

Capacity Review Results for District 207

October, 2025



Objectives

- 1 Preview high level themes of our review
- 2 Share detail for each component of the rubric
- 3 Discuss recommendations and next steps



We conducted focus groups and interviews, surveyed many internal and external stakeholders, and reviewed key data and background materials



**40+ FOCUS GROUPS &
INTERVIEWS**

*covering 205 participants
across all buildings/programs
and stakeholder roles*



943 SURVEY RESPONSES

*with responses in three
languages and across all
buildings/programs and
stakeholder roles*



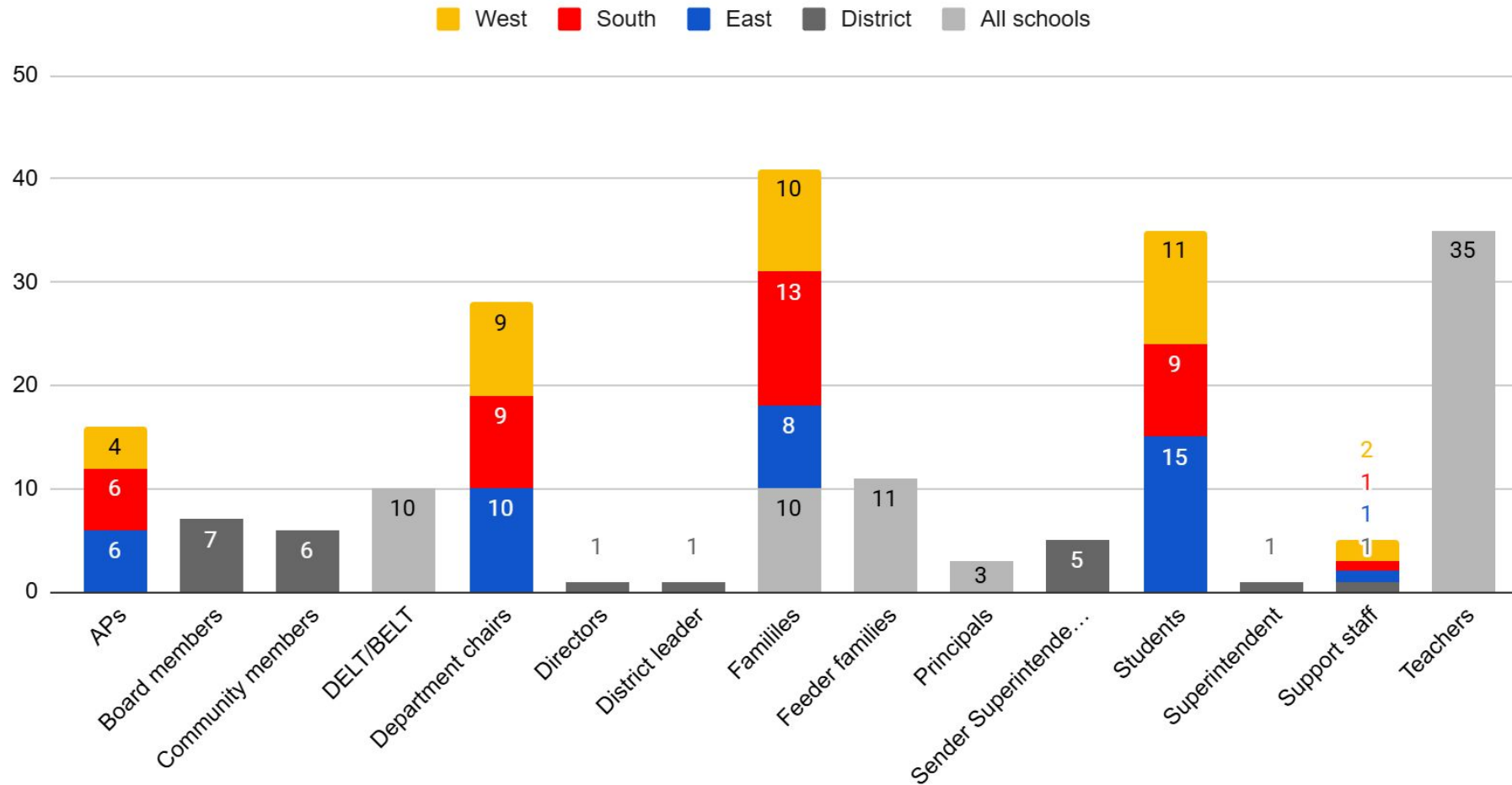
**VARIOUS DOCUMENTS
AND DATA**

*e.g., achievement,
attendance, grades,
Responsible Pause, etc.*



Stakeholder data: Focus group and interview participants were distributed across schools and roles, allowing for rich conversations and insights

