Humboldt County Office of Education

Superintendent's Student Advisory Council Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Spring 2025, the Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) launched its inaugural Superintendent's Student Advisory Council to ensure high school students from across the county had a direct role in shaping educational decisions. The goal of this first council was to co-create a sustainable, youth-led structure that centers student experience, shared governance, and authentic student leadership. The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) at Cal Poly Humboldt was contracted as evaluators to document and synthesize the Council's formation and learning process during its planning phase. The current report serves as a record of Cohort I's work, a guide for the Council's implementation in Fall 2025, and a potential framework for other Humboldt County schools and districts interested in adopting a co-leadership model.

Over the course of five meetings between March and May 2025, a diverse group of 15 high school students representing multiple schools, districts, backgrounds, and identities convened to co-design the Council's mission, structure, and function. These students participated in facilitated discussions, leadership activities, and collaborative planning sessions, culminating in the approval of a formal Statement of Purpose and the recommendation of a flexible, student-centered structure to guide future Councils.

Throughout the process, three major themes emerged:

- **Student Agency and Shared Governance**
  Students served as active co-creators of the Council. They helped design meeting formats, proposed structural norms, and gave input on real-time policy issues. HCOE staff emphasized transparency and respect, fostering a culture where student voice was treated as essential to the Council's success.

- **Student Development and Adult Facilitation**
  Many students were engaging in leadership work for the first time. HCOE staff balanced support with restraint, providing scaffolds such as templates and facilitation roles while allowing students to guide the Council's direction. Students built critical skills in leadership, collaboration, and policy analysis.

- **Lived Experiences in Humboldt Schools**
  Students shared firsthand accounts of the barriers they face in their educational environments, including racism, bullying, lack of cultural representation, economic hardship, and institutional distrust. These experiences underscored the urgent need for student-informed approaches to equity and inclusion.

The planning process also surfaced logistical and access considerations, such as the need for transportation support, flexible communication methods, and inclusive recruitment strategies.

Cohort I helped shape the vision for the Council, then went further by taking steps to put it into practice. Their insights informed the final meeting's agenda, which included feedback on an active policy dilemma and the development of priorities for future cohorts to build upon. Their work laid the foundation for an enduring structure that reflects the real needs, identities, and leadership of Humboldt County's youth.

Key Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from Cohort I's work and are intended to support the successful implementation of the Student Advisory Council in Fall 2025:

- **Honor and Integrate Cohort I's Legacy**
  Acknowledge the foundational work of the first cohort by sharing their purpose statement, structural designs, and reflections with future cohorts. Consider informal alumni roles to maintain continuity.

- **Establish Clear Expectations and Orientation Early On**
  Provide upfront clarity about the Council's scope, purpose, influence, and timeline so students know what to expect and how they can shape the process.

- **Maintain and Expand Breakout Group Structures**
  Continue using small-group formats that promote open dialogue and relationship-building. Formalize these as subcommittees to encourage student ownership of key focus areas.

- **Support Equity in Recruitment and Participation**
  Continue to use multiple outreach methods and provide logistical support (transportation, communication access) to ensure broad and inclusive student representation.

- **Create Opportunities for Action and Application to Existing Challenges**
  Include policy dilemmas, project planning, and student-led initiatives in the Council's agenda to build relevance and leadership experience. Compensate students to reflect the value of their contributions.

- **Standardize Iterative Processes**
  Regularly collect feedback through plus-deltas and reflection activities, and visibly incorporate that input into planning to reinforce student voice.

- **Scaffold Student Leadership**
  Provide developmentally appropriate support, tools, and context while allowing students to lead decision-making. Focus on capacity-building rather than control.

The current report documents the promising start of a long-term effort to center youth lived experience in educational decision-making. As the Council enters its next phase, the insights from Cohort I provide a strong foundation for continued growth, reflection, and impact.

METHODS

Following protocol from Braun and Clarke (2006), CCRP utilized a qualitative, descriptive approach to explore themes emerging from the five initial council meetings. This approach reflects pragmatic qualitative methods commonly used in applied research and organizational learning contexts, where the focus is on identifying patterns, summarizing insights, and supporting reflection and planning (Patton, 2002; Sandelowski, 2000). See Appendix A for an overview of Braun and Clarke's thematic analytical protocol.

Qualitative coding of meeting notes was conducted flexibly and iteratively to capture meaningful features of the data relevant to the Council's formation and early development. Coding was applied to complete statements or meaningful segments of notes rather than isolated words, with attention to preserving the context and intent of each segment. Multiple codes were permitted for a single data extract when appropriate, and not all lines of text were coded, as the process emphasized relevance over saturation. This approach supported an inclusive yet focused analysis, consistent with the descriptive and exploratory goals of the project.

Both semantic and latent features were coded. Semantic codes reflected the explicit content of student and staff contributions—what was directly said or described—while latent codes captured underlying assumptions, values, or structures implied in the data. This hybrid approach supported an inclusive yet focused analysis, aligning with the descriptive and exploratory goals of the project.

Data Sources

The current report draws on both primary and secondary data sources, as outlined below.

Primary Data

'Primary data' refers to information gathered directly from first-hand sources. Primary data were collected through two main sources: (1) formal council meetings and (2) interviews with HCOE staff assigned to the council project.

Council Meetings

Multiple forms of data were collected from each meeting and utilized for the current report. First, notes were taken during each Council meeting to document key themes, discussions, and observations. These notes serve as the primary source of qualitative data and are the basis for thematic analysis.

Second, HCOE provided meeting-related materials, including agendas and sign-in sheets. Agendas were used to understand the planned structure and focus of each meeting, helping to contextualize the meeting notes. Sign-in sheets were reviewed descriptively to track student

participation over time. A short survey was also administered to students at the second meeting (3/19/2025) to gather input on common challenges faced at school. Results from this survey are discussed in further detail.

Last, a simple feedback activity, commonly called 'plus-delta', was conducted at the end of meetings to provide staff with real-time feedback they could use to develop subsequent meetings agendas. In this activity, students shared something positive ('plus') and something that could be improved ('delta') about their meeting experience. While not the central focus of the evaluation, these responses were reviewed thematically, along with meeting notes, to identify patterns in student perceptions, satisfaction, and engagement.

HCOE Staff Interviews

One-on-one unstructured interviews were conducted by CCRP with HCOE staff directly assigned to support the Council. These interviews aimed to gather insight into how the Council was developed, facilitated, and supported during its initial planning phase. Staff were asked about their experiences, observations, and perspectives on the Council's structure, logistics, and evolving purpose. Interviewers took detailed notes, which were reviewed for recurring themes relevant to the goals of the evaluation.

Secondary Data

'Secondary data' refers to information that is already available to the public. Secondary data sourced and referenced within this report include the following:

- U.S. Census Data - American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2023)
- Humboldt County Office of Education
- California Department of Education - DataQuest
- Population Reference Bureau - KidsData.org; California Healthy Kids Survey

Data Limitations and Notes

Pooled Secondary Data Sources
Most of the secondary data included in this report are multi-year averages, or pooled averages, rather than single-year snapshots. For example, ACS data are estimates based on 5-year averages (2018-2022). Some school climate indicators from KidsData.org are based on pooled data from 2017-2019. These pooled estimates improve reliability of data, especially for small or rural populations.

