

Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center



School Improvement Plan - 2023-2025

Our Mission



Our Values

- **Community** is a welcoming group with a common purpose that supports the care, equity, and rights of one another resulting in ongoing respect and trust.
- **Care** is providing an environment that supports the emotional and physical needs of everyone and creating meaningful relationships among individuals, family, and communities.
- **Equity** is advocating for the rights of all people including children, their families, and one another to access everything needed to learn and grow.
- **Respect** is valuing and showing appreciation for the worth of one another.
- **Trust** is a reliance on, and the confidence in, the integrity, strength, surety, and ability of a person or entity.



Our Beliefs

- All children can learn, desire to learn, and have the right to learn.
- Our community is strengthened by diversity, multiple perspectives, and mutual respect.
- Educational experiences should engage the whole child through hands-on learning and real world opportunities that encourage critical thinking, creativity, curiosity, and inquiry.
- Education is an active partnership with a shared responsibility between home, school, and the community.
- All decisions concerning education should be based on what is best for children.



Our Community



- The students who make up our population come from a variety of countries around the world, including but not limited to the United States of America, Brazil and every other country in South America, Central America, Nepal, Ukraine, Dominican Republic, Russia, Greece, Germany, Japan and China.
- There are currently **23** home languages other than English represented in our school.
- Our school houses the ECIP (Early Childhood Intervention Program), which includes 4 integrated classes and 2 substantially separate classes.
- We also have 7 preschool AIM (Adapt Include Motivate) classes who are also housed at the Capuano Center.
- In addition, we have 6 PK-General Education (PK-GenEd), which is also a program for students 4 years of age as of August 31st of the current school year.
- We also have 2 General Education Kindergarten classes which also have diverse students who might require additional language support or services as determined by an IEP in the classroom.
- The AIM program, similar to the PK-AIM, has 2 Kindergarten classes. These are students who benefit from inclusion with the General Ed classes at different levels of participation during the day.

Our Community



- Given the variety of home languages and language learning needs, all students benefit from every teacher in the building either holding or working toward an SEI (Sheltered English Immersion) endorsement from the DESE.
- This is typically the first time students come to school, so it is imperative that teachers identify students who might need additional support to thrive in the classroom.
- Capuano students have opportunities to focus on different aspects of their academic growth while simultaneously improving their English proficiency, developing social and academic language, and an appreciation of their cultural differences which helps them become more accepting of others regardless of their differences.
- This is a goal that all our classes at the Capuano share.
- Enrollment slowly recovering after the COVID-19 pandemic. Enrollment used to be in the high 300's (Approximately 360 students). Currently in the 250's. Besides the pandemic, 3 general education classrooms have been moved to other schools (1 SEI Kindergarten and 2 PK classrooms). We currently have almost the same amount of homerooms as we used to have pre-pandemic: 23 homerooms.
 - GenEd classrooms have been substituted by SpEd classrooms, which naturally have less students: 18-20 vs. 6-9.

Before 2022

- Some elements of Restorative Justice made their way into the classrooms.
- Strong emphasis in exploring inequities in the classroom through Professional Development.
- Made sure of fidelity in the implementation of Second Steps in all classrooms, through classroom observations and grade level meetings.
- Social Emotional Learning Measure done three times every year. Rubric based on the SEL Standards on the DESE website.

2022-2023

- Introduction of Professional Development format of PLC (Professional Learning Communities), in which teachers have more time to collaborate and share best practices.
- First group of teachers officially trained in Restorative Justice.
 - RJ Circles format used widely in Professional Development, PLC meetings, and grade level meetings.
- Actively reviewing different school aspects to make sure that equity still took a front seat in our school.
- Introduction of Letter Naming data collection as a whole school measurement.
 - Previous SIP only referred to Dibels. However, PK does not have this assessment. Hence, the need for an assessment to identify students who might need additional support schoolwide.

2022-2023 (cont'd)

- Group of administrators, support staff, and teachers completed **Trauma Sensitivity Certification** from Lesley University.
- Introduction of activities to include families and make them feel welcome:
 - Weekly Family Newsletter
 - Monthly Principal's Coffee Hour
 - Movie Nights
 - Family Weekends
 - Grade Level sponsored literacy and math afternoons / evenings
- Introduction of a school mascot, **Cappy**, and school colors
 - All community stakeholders had a voice during the whole process.
 - Held an unveiling ceremony with Michael E. Capuano as our special guest.
 - School colors and/or Cappy gear used on Fridays as a community.



Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center

Data - 2022-2023

“Data is a precious thing and will last longer than the systems themselves.”



- Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web

Student Learning

After a thorough discussion with different stakeholders and data review, school leadership has identified letter naming, phonemic and phonological awareness (academic), social emotional learning (student wellness), and Family Engagement (Equity) as overarching areas of improvement.

- Our specific student population comes to our school with little to no exposure to specific literacy skills.
- This is the foundation to success in reading and writing at their many academic levels in their future academic careers.
- Without these significant skills, these students would not be positioned for success.
- In previous years, our Improvement Plan goal on academics included only phonemic and phonological awareness.
 - This limited the scope of the goal to only Kindergarten students who get assessed on those areas in their Dibels.
- We decided to add letter naming as a foundational skill that is already taught and assessed starting in the Pre-K in order to make the goal more inclusive of our diverse student population.

Student Learning Goal:

By the end of each school year, at least 80% of students will show academic improvement by being “on target” with letter naming, phonemic and phonological awareness as evidenced by a fixed set of assessments, access points, DIBELS, and accommodations, progressing towards student success during the next two school years.

Action Steps:

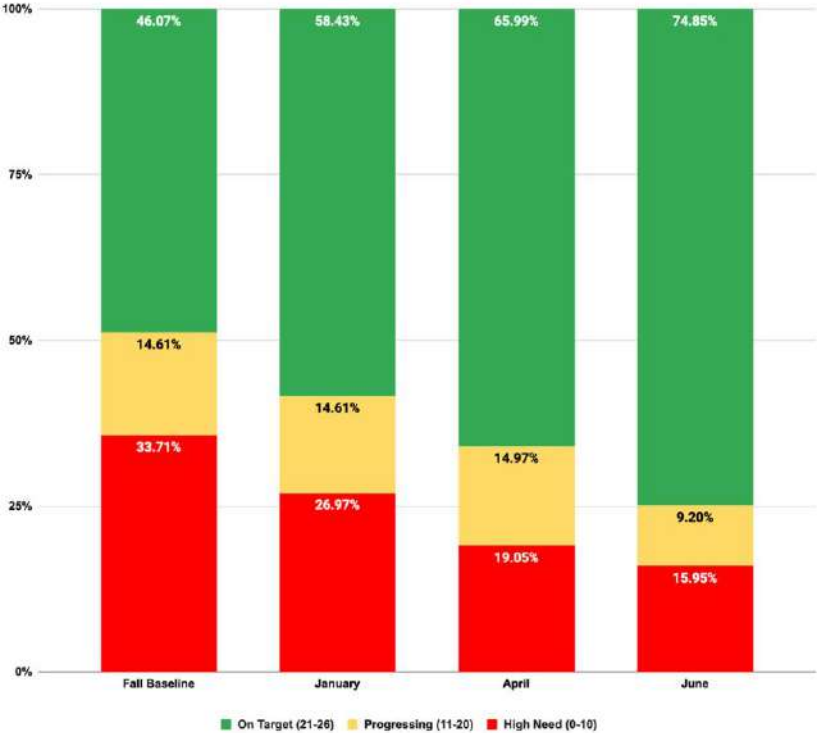
- The usage and collection of reputable data that is agreed upon within each grade level.
 - PK - Teacher Assessments and Report Cards
 - K - Teacher Assessments, DIBELS, and Report Cards
 - Update: Data is collected and used during grade level meetings and Professional Learning Communities to discuss student progress and identify students who might need Tier 2 support. This helps the school in closing the gap and being equitable toward all students. 2024-2025 all PK classrooms will be using the PELI (Preschool Early Literacy Indicator), which will also inform regarding important aspects such as letter recognition and phonemic awareness.
- Collating best practices during PLC and PD times
 - PLC and PD times are exclusively dedicated to the idea of High Expectations, following the district’s focus, and our activities center around strategies to be used by educators in their classrooms to support their students and the identification of students who might need to be referred to the MTSS, who would revise their progress every 6 weeks and move on to further referrals if needed.