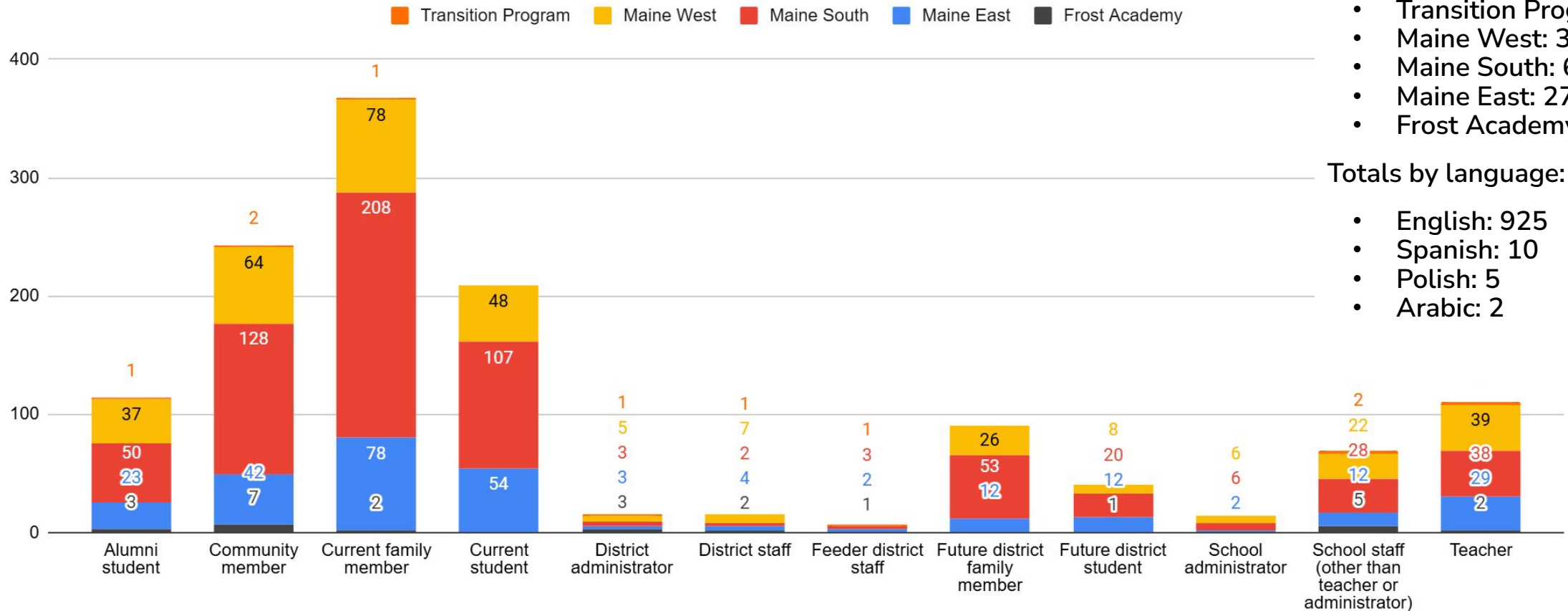
Focus group and interview participants



All schools = focus group had participants from multiple schools represented

Stakeholder data: Survey respondents provided high level thoughts on current strengths & opportunities, plus ideas for the forthcoming plan

District 207 survey responses



Totals by school:

- Transition Program: 11
- Maine West: 340
- Maine South: 646
- Maine East: 273
- Frost Academy: 26

Totals by language:

- English: 925
- Spanish: 10
- Polish: 5
- Arabic: 2

n=942 as of survey close on 9/24/25

Note: counts by role include double counting responses that selected more than one role

Qualitative feedback (via focus groups, interviews, and survey responses) illuminated some trends across role and school

