Alignment	<p><i>"Supports and monitoring of the numerous intervention strategies for students as well as the professional development for teachers."</i></p> <p><i>"The sheer breadth of the plan as well as working to set up and follow accountability protocols which are critical."</i></p> <p><i>There are lots of words and great ideas, but it will mean nothing if there isn't follow through and flexibility in the implementation."</i></p>	<p><i>"The sheer breadth of the plan as well as working to set up and follow accountability protocols which are critical."</i></p> <p><i>"Getting all of the administrators to agree on following through."</i></p> <p><i>"Units of Study (and F&P) are not aligned to reading science, so to see that correlation is extremely concerning. Harford County has an opportunity with this Blueprint to shift course and make a positive impact on the reading/ writing for students K-8 - in the entire ELA block - and is choosing to hold steadfast to practices that are explicitly disproven by research. Why?"</i></p>
Family and Community Engagement	<p><i>"There are so many contrasting interests it is hard to put a plan in place that everyone will be satisfied with."</i></p> <p><i>"The Blueprint challenges are getting the family buy-in. While we can connect the families with resources, they have to be able to take the next step, such as making a phone call, or asking for food."</i></p>	<p><i>"It's challenging because although everything being implemented, Mental Health Care, Ptech etc. is great for our students, I find has a parent there is an extreme lack of communication, follow-up and using the tools (Canvas, Home Center, Class Dojo). There are teachers that I have reached out to several times on these platforms who do not respond to parents."</i></p>
Equitable and Respectful Environment	<p><i>"There is sometimes an atmosphere of disrespect and lack of trust in communities for educators because some people just do not understand what goes into choosing a career in education and the commitment that entails."</i></p>	<p><i>"The blueprint excludes and/or omits any implementation or changes to the social studies and history curriculum. The current curriculum excludes, omits, and lacks accurate history of Native American and black people roles in American history. The current curriculum is limited to teaching students about MLK and Rosa Parks in civil rights and slavery. The lack of accurate historical content and updates in the curriculum continues to marginalize black students in education, omits and erases their history, and it contributes to a lack of understanding and misinformation by white students about their own history."</i></p>

QUESTION 3: WHAT ASPECTS OF BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION IS HCPS DEMONSTRATING EXEMPLARY PROGRESS?



What aspects of Blueprint implementation is HCPS demonstrating exemplary progress?

Over one-quarter of respondents (26%) suggest aspects related to CCR are demonstrating exemplary progress. Respondents appreciate opportunities for students to prepare for college as well as alternative postsecondary plans (e.g., apprenticeships, career pathways). One respondent highlighted *“the expansion of CTE and special programs available across the system.”* In general, CCR is a theme valued across both respondent groups as both employees and non-employees see the importance of supporting students’ future through additional pathways and avenues to succeed.

Twenty percent of responses do not identify specific aspects of the plan that are demonstrating exemplary progress. Some responses indicate the Blueprint has not moved from the planning to implementation stage, while other responses suggest stakeholders are generally unsatisfied with the plan. In addition to those who feel unsatisfied, responses suggest several respondents do not feel confident answering this question due to a lack of clarity with the plan or limited understanding with current implementation. **A larger portion of non-employees report responses that demonstrated uncertainty around the areas of exemplar progress when compared with employees.** Specifically, several non-employee respondents felt the plan was too long to read or too difficult to understand.