Student Learning Goal: Action Steps (cont'd)

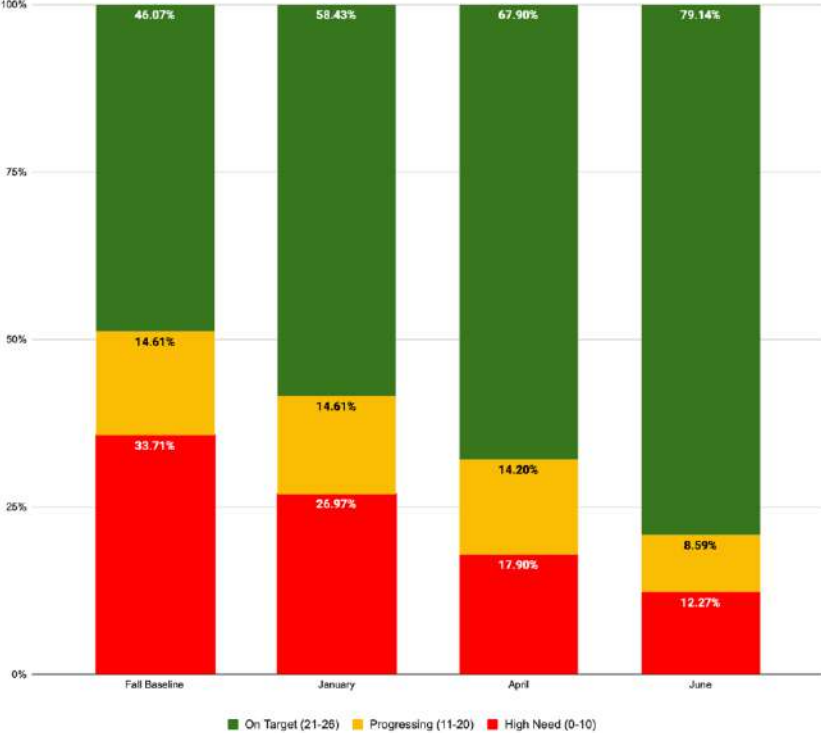
- Bringing in experts to inform and update our best practices
 - Update: We have been utilizing our service providers to offer their professional expertise and coaching to homeroom educators as a way of expanding their knowledge base regarding childhood physical and intellectual development.
- Curating materials
 - Use Early Childhood coaches as a resource.
 - Update: Early Childhood coaches have become active members of each PLC at the Capuano. They are also used as resources during Professional Development to model and present best practices. This benefits students by having their teachers receiving new educational materials that can be introduced to their classroom

Letter Naming Data - 2022-2023 - General Performance

Capuano ECC - Letter Naming Data SY23 - PK - All

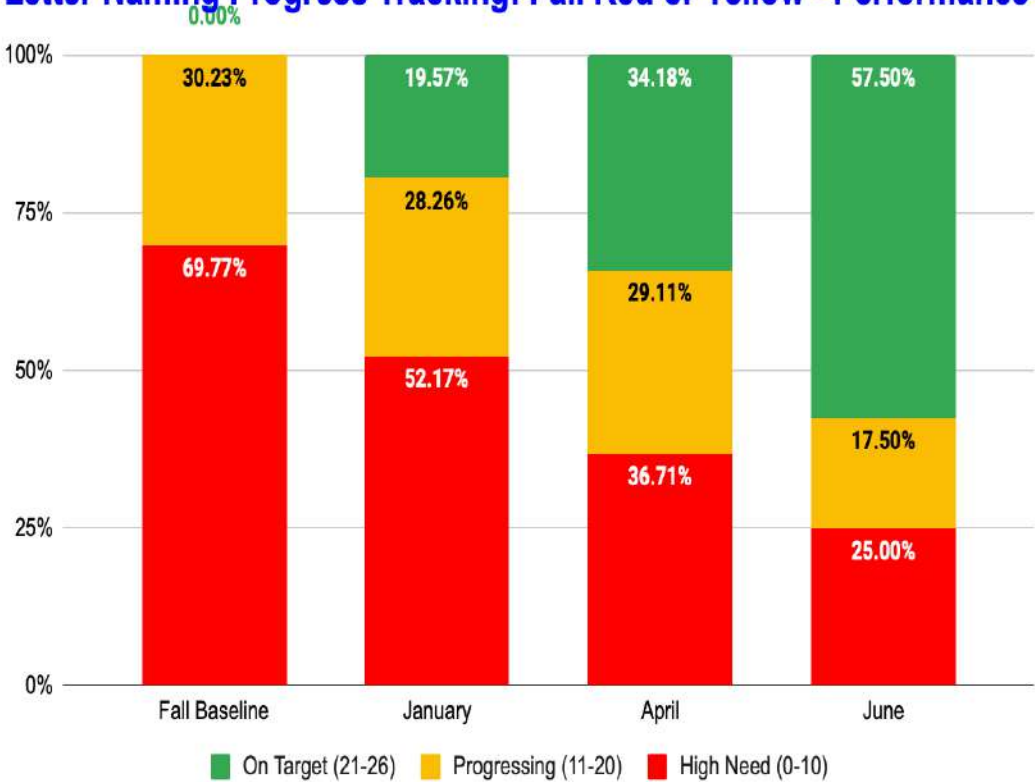


Capuano ECC - Letter Naming Data SY23 - PK - 4 yrs old only

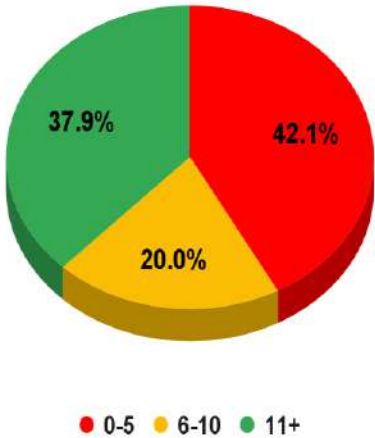


Letter Naming Data - 2022-2023 - Students who started yellow or red in the Fall

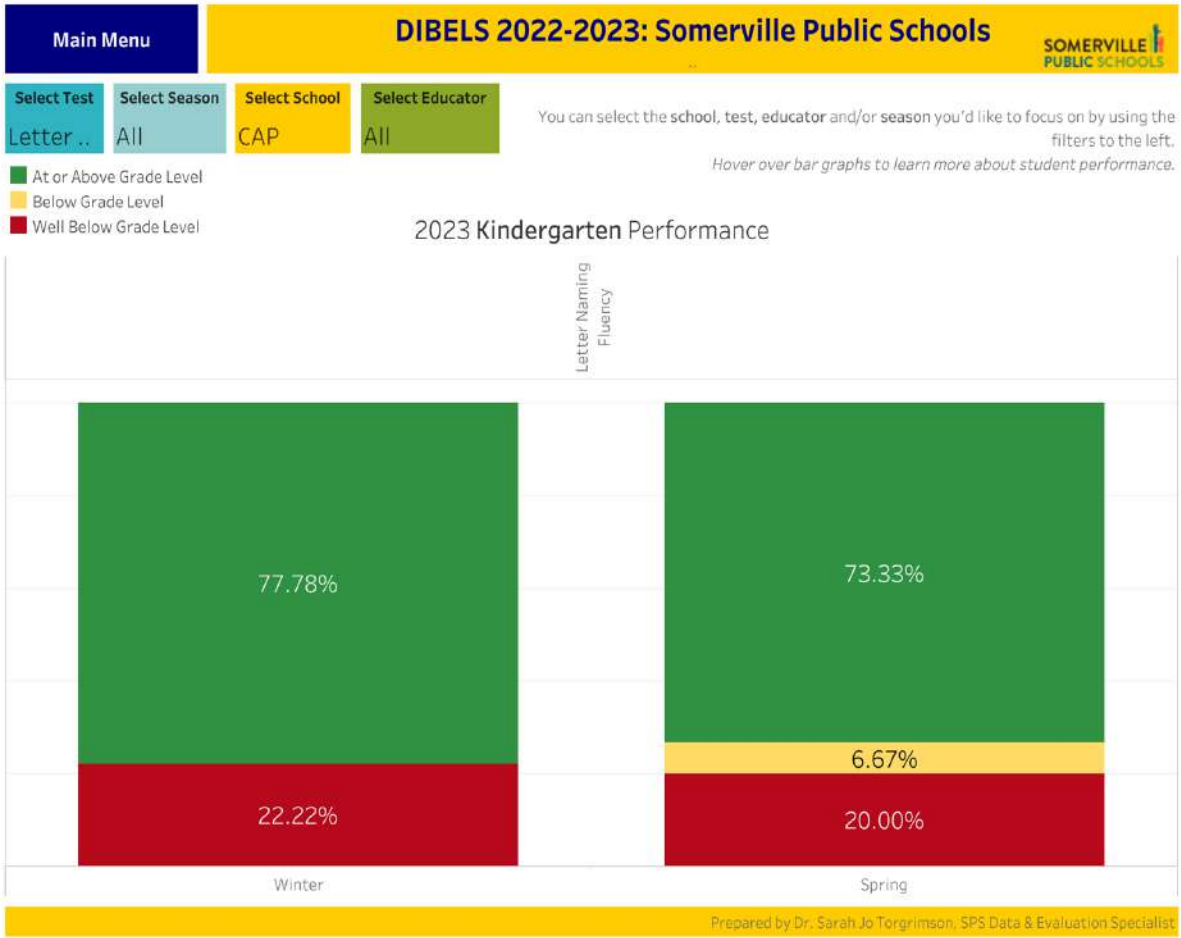
Letter Naming Progress Tracking: Fall Red or Yellow - Performance



