

Many Cultures One Community

Multicultural Learning Environment Initiative

Lansing School District Board of Education
ISS Meeting June 11, 2026





Why We're Here Today

- Reintroduce the district's Multicultural Initiative
- Share the why, the framework, and review first-year implementation
- Look ahead to year two tasks and alignment within district initiatives



Who are we?

10,772
Active
Students

African American:
6,088 - 56.5%

Hispanic:
2,303 - 21.38%

Multilingual Learners:
1603 - 15.12%

62 languages
85 Countries

Asian:
823 - 7.64%

Native American*
: 364 - 0.34%

Identify as 2 or more Races :
1409 - 13.34%

Special Education:
2355 - 20.84%

White:
4,811 - 44.6%

Pacific Islander:
48 - <0.45%

*Not including Canadian tribes

Building on Existing Work

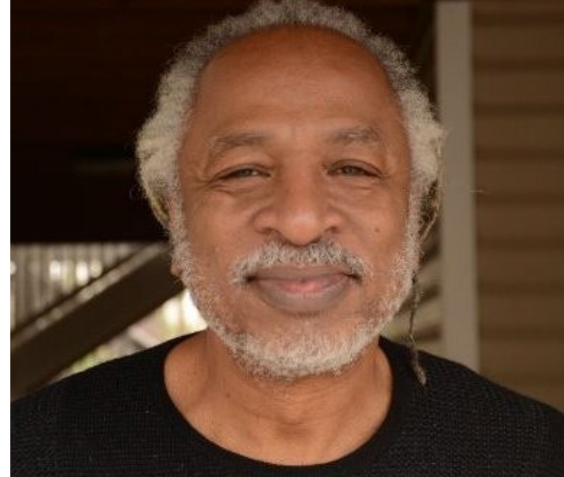


Multicultural Taskforce Co-chairs