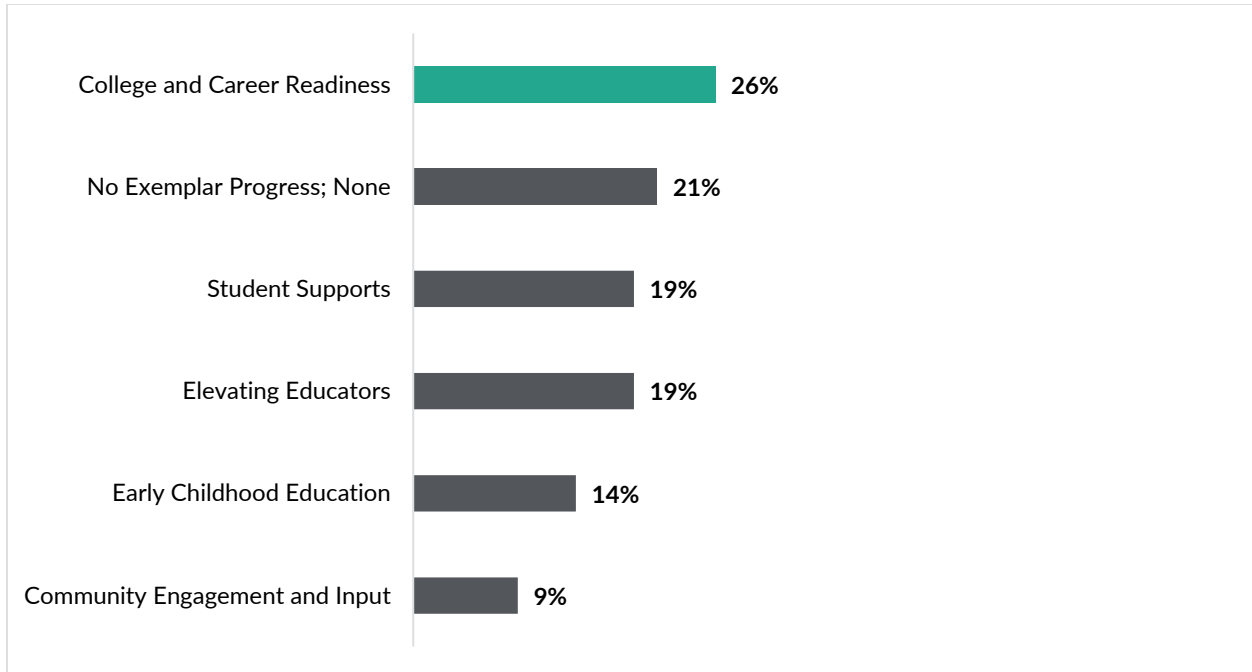
The theme of Student Supports yielded a 19 percent response rate. Stakeholders share positive perceptions that the plan increases various student services and supports. Stakeholders also highlight how the plan leverages community resources through partnerships to support families and students (e.g., mental health services). For example, one non-employee respondent states, *“there are schools that do a great job of including the community and have reciprocal supports.”* Related are comments about the community school model and its positive impact in increasing access to opportunities and support structures. Notably, employees respond more frequently within this theme (31%) than non-employees (13%).

Nineteen percent of comments relate to the Blueprint pillar, Elevating Educators. Both employee and non-employee respondent groups emphasize progress around staffing (i.e., increases in numbers and diversity), compensation of staff, and professional development and career progression (e.g., Career Ladder, NBCTs).

Fourteen percent of responses highlighted ECE programming, which aligns with the ECE Blueprint pillar. Many respondents note the progress in expanding early childhood programs to increase access to high-quality early learning opportunities regardless of socioeconomic status/income. Employees and non-employees note the value of expanding programs and allocating resources to increase early learning opportunities.

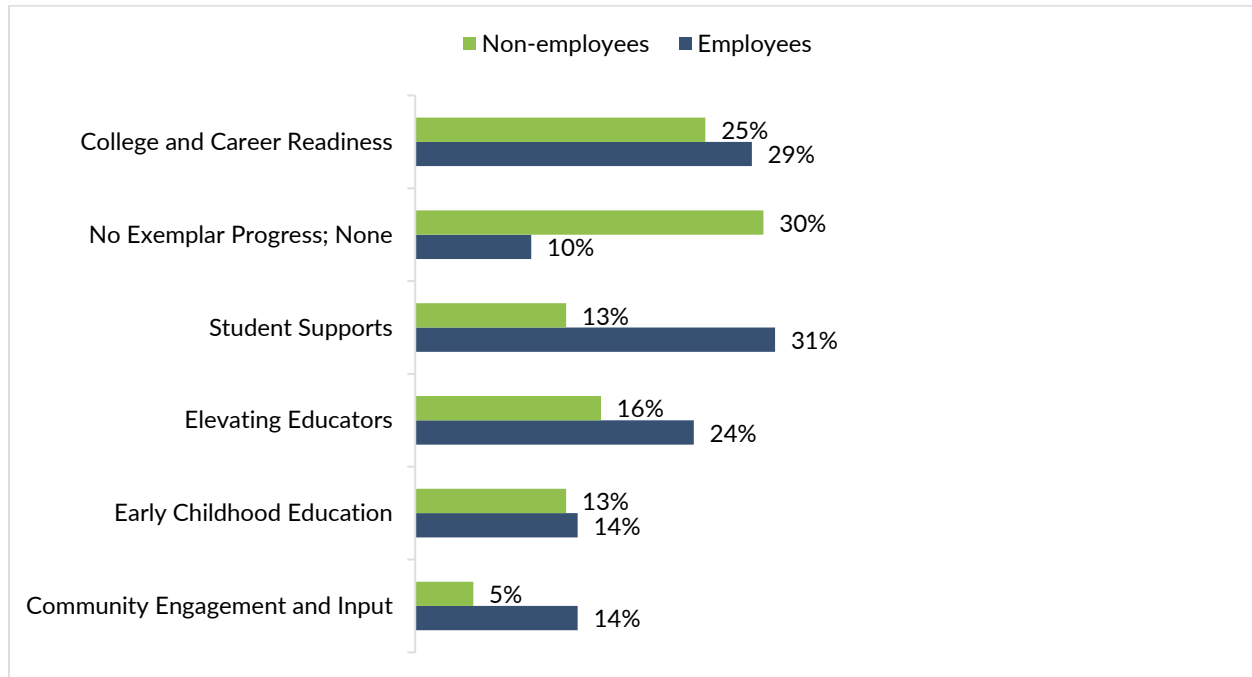
Some respondents (9%) feel that HCPS’ Blueprint implementation is demonstrating exemplar progress related to Community Engagement and Input. Respondents appreciate the district involves many stakeholder perspectives including staff, families, and community members. Interestingly, **viewing Community Engagement and Input as an exemplar component of the plan is more closely associated with employees compared to non-employees.** Specifically, 14 percent of employees’ responses to this question were related to this theme compared to five percent (5%) of non-employees’ responses.