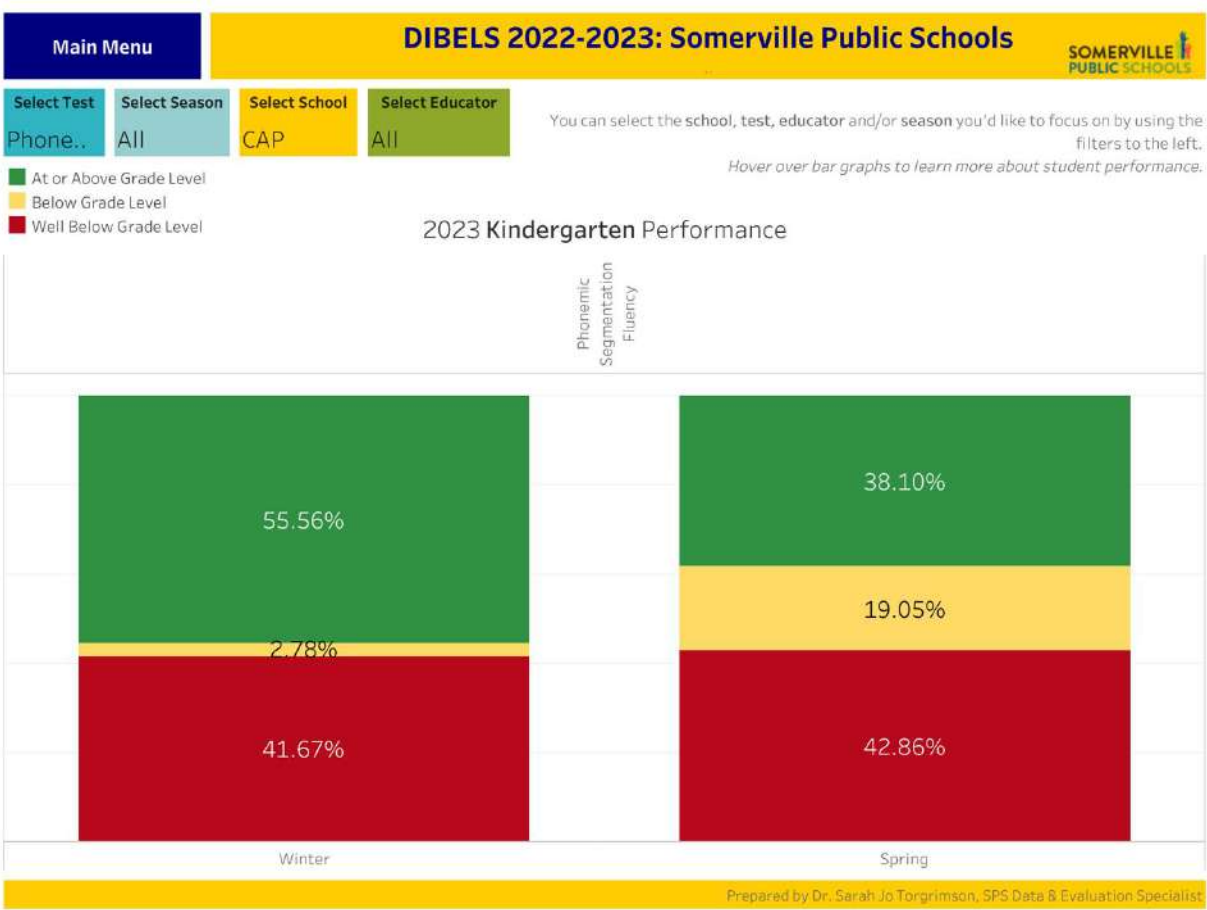
Letter Naming Progress Tracking: Fall Red or Yellow - Growth



Dibels - 2022-2023 - Kindergarten - Letter Naming Fluency



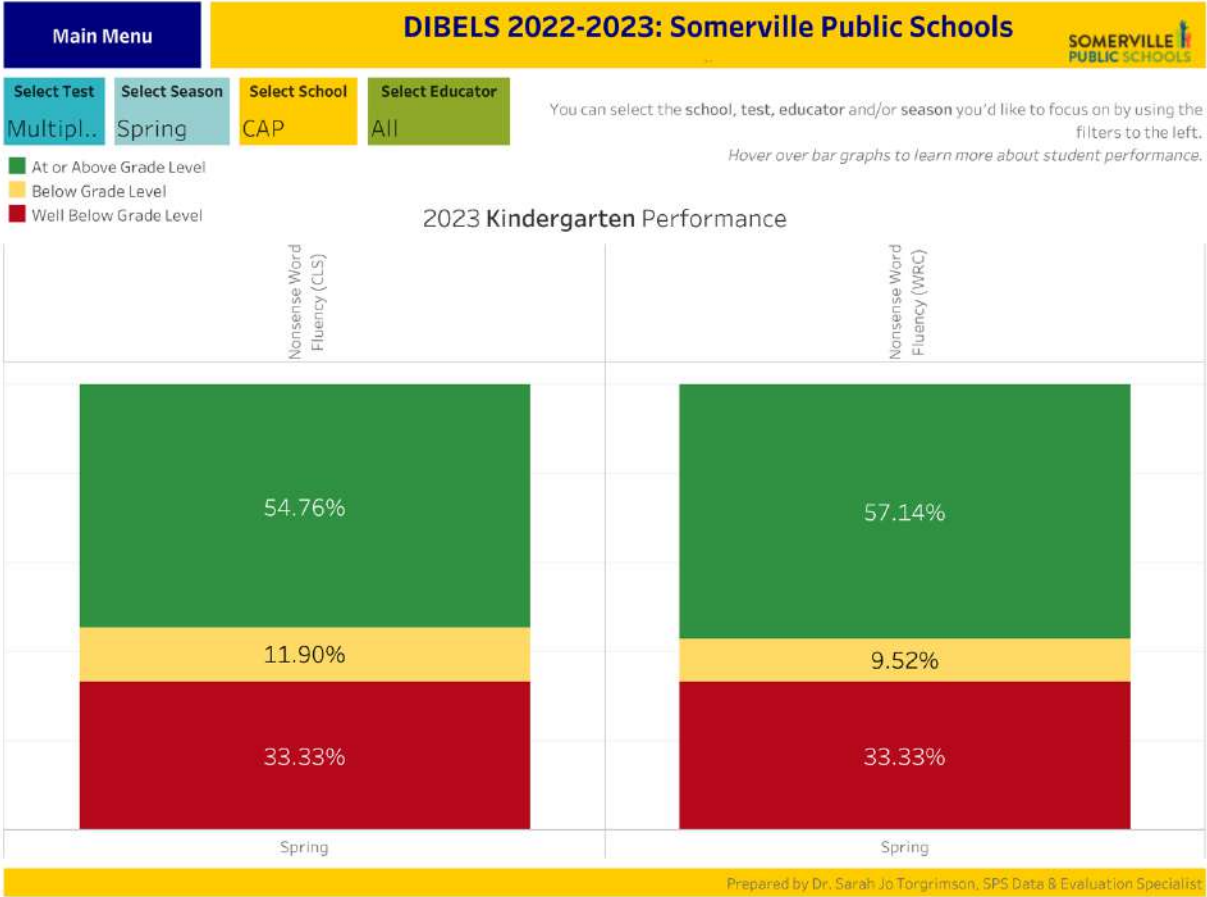
Dibels - 2022-2023 - Kindergarten - Phonemic Segmentation Fluency



Prepared by Dr. Sarah Jo Torgirson, SPS Data & Evaluation Specialist

Dibels - 2022-2023 - Kindergarten -

Nonsense Word Fluency: Correct Letter Sounds and Words Read Correctly



Social Emotional Learning

- SEL is a significant focus across all grade levels.
 - Often, our students come to school for the first time when they come to us.
 - In addition to that, some of our students have been socially isolated from peers during the COVID Pandemic.
 - Students' trauma levels are heightened and their social emotional development up to this point tends to differ from standard developmental expectations.
- By taking a benchmark of SEL Domains (we measure 6 domains at the Capuano), we know where our students stand and which domain(s) might need special attention.
- Additionally, if students do not meet grade level SEL expectations, they may not be able to meet higher demands, both academics and social emotional, of a larger scale school setting, like a PK-8 building, where many Capuano students go after their Cappy years (PK and K).
- In previous years, our student wellness goal was also based on our SEL assessment of students, but focused mostly on Domain 4B (Conflict Management). Although we want to keep working using the SEL assessment as a guide for our goal, we decided to expand it to make sure that we not only improve one domain, but all of them.

