

Equity Audit Report

Prepared for:

West

Northfield

School District

31

Spring 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary is a brief synopsis of the Equity Audit findings. All findings are categorized using an accountability framework – *Five Strands of Systemic Equity*® - which serves as a roadmap to organizational transformation. The full Equity Audit report that follows this executive summary provides comprehensive information about the purpose of an equity audit, as well as its features, process, and quantitative and qualitative research details. The full equity audit report includes findings, and considerations for next steps informed with current research.

SYSTEMS

To ensure a systemic and continuous development toward advancing equity within all policies, processes, procedures, initiatives, decision-making and fiscal responsibility.

- 1.1 Develop common language around equity, and effectively communicate it with all stakeholders.
- 1.2 Develop a Board policy, a Board statement and/or district statement on equity.
- 1.3 Develop transparent, intentional, measurable, and accountable equity goals.
- 1.4 Implement practices to attract highly qualified diverse teams by race/ethnicity and gender.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

To intentionally embed equity-driven pedagogy in the curriculum, resources, instructional approaches, use and consideration of assessments and academic programming for the purpose of advancing equity for each student.

- 2.1 Develop equitable access and opportunity of advanced learning programming for BIPOC students while detracking to amplify talent development for all students.
- 2.2 Interrogate the IEP process to ensure equitable access and opportunity.
- 2.3 Review, with a critical lens, the MTSS identification process for students to receive Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.
- 2.4 Examine unequal growth consistencies in the benchmark and standardized assessments.
- 2.5 Embed culturally responsive curriculum and resources in each content and grade.

STUDENT VOICE, CLIMATE AND CULTURE

To consistently seek students' feedback and experiences and nurture a positive, authentic, and meaningful organizational culture and climate.

- 3.1 Reform the implementation of SEL with an equity lens.
- 3.2 Develop a student equity advisory committee.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

To provide a continuum of professional learning and growth opportunities for all staff in pursuit of fully understanding and embracing educational equity.

- 4.1 Train all staff on educational equity.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AS AGENCY

To partner with families and the community for authentic opportunities to serve the students, the school and district.

- 5.1 Develop and actively collaborate with a community equity advisory committee.
- 5.2 Develop comprehensive translations to families in multiple languages.

Section 1

INTRODUCTION

During school year 2020-21, West Northfield School District 31 engaged in an equity audit. An equity audit is a proactive opportunity to critically examine systemic equity movement. The purpose of the equity audit is to clearly identify areas of strength, and especially recognize needed improvement to advance equity.

What is equity?

There are numerous definitions of equity and each district would decidedly choose which adhere to their values. The consistent theme in **quality** educational equity definitions include language that clearly state school systems are responsible for their own inequities, particularly among historically marginalized populations. These populations are marginalized based on categories that include, but are not limited to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), gender, gender identity, sexuality, socio-economic level, differently abled individuals, citizenship status, English Language Learners (ELL)/emergent Bilinguals, minoritized religions and other disenfranchised identity groups. The Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center (MPEAC), which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, defines educational equity as:

When educational policies, practices, interactions, and resources,
Are representative of, constructed by, and responsive to all people
such that each individual has access to, can meaningfully participate,
and make progress in high-quality learning experiences that empowers
them towards self-determination and reduced disparities in outcomes
regardless of individual characteristics and cultural identities.

MPEAC, *Equity Digest*,
April, 2019

The American Institute for Research (2018) recognizes a similar definition. It states, “Educational equity is achieved when *all* students receive the resources, opportunities, skills and knowledge they need to succeed in our democratic society”. Several equity-focused entities such as The Education Trust, Learning for Justice and Rethinking Schools advocate that equity must disrupt any forms of “ism’s”. That is, racism, classism, sexism, normative beliefs associated with heterosexuality, cisgender, national origin, and other forms of superiority based

on dominant social constructs and identities. The National School Board Association (NSBA) defines educational equity as:

We affirm in our actions that each student can, will, and shall learn. We recognize that based on factors including but not limited to disability, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, students are deprived of equitable educational opportunities. Educational equity is the intentional allocation of resources, instruction, and opportunities according to need, requiring that discriminatory practices, prejudices, and beliefs be identified and eradicated.