Theme Frequency: Top Themes Regarding Exemplar Progress (Question 3)



Note: This figure indicates the top five themes of the 103 coded responses. The theme with the highest frequency is highlighted in teal. Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

Relative Importance of Each Theme by Stakeholder Group: Exemplar Progress (Question 3)



Note: Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

Sample Responses from Survey Feedback: Exemplar Progress (Question 3)

Theme	Sample Responses	
	Employees (staff, school-based, central office, board members)	Non-employees (parents, community or business partners)
College and Career Readiness	<p><i>"Plans to meet the needs of most populations of students in HCPS."</i></p> <p><i>"HCPS is demonstrating exemplar progress with North Star initiatives having high school students complete college course work."</i></p> <p><i>"North Star, Student Supports."</i></p>	<p><i>"Opportunities for higher level learning within the high school experience— the IB program and other Magnets provide multiple opportunities for interest for students."</i></p> <p><i>"Aligning career education with non-traditional education opportunities."</i></p> <p><i>"The 9th grade graduation "on track" to graduation rate trend is positive not only among all students, but targeted student subgroups as well. "</i></p>
No Exemplar Progress; None	<p><i>"Most Blueprint areas already have developed structures for implementation of the goals."</i></p> <p><i>"None, but it is close on several but none that would meet my definition of exemplar."</i></p>	<p><i>"I haven't seen a change, other than free HCC classes. So if the Blueprint has already been implemented, I haven't noticed."</i></p> <p><i>"I found it challenging to even read the blueprint since I couldn't actually find one."</i></p>
Student Supports	<p><i>"Community Schools. I see the hard work that the Community School Specialist are doing to identify the needs of the families and communities and secure partnerships with resources that help support those in need."</i></p> <p><i>"More support for disadvantaged populations and mental health access."</i></p>	<p><i>"Looking for innovative ways to manage case management tasks with regard to students with disabilities."</i></p> <p><i>"Trauma informed practices, wellness assessment for data (although interventions can't take place if counselor caseloads remain high)."</i></p>
Elevating Educators	<p><i>"Acknowledgement of the expertise of NBCTs."</i></p> <p><i>"Wages."</i></p>	<p><i>"Diversity in its workforce."</i></p> <p><i>"Elevating Educators/Career Ladder."</i></p>
Early Childhood Education	<p><i>"Early childhood opportunities."</i></p> <p><i>"Early Childhood expansion and growing teachers from within (students and support staff)."</i></p>	<p><i>"Making changes to pre-kindergarten classes."</i></p> <p><i>"Harford County Public Schools has dedicated resources to making sure that the PreK classrooms in the public schools complete the Accreditation process and they have done an excellent job of pursuing Accreditation at those locations."</i></p>
Community Engagement and Input	<p><i>"Gaining stakeholder input."</i></p> <p><i>"There is a lot of communication being trickled down about this Blueprint. The committees established revolving around Innovation ensure that there is representation from many stakeholders."</i></p>	<p><i>"Increasing teacher salaries, developing strong relationships with community partners; creating committees that include both HCPS staff and members of the community."</i></p> <p><i>"I think understanding that Mental Health is an important part of the student's learning success. The family nights at the Title 1 schools have been beneficial to the communities."</i></p>

QUESTION 4: WHAT ASPECTS OF BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION DOES HCPS NEED TO IMPROVE PLANNING FOR BETTER PROGRESS?

 What aspects of Blueprint implementation does HCPS need to improve planning for better progress?