Dr. Ruben Martinez

Professor Emeritus at MSU



Carlton Evans

Facilitator, Social Justice
Consultant



Jessica Benevides

Lansing School District
Superintendent

Task Force Members

Shirin
Kambin

Mitzi Walker

Hattie
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Adamu
Bahiru

Kristan
Small-
Grimes

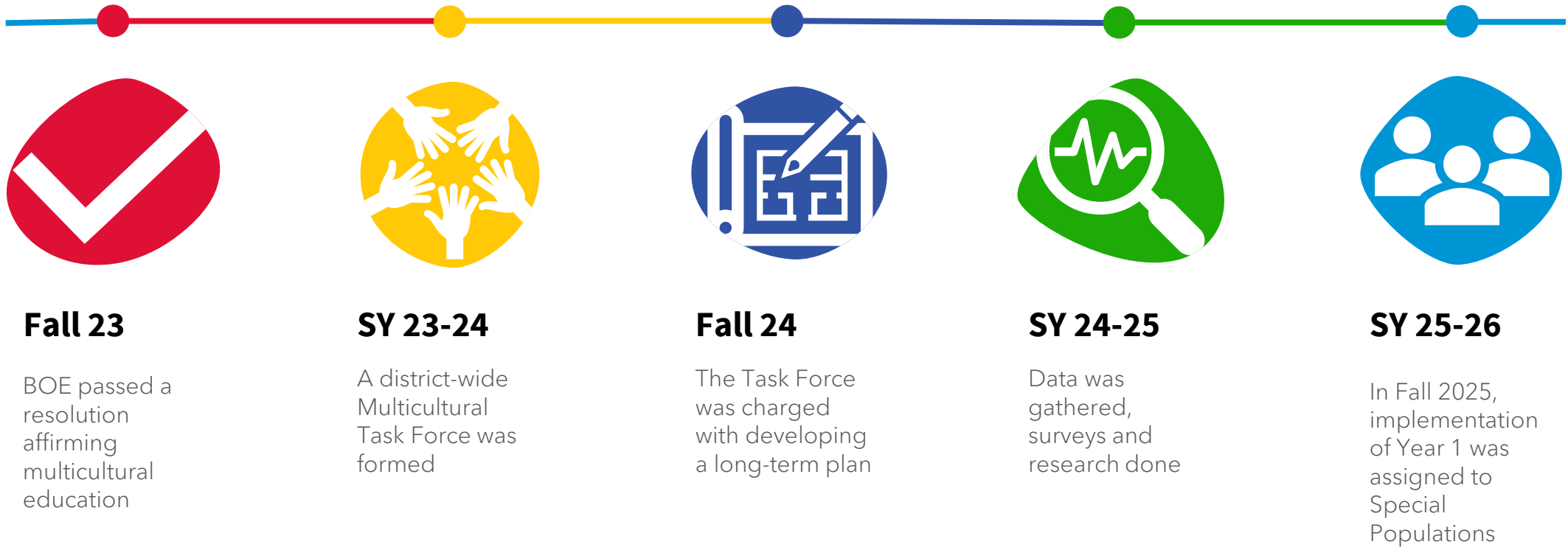
Rachel
Willis

Clinton
Mireles

Justin
Sheehan

Dr. Deyanira
Nevarez
Martinez

Developing the Multicultural Initiative



Why This Matters

Listening to Our Community

- District Equity Survey (Winter of 2022)
- Multicultural Survey (Fall 2024)
- Large Scale Great Schools Survey (Spring of 2025)

Key Takeaways:

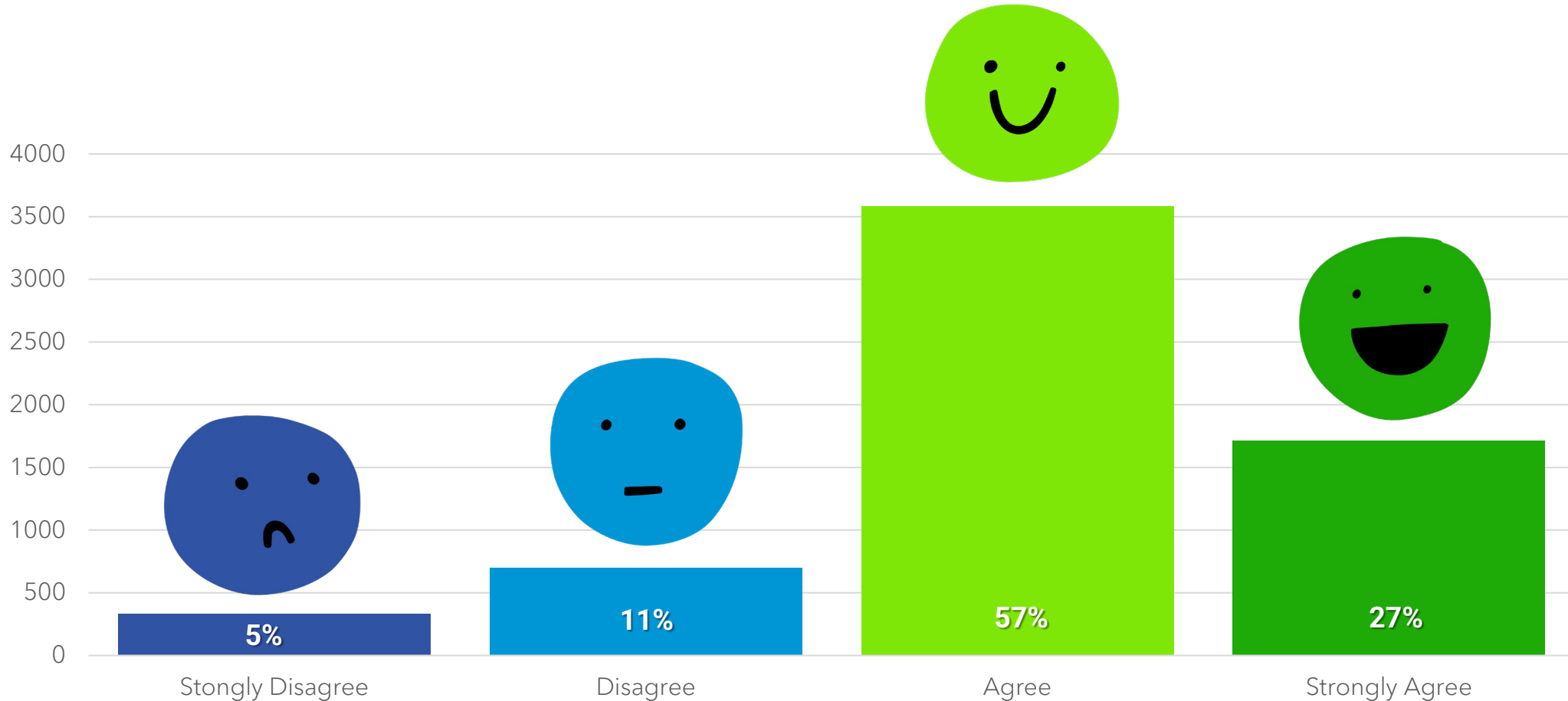
- Sense of belonging varies across student groups
- Desire for representation, affirmation, and cultural visibility
- Need for consistent district-wide approaches



