



2025 Employee Survey Results and Strategic Plan Update

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Overview

This report summarizes findings from qualitative, open-ended survey responses associated with the **2025 Frankfort-based Employee Satisfaction Survey**, which was used to gather insights on key issues and experiences.

The survey was deployed to employees during June of 2025.

Of those completing the survey approximately 400 relevant responses were gathered across 5 domains:

- Leadership
- Communications
- Skills
- Culture & Climate
- Operations

An additional question was included to provide respondents the opportunity to share any further comments or concerns.

Methodology

- Based on open-ended responses from the Frankfort-based Employee Satisfaction
- Responses complemented the quantitative survey and covered each domain, plus general feedback
- Analysis steps:
 - Cleaned and prepared data
 - Coded responses to identify initial ideas
 - Grouped codes into broader categories
 - Refined into key themes based on similarity, frequency, and relevance
- Themes validated using:
 - Mention counts and frequency ratios
 - "Strong Themes" = mentioned by $\geq 20\%$ of respondents in a domain
- Additional “insights” included to reflect all feedback context
- Results indicate patterns, not statistical generalizations

Limitations

- Not all individual comments are included due to:
 - Low frequency of some topics
 - Commitment to protecting respondent anonymity
- The focus is on highlighting **key themes and patterns**.
- Detailed, actionable reports were shared with each **Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) office** and include more granular insights, while maintaining confidentiality.

Theme: Strong Leadership and Supportive Teams

Across the department, employees consistently describe their immediate supervisors and office-level leadership as supportive, respectful, and empowering. These leaders foster a culture of collaboration, trust, and professional growth, contributing positively to morale and workplace satisfaction.

Key Insights Include:

- Employees report feeling deeply supported by their supervisors, who are described as approachable, communicative, and invested in staff success. Leadership is credited with creating environments where staff feel valued, trusted, and encouraged to grow professionally.
- Many teams are praised for their strong culture, collaboration, and shared goals. Onboarding processes are highlighted as well-structured and welcoming, helping new employees feel integrated and confident in their roles.
- Specific individuals are frequently recognized for their fairness, compassion, and leadership qualities.

Theme:
Leadership Challenges
Impacting Workplace
Culture

While many employees value their work and teams, a significant portion of feedback highlights concerns about leadership behaviors at higher levels. These concerns center around perceived micromanagement, lack of empathy, poor communication, and disconnect between leadership and staff. These issues are described as having a direct and negative impact on morale, trust, and productivity for some.

Key Insights Include:

- Some employees feel their ability to work independently is limited by overly directive leadership styles. They express a preference for leaders who trust their expertise and provide space for professional judgment.
- While many employees commend their immediate supervisors for being supportive and respectful, there are concerns regarding some higher-level leadership. These include unclear expectations, limited recognition, and inconsistent engagement practices. Additionally, some staff have observed leadership styles that lack transparency or responsiveness, and in certain cases, behaviors described as unprofessional or perceived as dismissive or disrespectful.
- There is a clear desire for leadership that encourages input and strengthens collaboration across offices within the department to improve coordination and effectiveness.

Theme: **Strengthening the Culture**

KDE is widely recognized as a collaborative, mission-driven organization with a positive and welcoming culture. Comments reveal that employees express pride in their work and appreciation for their colleagues and leadership. However, some note challenges related to leadership consistency, fairness, and personal connection within their office.

Key Insights Include:

- Comments highlight deep pride in KDE's mission to support students and educators across Kentucky. The agency is described as a place with exceptional people, strong camaraderie, and a shared sense of purpose. Many feel valued, supported, and energized by their work and colleagues.
- Some employees report challenges with inconsistent office-level leadership styles, micromanagement and exclusion from decision-making. For these employees, the issues are seen as contributing to reduced morale and a sense of disconnect between staff and leadership within their office.

Theme:
**Enhancing
Communication for
Stronger Collaboration**

Many employees recognize KDE's progress in improving communication across the agency, especially through leadership forums, newsletters, and cross-office updates. However, comments suggest inconsistent messaging sometimes contributes to a lack of transparency. While some teams model strong communication practices, others face barriers that impact trust, collaboration, and morale.