Over one-quarter (27%) of respondents identify both College and Career Readiness and Elevating Educators as needing improved planning. Many respondents feel CCR plans are positive and moving in the right direction (per its high response rate in Question 3), but still require additional improvements. Some responses, for example, suggest needing to adjust the implementation or accessibility of programs (e.g., dual enrollment). One respondent suggests “*using proven curriculums to support students*” and another respondent hopes for “*more seats in the magnet program.*” Within the Elevating Educators theme, although many stakeholders feel the **increases in hiring are positive, some feel there needs to be more support for retaining high-quality teachers**, such as through compensation, training and support, and clear and appropriate responsibilities. A larger portion of employees comment on Elevating Educators, and a larger portion of non-employees comment on CCR.

Sixteen percent of responses relate to improving Student Supports. Most respondents who suggest improvements related to this theme have specific contexts in which they would like to see additional student support. Examples include supporting specific student populations (e.g., English learners, students of color). Notably, many responses specifically reference needing to support Gifted and Talented students more. Employees comment nearly twice as much (22%) on this theme than non-employees (12%).

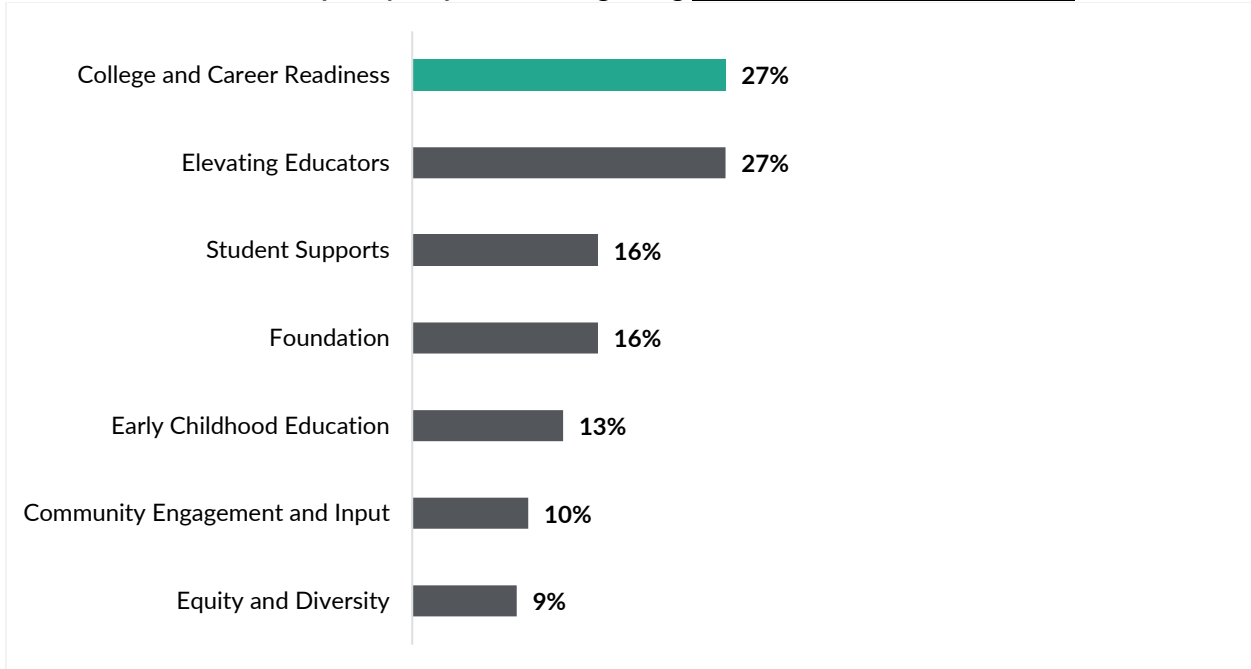
The Blueprint pillar, Foundation, yielded 16 percent of the responses. These responses generally identify a need for improvement in areas related to accountability, funding, and alignment with state standards. Many respondents are concerned about whether HCPS has the funding to carry out all the goals and align practical strategies with the plan. For example, one respondent states, “*the act of implementing needs to follow through to the teacher/student level. There is a lot of talk about it and not much follow through.*”

Although many stakeholders are excited about the expansion of ECE programming, a portion (13%) feel HCPS needs to consider specific implementation strategies and barriers. Respondents cite physical space, qualified staff, and impact on the community workforce as potential implementation barriers. These concerns around staffing and physical space are mostly voiced by employees as they will be more directly impacted by a lack of proper resources.

The remaining two themes that yielded over nine percent are Community Engagement and Input (10%) and Equity and Diversity (9%). While Community Engagement and Input is identified positively in Question 3 by a small group of respondents (9%), but about the same portion of respondents indicate a need for improvement in this area. Most comments for Question 4 related to Community Engagement and Input suggest a need for improved communication and more effective collaboration with families, community members, and staff members, particularly through more consistently structured meetings or other information-sharing methods.