Mentimeter participation: 3 questions

Student Responses: Great Schools Survey 2024-2025

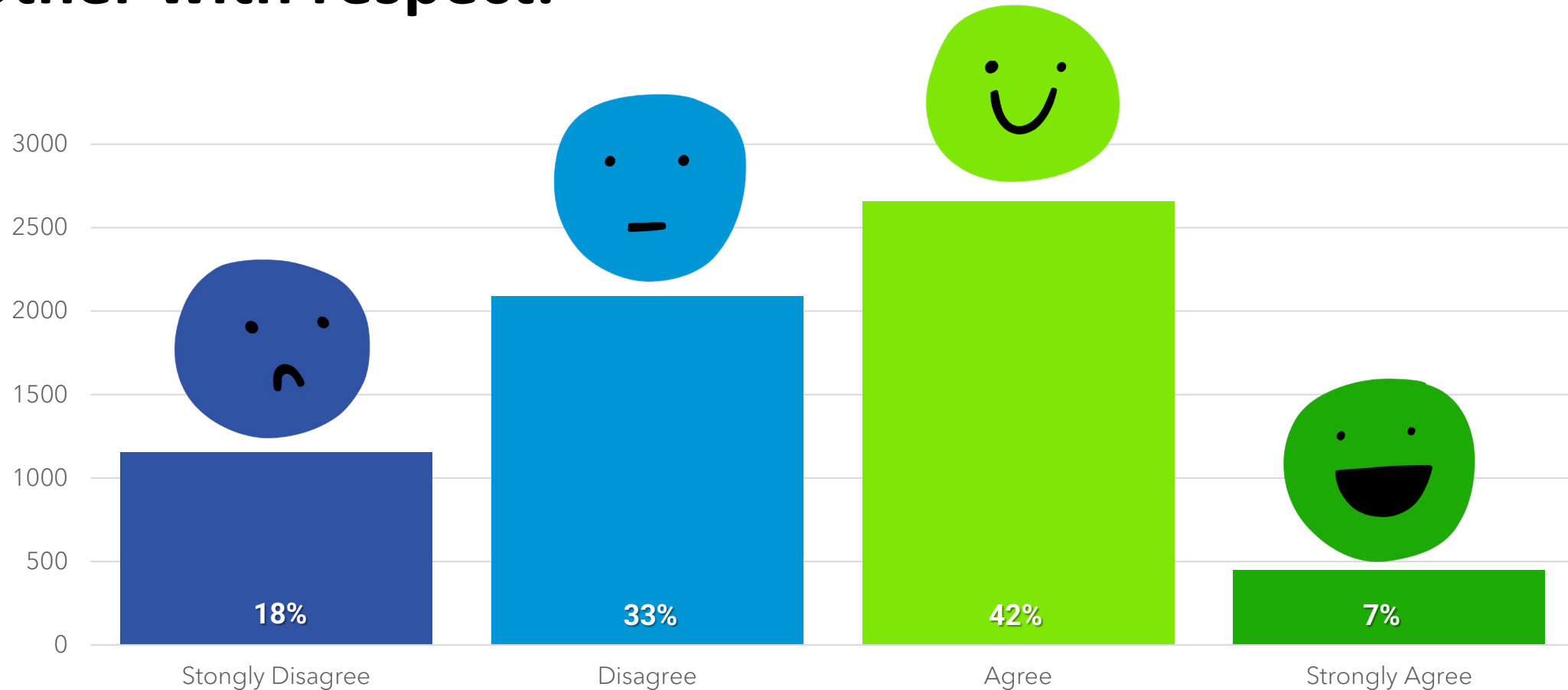
“I see people of many races, ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds represented in the curriculum.”



