

On January 27, 2025, Belmont students were invited to participate in an information gathering and listening session in the Belmont High School Cafeteria and over 100 students attended. This meeting was facilitated by Belmont High School Administrators and Dayton Metro Library Staff. The purpose of this program was to center student voices to gain further insight into how the library can be made to be a space that is welcoming and safe for all.

Students were generously provided a pizza dinner by the local IUE-CWA. While students ate, Principal Kimani Smith welcomed students and explained their important role in providing input and insight into teen activity after school. Dayton Metro Library Youth Services Director Allison Knight, then led students through a series of activities.

The first asked students to go around the room and provide responses to 12 prompts:

1. A great thing (place, activity, whatever) for teens in Dayton is....
2. What people need to understand about being a teen in Dayton is....
3. What do you like to do when you come to the library?
4. What is something the library needs to do, or do more of?
5. What is something the library needs to do less of, or stop doing?
6. What's a realistic thing that the library could do to make people feel safe?
7. What makes the Southeast library special?
8. If there was only one thing the library could provide for teens after school, what would it be?
9. What people need to understand about being a student at Belmont is.....
10. Now that the library is closed after school, I hear that many teens.....
11. Something the library could help me accomplish is....
12. How could the branch's Homework Help Center help you with school?

Next, students were broken into smaller groups, with each group given one of the large prompts with response. Students worked with a facilitating adult to synthesize the many responses given, and then shared their insights out to the whole.

Then, students were asked to give a "thumbs up, level thumb, thumbs down" in response to the conclusionary ideas that the adult sessions had generated, with a chance to elaborate further if they wished.

Finally, students were asked to come up with a response to the following prompt: Given all that you've heard and read tonight, what would be a one bullet point action step for the library that your group thinks will most benefit the most people. Students then shared out those responses with the whole.

Students provided a broad and thoughtful range of responses to prompts throughout the evening that reflected that diversity of students present: Students from every grade level served at Belmont, numerous sports teams (basketball, wrestling, football, track, and cheerleading), band members, art students, just to name a few.

Dayton Metro Library looks forward to working with the Administrative team at Belmont High School to work through the many student ideas and to find ways to continue to provide services to students.