Lag in Publicly Available Data
Many secondary data sources included in this report are based on data collected several years prior to their publication. For example, the most recent ACS 5-Year Estimates were published in 2023 but account for data collected between 2018-2022. Time lags are common in large-scale

public datasets and should be considered when interpreting claims made in this report, particularly in fast-changing policy or school contexts.

BACKGROUND

To better incorporate high school student perspectives into formal decision-making, the Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) established the HCOE Student Advisory Council in Spring 2025. The purpose of this first Council (Cohort I) was to develop a formal protocol to ensure student input is considered for certain HCOE decisions, amplifying the voices of students from schools across the county. The Council also reinforces the concept that HCOE staff and administrators need students' insights just as much as students need institutional support.

While student input may be acknowledged in principle by school administrators, HCOE staff noted that traditional systems often make broad and inclusive recruitment difficult. As a result, students who could meaningfully contribute are often excluded due to structural barriers that limit their access to leadership opportunities. The Student Advisory Council was intentionally designed to address these gaps by creating opportunities for a diverse group of students to help shape educational decision-making at the county level.

HCOE staff designed a comprehensive application grading rubric to assist in recruitment for council members. This rubric considered several evaluation criteria, including students' representation of historically underrepresented groups (e.g., students with disabilities, homelessness, foster youth, socioeconomic disadvantages, students of color, Two-Spirit (2S)/LGBTQ+), regional diversity, and overall contribution to committee diversity and goals. HCOE also developed a comprehensive outreach and recruitment strategy, contacting school leaders and leveraging existing relationships with local programs that serve youth. These included the McKinleyville Family Resource Center, TRIO Educational Talent Search, Two Feathers, the Northern California Indian Development Council, Black Student Unions in Humboldt, HCOE's lead for youth in foster care or experiencing homelessness, HCOE Court and Community Schools, advisors for high school identity clubs, Queer Humboldt, and Humboldt Asians & Pacific Islanders.

HCOE successfully recruited 15 high school students (grades 9–12), representing six high schools—including both traditional and alternative schools—from across the county. Over half of those recruited identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), with some being multilingual, experiencing socio-economic disadvantages, and/or being part of the 2S/LGBTQ+ community. Students also brought unique strengths to the table such as peer tutoring, participation in leadership programs, artistic and cultural expression, and advocacy in areas like mental health and educational equity. Students met with HCOE staff across five meetings between March and May 2025 to co-develop the Council's initial characteristics and functions, with the Council set to officially launch in Fall 2025.

Across planning meetings, students played an active role in shaping the Council's structure, values, and purpose. They co-developed and approved a formal Statement of Purpose, designed a

flexible meeting structure for future cohorts, and identified key challenges students face across the county, including cultural exclusion, inequitable discipline, and barriers to participation. Council members also provided input on a real-time policy issue, signaling their transition from planning to influence. These early contributions established a student-led foundation for the Council's long-term role in educational decision-making.

This report provides descriptive documentation of the Spring 2025 planning process. Rather than evaluating outcomes, this report highlights the evolution of ideas, planning steps, and student priorities as they took shape. This report may serve as a record and learning tool for students, HCOE, and partners as the Council moves toward formal implementation in Fall 2025. This report will also be shared with local education agencies and may serve as a template for future co-leadership efforts between education leaders and students across the county. The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) served as a neutral observer, synthesizing and reflecting back the developments emerging from the planning process.

Understanding the broader environment in which the Council was created, including regional demographics and student needs, can help contextualize both its purpose and potential. The following sections outline Humboldt County's population characteristics, HCOE's structure, and the demographics of students served across the region.

Humboldt County Population Characteristics

Age and Race/Ethnicity

Humboldt County has an estimated population of 135,418 residents, with approximately one in five under the age of 18 years. Figure 1 below shows the age distribution and racial/ethnic makeup of Humboldt County residents. Residents skew relatively older—one in five are at least 65 years of age, with 56% of the population 35 years of age and older. Most residents are White without Hispanic/Latino origin, though nearly one-third of the overall population is nonwhite or Hispanic/Latino, reflecting the county's cultural complexity and presence of diverse communities across age groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Figure 1

Age Range and Race/Ethnicity of Humboldt County Residents
(ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022)
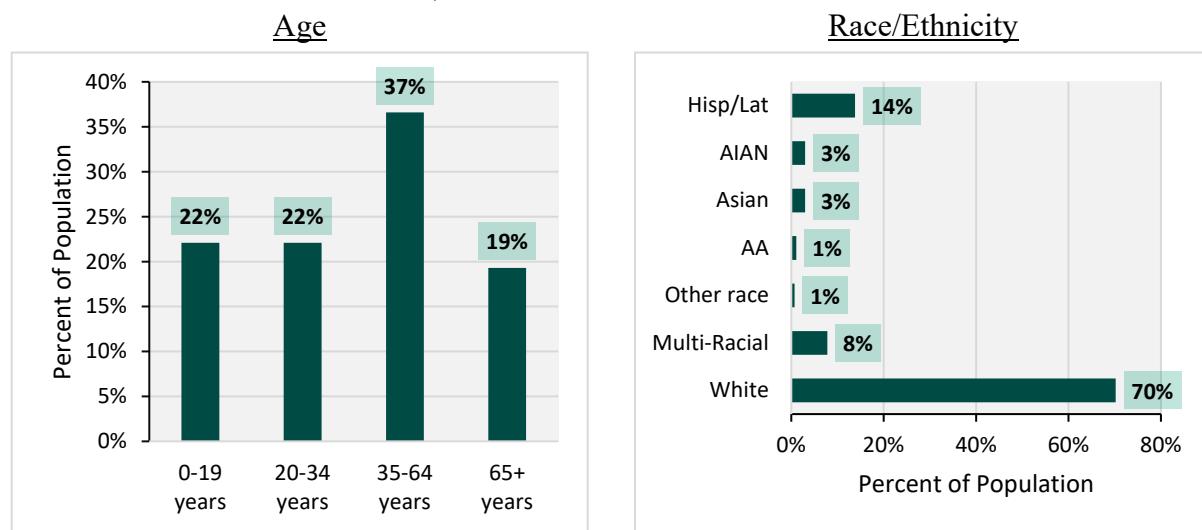
Note. Hisp/Lat = Hispanic/Latino; AIAN = American Indian/Alaska Native; AA = African American. This report uses both the terms **American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)** and **Indigenous** to refer to Tribal communities within Humboldt County. The term **AI/AN** is used when referencing official demographic categories, such as those reported by the U.S. Census Bureau or California Department of Education. The term **Indigenous** is used more broadly in narrative sections to reflect cultural identity and lived experience. This approach attempts to respect the language of data sources while honoring the way these communities self-identify.

Household Income and Poverty

Humboldt County's median household income is $61,135, lower than both the state (CA; $95,521) and national ($78,538) medians. Median income for family households with children under 18 is higher at $72,963 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Table 1 below summarizes disparities in median household income by race and ethnicity. When averaging the median incomes for nonwhite households ($51,869), White households report a median income approximately 17% higher than the nonwhite average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Table 1

Humboldt County Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022)

Race/Ethnicity	Median Household Income
Hispanic or Latino of any race	$58,765
American Indian and Alaska Native	$51,250
Asian	$41,214
African American	-
Other race	$52,185
Multi-Racial	$55,929
White (non-Hispanic)	$62,362

Note. Data for African Americans suppressed due to low sample size.