Key Insights Include:

- There is expressed appreciation for clear, more frequent communication from leadership, including agency-wide updates and forums. Specific individuals and teams are praised for keeping staff informed and fostering open dialogue. These efforts have contributed to improved morale and a more collaborative culture in some areas.
- Employees express a strong desire for more transparent decision-making, more consistent communication, and trust in their professionalism. Office level concerns include rigid protocols and redundant reporting, calling for more simplified communication tools, improving outreach to districts and educators, and ensuring all voices are heard in planning and policy decisions

Strategic Progress

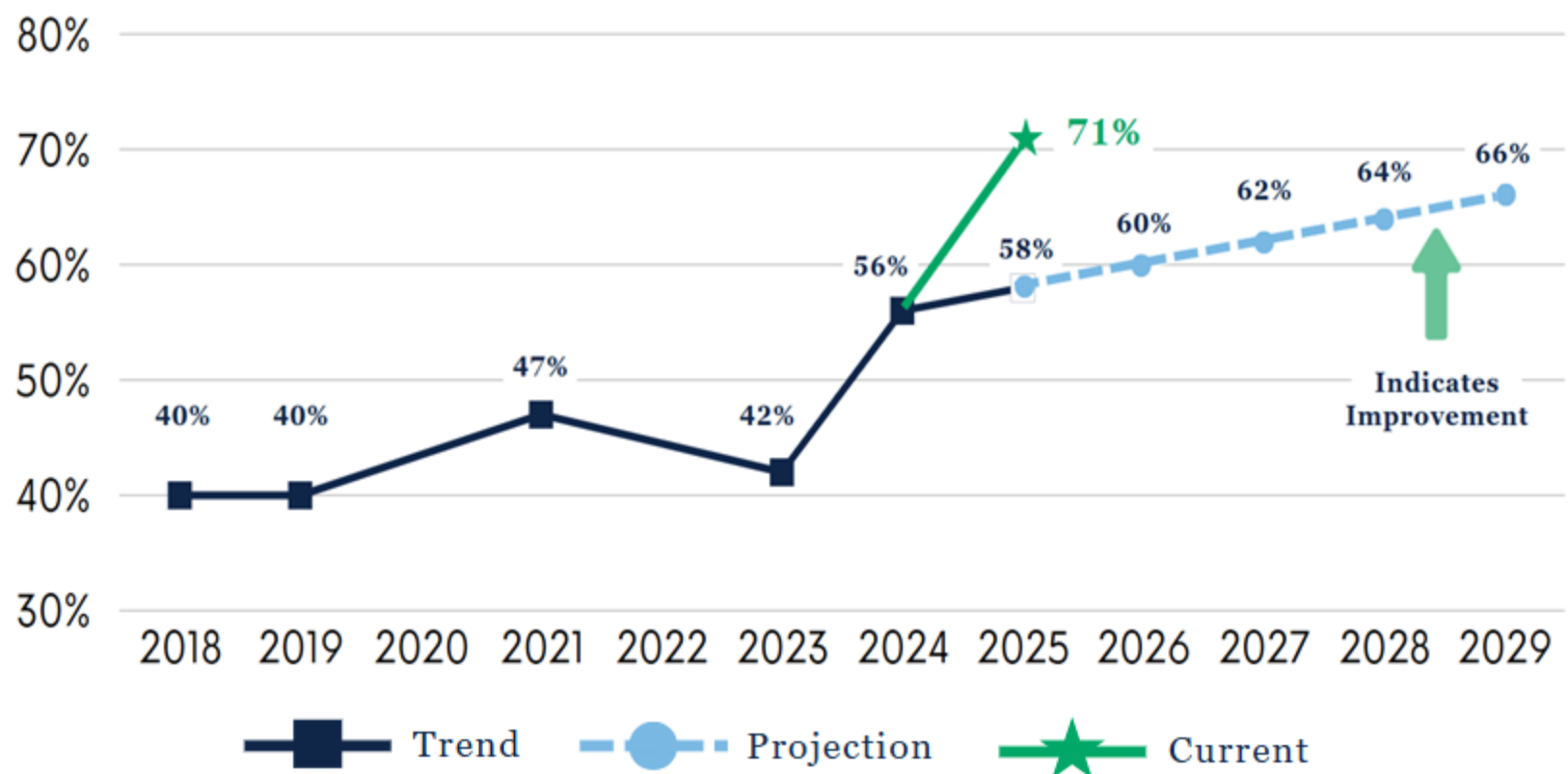


Kentucky Department of
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Goal #6: Improve Customer Satisfaction

Increase customer satisfaction based on average favorable agreement for: “I know who to contact to get information” and “KDE values feedback” from 56% in 2024 to 66% in 2029.