Students included in sample: 6,329

Student Responses: Great Schools Survey 2024-2025

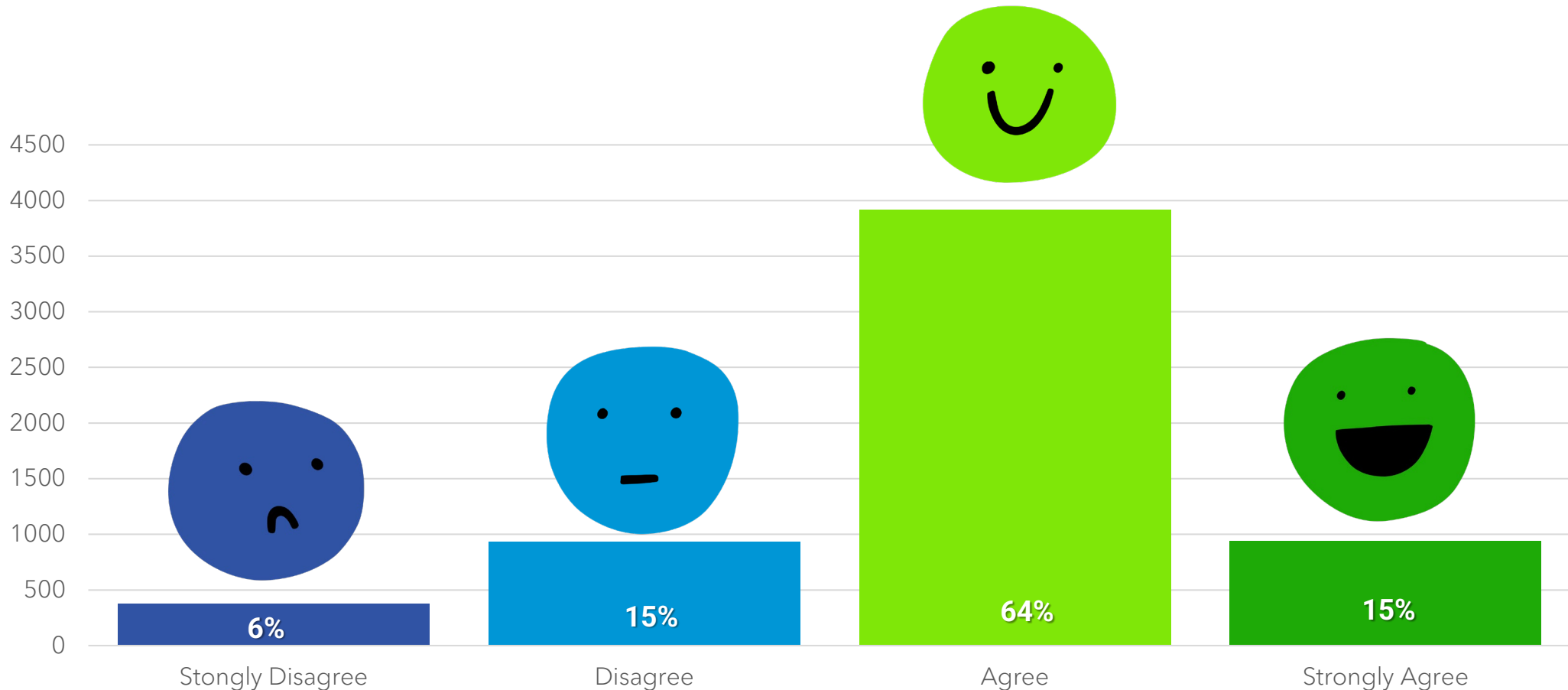
“Most students at this school treat each other with respect.”



Students included in sample: 6,344

Student Responses: Great Schools Survey 2024-2025

“I am presented with positive images of people from a variety of races, ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds.”