About 16% of the population lives below the federal poverty level, including 14% of residents under the age of 18. When broken down by race and ethnicity, poverty rates are higher among Hispanic/Latino individuals and nearly double for American Indian/Alaska Native residents, reaching approximately 26% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Humboldt County Office of Education Characteristics

HCOE represents nearly 17,400 students within Humboldt County, from kindergarten through high school, including special education and alternative options (California Department of Education, 2024), accounting for nearly 90 schools across 31 districts, not including the HCOE itself (Humboldt County Office of Education, 2025). See Table 2 below for a breakdown of HCOE districts and schools.

Table 2

Breakdown of HCOE Districts and Schools

Number of Districts		Number of Public Schools	
Elementary School Districts	24	Elementary Schools	43
High School Districts	2	Middle Schools	8
Unified School Districts	5	Comprehensive High Schools	9
County Office of Education	1	Alternative Schools	12
		Charter Schools	15
Total	**32**	Special Education Schools	1
		Total	**88**

Humboldt County Student Characteristics

Table 3 below provides public school enrollment in Humboldt County disaggregated by race/ethnicity. The majority of students are White or Hispanic/Latino, similar to overall county population statistics. However, American Indian/Alaska Native students account for a much larger share of enrollment relative to their proportion of the general population, representing nearly three times their share compared to countywide figures.

Table 3

Humboldt County Public School Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity (2023-2024)

Race/Ethnicity	Count (*n*)	Percent
Hispanic or Latino of any race	3,692	21.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1,515	8.7%
Asian	518	3.0%
Pacific Islander	83	0.5%
Filipino	34	0.2%
African American	166	1.0%
White	9,323	53.7%
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	1,842	10.6%
No race reported	182	1.0%
Total (*N*)	**17,355**	**100.0%**

Note. The California Department of Education (CDE) recognizes 'Filipino' as a distinct racial category, separate from Asian and Pacific Islander classifications. When possible, this report retains that distinction by disaggregating Filipino student enrollment from other categories, in alignment with CDE reporting guidelines and to ensure accurate representation.

Student Economic Hardship and Academic Outcomes

Figure 2 below provides data on key economic and stability indicators for Humboldt County youth (California Department of Education, 2025; Population Reference Bureau, 2025). Several indicators highlight systemic challenges youth face.

Over half of public school students (57%) are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals (FRPM), reflecting widespread economic disadvantage. Food insecurity (18%), housing instability (12%), and disconnection from education and employment among older teens (9%) further underscore vulnerabilities that can affect educational access, engagement, and long-term outcomes. While these indicators vary in scale, collectively they illustrate the broader socioeconomic conditions shaping the student experience in Humboldt County.

Figure 2

Economic and Stability Indicators Among Humboldt County Students
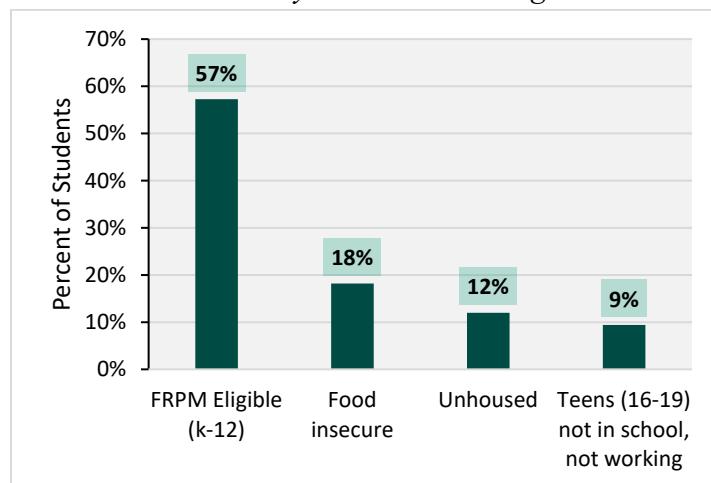
Note. FRPM eligibility and unhoused student enrollment reflect 2023–2024 data from the California Department of Education. Food insecurity (2019) and teen disconnection (2016–2020) are estimates from the Population Reference Bureau via KidsData.org, based on ACS 5-year data.

Table 4 below provides the percentage of students meeting academic proficiency in math and English by grade level, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Population Reference Bureau, 2025). Overall academic proficiency rates among Humboldt County students are low, particularly in mathematics. Less than one in three students (28%) demonstrate proficiency in math across tested grades (3–8 and 11), with proficiency dropping even further by high school (23% among 11th graders). Racial and socioeconomic disparities are evident. American Indian/Alaska Native students have particularly low math proficiency rates (15%), while White students, though still low overall, report the highest rates among racial groups (35%). Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds perform worse than students who face fewer systemic barriers, with a 19%–20% gap in both math and English proficiency. English proficiency rates are somewhat higher overall, but similar patterns of racial and socioeconomic disparities persist.

Table 4

Percentage of Students Meeting Academic Proficiency by Grade (11), Race/Ethnicity, and Socioeconomic Status (Grades 3-8, 11; 2021)

Assessment Area and Student Group	Percent
Math Proficiency (grades 3-8,11)	28.2%
By HS Grade Level	
Grade 11	23.2%
By Race/Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino	17.1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	14.8%
Asian	22.3%
Pacific Islander	-
Filipino	-
African American	-
White	34.6%
Multi-Racial	25.7%
By Socioeconomic status	
SES disadvantaged	20.2%
Non-SES disadvantaged	39.4%
English Proficiency (grades 3-8,11)	41.5%
By HS Grade Level	
Grade 11	49.2%
By Race/Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino	29.1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	19.9%
Asian	36.7%
Pacific Islander	-
Filipino	-
African American	25.3%
White	49.0%
Multi-Racial	39.2%
By Socioeconomic status	
SES disadvantaged	30.6%
Non-SES disadvantaged	56.8%

Note. Categories with no data were suppressed by the data source due to small sample sizes. Only 11th grade results are reported for high school students, as this was the only high school grade sampled in the source data. To align with the age group of council participants, 11th grade proficiency data were used to provide relevant context.

Table 5 below shows enrollment-suspension disproportionality ratios for Humboldt County students by race/ethnicity (California Department of Education, 2025). Each ratio compares a group's share of total suspensions to their share of overall student enrollment:

- A ratio of 1.0 indicates proportional suspension.
- A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates overrepresentation.
- A ratio less than 1.0 indicates underrepresentation.

Suspension disproportionality in Humboldt County is most pronounced among African American and American Indian/Alaska Native students. African American students make up 1.0% of total enrollment but account for 2.0% of suspensions, resulting in a disproportionality ratio of 2.00—meaning they are suspended at twice the rate expected based on their enrollment. Similarly, American Indian/Alaska Native students, who represent 8.8% of the student population, account for 16.9% of suspensions, with a ratio of 1.92. In contrast, White students, who make up the majority of enrollment at 53.3%, are slightly underrepresented in suspensions with a ratio of 0.92, suggesting their suspension rate is slightly below what would be expected given their enrollment share. These patterns highlight racial disparities in how school discipline is applied.

Table 5

Enrollment and Suspension Ratios by Race/Ethnicity (2023-2024)

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Cumulative Enrollment	Percent of Students Suspended	Disproportionality Ratio
Hispanic or Latino of any race	21.8%	18.0%	0.83
American Indian/Alaska Native	8.8%	16.9%	1.92
Asian	3.0%	0.9%	0.30
Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.6%	1.20
African American	1.0%	2.0%	2.00
White	53.3%	49.2%	0.92
Multi-Racial (not Hispanic)	10.7%	11.5%	1.07
No race reported	0.8%	0.9%	1.13

Note. Ratios represent the percentage of suspensions relative to each group's share of enrollment. A value above 1.0 indicates overrepresentation in suspensions, while a value under 1.0 indicates underrepresentation in suspensions.