Social Emotional Learning Measure - Rubric created in 2017 by a group of Capuano counselors and teachers, using DESE Standards for SEL. The domains that we measure at the Capuano are:

- **D1 - Self awareness**
 - Standard 1: The child will be able to recognize, identify, and express his/her emotions.
- **D2 - Self management**
 - Standard 4: The child will demonstrate impulse control and stress management.
- **D3 - Social Awareness**
 - Standard 5: The child will display empathetic characteristics.
- **D4A - Relationship Skills**
 - Standard 8: The child will engage socially, and build relationships with other children and with adults.
- **D4B - Conflict Management**
 - Standard 9: The child will demonstrate the ability to manage conflict.
- **D5 - Decision Making**
 - Standard 11: The child will demonstrate beginning personal, social, and ethical responsibility; and
 - Standard 12: The child will demonstrate the ability to reflect on and evaluate the results of his or her actions and decisions.

All the standards are age appropriate to the expectations of 4 and 5 years old.

Student Wellness Goal:

By the end of each school year, at least 80% of students will demonstrate improved social emotional learning by achieving “Meeting standard” on all standards as evidenced by an SEL Measure created and defined by state SEL frameworks during the next two school years.

Action Steps:

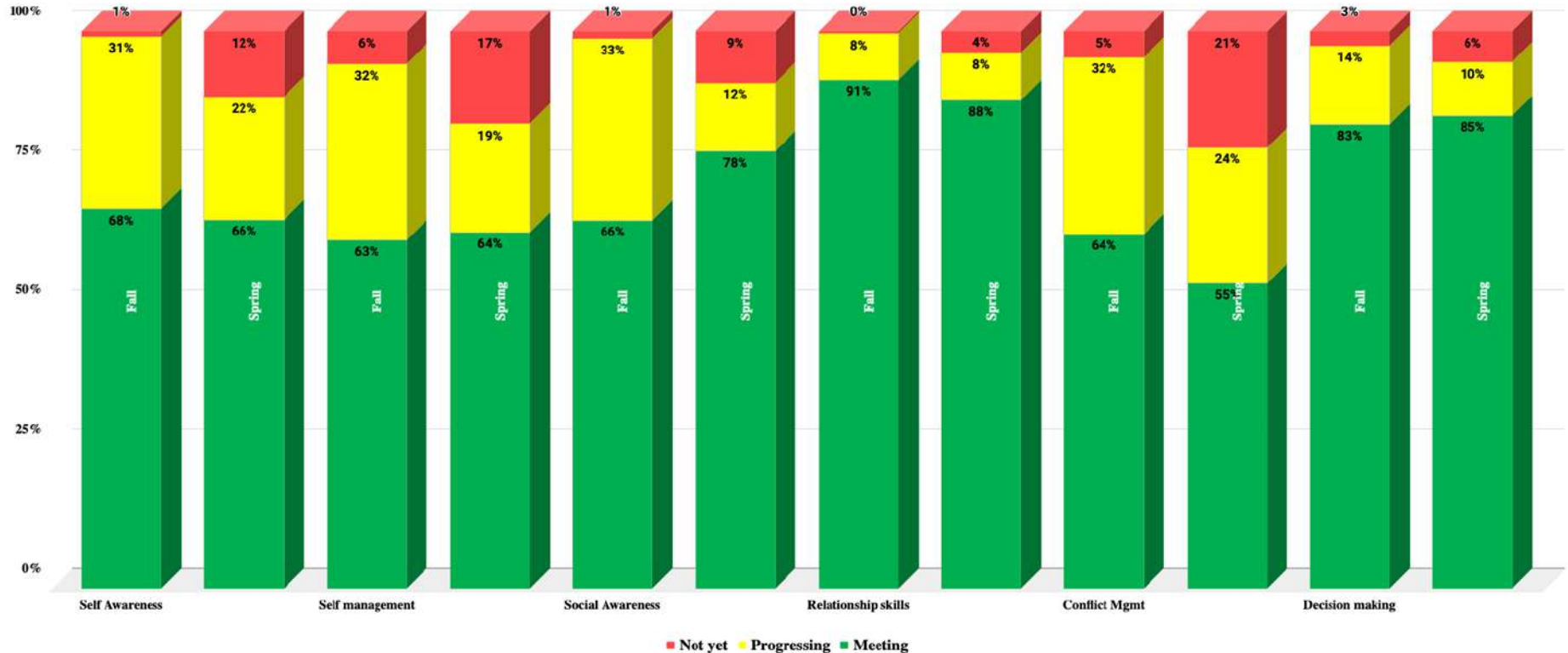
- Assess students using our school’s SEL measure 3 times every year
 - Update: Schoolwide assessment happening in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. This offers invaluable data to start identifying students who might need additional support from the get go.
- Discuss results of SEL Assessment in PLC Teams and ILT in order to identify domains that need improvement
 - Update: Every cycle data is out, PLC’s work in their grade levels looking at the data as well as the ILT has a schoolwide data dive to look for areas of improvement and to inform our Professional Development. This helps establishing a system of supports that will help students move towards meeting the expected standards, or at least support them in growing the expected amount of levels for the year.
- Teaching foundational SEL vocabulary
 - Update: We have a PBIS Matrix of “Be Kind / Be Safe” which teachers use to reinforce positive behaviors and vocabulary throughout the school. They also follow the Second Step curriculum which directly focuses on the students’ social emotional Learning. Small groups are formed by the Counselor and Dean of Students to support SEL with students who might need a more focused approach. This helps the whole school to have a common language and students are clear about the expectations due to the similar language used around the school.

Student Wellness Goal: Action Steps (cont'd)

- Using reflective strategies to regain rapport after crises
 - Update: Counselors, Dean of Students, and Behavior Specialists in the building work with students who need support in this area. They make presentations at our building-based Professional Developments to reinforce and provide teachers with some of these strategies for educators to be comfortable with if needed during Tier 1 interventions.
- “SEL-APL” Standards (Approaches to Play and Learning)
 - In process during 2023-2024
- Restorative Justice
 - Update: Staff in process of being trained on either Tier 1 or Tier 2 of RJ. This creates a group of people focused in supporting the school’s approach to Social Emotional Learning.
- Make sure Individual Educational Plans include resources to address socioemotional needs of students
 - Update: Students who need additional support on SEL in the IEP’s, receive it from our Adjustment Counselor.