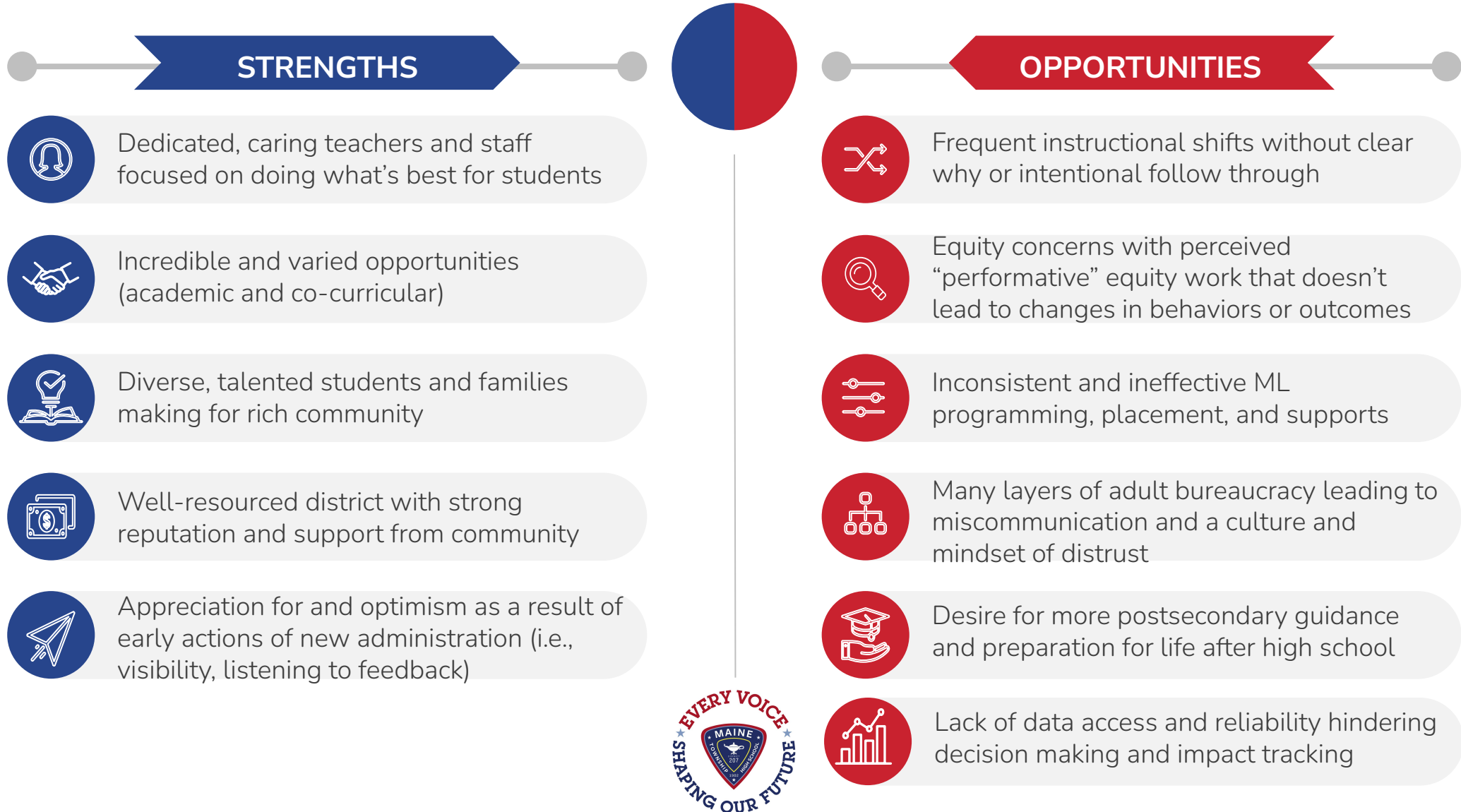
Qualitative themes by role

- **Teachers** most value dedicated colleagues/diverse students, but are frustrated by large classes, rushed initiatives, and lowered rigor.
- **Students** most value extracurriculars and supportive staff, but are frustrated by rigid rules, limited student voice, and fewer advanced opportunities.
- **Families** most value caring teachers and opportunities, but are frustrated by communication gaps and uneven rigor/prep.
- **Community members** most value reputation and diversity, but are concerned about resource use and transparency.
- **Staff/Admin** most value collaboration, but want clearer roles and fewer shifting priorities.

Qualitative themes by school

- **Maine East respondents** most value the school's diversity, supportive teachers, and community pride, but are frustrated by equity gaps in resources and programming, inconsistent rigor for multilingual learners, and unclear communication from the district.
- **Maine West respondents** most value the dedication of teachers and the school's inclusive community, but are frustrated by concerns about academic preparedness, uneven opportunities compared to other schools, and limited student support services.
- **Maine South respondents** most value the strong academic reputation, caring staff, and broad opportunities for students, but are frustrated by inconsistent expectations (e.g., behavior, academic rigor), high pressure and stress on students, and shifting initiatives without clear alignment.

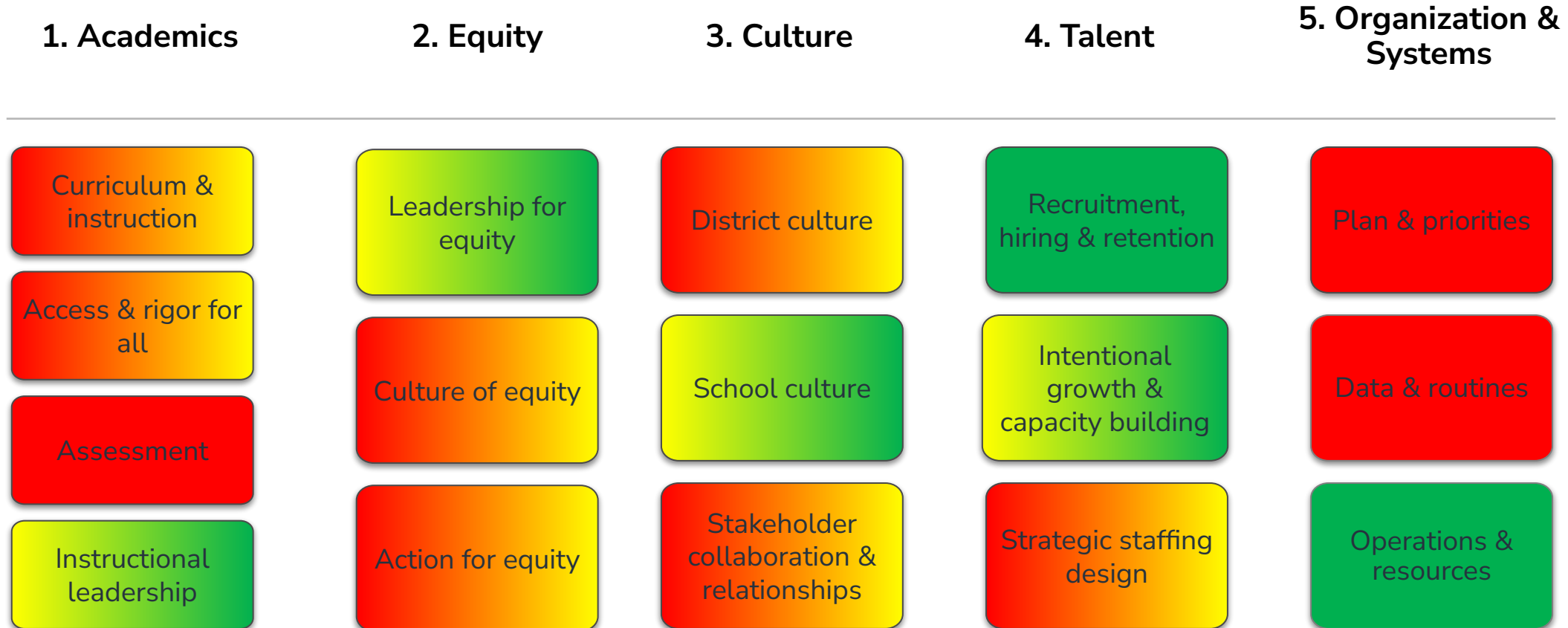
Overall across our review, a number of key strengths and areas of opportunity emerged (listed in no particular order)



We leveraged these insights to arrive at an assessment of District 207's capacity to achieve its goals using DeliverEd's Capacity Framework



A summary (incorporating all inputs) emphasizes where District 207 can leverage existing strengths while addressing areas of opportunity