Students included in sample: 6,157

Guiding Framework: James A. Banks'

Levels of Multicultural Integration

- Provides a developmental, multi-year roadmap for multicultural education
- Focuses on creating equitable learning environments that reflect and affirm diverse cultures, identities, and perspectives
- Emphasizes that multicultural education is not an “add-on,” but a comprehensive reform approach that affects curriculum, instruction, school culture, and policy.
- Centers on helping students develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes to function in a diverse, democratic society while addressing systemic inequities in education
- Banks framework helps educators evaluate how deeply multicultural perspectives are embedded into curriculum and instruction



Banks: The Four Levels of Integration



Guiding Framework: Gloria Ladson-Billings

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

- Affirmation is necessary—but not sufficient
 - Representation signals inclusion, but does not automatically change teaching and learning
 - “Culture is not something you hang on the walls.”
- Cultural pluralism requires intellectual engagement
 - Students’ languages and cultures must be treated as legitimate sources of knowledge
 - Visuals should connect to curriculum, instruction, and academic rigor
- Academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness must coexist
 - High expectations remain central
 - Environments should provoke thinking about power, language, and inequity
- Teacher beliefs and instructional decisions—not décor—are the true levers of change



Guiding Framework: Gholdy Muhammad

Historically Responsive Literacy (HRL)

- Affirms visible multicultural and multilingual environments as a **critical first step**
 - Supports the Identity pursuit by signaling dignity, belonging, and value
 - Disrupts monolingual and monocultural norms
- Pushes beyond representation toward **depth and purpose**
 - Asks: Who is represented? Who decides? Who is missing?
 - Warns against performative or surface-level displays
- Emphasizes **student agency and criticality**
 - Students should co-create displays, texts, and multilingual materials
 - Visuals should highlight joy, resistance, brilliance, and historical context
- Environments should be **instructionally alive**
 - Connected to units of study, inquiry, literacy, and social justice learning
 - Identity-affirming spaces should actively support intellect and skill development





Year 1 Focus: Contributions Approach

What This Looks Like in Schools

- Student-Centered, Welcoming, and Affirming Environments
- Multilingual signage - Cultural calendars used intentionally
- Displays reflecting student identities - School-wide recognition of diverse histories



Four Focus Areas for Year 1

Aligned with *Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education*

Communication

Clear, Inclusive, Translatable - District-wide newsletter in ParentSquare - Guidance for writing with translation in mind - AI translation tool cheat sheet - Family-facing communication supports

Professional Learning

Learning Together - Foundational PD on Banks' framework - Research-based grounding - Ongoing learning through grade clusters and PLC alignment



Curriculum

Honoring What Already Exists - Asset-mapping current multicultural resources - Multicultural libraries and curriculum units - Leveraging community partnerships

Physical Environment

Making Culture Visible - Multilingual signage - Banners and visuals celebrating identities - School spaces reflecting students and families



Crosswalk Synopsis / Including PLC work

- **James A. Banks** - Structure & Sequence
 - Provides the roadmap for district-wide multicultural education
 - Year 1: Contributions Approach builds shared language, visibility, and entry points
 - Establishes coherence and readiness for deeper transformation over time

We start with visibility

We protect instructional quality and expectations

- **Gloria Ladson-Billings** - Instructional Integrity
 - Ensures representation does not replace rigor
 - Challenges educators to move beyond celebration toward academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness
 - Reminds us that beliefs, expectations, and instructional decisions drive equity—not décor alone