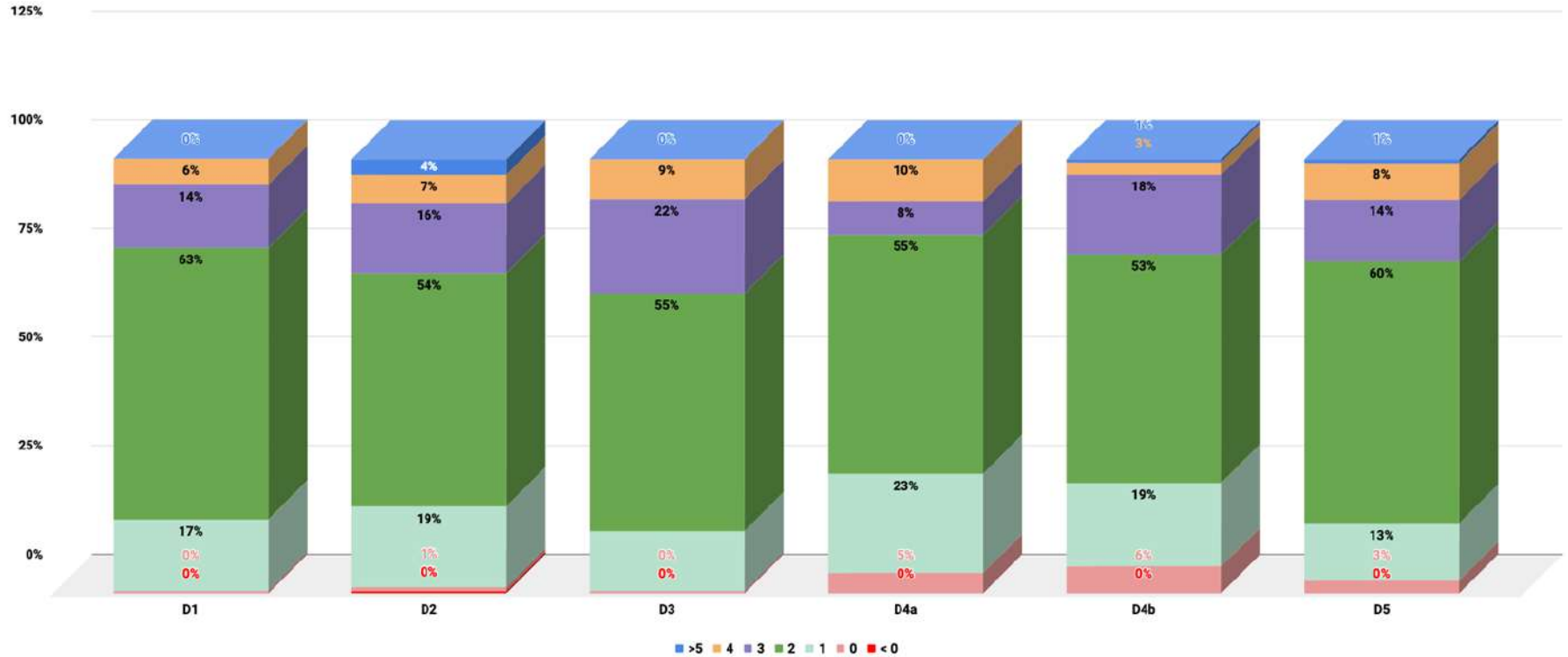
SEL Data - 2022-2023 - All Students / All Domains

2022-2023 Capuano ECC SEL Comparison - All Students



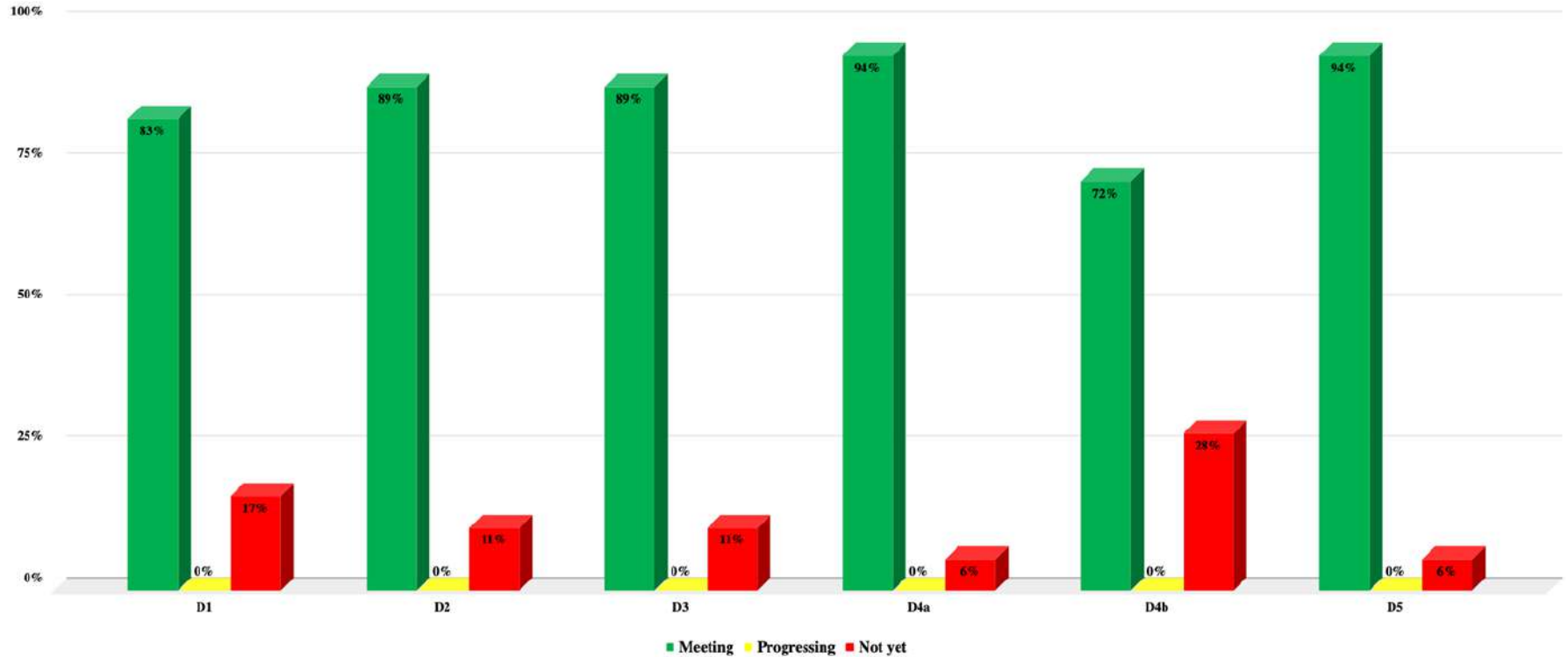
SEL Data - 2022-2023 - Growth

Capuano ECC SEL 2022-2023 - Growth: Fall '22 to Spring '23



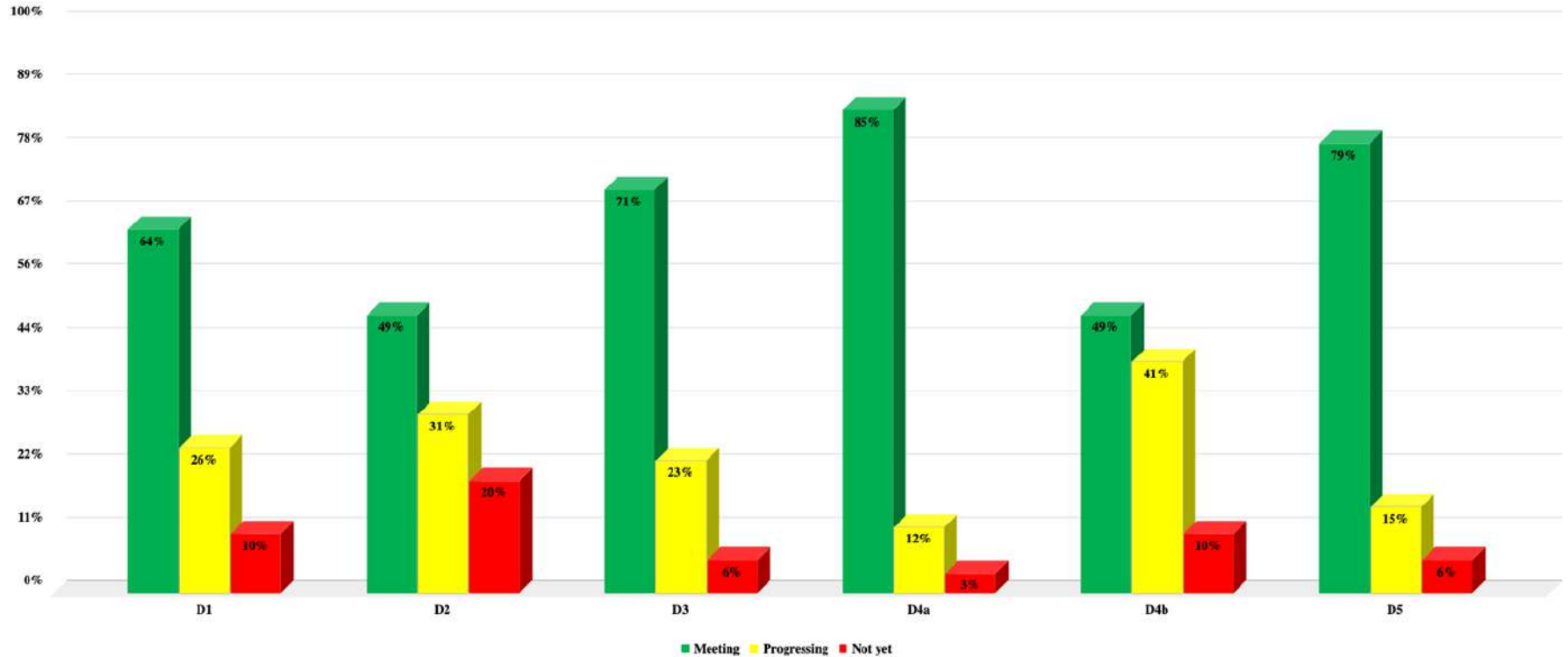
SEL Data - 2022-2023 - By program / grade level

