

Making Wellness a Priority

Leadership Moves that Support Student Wellness Efforts



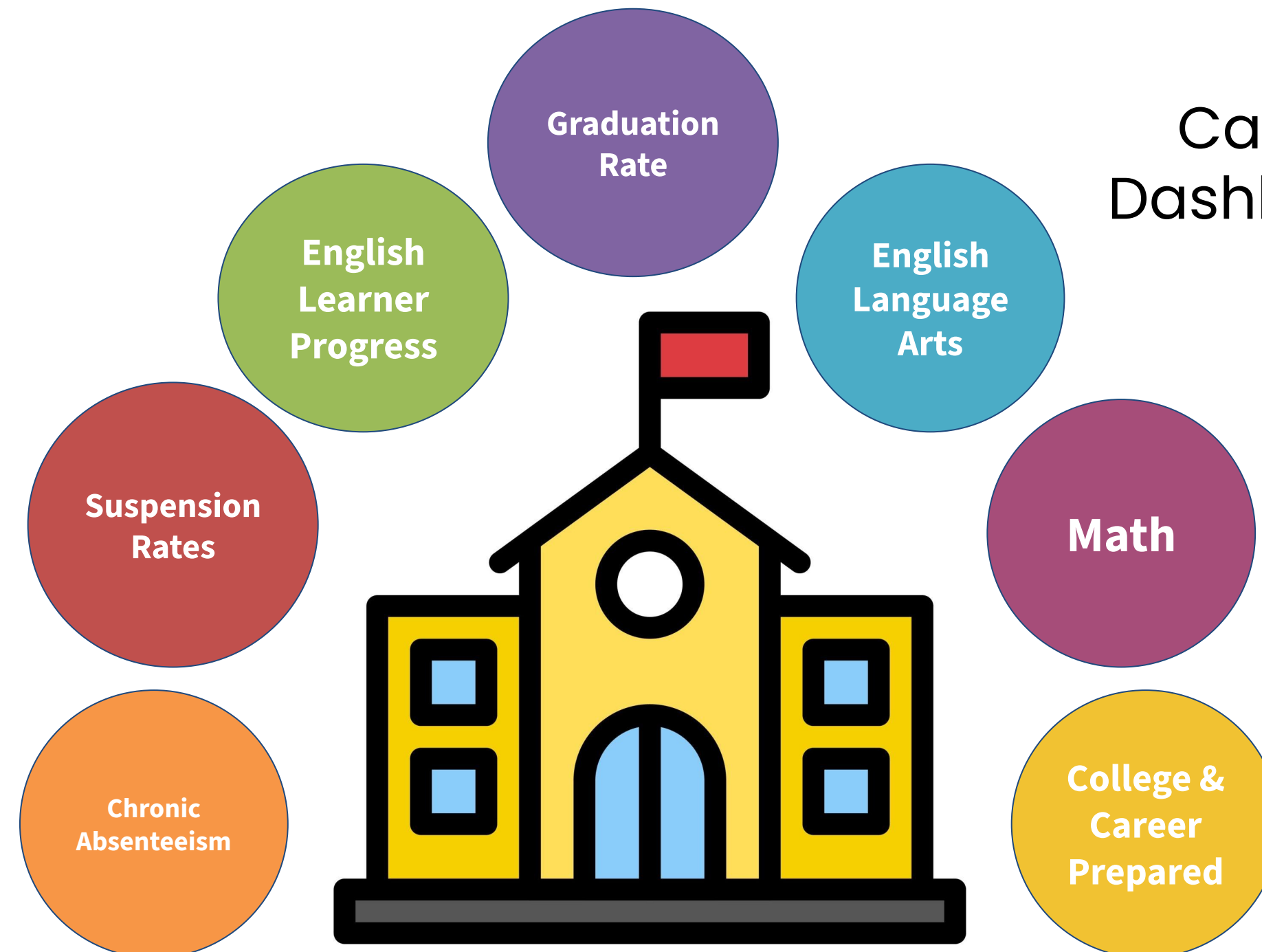
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The “Competition”

California School
Dashboard Indicators



Where Does “Wellness” Live?



California School
Dashboard Indicators



Where Do We Start?