## Bullying, Academic Motivation, and Mental Health

Experiences with bullying among Humboldt County students may vary across different groups. Figure 3 below shows pooled percentages of students who experienced bullying at school between 2017 and 2019 disaggregated by race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and school connectedness—low, medium, high (Population Reference Bureau, 2025). Data show those

experiencing bullying least often are American Indian/Alaska Native, males of any race (at least for grade 11), and those with high levels of school connectedness (i.e., students with a high overall sense of belonging, safety, support, and fairness within their school community, encompassing relationships with both peers and adults).

On the other hand, several groups face disproportionately high rates of bullying. Students identifying as gay or lesbian reported the highest levels of bullying, with students unsure of their sexual orientation also experiencing elevated rates. Nearly half of all African American students also reported experiencing bullying or harassment at school, and the same goes for students with low perceptions of school connectedness. While bullying is experienced across demographic factors, certain student groups experience bullying at disproportionately high rates. The elevated experiences reported by Two-Spirit (2S)/LGBTQ+ students, African American students, and those with low school connectedness highlight important concerns about equity, safety, and inclusion in school environments.

Figure 3

Percentage of Public School Students Who Experienced Bullying or Harassment at School (2017-2019)
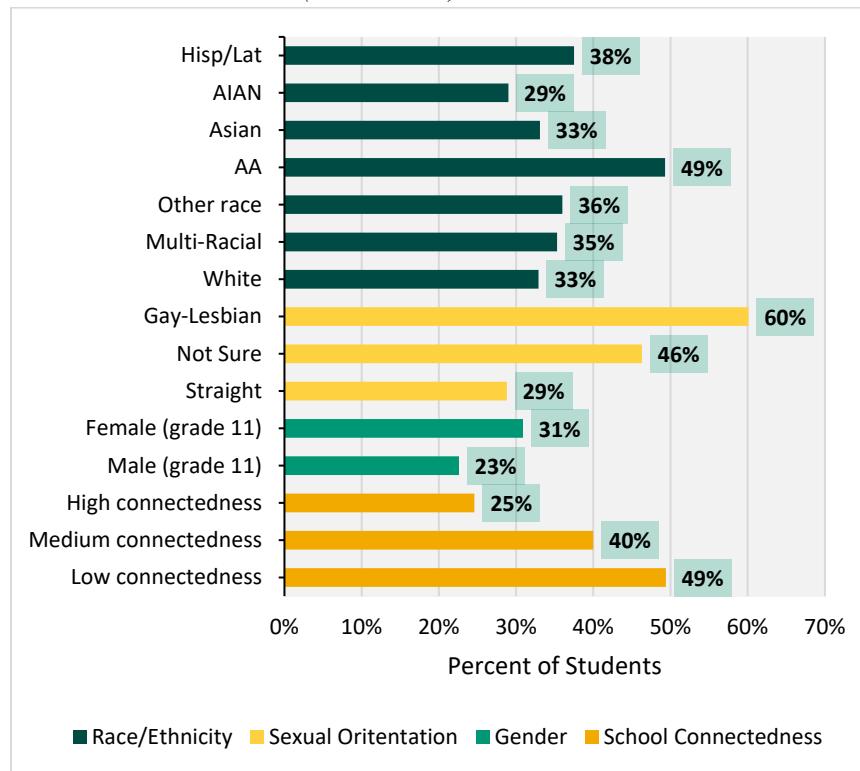
Note. Data sourced from the Population Reference Bureau via KidsData.org, based on California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) results pooled from 2017–2019. Bullying and harassment refer to the estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who reported experiencing bullying or harassment at school in the past year for any reason. All categories reflect aggregated results across grade levels, except gender, which is limited to 11th-grade students due to data availability.

Figure 4 below provides data on academic motivation broken down by race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and school connectedness (Population Reference Bureau, 2025). Patterns of low academic motivation vary among Humboldt County student groups, similar to the earlier findings on bullying and harassment. Low academic motivation is most commonly reported among students with lower levels of school connectedness. Two-thirds of students with low perceptions of school connectedness (64%) reported low academic motivation, compared to approximately one in eight students with high connectedness; it is worth noting the rate of low academic motivation triples between students with low-to-medium school connectedness.

Racial and ethnic disparities are also evident in the data. African American students reported the highest rates of low motivation among racial groups (40%), while Asian students reported the lowest (20%). Differences based on gender and sexual orientation were present but less pronounced, with slightly higher rates among females and students unsure of their sexual orientation. These results suggest that a student's sense of belonging and connection to their school environment plays a critical role in shaping academic engagement.

Figure 4

Low Academic Motivation by Race/Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Gender, and School Connectedness (2017-2019)
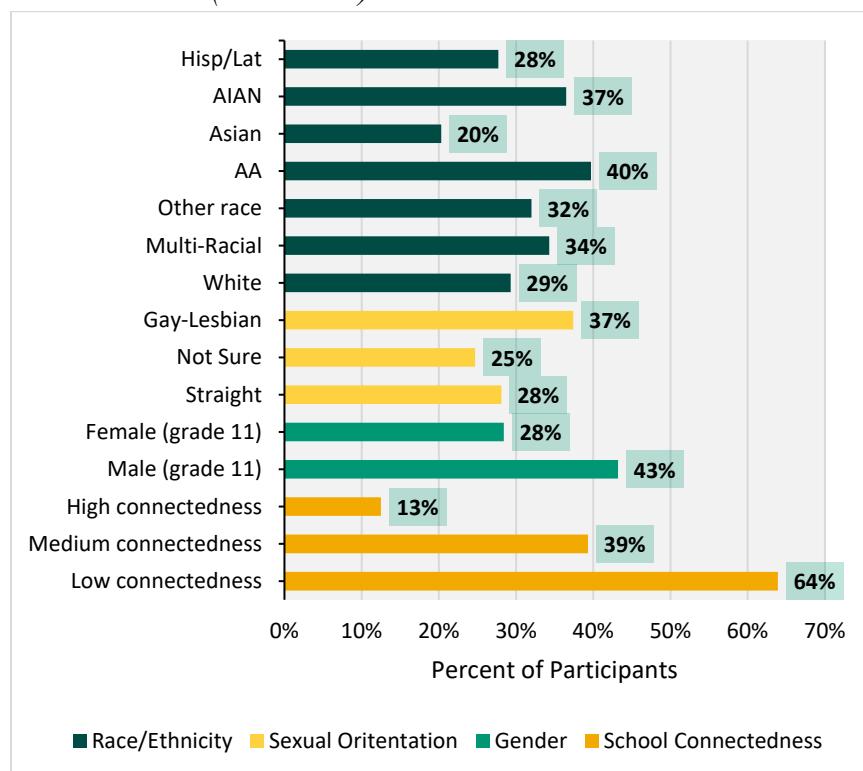

Note. Data sourced from the Population Reference Bureau via KidsData.org, based on California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) results pooled from 2017–2019. Figures represent the percentage of students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who reported low academic motivation. Categories reflect aggregated data, with gender limited to 11th-grade students due to data availability.