ECIP SEL Spring 2022-2023 - All Students



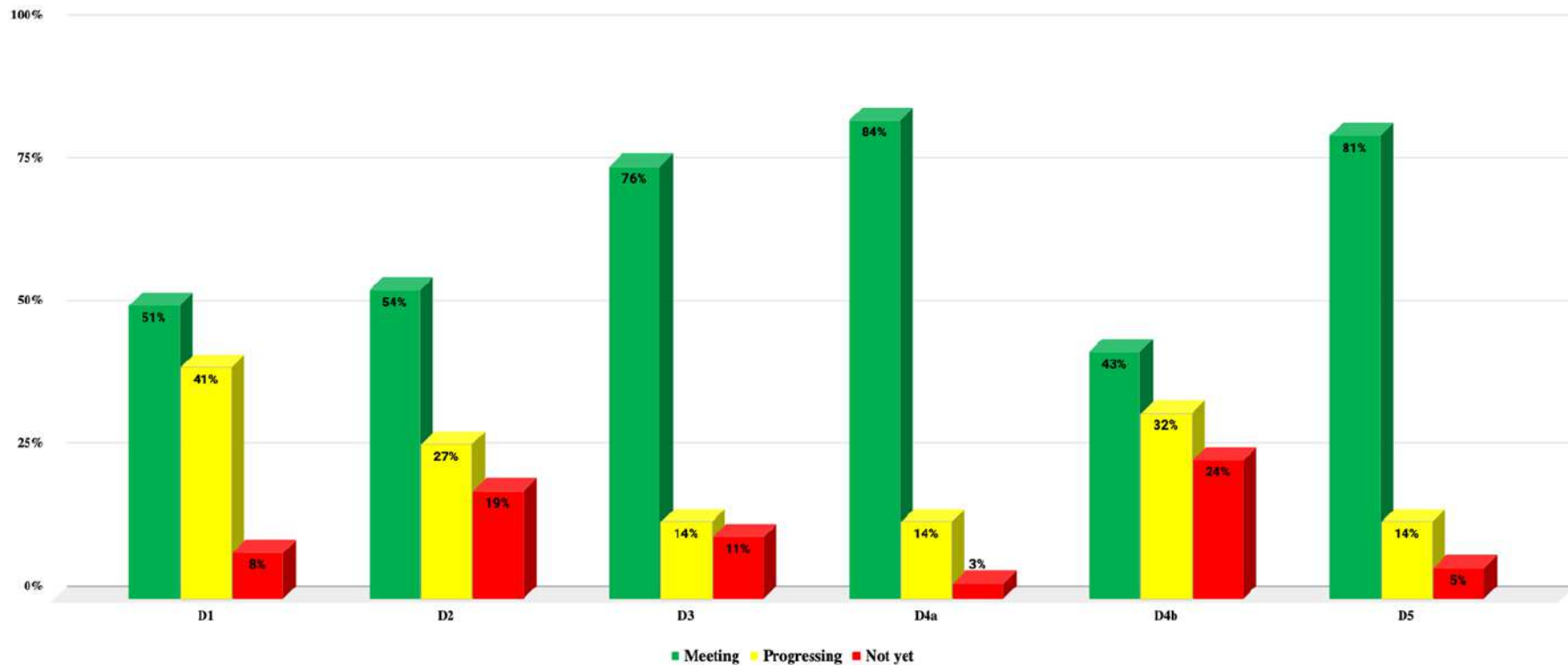
SEL Data - 2022-2023 - By program / grade level

PK-GenEd SEL Spring 2022-2023 - All Students



SEL Data - 2022-2023 - By program / grade level

Kindergarten SEL Spring 2022-2023 - All Students



Equity Goal:

- In terms of Equity, we decided to focus on the very important area of **Family Engagement**.
- There are several inequities that impact our families from accessing schools.
 - Somerville has a vast socio-economic field.
 - We have students whose parents own multi million dollar homes and families who live in multigenerational apartments, some as little as 1 bedroom, not to mention our families that live in public housing.
 - We have parents who work multiple jobs to make ends meet and parents who can work from home flexible hours as well as households with only one working parent.
 - With financial inequities comes the inability to come to school during school hours to participate in student learning/activities.
 - Financial hardships are pervasive and do not just impact one milieu of a student's life.
 - The above became more obvious during and as an aftermath of the COVID Pandemic.
 - However, historically this has been a concern for families who don't speak English as their first language.
- To support this notion, we used information gathered from the 2022 Conditions For Learning Survey.
 - Families felt that they did not have enough access to school, and that this lack of access was hindering their ability to participate in their child's education.

The identification of these two inequity areas for families is based on observational/anecdotal evidence.

Equity Goal:

100% of Families/Caregivers will be invited to whole school and class events through celebrations and academically oriented activities both in person and virtual during the next two school years, as evidenced by school communications, teacher invitations, and attendance logs.

As stated before, the socio-economic inequalities some of our families face do not allow them to participate in school-based activities. As we know from anecdotal and evidence based research students whose families engage in their education do better than students whose caregivers are unable to attend school-based projects. Our goal strives to close this gap by allowing students' caregivers who would historically be underrepresented to participate.

Action Steps:

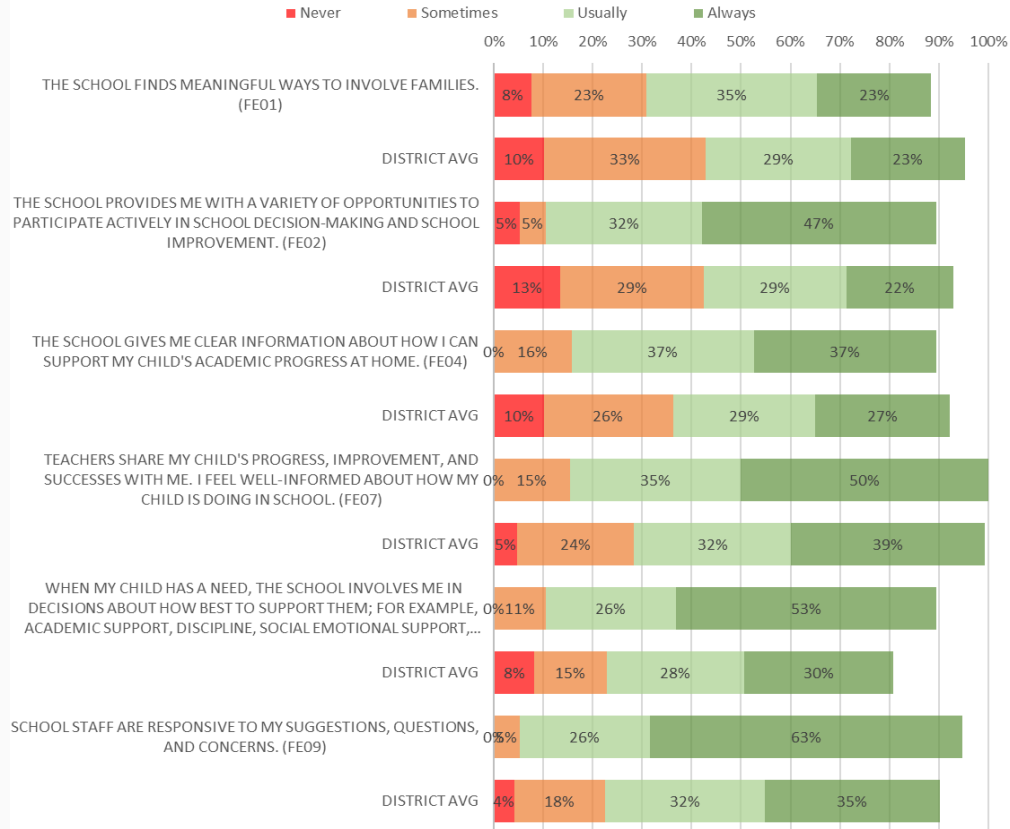
- School will provide consistent and constant communication to parents making sure that access to school is being given to parents.
 - Update: Constant communication sent to families on a weekly basis in the form of the Capuano Families Weekly Newsletter. This is a trove of information regarding activities at the Capuano as well as information about services available to support families from the district and the city. All classrooms have constant communication with parents via the approved communication platforms (Class Dojo or Talking Points). Educators advertise their classroom activities open to families, and there is a consistent attendance to these events.
- School will add a virtual alternative to most of the school activities such as Open House, Orientation Day, Parent Teacher Conferences, and any other future events that allow for such a format to be offered as an alternative.
- Educators will model best practices which will assist families to use school strategies to support language, inclusivity, predictable routines, and behavior at home. This will provide consistency to students when language and communication is used at home and at school, hence avoiding behaviors that might be reflective of confusion or not being able to understand what the expectations are.
- Educators will provide support materials as needed
- Results of CFL - Families - 2023 will be analyzed and compared to results from 2022.