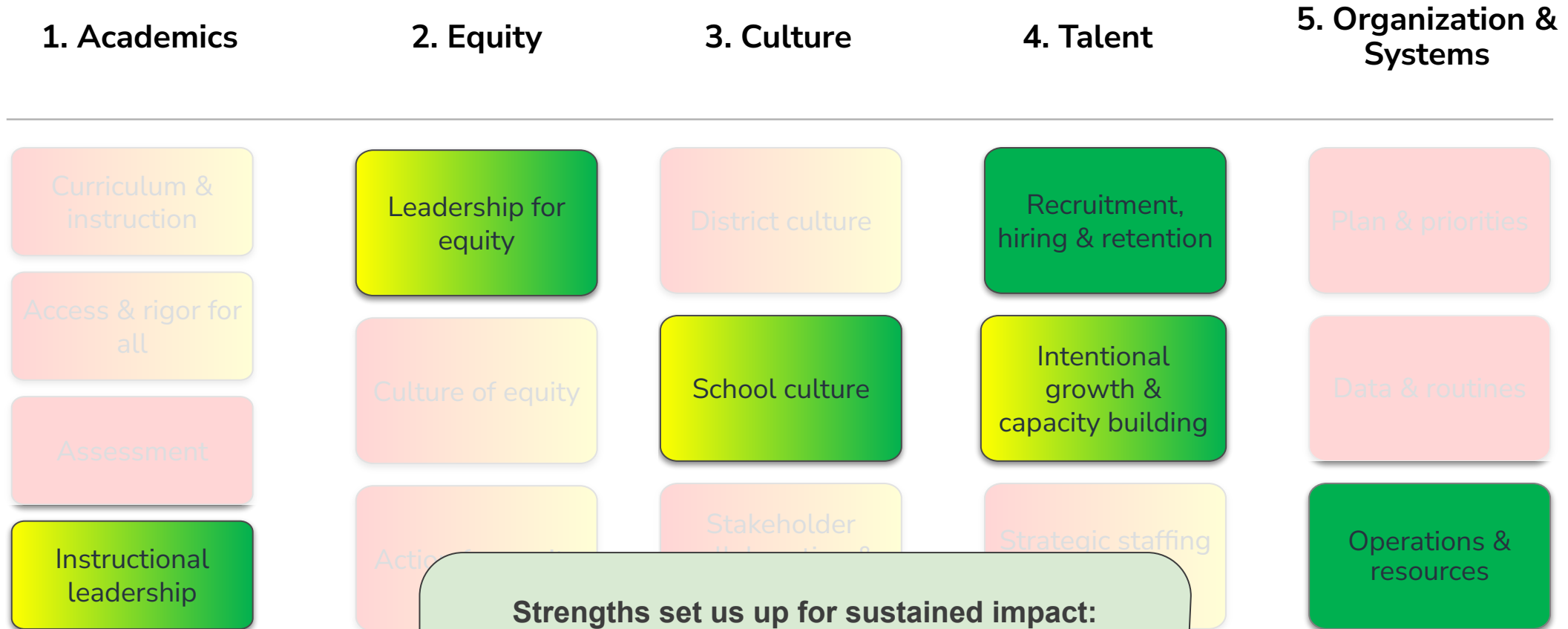


Ratings and rationales were determined synthesizing all capacity review inputs; leadership self-assessment, stakeholder survey, focus groups/interview notes, and data and document review.



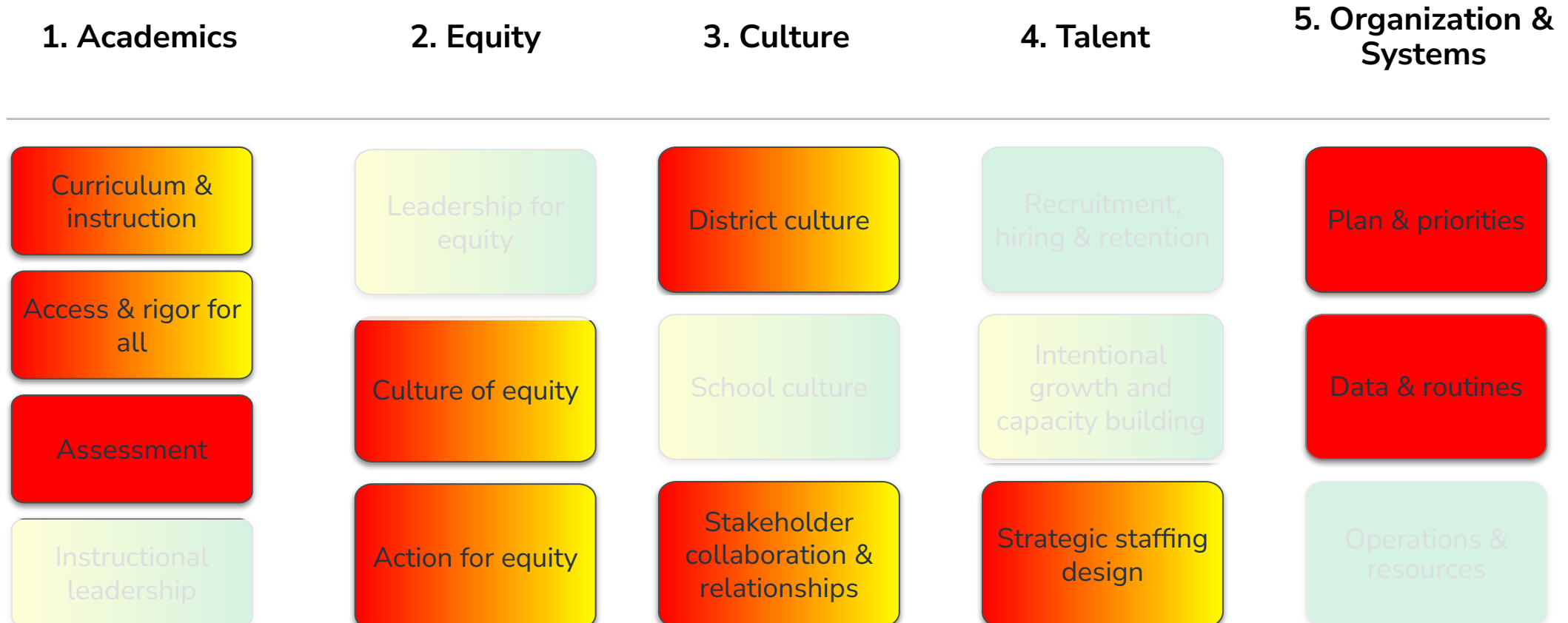
NOTE: We push for a spread of ratings for relative areas of strength and opportunity; this “heat map” is consistent with what we see in districts across our work