Figure 5 below provides data on reports of depression and thoughts of suicide broken down by race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and school connectedness (Population Reference Bureau, 2025). Depression is relatively common overall, affecting roughly one in three students, but is notably higher among certain groups. Students identifying as gay or lesbian report the highest levels of depression, with over two-thirds experiencing symptoms—more than double the rate observed among straight students. Elevated depression rates are also observed among students categorized as 'Other Race' (48%), African American students (43%), and American Indian/Alaska Native students (39%). Females and students unsure of their sexual orientation also report higher rates compared to their peers.

Suicide ideation is less common than depression overall, with about one in five students reporting thoughts of suicide. Racial and gender differences in suicide ideation are relatively modest. However, sexual orientation again emerged as a major factor; nearly half of students identifying as gay or lesbian report suicide ideation, compared to about one in seven straight students, representing more than a threefold difference. These findings highlight considerable disparities in mental health outcomes, particularly among 2S/LGBTQ+ youth and students of color, and point to the critical need for supportive, inclusive school environments.

Figure 5

Reports of Depression and Suicide Ideation by Race/Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, and Gender (2017-2019)
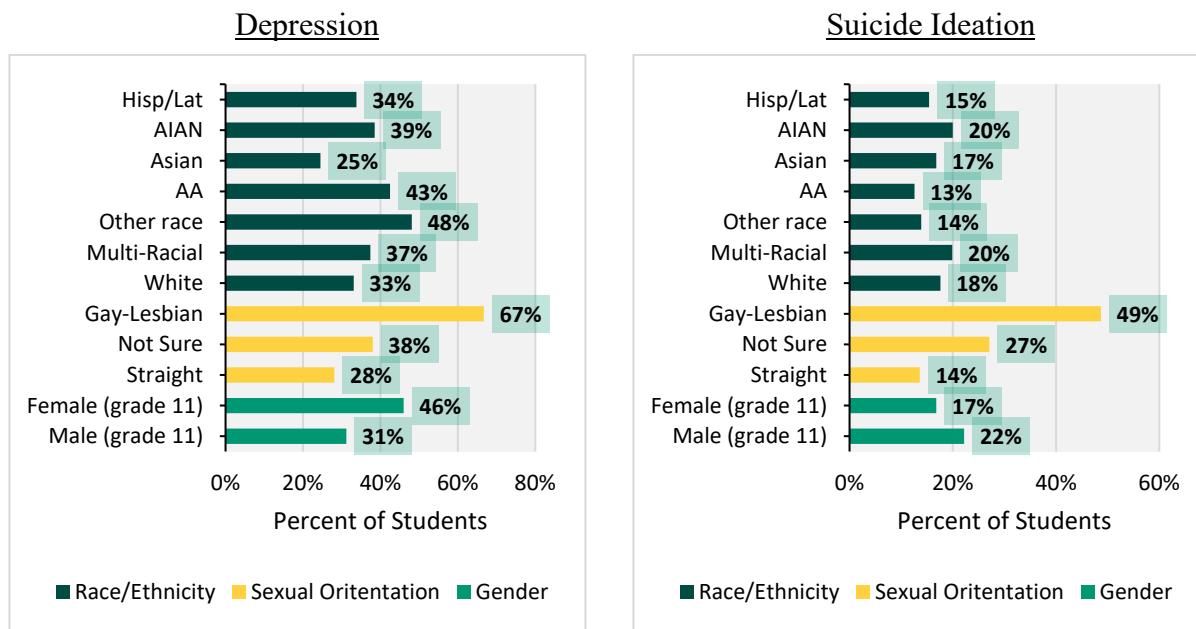

Note. Data sourced from the Population Reference Bureau via KidsData.org, based on California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) results pooled from 2017–2019. Figures represent the percentage of students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who reported low academic motivation. Categories reflect aggregated data, with gender limited to 11th-grade students due to data availability.

What is the Bottom Line for Students in Humboldt County?

Collectively, data and results provided in the sections above reflect the broader environment in which Humboldt County students live and learn. Patterns of economic instability, disparities in academic achievement, and inequities in school experiences and mental health outcomes underscore the critical need for authentic student voice in educational decision-making. The HCOE Student Advisory Council was created in direct recognition of these realities, offering a formal structure for students, particularly those in leadership spaces, to share their life experiences, shape policy conversations, and promote a safer learning environment.

RESULTS

Results are broken into two main parts. Part I provides a concise narrative of all council meetings, including the topics discussed, group activities, and how the Council evolved over time. This section focuses on documenting the sequence of events and key moments in the Council's formation. Descriptions draw from meeting notes, student comments, and supplemental materials such as activity worksheets, post-it note and survey exercises, and shared visuals created during sessions.

Part II presents an analysis of cross-cutting themes that emerged throughout the meetings. These themes reflect patterns in student perspectives, recurring concerns, and the evolving dynamics between students and staff. Thematic insights are based on patterns and examples interpreted from meeting notes and supporting documents.

Part I: The Story of the Council

Forming the Council (Meeting I - March 3, 2025)

The Council's first meeting focused on building trust and defining group purpose. Students shared their reasons for joining the Council, often pointing to bullying, cultural exclusion, or feeling unheard in their schools. One student from one of the most remote regions of Humboldt emphasized the need to speak on behalf of their community. Staff framed the Council as a candid, safe space for students, where input would carry real influence, not serve as token participation. Students responded with early priorities such as expanding curriculum around local Indigenous cultures, addressing hate speech, and improving equity. They were shown examples like the BIPOC[1] Student Report (CCRP, 2021) and a video highlighting the Los Angeles Student Council, offering early models for what youth-led influence could look like. The meeting closed with a shared understanding: this space would be guided by student voice, grounded in respect, and shaped through a commitment to shared power between HCOE and student council members.

Discovering the Issues (Meeting II - March 19, 2025)

In the second meeting, students surfaced core challenges they face in Humboldt County schools while also shaping expectations for how the Council should function. A relational check-in and review of the *Ladder of Youth Participation* (Hart, 1992) prompted reflection on past experiences with tokenism and a clear desire for shared or youth-led decision-making. HCOE staff responded candidly to questions about the Council's influence, acknowledging student

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[1] BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

perspectives are often excluded from educational decisions. Cultural inclusion was also raised, notably around the preservation of Yurok language programs, a clear indication for more Indigenous student leadership representation within public schools and an issue that would surface again in subsequent meetings.

Building on earlier conversations, students began naming specific challenges they have experienced in their school environments. Students revisited issues raised in their applications and during the first meeting, expanding on these concerns through group discussion. A post-it note activity was then conducted, where students wrote down and posted their concerns on one of the walls in the meeting room for others to view. Student Post-it notes expressed a wide range of issues, from racism and safety to academic disengagement and financial barriers, representing a snapshot of student-identified challenges in local schools.

HCOE then administered a short survey to students asking them to note some common challenges they or their peers have faced at school. A compiled list based on these survey results can be found in Appendix B, Table B1. The results of the survey mirrored findings from the post-it note activity, reflecting on challenges faced by many students within the county, including but not limited to racism, sexism, homophobia, lack of perceived safety, living in a low-income household, and high costs for school-related events.

The group also discussed council meeting structure, expressing a desire for action-oriented sessions that still allow space for peer connection. To account for this balance, students proposed using breakout groups for more focused topics, laying early groundwork for the collaborative structure that would take shape in future meetings.

