Youth Perspectives on:
Responsive & Just Government

Overview

This theme captures students' desire for a government and school system that is fair, transparent, and accountable. Youth expressed over 245 times during listening sessions the need for equitable investment across communities, more diverse and inclusive representation, and institutions that take real action to address discrimination and systemic injustice.

80% of youth surveyed (n=1,127) rated this issue as somewhat or extremely important
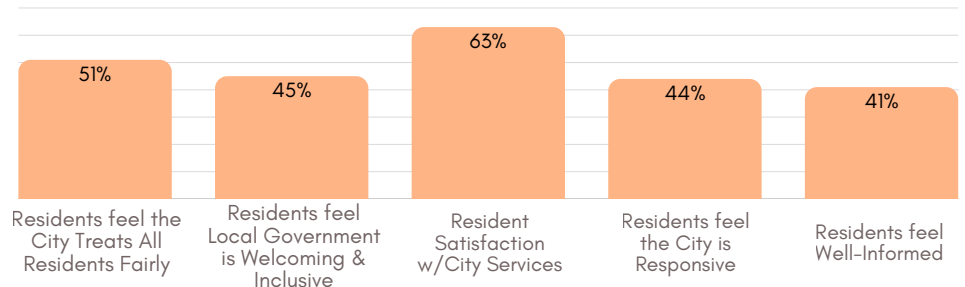
WHY IT MATTERS

Students' academic confidence and future success are directly shaped by how supported and engaged they feel at school. When learning environments are responsive, hands-on, and inclusive, youth are more likely to thrive. Their feedback highlights the importance of equity, relationships, and real-world relevance in academic settings.

WHAT THE DATA SAY

Resident Satisfaction with Government Services in Alexandria
Source: 2024 Resident Survey

Category	Value
Residents feel the City Treats All Residents Fairly	51%
Residents feel Local Government is Welcoming & Inclusive	45%
Resident Satisfaction w/City Services	63%
Residents feel the City is Responsive	44%
Residents feel Well-Informed	41%

WHAT YOUTH WANT

25+ mentions

"Better relationship between community and officials"

Responsive & Effective Government
- Equitable investment in schools, parks, transportation, and public services across all neighborhoods
- A local government that listens to youth and takes visible action based on feedback
- Strong protections for the civil rights of all people

15+ mentions

"More entertainment facilities"

Economic Growth & Development
- More local businesses, entertainment, modern amenities, and spaces that bring communities together

100+ mentions

"My "perfect" community is a community where everyone is treated equally and has a equal opportunity in almost everything"

Race & Social Equity
- Systems that actively work to eliminate discrimination, prejudice, and systemic inequities
- Accessible, youth-friendly communities

WHAT YOUTH EXPERIENCE

10+ mentions

"Not enough public-school funding."

Government Responsiveness & Efficiency
- Investment is uneven, with some neighborhoods, particularly in West Alexandria, feeling underfunded or overlooked
- Trust in institutions is low, with concerns about fairness, transparency, and follow-through

5+ mentions

"Not enough renovation and new buildings."

Economic Growth & Development
- Limited access to entertainment, retail, and dining options, with few local businesses and amenities that reflect their interests or cultures.

85+ mentions

"I have experienced people being racist to me and its not fun."

Discrimination, Prejudice, & Systemic Inequities
- Discrimination is common, with students reporting personal and systemic experiences of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia
- Representation is lacking, with youth feeling excluded from leadership and decision-making spaces