PLC Application:
Turning Frameworks into Practice

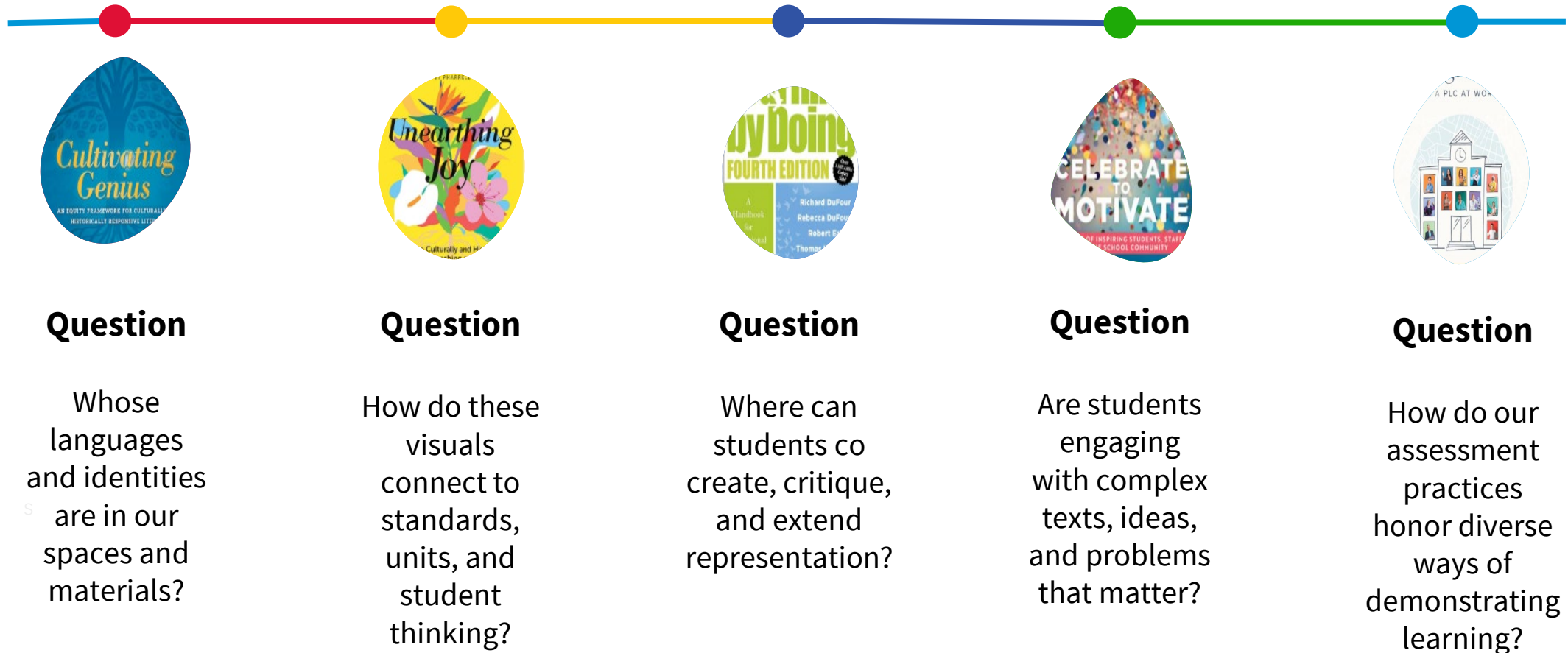
We design learning for identity, agency, and depth

- PLCs serve as the bridge between environment and instruction
 - Teams reflect on questions such as:
 - Whose identities and languages are visible in our spaces and materials?
 - How do these visuals connect to standards, units, and student thinking?
 - Where can students co-create, critique, and extend representation?

- **Gholdy Muhammad** - Purpose & Student Agency
 - Clarifies why representation matters through Identity, Skills, Intellect, and Criticality
 - Pushes learning environments to be co-created, historically grounded, and instructionally alive
 - Positions students' languages, cultures, and histories as sources of knowledge

Infuse Multi-Cultural Practices into Existing PLC at Work Implementation

One Goal: Increase Academic Achievement



Lansing Black Educator and Administrator Coalition

Mission

Develop and strengthen the Lansing Black Educators and Administrators Coalition as a meaningful affinity group that provides a safe, supportive space for Black educators and administrators to share experiences, build community, and engage in professional and personal growth. Through intentional networking, mentorship, advocacy, and leadership development opportunities, the coalition will serve as a viable strategy for retaining current educators and administrators while fostering pathways for recruitment, advancement, and long-term success within the district.

Key Milestones:

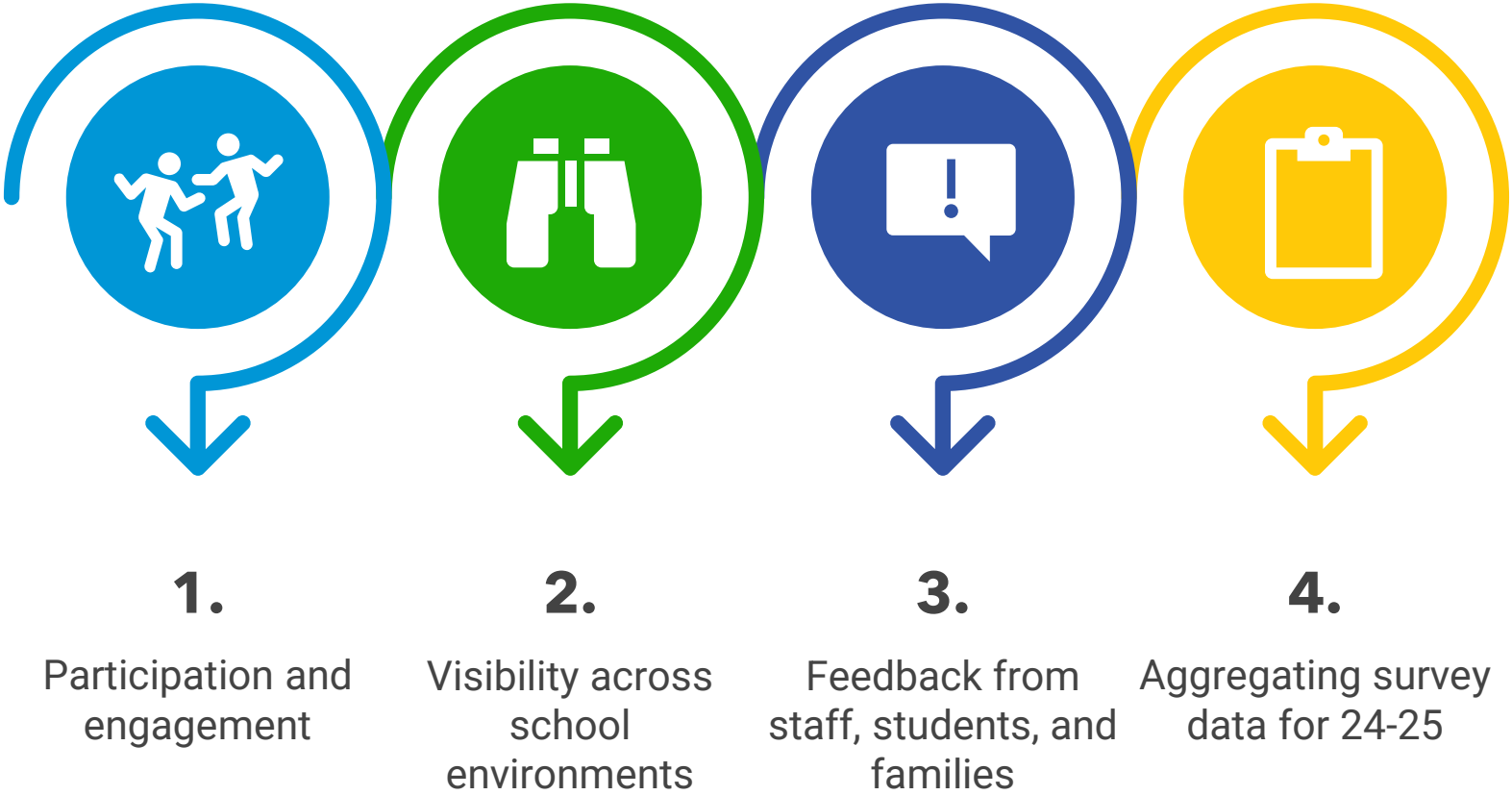
Monthly Meetings kicked off:
3/11 - Educators
3/18 - Administrators
5/14 - Fellowship meetings planned for summer meet-and-greet and September kickoff

Core Areas of Focus:

Build Leadership Capacity and Professional Growth Opportunities
Create and Sustain a Safe and Inclusive School Environment
Promote Equity, Advocacy, and Student Success