Equity / Family Engagement Goal: Action Steps (cont'd)

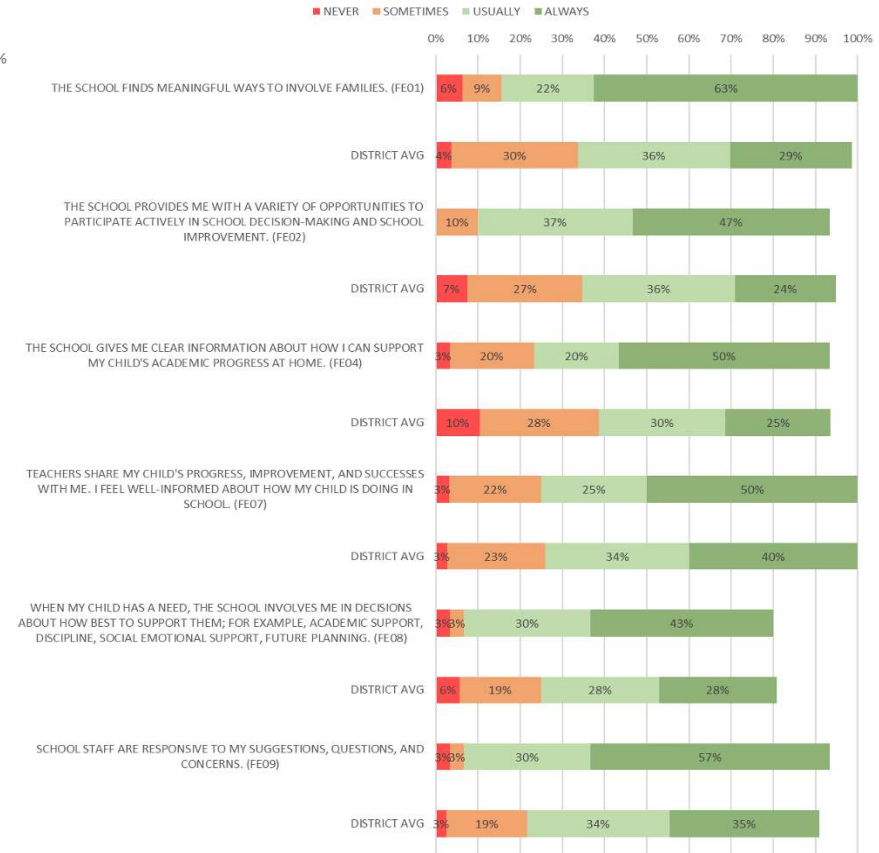
- School will add a virtual alternative to most of the school activities such as Open House, Orientation Day, Parent Teacher Conferences, and any other future events that allow for such a format to be offered as an alternative.
 - Update: Even after re-opening the school to families after the COVID lockdown, teachers keep offering virtual options (Zoom or Teams) for families to connect during Parent Teacher Conferences and for regular meetings. For families that cannot attend the Open House, a slideshow of the presentation done on that night is made available for them to have access to the information that was offered on that night.
- Educators will model best practices which will assist families to use school strategies to support language, inclusivity, predictable routines, and behavior at home. This will provide consistency to students when language and communication is used at home and at school, hence avoiding behaviors that might be reflective of confusion or not being able to understand what the expectations are.
 - Update: We ensure that all communication goes home in the target languages, and information regarding use of academic language for SEL / PBIS is also sent translated to make sure that regardless of the language used at home, there is consistency of the vocabulary.
- Educators will provide support materials as needed
 - As discussed in the previous bullets.
- Results of CFL - Families - 2023 will be analyzed and compared to results from 2022.
 - Update: Results were analyzed and presented next

Conditions For Learning Survey 2022-2023 - Family Survey

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT (CAPUANO: N=26)



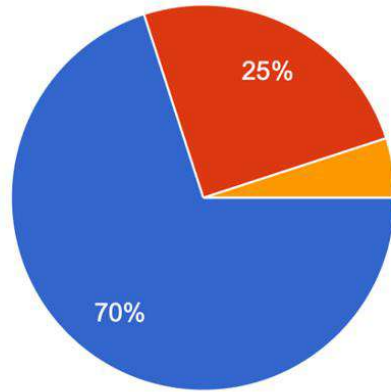
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT (CAPUANO: N = 32)



Capuano Mid-Year Family Survey March 2022 vs February 2024

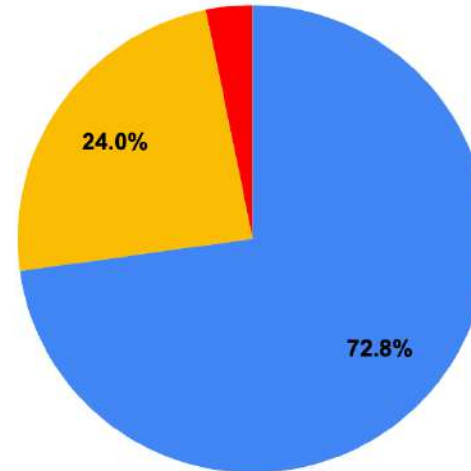
As a parent/guardian, do you feel connected to the Capuano School?

60 responses



- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

2023: As a parent/guardian, do you feel connected to the Capuano School? (126 responses)

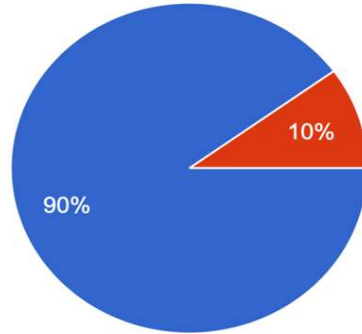


- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

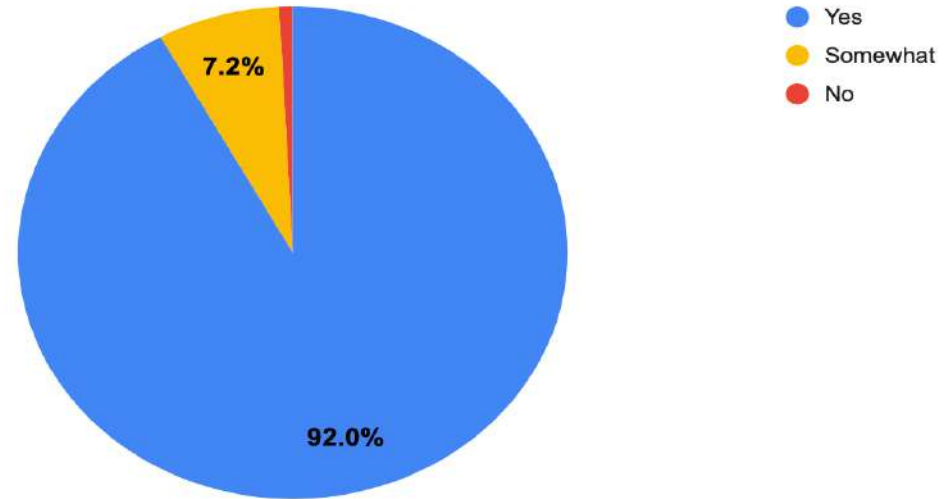
Capuano Mid-Year Family Survey March 2022 vs February 2024

If you have a question or need, related to school, do you feel you can speak with someone at the Capuano?

