

TWIN RIVERS

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special Projects & Equity • Expanded Learning

Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP)

Student Belonging & Engagement Survey

Findings & Recommended Next Steps | 2025–2026 School Year

Prepared by the Office of Special Projects & Equity

Executive Summary

This report summarizes student responses to the 2025–2026 ELOP student belonging and engagement survey. Approximately 70 students responded, with individual belonging ratings ranging from 2.1 to 4.3 on a 5-point scale.

Most responses cluster between 3.4 and 4.0, with a meaningful group rating their experience at 4.1–4.3. This pattern indicates that students recognize real positives — sports, clubs, some cultural recognition, supportive staff, and school spirit — while also naming clear areas for growth in belonging, emotional support, academic workload, and access to opportunities.

In short, students report that they:

- Experience belonging through sports, clubs, some cultural celebrations, and supportive staff.
- Feel that not all cultures, learning needs, or emotional needs are equally supported.
- Are asking for more voice, more support, and more options to connect with school.

Takeaway Students are broadly engaged and see meaningful positives, but they are asking the district to extend belonging more equitably — across cultures, learning needs, and emotional well-being.

Top 10 Themes from Student Responses

The following themes emerged most frequently across student responses. Each theme includes representative student input and a summary takeaway.

1. Culture and Cultural Representation

Requests for broader cultural representation appeared very frequently.

- More cultural clubs and cultural events (e.g., "more cultural clubs/events on campus").
- Specific events named: Mexican-themed, Latino, Hmong, and Hispanic celebrations, and "different cultures in the auditorium."
- Language and culture classes, such as a Hmong class, to help students learn about and connect with their heritage.
- Appreciation for Hispanic Heritage Month, alongside concern that other cultures (other South American countries, Hmong, and others) do not receive the same visibility.

Takeaway The school does something around culture (especially Hispanic culture), but students want broader, more equitable, and more visible representation of all cultures.

2. Belonging Through Sports and Clubs

Many responses named sports and clubs as their primary drivers of belonging.

- "Sports teams and clubs give me a sense of belonging."
- "The wrestling team made me feel welcome."
- Requests for more diverse clubs, and more clubs that meet during school hours.
- Interest in more arts, drama, music, cooking, and life-skills clubs.
- A desire to play sports without having to be on an official school team.

Takeaway Sports and clubs work very well for those involved, but students want more variety, easier access, and more non-competitive opportunities.

3. Cultural and Racial Inclusion

Some students feel strongly included; others clearly do not.

- Positive: "My school culture gives me a sense of belonging... language or race doesn't matter."
- Positive: "Everyone is welcome and wanted because their background is recognized."
- Critical: "Our school celebrates Latino culture, but others aren't."
- Critical: "I feel like some people may not belong because they're different."

- Need: "We need translators for the kids who don't understand English — teachers don't even help them out."

Takeaway Experiences are mixed: some students feel highly included, while others feel different or unseen — especially those from less-represented cultures or with limited English.

4. Emotional Support, Mental Health, and Anxiety

Mental health was one of the strongest and most frequent themes.

- "Having more adults that understand anxiety."
- "Making mental health and wellness a priority... more counseling resources."
- "Break days to catch up or rest and recover from stress."
- Several students reported feeling overwhelmed and not understood by teachers regarding workload and emotional needs.

Takeaway Mental health is a major pain point. Students need the school to recognize stress and anxiety and to provide resources, flexibility, and understanding.

5. Academic Workload and Assignments

Closely tied to mental health, but strong enough to stand on its own.

- "Stress on assignments — teachers assign a ridiculous amount of work."
- Requests for less homework and for coordinated "break days" to catch up.
- Students link heavy workload and poor coordination between classes to lower motivation and attendance.

Takeaway Workload is perceived as unbalanced and poorly coordinated, affecting both well-being and motivation.

6. Student Voice, Participation, and Ownership

Several responses called for greater student voice and leadership.

- "Our school should implement more student-led initiatives... an active voice council... peer mentorship groups."
- "Increase intercommunication between students and administrators through polls."
- "I wish clubs were easier to create."
- "We should have events where different clubs host them."

Takeaway Students want to be part of decisions, create clubs with fewer barriers, and have formal channels to share input and co-design school culture.

7. Teacher Support and Individualization

Students both praised and critiqued teacher support.

- Positive: "Teachers and students support each other like a family."
- Positive: "Everyone is kind and supportive."
- Need: "Teachers should be more understanding of different students — all students don't think the same."
- Need: Translators and active support for multilingual students.

Takeaway Students value supportive teachers but ask for more empathy, differentiation, and specific support for diverse learners and multilingual students.

8. Physical Environment and Campus Climate

Students commented on the physical and safety environment.

- "We could liven up the campus and clean up the restrooms — a brighter and cleaner campus."
- "Having areas to refill water bottles," instead of using bathroom water.
- Safety and order: "La seguridad," and being "more strict about substance use and vaping on campus."

Takeaway Infrastructure and physical climate — restrooms, water, cleanliness, substance use, and safety — directly influence whether students want to be at school.