While there are opportunities for growth, the areas of strength for District 207 are promising and provide a strong foundation to grow



Strengths set us up for sustained impact:
 District 207 has strong people at all levels of the organization, working hard and committed to the best for students. Further, the district has the systems and resources necessary to support and scale success.

Further, our areas of need are likely to be improved quickly with a strong, clear, and aligned strategic plan across the district



Opportunities are already being addressed with this process:
 The district is already engaged in the responsible pause and this strategic planning process, which will provide the clarity and alignment that will quickly improve several areas (plan & priorities, data & routines) and lay a consistent framework for improvements over time to many others (curriculum & instruction, assessment, district culture, stakeholder comms).

District 207 Review: Ratings and Rationales (1 of 2)

G Green: Good, requires slight refinements
AG Amber - Green: Mixed, some aspect(s) require attention
AR Amber - Red: Needs attention
R Red: Needs urgent attention and decisive action

	Characteristic	Rationale
ACADEMICS	1A. Curriculum & instruction	<div style="background-color: #ffc107; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">AR</div> <p>While District 207 offers a wide range of curriculum opportunities that many stakeholders value, there is a shared sense that a clearer instructional vision, stronger alignment across buildings, more student-centered approaches, consistent postsecondary supports, and steadier grading and assessment practices would further strengthen teaching and learning.</p>
	1B. Access & rigor for all	<div style="background-color: #ffc107; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">AR</div> <p>District 207 has expanded access to rigorous coursework, though stakeholders noted that instructional rigor, supports for teachers and students, and equitable outcomes—particularly for multilingual learners, students with IEPs, and low-income students—remain uneven.</p>
	1C. Assessment	<div style="background-color: #dc3545; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">R</div> <p>District 207 would benefit from more consistent, transparent, and aligned systems for assessment and grading, as stakeholders pointed to confusion and inconsistency with grading practices, burdensome data access, and limited understanding of progress and preparation toward postsecondary expectations.</p>
	1D. Instructional leadership	<div style="background-color: #ffc107; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">AG</div> <p>The district has a deep bench of leaders and staff, yet unclear roles, uneven support structures, and the absence of a shared instructional vision limit the impact of otherwise strong collaboration.</p>
EQUITY	2A. Leadership for equity	<div style="background-color: #28a745; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">AG</div> <p>District 207 leaders emphasize equity and have taken steps such as expanding access to rigorous courses and co-teaching; stakeholders note progress alongside a desire for more consistent leadership, transparency, and demonstrated follow-through.</p>
	2B. Culture of equity	<div style="background-color: #ffc107; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">AR</div> <p>Stakeholders view the district as committed to inclusivity and equity, with diversity and past initiatives as points of pride, while also expressing that experiences of belonging and consistent follow-through on equity practices remain areas for significant growth.</p>
	2C. Action for equity	<div style="background-color: #ffc107; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">AR</div> <p>District 207 has advanced equity initiatives and built supportive structures, yet stakeholders emphasized the need for greater consistency, evaluation, and follow-through to ensure these efforts translate into actions that result in meaningful outcomes for all students.</p>

District 207 Review: Ratings and Rationales (2 of 2)

G Green: Good, requires slight refinements
AG Amber - Green: Mixed, some aspect(s) require attention
AR Amber - Red: Needs attention
R Red: Needs urgent attention and decisive action

Characteristic	Rationale
CULTURE 3A. District culture	While recent progress has been made, District 207’s overall culture between administration at the schools and the district remains uneven, with stakeholders noting persistent tensions, strained relationships, and limited recognition that make gains feel fragile.
	School culture is broadly viewed as strong and welcoming, though stakeholders pointed to inconsistent supports for well-being, uneven belonging and safety, and desires for more family partnership.
	Stakeholders appreciated recent listening efforts, but communication and decision-making processes are still often seen as unclear, district-led, and not always as inclusive of authentic student, staff, or family voice as they could be.
TALENT 4A. Recruitment, hiring & retention	District 207 is widely recognized for attracting and retaining talented, student-focused educators with long tenures and strong relationships; looking ahead there is an opportunity to proactively plan for upcoming retirements among veteran staff.
	District 207 provides strong resources for teacher growth, including widely valued instructional coaches and professional learning opportunities, with room to further align development efforts and manager support to priority needs.
	Stakeholders noted that while collaboration is valued, the lack of a clear organizational chart and overlapping roles can create confusion and inefficiencies in how support and responsibilities are understood across the district.
OPS & SYSTEMS 5A. Plan & priorities	Stakeholders expressed a desire for clearer, aligned vision and priorities at both the district and school levels, noting that too many competing initiatives and shifting focus have created confusion, inconsistency, and a sense of burnout.
	District 207 would benefit from more accessible and aligned data systems, as current barriers to access and limited follow-up on initiatives make it difficult to use information consistently for continuous improvement.
	District 207 is viewed as “resource rich” with progress in improving systems and collaboration, though transportation challenges for students reliant on PACE remain a consistent concern.