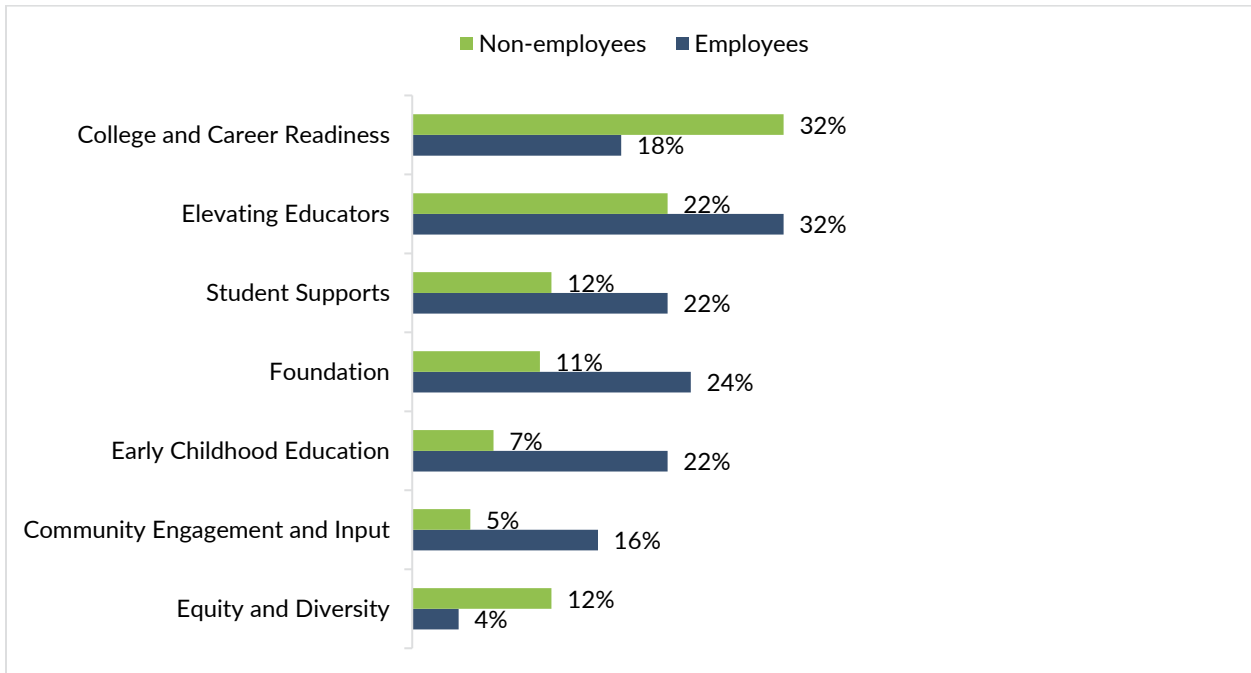
Related to Equity and Diversity, some stakeholders feel there needs to be **more intentional effort to increase equitable practices** (e.g., diverse educators and curricula) whereas others feel equity work is not important. Across respondent groups, both employees and non-employees have concerns or skepticism in these areas of equity and practical implementation. However, **a larger portion of non-employees’ responses (12%) fall under this theme when compared to employees’ responses (4%).**

Theme Frequency: Top Themes Regarding Plan Improvements (Question 4)



Note: This figure indicates the top five themes of the 124 coded responses. The theme with the highest frequency is highlighted in teal. Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

Relative Importance of Each Theme by Stakeholder Group: (Plan Improvements) Question 4