9. Career, CTE, and Internship Opportunities

A concrete theme, especially at the high school level.

- "More internships and work experience."
- "A career exploration program would immensely improve" the experience.
- Requests to expand CTE pathways (e.g., mechanics, veterinary experiences).
- Students say these programs help them see how education connects to their future.

Takeaway There is strong demand for career exploration, internships, broader CTE, and hands-on experiences — which also boost motivation and sense of purpose.

10. Activities, School Spirit, and Fun

Many students referenced events and school spirit.

- "Our school tries to be really big on spirit."
- Requests for more rallies, spirit days, talent shows, dances, and fun events.
- Students tie belonging and attendance to fun events, chances to showcase talents, and safe social spaces.

Takeaway Students want a lively school with more frequent, varied, and enjoyable events that make daily school life more engaging and community-oriented.

Recommended Next Steps

The following recommendations are drawn only from the student responses summarized above.

1. Develop an Equitable Cultural Representation Plan

- Create an annual calendar of diverse cultural events (Latino, Hmong, and other cultures, including mixed "Hispanic/American" identities).
- Support cultural clubs and cultural performances in the auditorium.
- Explore language and culture classes (e.g., Hmong or other languages) where there is sufficient interest.

2. Strengthen Clubs, Non-Competitive Sports, and Creative Activities

- Simplify the process to start new clubs, with a clearly explained path and an adult sponsor.
- Offer activities during the school day, not only after school.
- Launch or expand drama/musical theater, art, cooking, and life-skills clubs.
- Add informal sports spaces (e.g., a permanent volleyball net) and recreational options for students who can't or don't want to join official teams.

3. Prioritize Mental Health and Realistic Workload

- Increase counseling resources and wellness programming.
- Provide staff professional learning on anxiety and student stress.
- Coordinate cross-teacher planning around total workload so students aren't overloaded with simultaneous assignments.
- Consider "catch-up" or break days for students to complete work or decompress, as students suggested.

4. Deepen Inclusion for Multilingual and "Different" Students

- Provide translators and structured support for students who don't yet understand English, with clear expectations that teachers actively support them.

- Create spaces and events (affinity groups, peer support clubs) where students who feel "different" can connect.

5. Increase Student Voice and Shared Leadership

- Establish a student voice council to give feedback on events, policies, and school climate.
- Launch peer mentorship groups so students can support one another and help newcomers find belonging.

Takeaway Taken together, these steps respond directly to what students asked for: broader cultural belonging, stronger emotional support, a more balanced workload, and more voice in shaping their school.

2024–2025 21st CCLC Outcomes

The following reflects the most recent 21st CCLC outcomes data available for Twin Rivers Unified, based on the 2024–2025 Annual Performance Report (APR) for Grant Union High School. The report measures student outcomes in academic achievement, school-day attendance, behavior, and engagement in learning.

GPRA #1: Academic Achievement – State Assessments

Measures the percentage of students in grades 4–8 participating in 21st CCLC who demonstrate growth in reading/language arts and mathematics on state assessments. No students were reported in the applicable grade bands for this measure; therefore, state assessment outcomes were not applicable for 2024–2025.

GPRA #2: Academic Achievement – GPA

Measures the percentage of students in grades 7–8 and 10–12 with a prior-year unweighted GPA below 3.0 who demonstrated an improved GPA. The program reported **188 participating students** in the applicable grade levels. Of the students with available outcome data, **99 had a prior-year GPA below 3.0, and 70 demonstrated an improved GPA**, resulting in an improvement rate of approximately **71%**.

GPRA #3: School-Day Attendance

Measures the percentage of students in grades 1–12 who had a school-day attendance rate of 90% or below in the prior school year and demonstrated improved attendance in the current school year. The program reported **210 participating students** in the applicable grade levels. Of the students with available outcome data, **15 had a prior-year attendance rate at or below 90%, and 10 demonstrated improved attendance**, resulting in an improvement rate of approximately **67%**. Some students did not have prior-year attendance data because they attended another district during the 2023–2024 school year.

GPRA #4: Behavior

Measures the percentage of students in grades 1–12 who experienced a decrease in in-school suspensions compared with the previous school year. The program reported **210 participating students** in the applicable grade levels. Of the students with available outcome data, **9 had in-school suspensions in the previous school year, and 8 experienced a decrease in suspensions**, resulting in an improvement rate of approximately **89%**.

GPRA #5: Engagement in Learning

Measures the percentage of students in grades 1–5 who demonstrated improved teacher-reported engagement in learning. No students were reported in the applicable grade bands for this measure; therefore, engagement outcomes were not applicable for 2024–2025.

Summary of Outcomes

Across the applicable measures, the 2024–2025 APR shows improvement in **GPA, school-day attendance, and behavior** among students for whom outcome data were available. The highest reported improvement rate was in **behavior (89%)**, followed by **GPA (71%)** and **school-day attendance (67%)**. State assessment and engagement measures were not applicable because no students were reported in the required grade bands.