Academic data: SAT performance shows less than half of students meet standardized testing benchmarks, with significant subgroup gaps

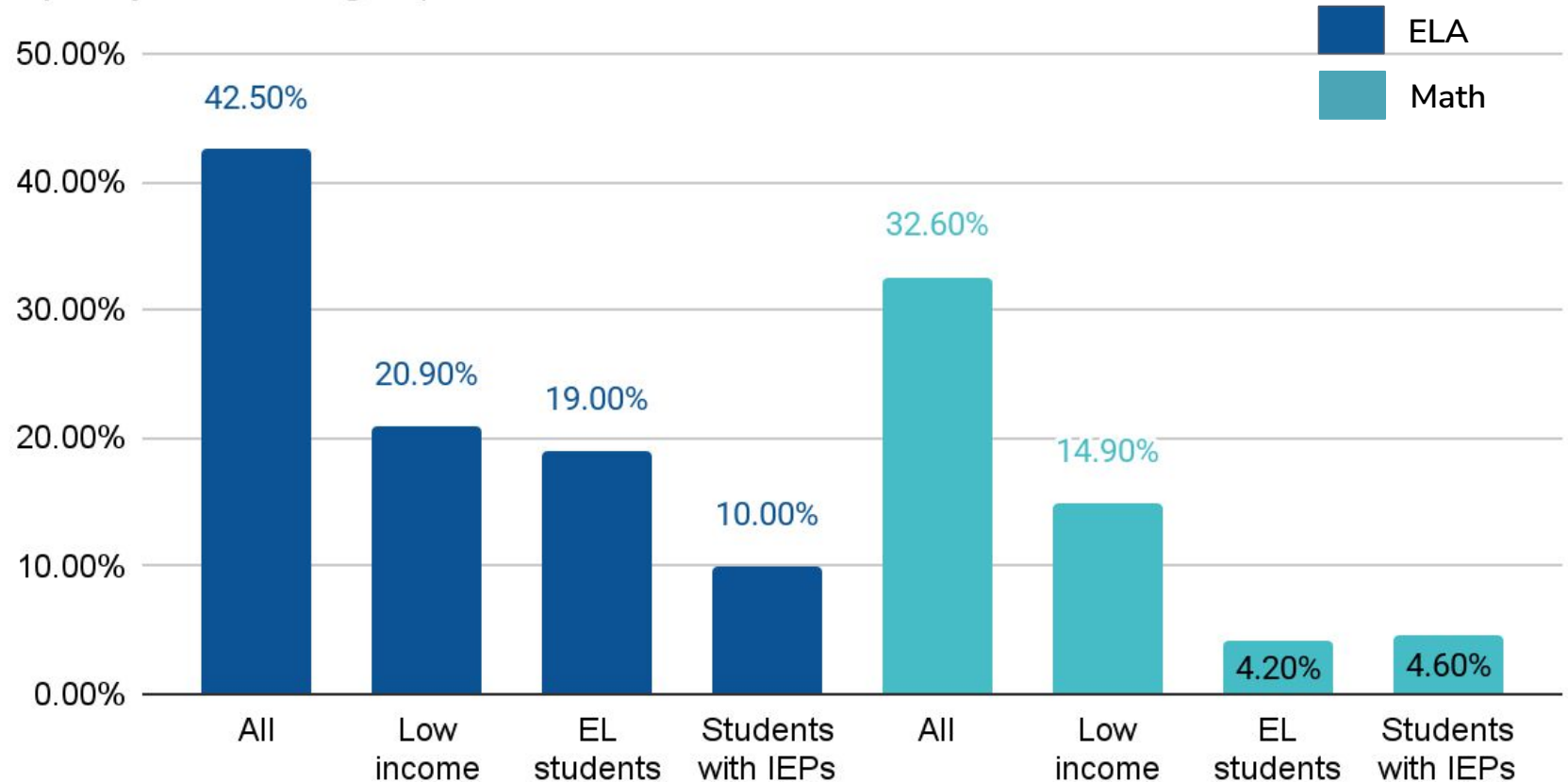
Even with limitations of standardized testing as singular measure, we know there's room for improvement in performance and rigor across the board.

This need becomes more stark when looking at subgroups, which perform less than half as well and account for a notable size of our population:

- 21% low income
- 16% EL
- 11.6% students with IEPs

% of grade 11 students meeting SAT benchmarks

By subject and subgroup

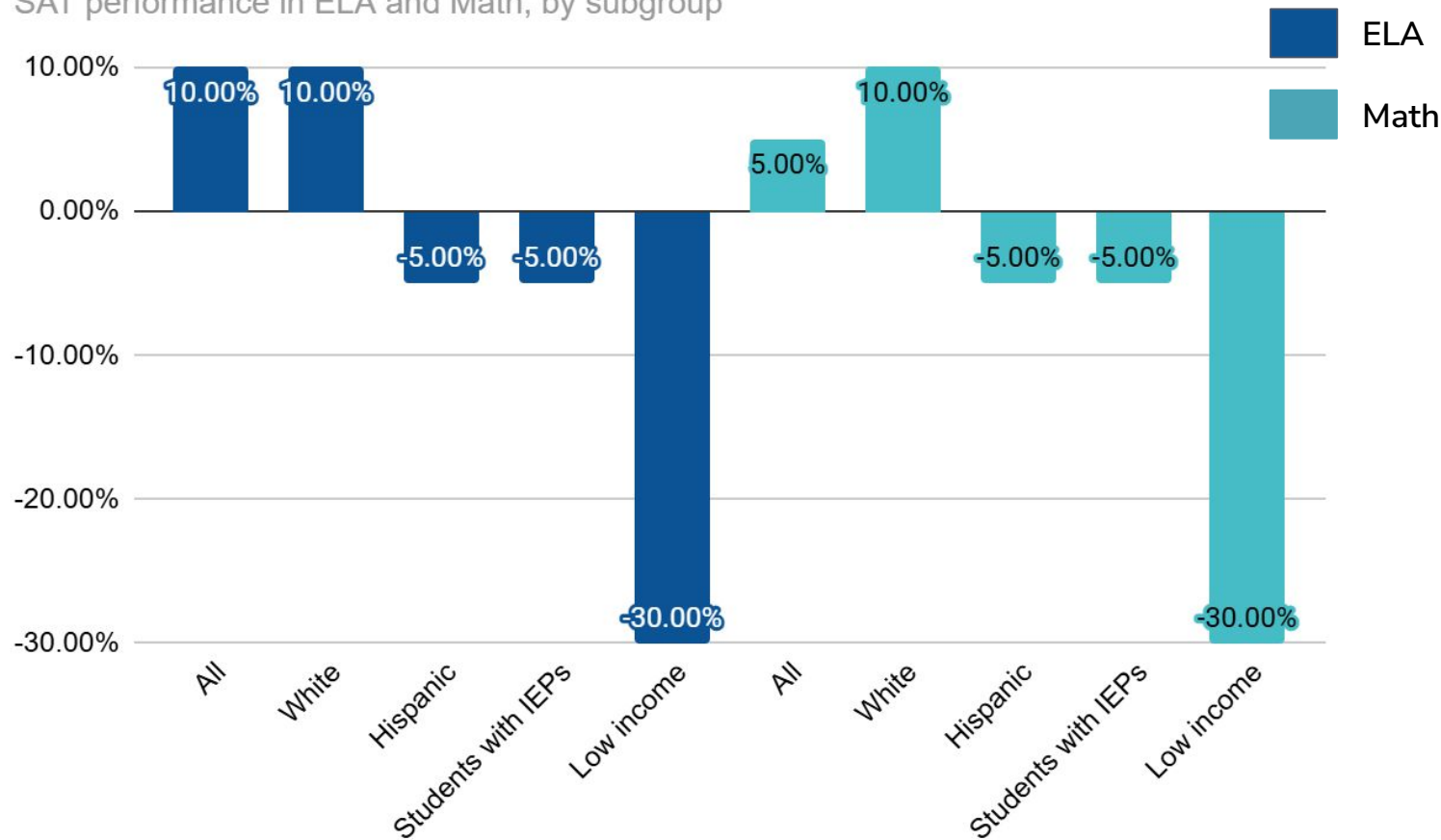


SOURCE: ISBE state report card SAT performance

Academic data: District performance is below state average for most subgroups - in particular low income students

% difference between District 207 and State averages

SAT performance in ELA and Math, by subgroup



We outperform the state in aggregate measures - which is great - but looking at subgroups we see this is primarily due to our performance with White students; other subgroups are below (and at times well below) state averages

NOTE: EL students not shown as our performance is in line with state average

We think this is a moment to provide clarity, alignment, and focus

District 207 can capitalize on this moment of “cautious optimism” and recent momentum to rebuild trust and collaboration across the district, align expectations and understanding across stakeholders, and commit to a discrete set of clear priorities that will take us from good to great.

“By raising expectations and ensuring meaningful support, we can better serve all students and rebuild the academic strength of our district.”

- Family member and teacher



We recommend District 207's strategic planning efforts should include a focus on the following themes

WITH AN UNWAVERING FOCUS ON STUDENTS

Provide **CLARITY** around a shared vision of high expectations

Ensure effective **SUPPORT** and guidance

Establish a strong collaborative **CULTURE**

Leverage **DATA** for improvement and impact

WHY

Universal feedback of desire for more clarity, alignment, focus currently. Without this, can't ensure consistency or make deep impact across district.

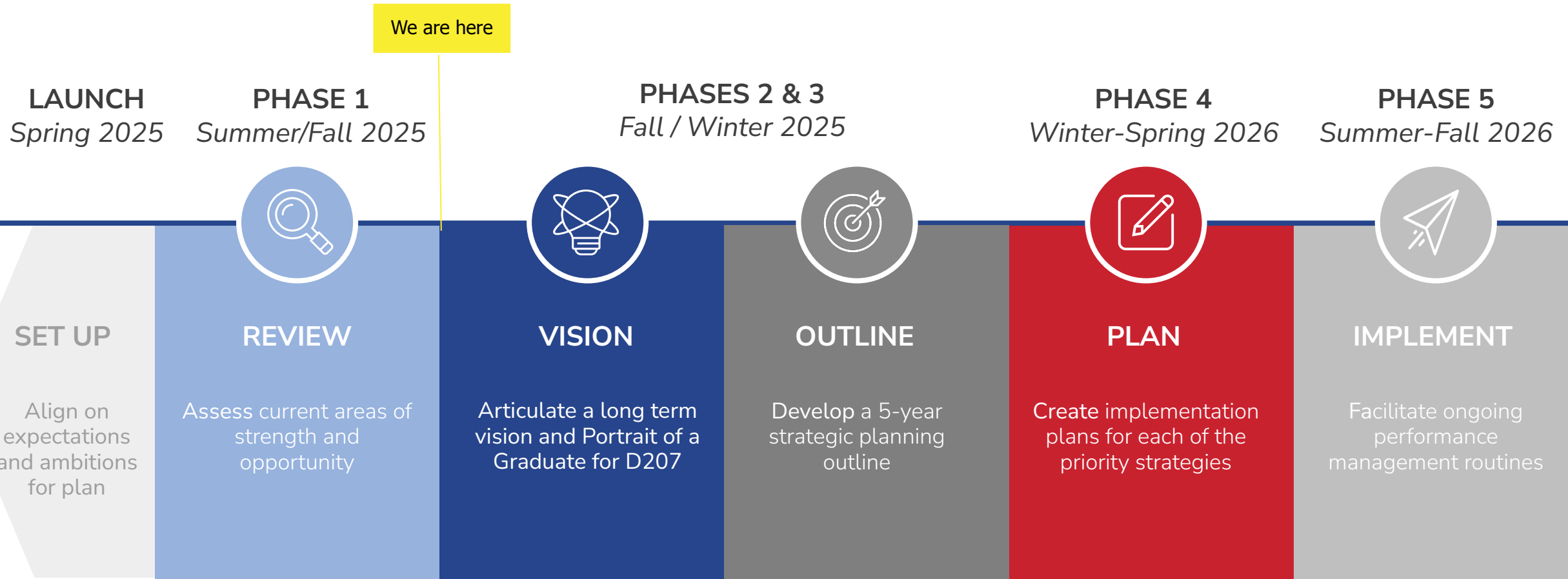
Concerns with rigor, readiness, exec functioning, consistent supports to meet needs; build on strong offerings and pathways to help students leverage successfully.