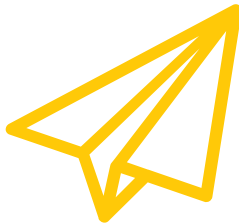


Measuring Progress - Year 1





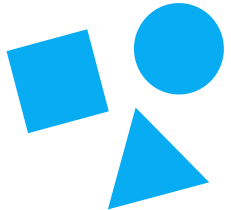
What's Next? Year 2



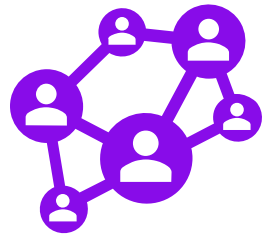
**Newsletter kickoff
for Fall 2026**



**Ongoing
professional
learning**



**Professional
Learning
Communities**



MiCIP Alignment



Cultural calendar




Alignment

One Goal: Increase Academic Achievement



One Strategy: Multi-Tiered System of Support Implementation





MICIP Portfolio Report

Lansing Public School District

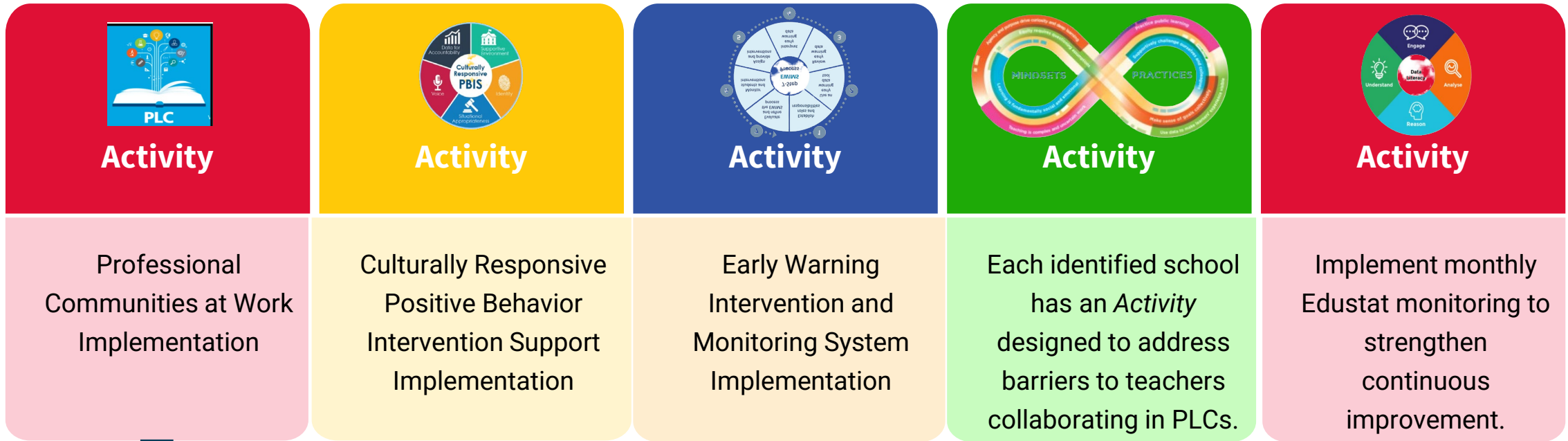
Increase Academic Achievement

Status: ACTIVE

Statement: Lansing School District will improve overall student achievement by implementing a cohesive, district-wide MTSS system that strengthens academics, non-academics, attendance, data literacy, instructional decision-making, and staff collective efficacy.

Created Date: 05/14/2026 *Target Completion Date:* 06/30/2029

Michigan Continuous Integrated Improvement Plan Continued...



TASKS to complete for our Multicultural Task Force Plan!

Onboarding Community Bus Tour!

Complete an audit of multicultural activities currently implemented.

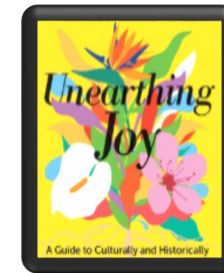
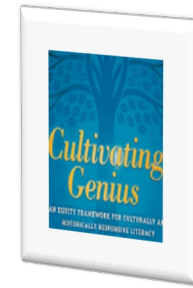
Define outcomes for Year 2 in the Multicultural Task Force plan, and identify 3-5 catalyst schools for Level 2 implementation.

Provide a framework to filter our curricular tools through to support multiple perspectives



Improvements from Year 1!

- We have prioritized our community bus tour as necessary for onboarding teachers by embedding it into orientation week instead of offering it as a voluntary experience!
- June 19th, we will be taking multiple MSU professors from the College of Ed on our bus tour in hopes of partnering to embed it into their teacher prep field courses for all teaching interns coming to Lansing!



- Adding two new books with opportunities for professional learning around multiculturalism, the bus tour script, and sample lesson plans using a framework to support onboarding teachers in becoming ethnographers of our community to build relationships the first two weeks of school!!





Thank you



Our diversity is not something to manage—it is something to celebrate, learn from, and build upon.