Building the Structure (Meeting III - March 26, 2025)

In Meeting III, the Council piloted small group breakout sessions, a format that would become a standard feature moving forward. Designed as informal 'coffee with a friend' conversations, the breakout sessions gave students space to raise questions, share school experiences, and build stronger relationships with peers and staff. Topics ranged from incident reporting and teacher-student dynamics to the misuse of authority and inconsistent disciplinary practices. Several students described frustration with faculty who demand respect without offering it in return, and others noted reporting systems for harassment and bullying are either nonexistent or ineffective at their schools.

The Superintendent also made intentional efforts to build authentic connections with students. Aside from actively attending all council meetings, the Superintendent explained the scope of his role within HCOE, emphasizing his work centers on policy and structural change rather than the day-to-day management of individual schools or districts. This conversation exemplifies HCOE's broader effort to be transparent and build trust between staff and students. Students also reflected on the Council's structure and proposed changes to its meeting schedule and

participation model. They recommended meeting more frequently at the start of the school year (i.e., Fall 2025) and transitioning to monthly sessions once the group was established. They also raised concerns about inconsistent meeting attendance and agreed existing members should continue without reapplying, while guest speakers and facilitators could be brought in as needed. By the end of the meeting, the Council felt more like a working group than a loose collection of students, focused on identifying and formulating potential ways to address problems within their schools.

Defining the Purpose of the Council (Meeting IV, April 2, 2025)

Meeting IV centered on co-creating a purpose statement for the Council. Based on feedback from previous sessions, HCOE staff adjusted the structure of the meeting, bringing students together to reflect as a full group before breaking into smaller teams. Students reviewed sample statements, discussed what felt authentic, and outlined the kind of language they wanted to use. During the breakout, students took on formal roles like timekeeper and recorder, with staff supporting the process but deferring to student direction. The result was a strong sense of alignment, with drafts to be synthesized into a single Statement of Purpose that would be reviewed and approved by students at the next meeting.

The session also surfaced tensions. One student voiced concern the work the Council had accomplished thus far focused too much on next year's cohort, raising questions about ownership and impact, something particularly important for senior council members who would not be returning in the fall—it is worth noting several students shared this sentiment (based on plus-delta meeting feedback). HCOE acknowledged the concern and emphasized student input would shape the agenda for the final meeting. While some uncertainty remained, the group had clearly moved from early-stage organizing into active decision-making. The experience clarified the Council's shared identity and laid the groundwork for future influence.

From Voice to Influence—Shaping Policy and Priorities (Meeting V, May 3, 2025)

The Council's final meeting represented a turning point, where preparation gave way to action and students stepped into new leadership roles by offering input on a real policy challenge HCOE was addressing at the time. Students formally reviewed and approved the Statement of Purpose they drafted together in the previous meeting, solidifying a shared identity for the group (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6
Student Approved Statement of Purpose

> **HCOE Student Advisory Council Statement of Purpose**
> We are a council of students based in Humboldt County working alongside HCOE staff to better the lives of current and future students, as well as educators and school staff. We prioritize youth voices to lead change and aim to promote a healthy standard of living and improve school safety.

The HCOE superintendent then presented a real policy dilemma—how to respond to competing state and federal guidance on school discipline—and asked for the Council's input. This moment marked a shift as students took on leadership in a live policy setting.

Students also engaged in an activity focused on three priority areas and questions based on information gathered through student applications and meeting reviews:

1. Safe, inclusive, and respectful school climate: **If you could make your school feel more inclusive, what would you add/change?**

2. Fair access to school experiences: **Why are school activities important for everyone to have access to?**

3. Academic success and support: **What motivates you to do well in school—and what makes it harder?**

Using markers and large posters, students recorded ideas, frustrations, and hopes across these domains (see Appendix C, Table C1). On school climate, they called for more cultural education, respectful communication, and inclusive programming, particularly for smaller schools. On access to school experiences, they emphasized the importance of clubs and events in reducing exclusion and promoting connection. On academic success, students reflected on both what drives them and what makes it harder to stay engaged. Their responses revealed a mix of personal goals, external encouragement, and systemic challenges. Terms like *junior slump* and *senioritis*[2] captured some of the emotional and structural barriers that can undermine student motivation in the later years of high school.

Closing Reflections

Across five meetings, the Council evolved from a loosely defined group of individuals into a collaborative body with shared purpose, structure, and agency. What began with relationship-

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[2] Junior slump refers to a drop in academic motivation commonly experienced during 11th grade. Senioritis refers to decreased motivation or effort among students nearing high school graduation.

building and personal motivation quickly developed into co-designed processes and real input on policy issues. HCOE staff consistently demonstrated their dynamic design of meetings by continuously adapting the Council's structure based on student feedback, adjusting meeting formats, roles, and discussion topics. Students, in turn, evolved from raising concerns to actively shaping how said concerns would be addressed—drafting a statement of purpose, proposing structural norms, and advising on district-wide challenges.

This inaugural cohort successfully laid the foundation for future Councils, modeling what youth voice can look like when it is respected, resourced, and positioned to lead. HCOE, due in part from the Council's achievements, has since explored the development of a model of co-leadership across agency sectors, where student voice functions as an integral element of administrative decision making and planning.

Part II: Key Themes and Insights

Systematic coding of meeting notes uncovered three major themes, each with their own subthemes (see Table 6 below).

Table 6
Emergent Themes from Meeting Notes and Thematic Coding

Theme	Subthemes
Student Agency and Shared Governance	❖ Student Voice and Agency ❖ Power Sharing and Equity ❖ Mutual Respect
Student Development and Staff Facilitation	❖ Skill and Knowledge Building ❖ Staff Scaffolding and Facilitated Frameworks
Lived Experiences in Humboldt Schools	❖ Racial Injustice and Disparities ❖ Bullying, Harassment, and Hate Speech ❖ Cultural Exclusion and Representation Gaps ❖ Socioeconomic Inequity and Structural Barriers ❖ Disempowerment and Institutional Distrust

Student Agency and Shared Governance

From the outset, HCOE emphasized student input would be foundational to the design and function of the Student Advisory Council. Rather than positioning youth voices as a symbolic addition after decisions were made, the Council centered students as co-creators in shaping its structure, processes, and priorities. This approach reflected a commitment to equity and collaboration that emerged consistently across meetings, reinforced by two interrelated themes: student voice and agency, and mutual respect.

Student voice and agency were central to nearly every aspect of the Council's development. Early in the process, HCOE introduced the Ladder of Youth Participation (Hart, 1992) and invited students to reflect on what role they wanted to play in shaping the Council, setting the tone for an ongoing, authentic collaboration. Students consistently expressed a desire to elevate their perspectives and play an active role in decision-making. HCOE responded by embedding student input into the Council's structure, formation and function, meeting protocols, and logistics. Students co-developed and approved the Council's Statement of Purpose and helped design elements like breakout group discussions, which later evolved into subcommittees (to be implemented formally in the Fall 2025 cohort). Student input shaped each meeting along the way. The final session stood out as an especially impactful example. After students, particularly seniors, shared concerns their work felt more preparatory than action-oriented, HCOE invited them to weigh in on a real-time policy dilemma: an executive order on school discipline clashing with HCOE's equity goals. This gave students a chance to engage with a current dilemma and showed their feedback was taken seriously.

Mutual respect was modeled through intentional relationship-building and transparency. HCOE staff made space for open dialogue, and the Superintendent in particular set a tone of humility and candor, openly acknowledging both the power he holds and its limitations, and lamented how school administrators often fall short in valuing student perspectives. This honesty helped establish a culture of trust, where staff ensured that students felt their voices were genuinely welcomed and recognized as essential to system-level conversations.

