

## Case Study

# Using Student Voice Data to Personalize Instructional Leadership Support and Empower School Transformation

Harrisburg School District

## District Overview

Harrisburg School District in Pennsylvania serves over 6,000 students across 11 schools. 97% of the students in the district are from low-income families and 53% of the student body is Black and 37% is Latino. The district recently moved from state recovery to court appointed receivership and is focused on personalizing learning for students under the leadership of Chief Academic Officer Dr. Portia Slaughter. The District's current Comprehensive Plan can be found [here](#).

## The Challenge

As Harrisburg School District implemented a two-year personalized learning initiative across all 11 schools, the goals of district leadership included:

- Understand the current state of instructional practices across campuses
- Provide personalized, data-driven support to each school based on their specific strengths and growth areas to improve learning outcomes.
- Build the capacity of leaders and teachers to provide rigorous and effective instruction to all students

Dr. Slaughter and her colleagues realized that to achieve their goals, and support student growth, they needed to hear directly from students about their experiences in the classroom.



## The Solution

The District partnered with Education Elements, which helped them implement its Tripod 7Cs student survey in October 2023. This survey, developed at Harvard University, measures student perceptions of seven key elements of effective teaching.

The survey was administered district-wide, at the campus level, to engage the whole school community. Afterwards, the leadership team analyzed the survey data alongside each school's personalized learning goals. Based on the data, the district leaders held workshops for teams examining campus strengths, gaps, and needed supports. Similar workshops were held with school teams of principals, coaches, and teachers.



## Key Benefits

The survey provided the district with comprehensive data on current instructional practices and an in-depth, student-voice perspective on teaching across the district and at each school site. Some of the beneficial outcomes from the survey are:

- **Differentiated leadership coaching:** By mapping the data to each school's personalized learning goals, the district could develop customized leadership coaching plans tailored to the unique needs of each campus.
- **Increased buy-in:** As school teams unpacked the survey insights, many saw value in the data for their own professional growth. One coach said: "Can we get this for individual teachers? It would be great feedback."
- **Ability to measure progress:** With a second survey planned for spring 2024, the district can evaluate whether their personalized supports led to growth in instructional practices based on student feedback.

## Community Feedback

School teams appreciated the dedicated time to analyze their data and align their next steps:

"Being able to talk as a team and [see] the data from the survey. LOVE the survey."

- Intervention Teacher

"Diving into the data provided gave us a real look at our deficits from a student perspective."

- Team Leader

"Thank you for allowing the team to talk and discuss our way through some of the items. This is needed space and time for us all to get on the same page."

- Supervisor of Extended Learning

The 7Cs student survey, combined with personalized leadership coaching, enabled Harrisburg to truly understand and address the unique needs of each school community on their personalized learning journey. This is putting Harrisburg on a strong path to obtaining the student learning growth they are striving for.