Average Favorable Agreement (Customer Survey)



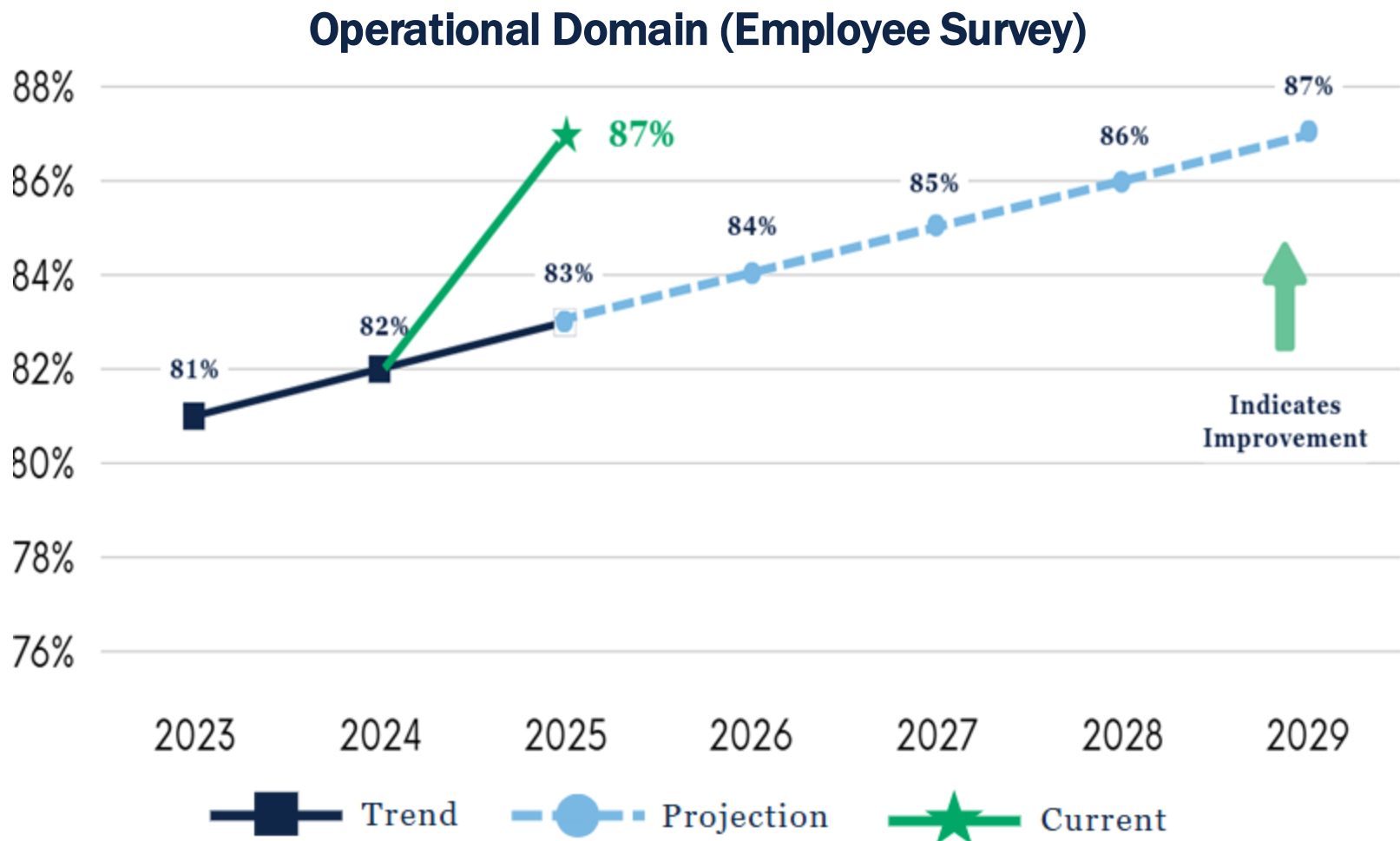
Key Performance Indicators

Maintain high agreement level on semi-annual Pulse Check

- How satisfied are you with the support you received from KDE today
 - 91% Satisfied/Very Satisfied
- The KDE staff member was courteous and professional
 - 97% Satisfied/Very Satisfied

Goal #7: Improve Organizational Process Management

Improve average favorable agreement of the Operations Domain in the Employee Survey from 82% in 2024 to 87% in 2029.