Together, these dynamics moved the Council beyond consultation and into true co-governance. The result was a foundation for youth-led leadership, grounded in reciprocal respect and shared responsibility.

Student Development and Staff Facilitation

A core objective of the Council was to help students develop skills they could use in other leadership contexts. HCOE staff approached this through intentional facilitation strategies and scaffolded decision-making, offering support while encouraging student ownership. From early meetings onward, students were introduced to formal meeting roles such as timekeeper, recorder, and reporter, reinforcing norms of professional collaboration. Staff also provided templates and

examples, including sample statements of purpose and reports from other student councils, to help youth visualize what their own work could look like.

Students received guided instruction on institutional processes as well. For example, staff presented overviews of HCOE's structure and the role of the County Superintendent, demystifying how decisions are made across districts. This background helped students understand the limits and leverage points of different positions, especially as they prepared to give feedback on local, state, and federal policy issues. In one meeting, for example, staff guided students through an analysis of racial disparities in school suspension data, prompting them to identify patterns and consider the implications of proposed federal discipline policies. The activity served as both a learning experience in critical data literacy and an example of scaffolded policy engagement.

Throughout the meetings, HCOE struck a balance between supporting student learning and stepping back. Staff helped frame decisions, pose guiding questions, and offered scaffolds, but consistently placed decision-making in students' hands. This approach recognized student-led work is most effective when paired with developmentally appropriate support, with carefully limited adult control.

Lived Experiences in Humboldt Schools

Perceived challenges faced at school emerged across multiple meetings, surfacing through both structured activities and open dialogue. While individual experiences varied, students consistently described systemic issues that shaped their educational environments, particularly feelings of cultural invisibility, racial inequity, and unaddressed harm. They spoke to the absence of meaningful cultural representation in curriculum, the prevalence of racially biased discipline, and a tolerance for bullying and hate speech that made many feel unsafe or unseen. These concerns reflected not only interpersonal experiences, but broader patterns of institutional abdication and social exclusion.

The hallmark of perceived challenges was racism and harassment, and experiences of discrimination, which students described as deeply embedded within school culture—manifesting in the behaviors of some faculty, staff, and students alike. Many students pointed to disciplinary practices that disproportionately target students of color, especially Black and Hispanic students, while those who perpetuated racist behavior were rarely held accountable. Several students shared that their peers had been punished for defending themselves, while aggressors faced no consequences. Hate speech and bullying were described as routine and largely ignored, creating environments where harm becomes normalized. Students also noted patterns of archaic favoritism, such as student athletes receiving more lenient treatment relative to other students. Collectively, these reflections highlight student concerns about fairness, accountability, and the need for more consistent support from school systems.

Cultural blindness was another emerging issue noted by students. Many called out the lack of cultural awareness and misunderstanding some faculty and staff demonstrate toward local Indigenous cultures. Students suggested greater efforts to integrate Indigenous perspectives into education, whether through formal curriculum or staff cultural training. Some students emphasized the need to move beyond superficial history lessons to include more meaningful, community-informed cultural knowledge. Other students raised concerns about the inconsistent presence of programs like Yurok language instruction, which vary widely by district. Students viewed these gaps as ongoing cultural exclusions that reinforce a sense of invisibility for Native students and other underrepresented groups.

Students also raised concerns about the ways socioeconomic status shapes access to education and support. Several students described the struggles low-income students face both inside and outside of school, from food and housing insecurity to exclusion from school events that require money. They felt these realities often go unaddressed by school systems, leaving affected students to navigate barriers with little institutional support. Some students called for broader efforts to address basic needs in the community, while others emphasized true educational equity requires acknowledging and responding to the socioeconomic conditions students bring with them into the classroom.

Last, a recurring theme across meetings was a sense of disempowerment and distrust toward school institutions. Students lamented that staff often wield authority without accountability, expecting respect without modeling it in return. Several students noted systems meant to address harm, like incident reporting or disciplinary processes, were either inconsistently applied or entirely absent, contributing to the perception that student voices carry little weight among school authorities. This imbalance of power left many students feeling dismissed or unheard, reinforcing skepticism that schools are willing or able to create meaningful change.

Closing Reflections

Taken together, these findings show that students were building a new advisory body while also naming the systemic issues they face in school. They spoke directly about racism, cultural erasure, economic inequality, and institutional distrust, even as they helped design a structure intended to address those challenges.

Through themes of agency, skill-building, and shared governance, students shaped how the Council would operate, what it would stand for, and how it might evolve. They gained insight into educational systems, learned how to collaborate across differences, and exercised critical thinking on real policy issues, all while holding space for honest conversations about what still isn't working.

While the Council's work was primarily focused on council formation, students accomplished far more than just planning. They co-developed the Council's Statement of Purpose, contributed

to its structural design, and established norms that will guide future cohorts. These efforts represent essential groundwork completed by students, ensuring that when the Council formally launches in Fall 2025, it will be shaped by student insight from the start. Importantly, students also voiced a desire for more direct input on meaningful issues, and HCOE responded. The final meeting was reformatted to include an exercise where students provided feedback on a real-time policy dilemma, demonstrating HCOE's efforts to maintain an evolving and responsive meeting design that is dependent on student input. In this sense, students formed the Council and began putting it into action, marking a major accomplishment. This early work set a precedent for future cohorts by modeling what shared governance can look like when youth are empowered to lead.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on results from this report, including successful practices and outcomes, student input, observed challenges, and HCOE's evolving facilitation practices during the inaugural Council. Recommendations are intended to support the successful implementation of Cohort II in Fall 2025 and ensure continued growth, relevance, and equity in student engagement.

Honor and Integrate Cohort I's Legacy

Ensure future cohorts begin with a clear sense of continuity and recognition of the foundational work completed by the inaugural Council.

- Invite Cohort I members—especially seniors—to share their reflections with incoming students through a panel, welcome letter, or short orientation video. Although seniors cannot continue as members, their insights can ground future cohorts in the Council's origins. If feasible, consider informal alumni roles that allow continued connection and mentorship.

- Distribute the finalized Statement of Purpose and structural recommendations as a starting point for future cohorts. Encourage them to build upon, rather than restart, the work already accomplished.

Establish Clear Expectations and Orientation Early On

Set the tone from the beginning by clearly outlining the Council's purpose, scope, and structure. Early transparency helps students feel grounded, reduces confusion, and builds trust in the process.

- Provide an overview of HCOE's role, including how the Superintendent and Council fit into broader decision-making structures.

- Clarify the Council's anticipated influence
  - What kinds of issues will students weigh in on?
  - What decisions can they help shape?

- Explain the timeline and format of the Council's work—how long it runs, how often it meets, and what opportunities exist for continued involvement.

- Introduce the types of activities and discussions students can expect (e.g., policy dilemmas, school climate feedback, subcommittees).

- Establish group norms and expectations early, especially for open dialogue and respectful disagreement.

Maintain and Expand Breakout Group Structures

Breakout groups were a particularly successful feature of Cohort I, supporting deeper discussion, peer connection, and student leadership. Maintaining breakout groups in meetings, even formalizing these as subcommittees, can help sustain engagement and promote shared ownership of Council work.

- Continue using small-group breakout sessions to encourage open dialogue and build relationships.

- Transition breakout groups into formal subcommittees organized around core topics (e.g., school climate, equity, academic support).

- Allow students to self-select into subcommittees based on interest and lived experience.