Current culture not always collaborative or two-way, working together (leveraging strength of people) we can plan better and get right support to implement well.

Data rich but insight poor with limited access and trust in accuracy; opening up access and building capacity unlocks impact and growth.



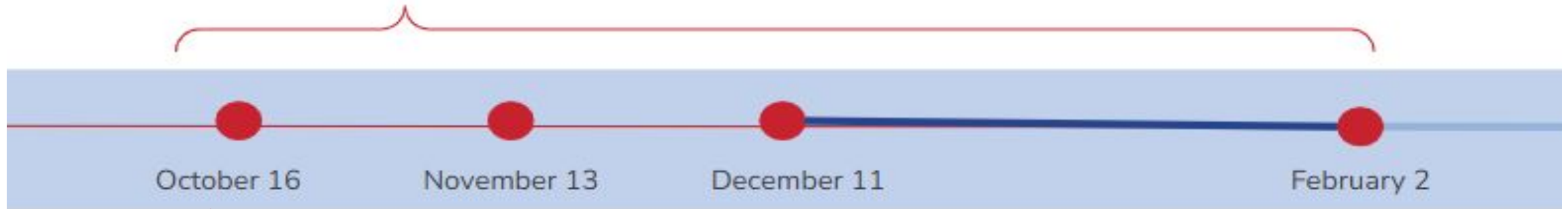
We will support District 207 and the steering committee to leverage this feedback as we start to build the upcoming strategic plan



Next we will engage a 'Steering Committee' to draft and recommend District 207's path forward, leveraging others' input as we go

STEERING COMMITTEE

SETS VISION & DRAFTS PLAN THROUGH 4 WORKSHOPS



Brainstorm the future for District 207

Workshop 1 objectives:

- Understand the overall strategic planning partnership goals and timeline, and your role as Steering Committee
- Define a bold and ambitious vision for District 207
- Brainstorm components of a profile of a District 207 graduate
- Preview and plan for next steps

DISTRICT 207 COMMUNITY
PROVIDES FEEDBACK

See appendix for a list of the Steering Committee members

Thank you



Steering Committee members represent a cross-section of our district

By stakeholder role, in alphabetical order

Students

- **Riyad Abukhalaf**, (South)
- **Zahra Beig**, (East)
- **Emma Fuentes**, (South)
- **Ayesha Hakeem**, (East)
- **Kamila Pasnicki**, (West)
- **Preston Pinedo**, (West)

Parent/Guardians

- **Stefanie Bauer**, (South)
- **Trisha Brown**, (South)
- **Meg Compton**, (South)
- **DeAnna Kelly-Liddell**, (East)
- **Eric Martell**, (West)
- **Devon Newbury**, (West)
- **Sarkis Yocoub**, (East)

Board of Education

- **Dean Patras**, Member
- **Sheila Yousuf-Abramson**, President
- **Ed Eicker**, Member (alternate)

Classroom Educators & Staff

- **Pam Alper**, Special Ed. (Transition program)
- **Mike Biondo**, Social Science (South)
- **Ashley Calby**, World Lang. (South)
- **Colleen Hatch**, English (South) & 207EA Leader
- **Amira Hattab**, English (West)
- **Julia Heyden**, Math (South) & 207EA President
- **Robert Payne**, CTE (East)
- **Daniel Walzer**, World Lang. (West)
- **Floyd Yager**, Math TA (East)
- **Paul Zafiroopoulos**, Science (East)

Building Leadership

- **Rachel Abel**, Assoc. Princ. for Teach/Learn (West)
- **Antwan Babakhani**, Principal (South)
- **Julianna Cucci**, English Dept Chair (South)
- **Claire Empfield**, Special Ed. Dept Chair (East)
- **Kendall Griffin**, Athletic Director (East)
- **Kristina Wiemer**, School Psychologist (Frost)
- **Eileen McMahan**, Principal (West)
- **Lauren Olson**, Assist. Princ. for Stud. Serv (South)
- **Melissa Pikul**, Principal (East)
- **Cristina Ramirez**, Assoc. Princ. for Stud/Fam Serv (West)

District Staff

- **Tatiana Bonuma**, Superintendent
- **Brett Clark**, Director of Comms
- **George Dagues**, Assist. Sup for HR
- **Katie DiSanza**, Assist. Sup for Stud. Serv.
- **Mary Kalou**, Assist Sup for Business
- **Shawn Messmer**, Assist. Sup for Curriculum & Instruction
- **Kim Thevenin**, Comms Specialist

Community Members & Other

- **Nicole Coomer**, Business partner
- **Amanda Griffin**, Community member (West attendance area)
- **Annette Miller**, Community member (South attendance area)
- **Jackie Neesan**, Community member (East attendance area)
- **Joianne Smith**, Oakton College President
- **Allie Wyler**, Business partner