- Defining “Wellness”
- Calibrating and Collaborating
- Learning and Growing TOGETHER



Defining “Wellness”

1. **QUICKWRITE:** In the next **2 minutes**, write down a definition of “wellness” for students.
2. **SHARE: Form a triad** and give **each person 2 minutes** to share their wellness definition and explain WHY this definition makes sense to them. As you are listening to each person, take note of the following:
 - a. What similarities do you notice?
 - b. What differences do you notice?
3. **DISCUSSION:** Considering what was just shared, take the next **10 minutes** to discuss a challenge in creating a shared understanding of “student wellness.”



Board Workshop

Definition

"Wellness means keeping your mind, body, feelings, and inner self working well together. Wellness grows through good relationships that understand both your personal experiences and the history and living conditions that have shaped your life. When wellness responds to community needs, it helps both individuals and their communities become the best they can be."

Framework

Our way of living well has four connected parts that work together:

- **Inner-Self:** Knowing who you are, your culture, and feeling in control of your life. Being able to handle tough times and stress in healthy ways. Understanding that it's okay to make mistakes and learn from them. Engaging in creative or athletic activities and planning for future events with excitement.
- **Relationships:** Caring deeply about family, friends, and community and building strong bonds. Valuing connections with others and trying to understand different points of view. Having supportive spaces to express yourself and connect with others.
- **Connections to Our World:** Feeling connected to our ancestors, where we live, and nature. Learning about different cultures and ways of life, and understanding how people's different experiences shape who they are.
- **Physical Health:** Taking good care of our bodies through healthy food and exercise. Understanding how our thoughts and feelings affect our bodies, especially during hard times. Finding healthy ways to deal with stress and worry.

These four parts all work together - you can't separate them. When you improve one area, it helps all the others get better too. When we feel like we belong and are connected to others, it helps us be healthier in many ways like increasing participation in class, completing goals, and better time management. The school system and teachers play a big part in helping students develop in all these areas.

Defining “Wellness”

What does this actually mean?

Does this reflect what STUDENTS think of wellness?

How will this be measured?

This is way too long and complex.

Defining Wellness

Our mind, body, feelings, and inner self working well together. Wellness is achieved through good relationships that understand both your individual needs and the history and living conditions that have shaped you. When it responds to community needs, it helps both individuals and the community become the best they can be."

Framework for Wellness

Our vision of wellness is a connected network of four parts:

- **Inner-Self:** Knowing who you are, your strengths and weaknesses, and having control of your life. Understanding your own thoughts and feelings, especially during tough times and stress. Being able to manage time and stress, and being able to plan for future events.
- **Relationships:** Caring deeply about others, being part of a community and building strong bonds. Valuing connections with others and understanding different points of view. Having support and being able to express yourself and connect with others.
- **Connections to Our World:** Feeling connected to our ancestors, where we live, and nature. Learning about different cultures and ways of life, and understanding how people's different experiences shape who they are.
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Student Voice & Feedback

Over 700 individual students provided feedback

What do you agree with?

- Taking care of the body through eating well, exercise, and sleep
- Understanding oneself, culture, and identity, stress management and emotional control
- Value of family, friend, and community connections
- Contributing to others' wellbeing
- Interconnected nature of physical, mental, and social wellness

What doesn't make sense to you?

- Make the language more direct
- What does "understand your body" mean and what relationship does this have to wellness?
- What does "nurture" mean?
- What does "supportive spaces" mean?

What would you change?

- Simplify the vocabulary
- Use friendly language
- Shorten the definitions of key concepts
- Use general terms when defining elements related to community connections

REVISED Wellness Definition

Wellness is taking care of our body, our mind, and the connections we have with family, friends, and community.



Body

Taking care of our physical health through exercise, nutrition, and rest.



Mind

Cultivating mental and emotional well-being through mindfulness and learning.



Relationships

Nurturing connections with family and friends for mutual support and love.



Community

Engaging with our community to foster a sense of belonging and purpose.



Calibrating & Collaborating

- **Which departments and/or teams hold pieces of wellness for Body, Mind, Relationships, and Community?**
 - Nursing, PE & Athletics, Food Services, Mental Health Resource Center, Counseling, Wellness Centers, MTSS, Student Activities, Equity & Belonging, Family & Community Engagement, Community Schools, etc.
- **How do WE monitor wellness needs? Conducting a “wellness assessment” inventory.**
 - Which elements have the most direct correlation to “wellness?”
 - What is missing? Who could help us develop these tools?