Note: Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

Sample Responses from Survey Feedback: (Plan Improvements) Question 4

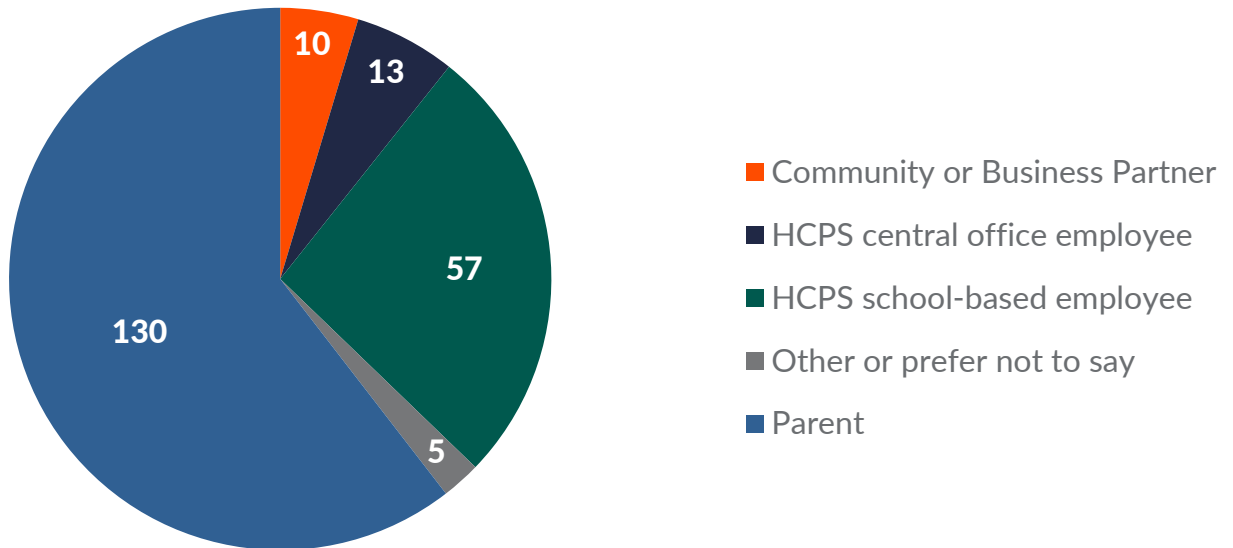
Theme	Sample Responses	
	Employees (staff, school-based, central office, board members)	Non-employees (parents, community or business partners)
College and Career Readiness	<p><i>"College and Career Readiness results for all students, especially students of color."</i></p> <p><i>"How will HCPS incentivize AP over Dual enrollment? High schools will be losing many students to dual enrollment. How will that impact extra-curriculars and athletics?"</i></p>	<p><i>"Exposing children to career opportunities. Children should be encouraged not only to attend college, but careers at the can jump into right after high school. I would like to see a program that involves community members coming into the classroom explaining career opportunities in the community."</i></p> <p><i>"Using proven curriculums to support students."</i></p>
Elevating Educators	<p><i>"Truly stick to these goals, especially those involving support of staff. Those seem to be the first things that get pushed aside. Salaries are a very important aspect, especially when trying to improve retention."</i></p>	<p><i>"Staffing: The plan identifies the need for additional teachers, assistants, special area teachers, and special educators to support full-day pre-kindergarten students. However, it does not provide a clear plan for recruiting and hiring these additional staff members."</i></p> <p><i>"Although recruiting and hiring effective teachers is present, I believe more conversation needs to be centered around retaining highly effective educators."</i></p>
Student Supports	<p><i>"With the increased growth of our EL population, our program is in the process of determining the best way to staff and allocate leadership solely focused on providing our EL students and families the support needed to become independent learners."</i></p> <p><i>"Behavioral health services."</i></p>	<p><i>"Supports for ELL students in all schools. This should include a full-time ELL position in all schools who have a high population of ELL students or who have previously received a poor rating on MSDE report card for ELL student success."</i></p> <p><i>"Where are the supports for helping gifted and talented students excel?"</i></p>
Foundation	<p><i>"Alignment of practice with the plan."</i></p> <p><i>"Funding."</i></p> <p><i>"Measuring of success; I think with this level of improvement/commitment there will need to be clear indicators of positive outcomes, some of which are easy to capture, some not so much."</i></p>	<p><i>"Budget constraints: Expanding pre-kindergarten programs requires additional funding for staffing, materials, and supplies. The plan acknowledges the need for additional funding but does not provide specifics on how the funding will be obtained or allocated."</i></p> <p><i>"Accountability."</i></p>
Early Childhood Education	<p><i>"Remodeling and replacing older buildings, making adequate space for pre-k expansion in existing buildings."</i></p> <p><i>"Innovation around Early Childhood - we have to be willing to do things differently to meet the goals of this pillar."</i></p>	<p><i>"If the Blueprint plan is implemented with the vast majority of students being served in the public schools, private programs will not be able to stay in business and they will close, resulting in less availability for childcare at the infant, toddler, two and three-year-old levels. This will create a much bigger workforce problem in our community."</i></p>
Community Engagement and Resources	<p><i>"Further communication needs to take place through departments."</i></p> <p><i>"Just continued communication to all stakeholders, including school-based staff."</i></p>	<p><i>"Focus on bullying and mental health services."</i></p> <p><i>"Stakeholder engagement and cooperation."</i></p>

