Northwood School District Staff Survey Overarching Themes (2025)

Strengths of Northwood School District (NSD)

1. **Supportive Staff Culture and Community**
    a. Strong camaraderie among colleagues; many cited teamwork and mutual support as key strengths.
    b. Positive and respectful relationships between staff and administration were commonly mentioned.
    c. Many staff appreciate the small school feel and sense of belonging.
2. **Administration and Leadership**
    a. Increased visibility and presence of leadership noted as a positive change.
    b. Administrators are often described as approachable, fair, and responsive.
    c. Open-door policies and accessibility were valued.
3. **Collaboration and Flexibility**
    a. Teachers and paras noted consistent collaboration across roles and grade levels.
    b. Staff value the autonomy and flexibility in instructional approaches.
    c. Strong para support and reliable guest teacher availability were highlighted.
4. **Access to Resources and Facilities**
    a. Appreciation for access to technology, materials, and facilities.
    b. Maintenance, Sunshine Committee, and PTO support were noted as beneficial.
    c. Smaller class sizes and availability of instructional space were frequently praised.

Areas for Improvement

1. **Special Education Collaboration and Communication**
    a. A recurring theme involved concerns around the lack of consistent collaboration between general education and special education staff.
    b. Desire for a more transparent and collaborative referral and IEP process.
2. **Student Behavior and Schoolwide Discipline**
    a. Behavior management remains a significant concern despite noted improvements.
    b. Staff call for clearer expectations, consistent consequences, and stronger support during behavioral incidents.
3. **Communication Across the District**
    a. Staff expressed frustration with inconsistent or last-minute communication from both school and SAU administration.
    b. Desire for regular, two-way dialogue and discussion opportunities at staff meetings.
    c. Requests for more transparency in decision-making, staffing, and program planning.
4. **Curriculum, Instruction, and Academic Support**
    a. Concerns over outdated or inconsistent curriculum resources in ELA and math.
    b. Request for more structured academic interventions and a clearer MTSS system.
    c. Lack of uniformity across grade levels.
5. **Professional Development and Training**
    a. Desire for more focused PD with clearer goals, especially in academic interventions, and curriculum implementation.
    b. Requests for follow-up and accountability after PD sessions.
    c. New staff seek better onboarding and early-year support.
6. **Workload and Role Clarity**
    a. Some feel overwhelmed with expectations outside of contracted hours (e.g., planning, data entry, report cards).

b. Need for clearer job descriptions and workload equity across roles.

Staff Satisfaction and Concerns

1. **Overall Positive Sentiment with Some Notable Frustrations**
    a. Many staff expressed pride in their work and appreciation for their colleagues and students.
    b. However, concerns over behavior, special education, communication gaps, and unclear roles were frequently cited.
2. **Recognition and Morale**
    a. Requests for more public recognition of staff and student success.
    b. Interest in continued or increased team-building activities and morale boosters.
3. **Equity and Inclusion in Decision-Making**
    a. Paras and specialists reported feeling excluded from discussions that directly impact their roles.
    b. Staff want more voice in curriculum, student placement, and policy development.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. **Enhance Communication and Collaboration**
    a. Include additional relevant stakeholders in meetings related to students.
    b. Establish structured opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.
    c. Allow time during meetings for discussion, not just information-sharing.
    d. Improve communication and collaboration withing special education and between regular education.
2. **Clarify Roles and Expectations**
    a. Provide written job descriptions.
    b. Ensure fairness in task assignments and role responsibilities.
3. **Improve Curriculum and Instructional Support**
    a. Adopt updated ELA and math curriculum aligned with the state requirements.
    b. Standardize curriculum across grade levels and offer time for vertical planning.
4. **Address Student Behavior Proactively**
    a. Strengthen the tiered behavioral response system with a clear matrix of consequences.
    b. Increase admin visibility during unstructured times (e.g., lunch, recess).
5. **Strengthen Professional Development**
    a. Offer additional relevant, differentiated PD options tied to district goals.
    b. Provide time during PD for application and collaboration.
    c. Strengthen the mentorship program for new hires.
6. **Increase Recognition**
    a. Celebrate staff and student achievements more frequently and visibly.

Next Steps

- Review and discuss survey results with the Leadership Team.
- Prioritize action items based on staff feedback.
- Collaborative development of solutions and action plans.
- Share progress updates and solicit ongoing staff input.