

### Who We Are:

We, the Agenda Gap of DRHS, set out to strengthen mental health support in schools and build better relationships between students and staff. We are a group of diverse students from different homes and environments who are brought together by a common goal, that being to improve the quality of life in the town of Digby and make things better for current and future youth.



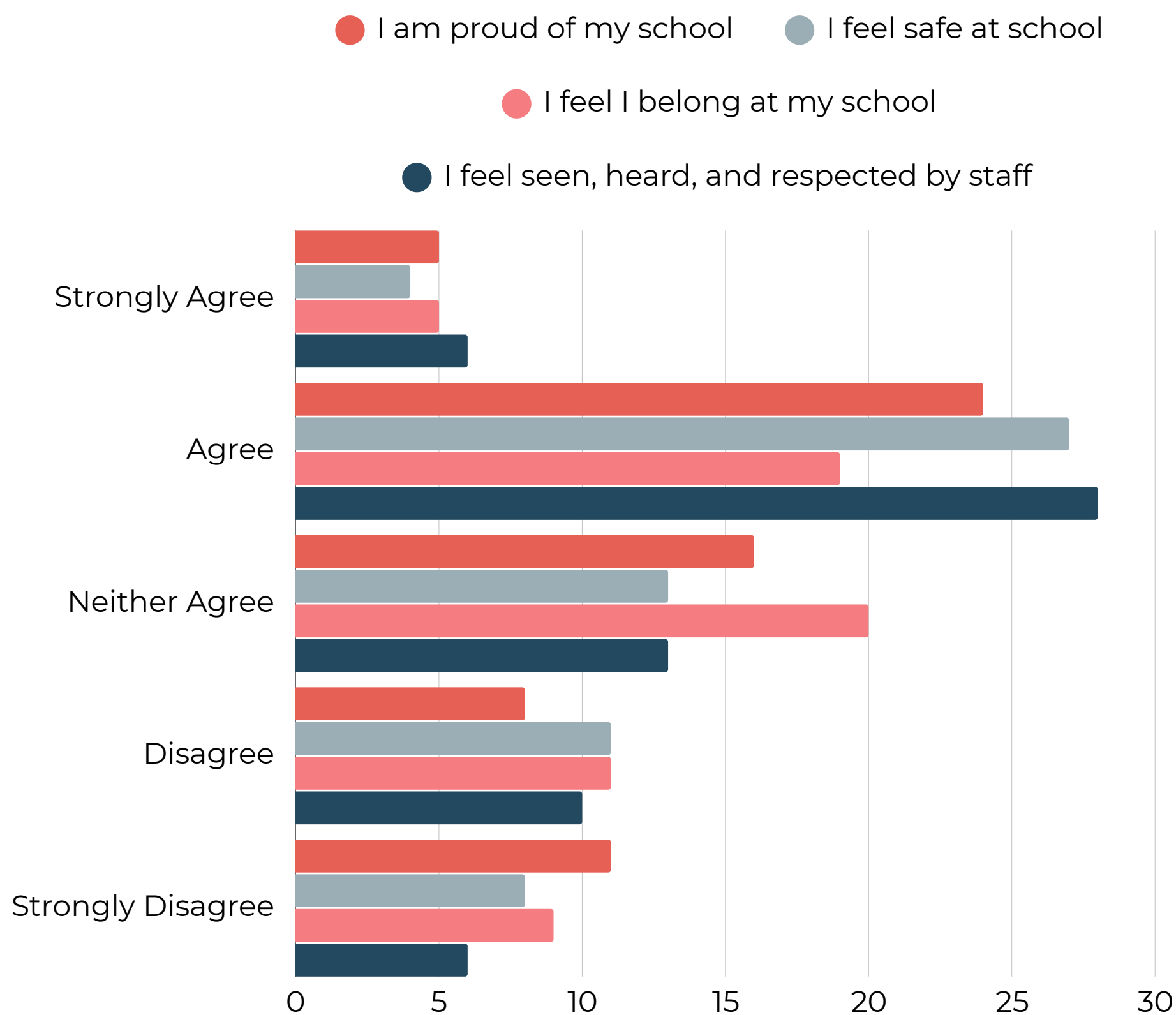
### The Challenge:

Through ongoing discussions as a group, we have surfaced that relationships between students and staff at DRHS must be improved. There is a general lack of understanding and sensitivity from teachers about students lived realities and the various challenges they encounter regularly. Teachers could do a better job of getting to know their students and offering tailored supports.

The province of Nova Scotia has recognized that schools aren't safe spaces. This is further supported by the results of a survey we conducted to better understand the perspectives of students at DRHS. Indeed, 30% of survey respondents (17/64) indicated that they do not feel safe at school, 32% (20/63) indicated that they don't feel they belong at school, 31% (20/64) indicated that they are not proud of their school, and 25% (16/63) indicated that they do not feel seen, heard, or respected by school staff.

### Why This Issue Matters:

**This issue has a direct impact on students' mental health and wellbeing and may also impact their ability to learn effectively and create supportive relationships in their school. When students don't feel safe at school, they are less likely to reach out for support, meaning they may not be getting the help they need and contributing to worsened mental health outcomes.**



To the left are the results from a survey of 68 DRHS students that we conducted asking them their opinions about the school and how they are treated.

### Our Proposal:

As a group, we recognized the potential of trauma-informed approaches as an effective means of addressing these challenges. With that in mind we have developed the following;



### Calls to Action:

- 1 Increase school staff's awareness of trauma and its impact on student wellbeing and learning.
- 2 Mandate trauma-informed training as a core component of professional development for all teachers.
- 3 Provide opportunities for students and teachers to build trusting relationships and get to know one another through fun and engaging activities.



## Resources

For more information about Trauma Informed Approaches and for related resources, check out...



### **FREE NS Health E-learning series:**

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) e-Learning Series <https://library.nshealth.ca/ED-Mental-Health-Addictions/TIC#s-lg-box-16646625>

### **Gov NS Trauma Informed Practice Discussion Guide:**

[https://novascotia.ca/dhw/addictions/documents/TIP\\_Discussion\\_Guide\\_1.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/dhw/addictions/documents/TIP_Discussion_Guide_1.pdf)

### **St FX: MEd with Mental Health Focus, Trauma Informed Practice course:**

<https://www.stfx.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Master-Education-StFX-Mental-Health-Concentration-2024.pdf>

### **Alberta Trauma Training Initiative E-learning series:**

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page15526.aspx>

### **The Brain Architecture Game (Education on how trauma impacts the brain):**

<https://dev.thebrainarchitecturegame.com/>

### **Trauma Sensitive Schools website:**

[https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Focus-Group-Report-July\\_2019-Final.pdf](https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Focus-Group-Report-July_2019-Final.pdf) (youth voices report)

### **BC Government Trauma Informed Practice - Resources**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health/trauma-informed-practice-resources>