Theme	Sample Responses	
	Employees (staff, school-based, central office, board members)	Non-employees (parents, community or business partners)
Equity and Diversity	<p><i>"- Equity (testing, admission-based programs, high-compliance in what should be alternate environments - like "cameras on" at Swan Creek, "leveled" offerings, etc. all benefit those with existing privilege and we don't really have good models that level the field)</i></p>	<p><i>"Equity: The plan does not address how to ensure that pre-kindergarten programs are accessible to all students, including those from low-income families, children with disabilities, and English language learners."</i></p> <p><i>" Just hiring someone to address diversity isn't going to fix the issue. They need to be properly resourced and supported to do their job."</i></p>

CLOSED-ENDED SURVEY QUESTION RESULTS

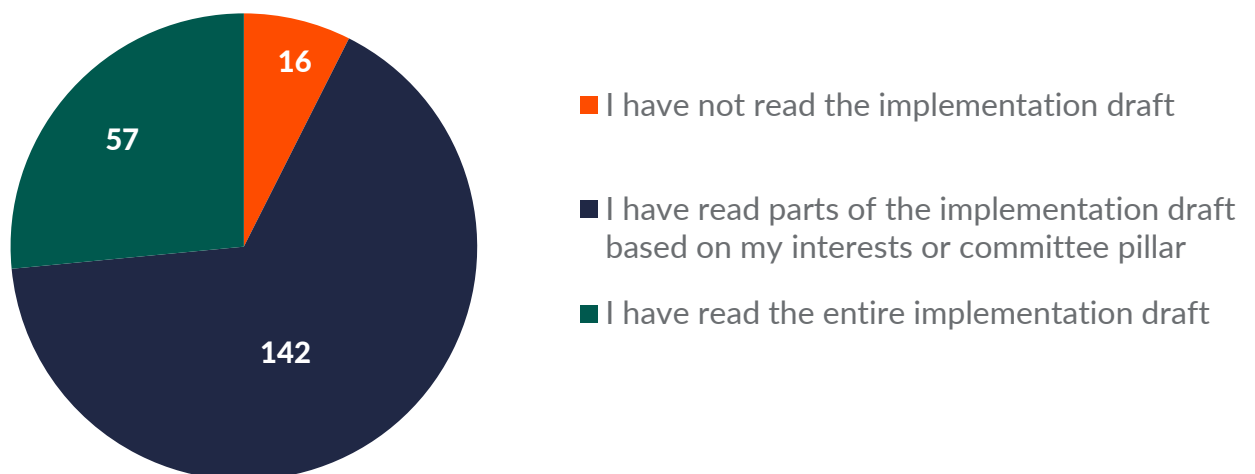
This section presents the responses and analysis of closed-ended questions from the Blueprint Implementation Survey.

I am providing feedback today as a:

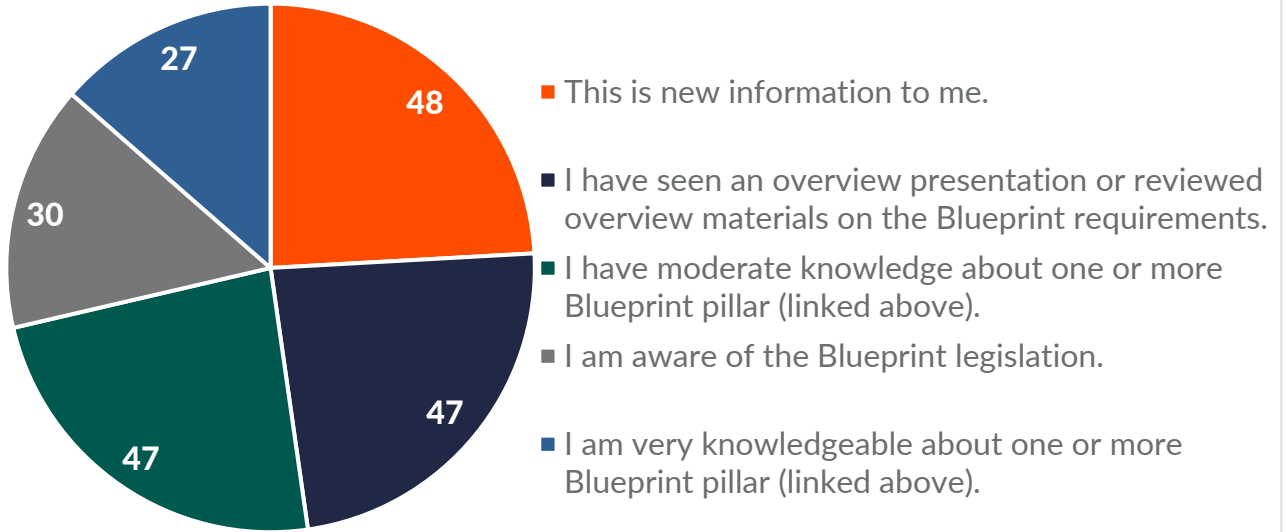


HCPS has released a draft implementation plan using a required MSDE template, please choose what best describes you:

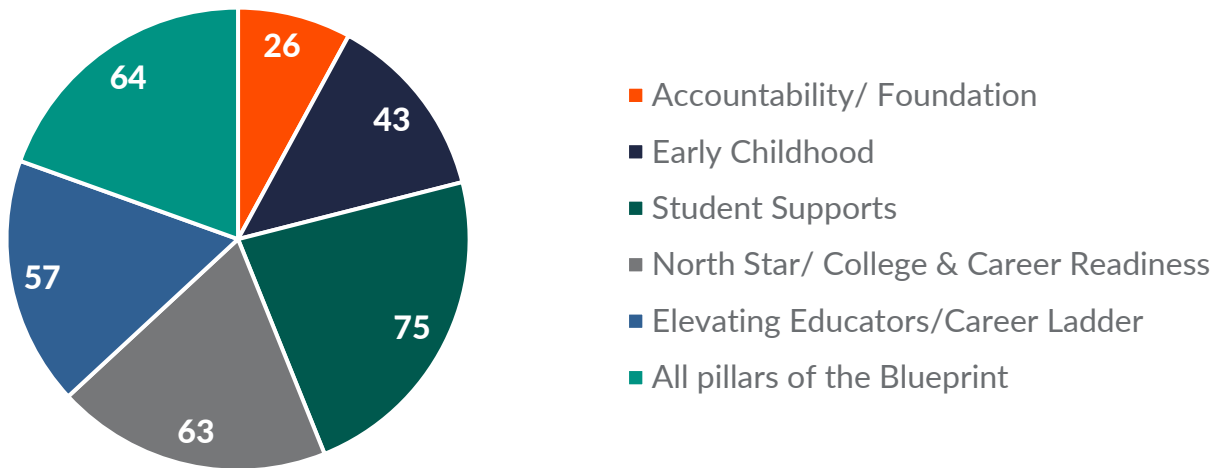
<https://www.hcps.org/superintendent/blueprint.aspx>



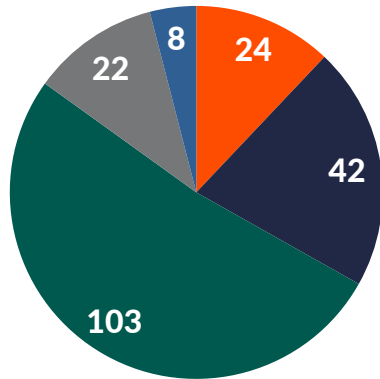
Please choose what best describes your interaction with the Blueprint legislation. <https://www.hcps.org/superintendent/blueprint.aspx>



I am providing feedback today on the following aspects of the Blueprint (choose all that apply):

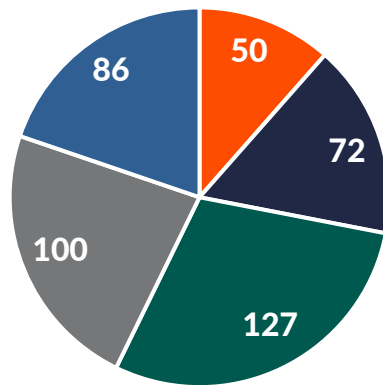


Please choose where your opinions fall on the following scale about Blueprint implementation for HCPS:



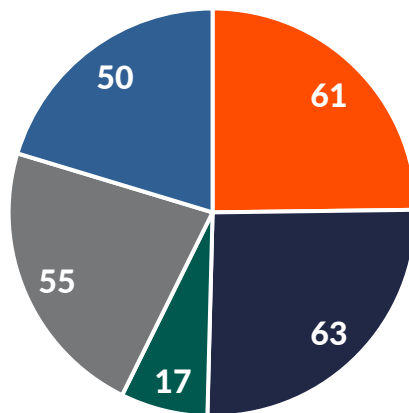
- 1 - Mostly challenges ahead
- 2 - A lot of challenges, with some opportunities
- 3 - Both challenges and opportunities
- 4 - A lot of opportunities with some challenges
- 5 - Mostly opportunities ahead

Which Blueprint pillars are the MOST important or valuable to you?



- Accountability/ Foundation
- Early Childhood
- Student Supports
- North Star/ College & Career Readiness
- Elevating Educators/Career Ladder

Which Blueprint pillars are the LEAST important or valuable to you?



- Accountability/ Foundation
- Early Childhood
- Student Supports
- North Star/ College & Career Readiness
- Elevating Educators/Career Ladder