Calibrating & Collaborating

PARTNER TALK **10 Minutes**

Find someone you haven't spoken with yet and share your thoughts on the following questions based on your current context:

- Which departments or teams contribute to student wellness?
- What systems or structures would be needed for calibration and collaboration?
- How could wellness efforts be shared more broadly with staff, students, and families?



Learning and Growing TOGETHER

Different voices, different perspectives

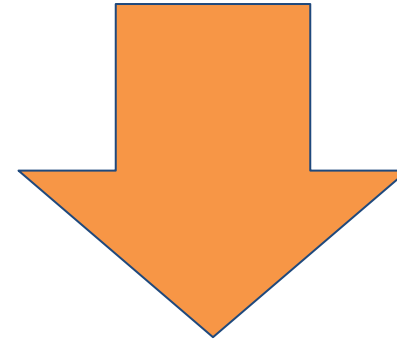
- Established a cross-functional district collaborative to align wellness initiatives, measures, and existing data sources into a unified framework.
- Partnered with San Diego State University researchers to refine and validate student wellness survey questions through direct student feedback.
- Piloted initial Student Wellness Profile Dashboard components across Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program (SBHIP) clusters to inform future dashboard development and long-term goal setting.

Learning and Growing TOGETHER



Goal 1 Student Wellness

Student wellness will increase from **(to be determined)** in **May 2026** to **(to be determined)** in **May 2030** as measured by the Multidimensional Student Wellness Index.



REVISED Goal 1 Student Wellness

San Diego Unified School District will improve student wellness as measured by the multidimensional Student Wellness Dashboard. Using 2024–25 as the baseline year, the district will track progress across the following confirmed dashboard components through May 2030:

- Chronic absenteeism will **decrease** from **21.4% to 12.4%** for **All Students** and from **28.7% to 19.7%** for **Spotlight Students**.
- The percentage of students reporting positive levels of belonging, mattering, and teacher relationships (responding with a 4 or 5 on the composite measure) will **increase** from **57.1% to 61.9%** for **All Students** and from **53.9% to 58.9%** for **Spotlight Students**.

Additional components of the Student Wellness Dashboard will continue to be developed and piloted, to include **tools that elevate student voice and wellness for Early Learners**.

Learning and Growing TOGETHER

Listening to the voice behind the number

A rating on a 5-point scale tells us **what** students selected — but not **why** they chose it, who they trust, or the strategies they are building underneath the number.

ANNOTATED TRANSCRIPT • 2:00 AUDIO RESPONSE

I think what drives me is like fear of failing. I've always had this immense fear of like being a failure in life. And I know failure is defined in many different ways and people have their own definitions of how they define failure. But to me, I come from a background of a family who has no people who have graduated college, has a lot of people that are struggling with financial issues and family issues. And when you grow up in that environment, it like forces you to become a better version of yourself. So every morning I wake up and one of my main motivators is definitely my auntie. She drives me to become a better person. She drives me to push myself because she's been through high school, graduated with honors, and she's told me that if she can do it, I can do it. She drives me to become an overachiever. Sometimes I even take on tests that I know are too big for me, but I end up doing anyways because I just want to accomplish something bigger than myself. My main goal in life is to be successful and make my family proud. I've wanted to make a name for myself. I've wanted to be someone that people in my family could name out and say, yeah, he's that person you could look up to. And that's what motivates me every morning to wake up and strive for what I want.

VOICE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

response reveals a motivational architecture the district's survey instruments are structurally unable to capture. His drive is not the confidence-based 'I believe I can improve' that a Likert scale measures — it's built on fear of failure, first-generation family obligation, and deep identification with a trusted adult who models possibility. He demonstrates five of IMPACTER's eight anchor attributes in a single two-minute response.

KEY GUARDRAIL 2 INSIGHT

"Voice data reveals a student building purpose from adversity — with a named trusted adult the system may not have known existed."