Key Performance Indicators

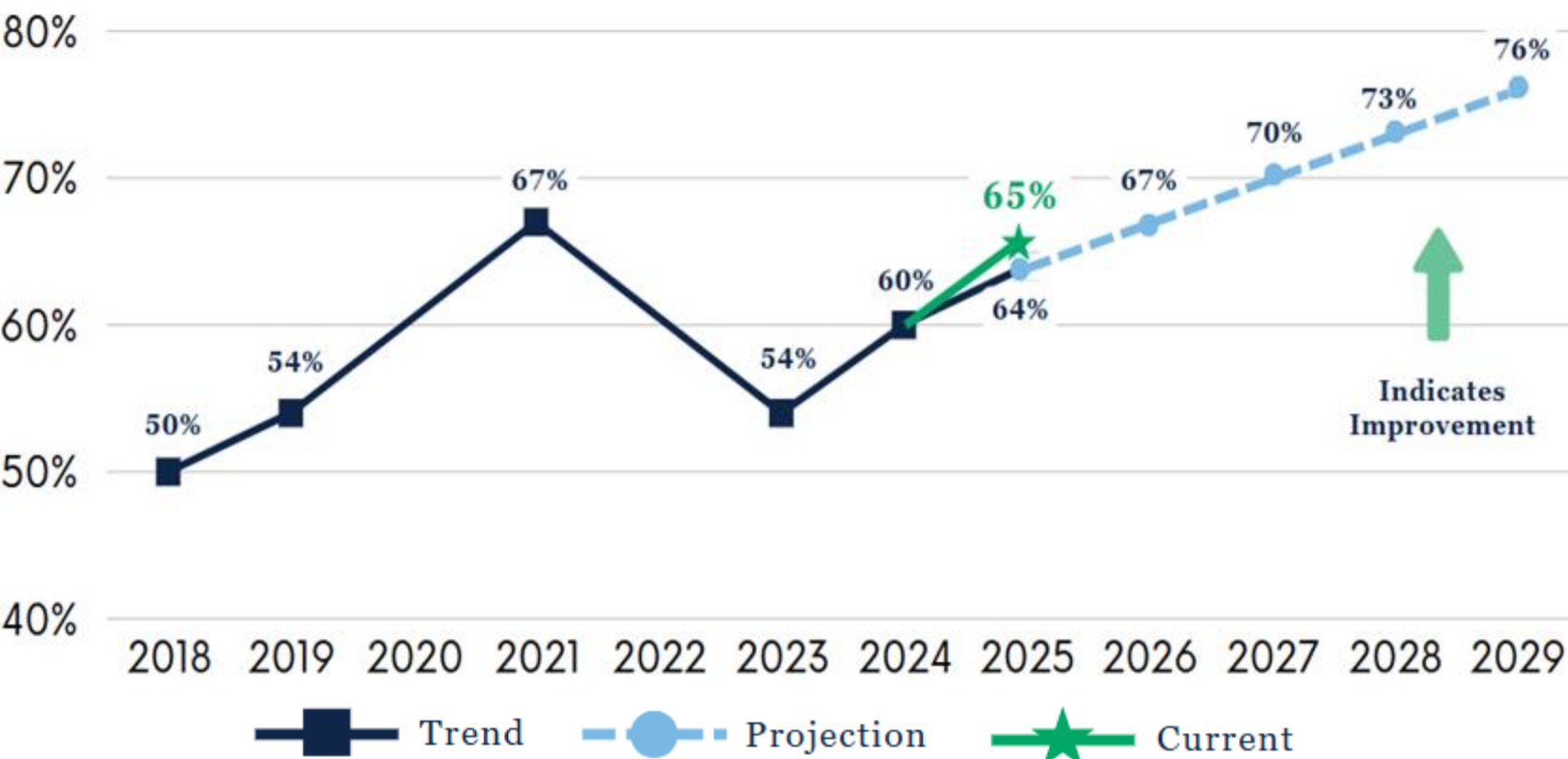
Increase agreement on the following employee survey questions:

- “KDE regularly reviews and improves its processes”
 - 74% in 2024
 - 79% in 2025
- "Processes are documented to protect important assets“
 - 86% in 2024
 - 89% in 2025
- “Processes for handling an emergency are documented”
 - 86% in 2024
 - 89% in 2025

Goal #8: Build Leadership Capacity

Improve average favorable agreement of the KDE Leadership Domain in the Customer Survey from 60% in 2024 to 76% in 2029.

Leadership Domain (Customer Survey)



Key Performance Indicators

- Increase the overall agreement rating of employee satisfaction in the KDE Leadership Domain
 - 85% in 2024
 - 87% in 2025
- Increase agreement on the Employee Survey for - “I am able to develop my professional skills in my current role”
 - 92% in 2024
 - 92% in 2025