60 responses



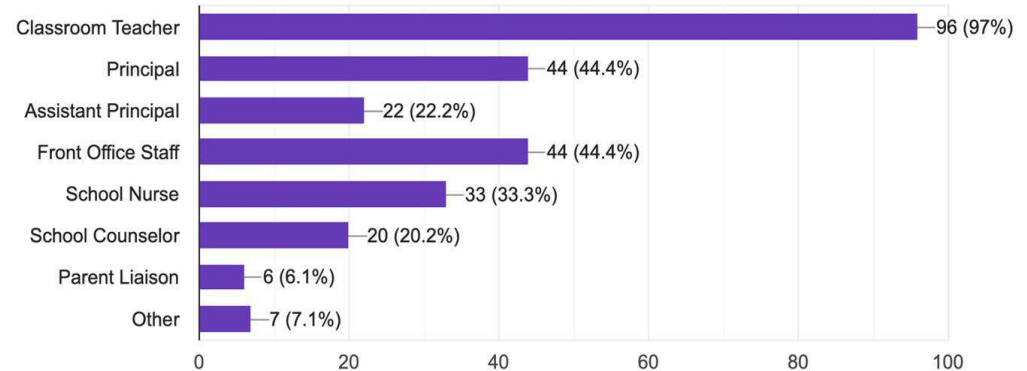
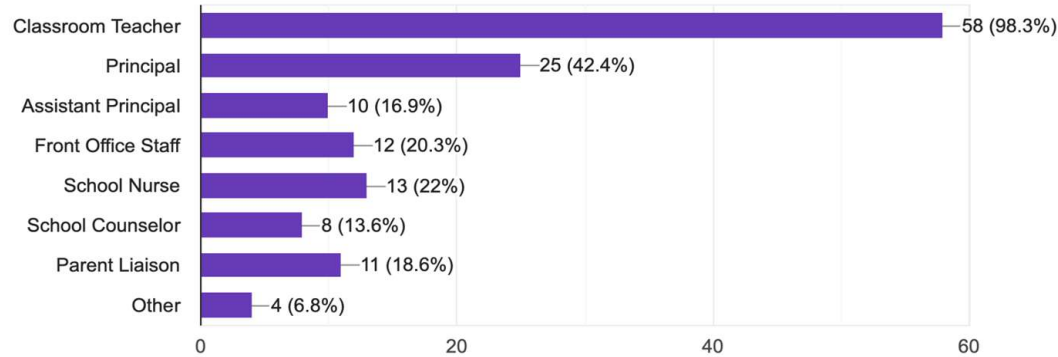
If you have a question or need, related to school, do you feel you can speak with someone at the Capuano? (126 responses)



Capuano Mid-Year Family Survey March 2022 vs February 2024

If so, who would you reach out to? (select all that apply)

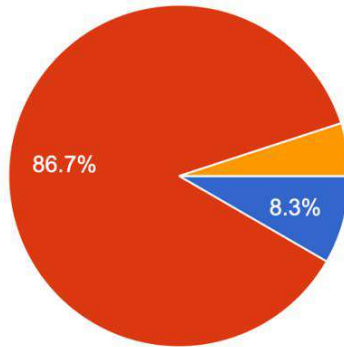
59 responses



Capuano Mid-Year Family Survey March 2022 vs February 2024

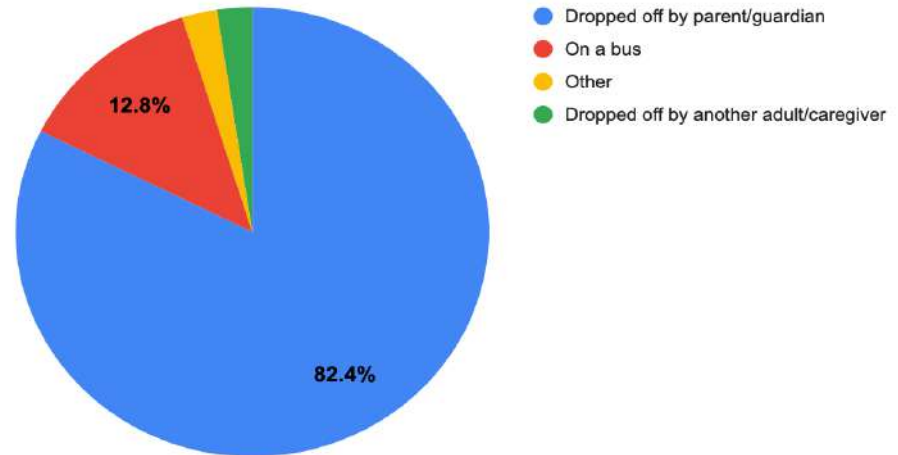
How does your child come to school primarily?

60 responses



- On a bus
- Dropped off by parent/guardian
- Dropped off by another adult/caregiver
- Other

Count of How does your child come to school primarily?

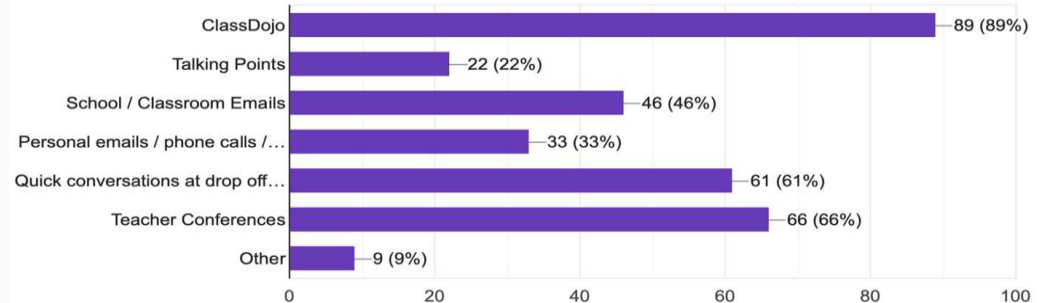
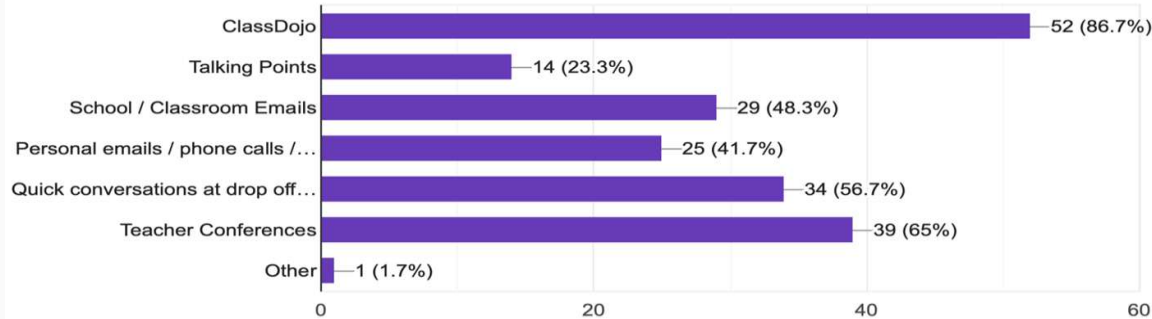


- Dropped off by parent/guardian
- On a bus
- Other
- Dropped off by another adult/caregiver

Capuano Mid-Year Family Survey March 2022 vs February 2024

What helps you to feel connected (Select all that apply)

60 responses



2022-2023 Action Steps tracking

- **Professional Development on Restorative Justice**
 - Staff in process of being trained.
- **Certify and Re-certify all classroom staff on CPI**
 - All staff either certified or needing re-certification at the end of this year.
- **PLC on best practices to teach early literacy and address social emotional needs (Second Step, PBIS Matrix)**
 - Professional Learning Communities meeting regularly every other week discussing best practices.
- **Work with classroom teachers to invite parents to classroom activities and more teacher / parent communication**
 - All homeroom teachers invite their families to the classroom to family activities at least once every semester.
- **Expand the scope of communication from school administrators through a thorough Weekly Newsletter**
 - Consistent communication from Principal and Main Office staff with families through Weekly Newsletter, Talking Points, emails, and ClassDojo, Daily drop-off and pick up engagement with families.
- **Introduce more whole school activities such as Math / Literacy Nights, Principal's Coffee Hour / Roundtable, Movie Nights, PTA sponsored events, etc.**
 - All these activities have happened and we are planning to have them again this year. In addition, last year in April and this year during Open House Night, we organized a "Caregivers Connection" in which we bring together several school and community service providers to offer resources to interested families. During Open House, we extended the invitation to Winter Hill PK and Kindergarten families who were in the building the same night.
- **Cohort on Trauma Sensitive school**
 - Completed in December 2023



Thank you!