- Rotate facilitation roles within each group (e.g., timekeeper, note-taker, discussion lead) to support leadership development.

Support Equity in Recruitment and Participation

Continue ensuring diverse representation through intentional, flexible recruitment strategies and removal of participation barriers.

- Continue exploring alternative outreach methods—social media, counselor referrals, community networks, and peer invitations—to reach a broad and diverse pool of students.

- Avoid relying solely on nominations, which may overlook students who are less visible but deeply impacted by school issues.

- Continue offering support for transportation, food, and communication access (e.g., accommodating students without consistent phone or internet access).

- Continue targeting outreach to underrepresented student populations, including Indigenous youth, students of color, 2S/LGBTQ+ students, and students from alternative or small schools.

Create Opportunities for Action and Application to Existing Challenges

To sustain student motivation and reinforce the Council's purpose, students should see their work leads to real influence. Tangible action, paired with appropriate recognition, affirms their contributions matter.

- Incorporate real-time policy dilemmas and current HCOE initiatives into Council agendas to allow timely, meaningful input.

- Dedicate time each semester for students to design and lead a project aligned with Council priorities.

- Support student-led initiatives with structured facilitation while ensuring students guide direction and decision-making.

- Continue compensating students for their time and expertise. This practice supports access and affirms that students are acting as consultants, just as adult advisors are often compensated for similar roles. Paying students is both practical and equitable, validating students' agency and reinforcing the importance of their voice in educational decision-making. Payment can also function as a means of access, as not all students can afford to donate their time, and compensation increases access while affirming the value of student contributions.

Standardize Iterative Processes

It is important for HCOE to adhere to an iterative process in relation to Council development. Dynamic meeting structures proved a successful endeavor for Cohort I. Ongoing reflection helps the Council stay responsive, student-driven, and continuously improving. Ongoing reflection helps the Council stay responsive, student-driven, and aligned with students' evolving needs and goals.

- Often and systematically collect data that will help assess the status of Council operations and efficacy; administer a brief reflection survey or conduct a group debrief to assess experiences and generate ideas for improvement.

- Focus on reflection and improvement. For example, continue using the 'plus-delta' format at the end of each meeting to gather quick feedback on what worked and what could improve.

- Review feedback regularly and visibly incorporate it into planning so students see how their input shapes the Council in real time. This process also increases transparency, which builds trust.

- Consider inviting returning Council members to help co-design meeting agendas or onboarding materials based on their reflections.

Scaffold Student Leadership (Without Undermining It)

Student development is a core goal of the Council. For many youth, this may be their first experience in a leadership role, making it essential that HCOE balances scaffolding and teaching with trust and restraint. Cohort I showed, with the right support, students rise to the challenge and lead effectively. The role of adult facilitators should be to guide students in their work on the Council, offering structure while making space for student voice and ownership.

- Introduce leadership roles early (e.g., timekeeper, discussion lead, note-taker) and rotate them to build skills and confidence across members.

- Provide optional scaffolds, like templates, sample agendas, and examples from other councils, to help students visualize what successful outcomes look like.

- Offer background information on education systems and policy topics before decision-making discussions, so students feel informed and prepared.

- Avoid over-structuring or redirecting student ideas. Instead, pose guiding questions and let students determine direction, pacing, and format where appropriate.

- Consider offering skill-building sessions (e.g., public speaking, facilitation, or critical data interpretation) outside regular meetings for students who want to grow in those areas.

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APPENDICES

The following appendices include supporting materials referenced throughout the report, such as student input activities and supplemental data tables.

Appendix A- Braun & Clarke Thematic Protocol and Application

Table A1

Overview of Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analytical Protocol

Phase	Description	Application to Current Project
1. Familiarization with the data	Involves reading and re-reading the data to become immersed and to begin noting initial observations and potential patterns.	Detailed notes from Council meetings and one-on-one interviews with HCOE staff were reviewed to identify early patterns, repeated topics, and areas of emphasis across discussions.
2. Generating initial codes	Systematically identifying and labeling meaningful features of the data relevant to the research questions.	Descriptive codes were assigned to segments of text that captured key ideas or points of emphasis (e.g., "role uncertainty," "student voice," "logistical barriers"). Coding was applied consistently across meeting and interview notes.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into broader, meaningful categories that capture important aspects of the data.	Codes were grouped into preliminary themes representing shared concerns, values, or priorities, such as the evolving purpose of the Council, structural preferences, and student engagement dynamics.
4. Reviewing themes	Refining candidate themes to ensure internal consistency and clear boundaries between themes.	Themes were revised to enhance clarity and analytical strength. Overlapping or ambiguous themes were consolidated or redefined to ensure coherence across the full data set.
5. Defining and naming themes	Articulating the essence of each theme and determining the specific aspect of the data it captures.	Each theme was defined with a concise description reflecting its core meaning and relevance to the Council's developmental context. Final theme names were selected to reflect clarity and accessibility for stakeholders.
6. Producing the report	Integrating themes into a narrative account, supported by illustrative data extracts.	Final themes were synthesized and presented in the findings section, with supporting examples drawn from meeting and interview notes. The analysis emphasizes patterns that inform the Council's self-design process and future implementation.

Appendix B - Student-Identified School Challenges (Meeting II)

Table B1

School Challenges Noted By Student Council Members

What do you consider are the most challenging issues(s) affecting students in Humboldt County public schools?	**Number of students who agree**
Prevalence of racism, sexism, and homophobia, often through microaggressions	9
Safety	9
The price tag that comes with school events, trips, and other experiences	7
Low socioeconomic status of students	7
Lack of interest/identifiable importance to stay in school and get a high school diploma	4
Lack of accessible and effective tutoring for struggling students	4
Hate speech, bullying, and physical altercations	4
Lack of personalized attention from teachers	3
Emphasize the challenges that are present in Hoopa Valley... such as how teachers and staff deal with things like violence or drugs	2
Misunderstanding of the needs of disabled students	2
Lack of time on specific studies	2
Important message of acceptance and understanding of all students	1
Literacy - ELA scores below standard	1
Lack of mental Health support	1
The lack of academic support within schools	1

Note. ELA = English Language Arts.

Appendix C - Student Reflections on School Climate, Access, and Academic Support (Meeting V)

Table C1

Student Responses on School Climate, Access, and Academic Motivation

Safety: If you could make your school feel more inclusive, what would you add/change?	Access to Opportunities: Why are school activities important for everyone to have access to?	Academic Support: What motivates you to do well in school—and what makes it harder?
Add knowledge of other peoples' community and culture	It builds a sense of community	To get into a good college
More activities to build community	Helps with meeting new people	Teachers/students wanting me to fail
More school wide events	It limits exclusion	My teachers making me feel like I can achieve things. /harder: junior slump.
Having good communication trainings for students & staff (e.g., what types of language are offensive)	It makes everyone feel a part of the school	My family, first gen expectations, proving a point
Making sure that an opportunity is accessible to everyone	Everyone should get the opportunity	Motivated by fear of failure
Making educators aware of different backgrounds student carry and allowing students to host a space for them	To help people gain new skills	Motivated by thinking of the future
Smaller schools should still have clubs or after school activities	Make people feel like no matter what's going on socially, there's a group that will accept you	Hard to stay motivated
Add more to history courses besides just basic surface-level history lex: more cultural knowledge	A reason to be out of my house and be social	Senioritis! (makes it harder)
	Sets a way of better social skills	
	Explore opportunities/spaces	