Click to highlight: Purpose Grit Growth Mindset Perspective-Taking Gratitude

ATTRIBUTES DETECTED

Purpose

Grit

Growth Mindset

Perspective-Taking

Gratitude

GUARDRAIL 2 ALIGNMENT

Motivation to Be in School

Strong

Sense of Belonging

Strong

Effort → Results

Moderate

Trusted Adult

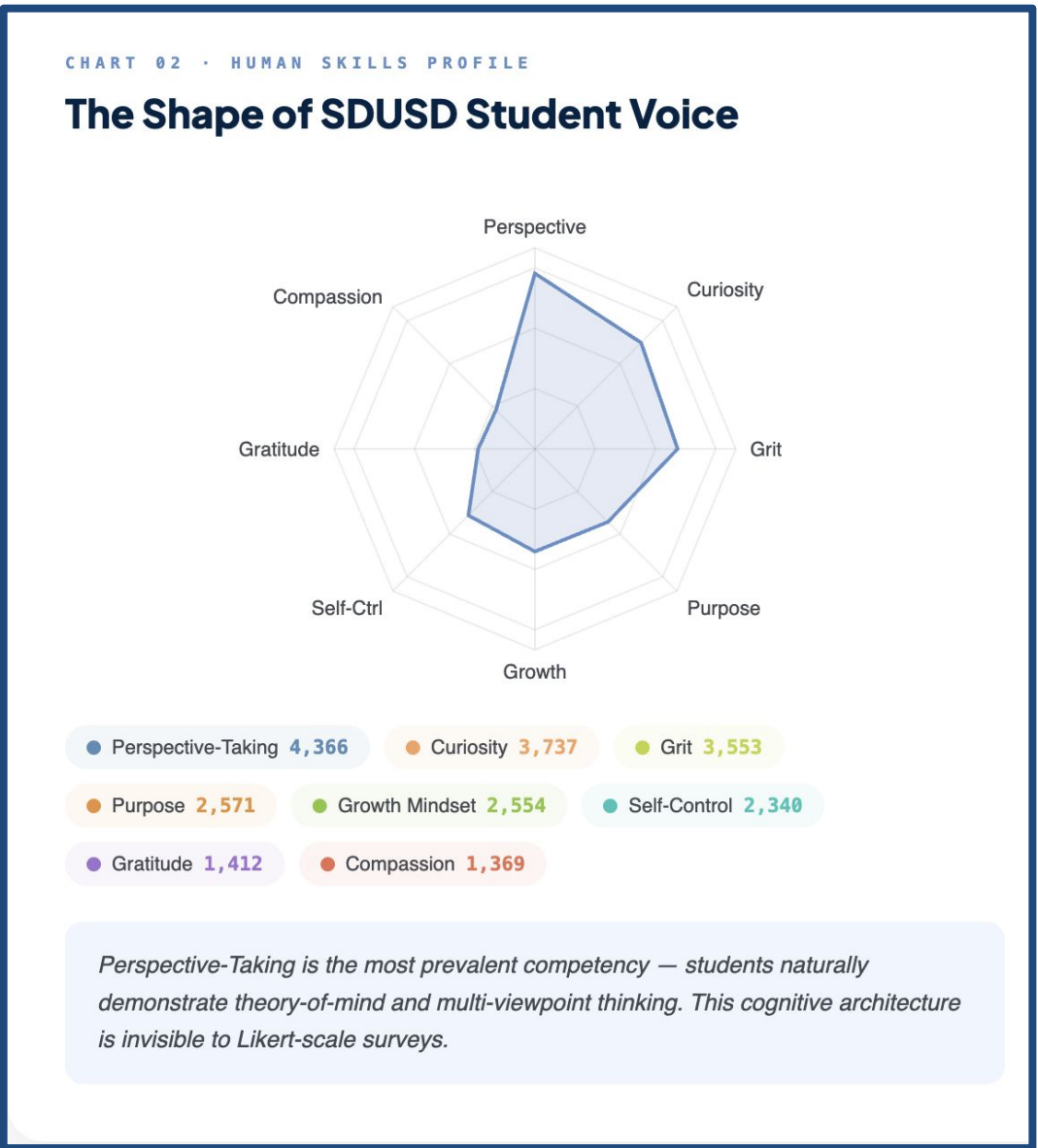
Explicit: Auntie (off-campus)

EQUITY SIGNALS

First-generation college student

Financial hardship

Family challenges



Lessons Learned



- It's an iterative process, and that's okay
- Student voice is critical
- Focusing on what is within our locus of control



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https://www.sandiegounified.org/about/board_of_education/SOFG