The NSBA delved further by developing DIRE – Dismantling Institutional Racism in Education Initiative¹ - which urges school systems across the country to recognize how systemic racism shows up in educational institutions and structures. The acknowledgment of racial disparities is expressed by numerous professional education organizations, including but not limited to the School Superintendents Association (AASA), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and National Education on Education. In Illinois, the number of professional education entities that advocate for equity and social justice of historically marginalized groups are abundant. Consider such associations as the following: Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois Education Association (IEA), Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) and Illinois Principals Association (IPA); all of whom demonstrate equity minded policies and practices. It is clear that educational equity explicitly disrupts racial inequities by holding school systems accountable to advance equity for all historically marginalized groups.

¹ nsba.org

RESEARCH

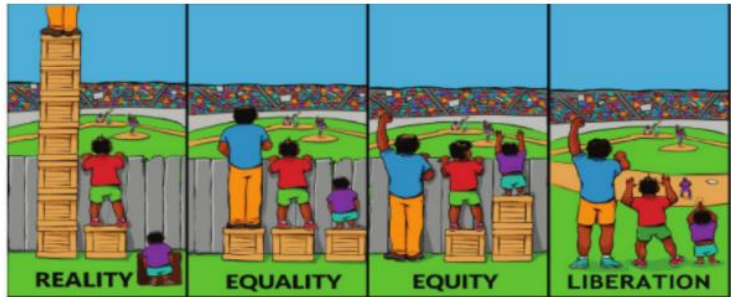
To understand equity, one must understand inequities and how every major U.S. system – criminal justice, education, employment, health care, housing, - has been designed to be inequitable. In other words, these systems were not created to benefit all members of society. They are inherently unequal. Educational equity mandates committed, systemic transformations at all levels to mitigate the inequities while leveraging access, opportunity, and outcomes for each student (Kincheloe, 2008; Gorski, 2018; Aguilar, 2020). By doing so, we actively work to transform systems and the leaders that occupy them (Shields, 2019; Blankstein et al, 2016). Such whole system transformations include the following:

1. Foster deep commitment to the moral imperative.
 2. Small number of ambitious goals relentlessly pursued.
 3. Establish a developmental culture and investment in capacity building.
 4. Build leadership at all levels.
 5. Cultivate district wide engagement.
 6. Learn from the work.
 7. Use transparent data to improve practice for innovation and improvement.
- (Fullan, 2015).

In recent history, many school districts across the country have increased their knowledge, skills, and commitment to educational equity but many more have not. Although the growing attention is welcomed, educational equity cannot be perceived as the latest initiative or trend. It is not an initiative at all. It is a transformative shift that encapsulates the ways schools should operate. We cannot do school well without authentic reflection and action toward equity for all students. If the primary premise of schooling is to cultivate future generations to be contributing members of greater society, then the principles of human development, socio-economic and political environments are ingrained (Howard, 2010; Diem & Welton, 2021). Educational equity is critical. Lives depend on it. History has demonstrated the need for equity to courageously unravel power and privilege among individuals and within institutions (Kim, 2020). The increasing popularity around equity over the last several years has

led to several visual illustrations to describe its complexities. A quick internet search yields many images including the² popular one below (Lynch, et al, 2020).

The image on the far left represents the *reality* that not all people are afforded the same advantages, and that some individuals may have great advantages than others thus



immediately creating unequal opportunities. While the second image to the left points out that when equal resources are provided, it does not lead to *equality*, as some individuals still maintain their advantages and disadvantages. The third image, or the one with the word *equity* underneath, indicates that we advance toward fairness and justice when individuals are given what they require to ascertain opportunities. Finally, the image on the far right exclaims that *liberation* is the goal by eliminating the fence. Metaphorically, the fence represents the systems that perpetuate unequal and inequitable outcomes (Lynch, et al, 2020). In schools across the country, students are legally and justifiably able to ascertain access and supports to aid in their learning, such regardless of legal status, special education need and language (Kim, 2020).

However, national data has shown that despite the law and morality of supporting children and their learning, academics are not fair. Scholars understand that legal protections for these groups is insufficient to reach equity (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2020; Diem & Welton, 2021). An urgent investigation to how society and institutions perpetuate inequities by examining biases, explicit and implicit, is necessary to unpack narrow or limited mindsets, beliefs, and practices. Equity begs the question whether certain district policies and procedures are exclusionary or catered to dominant views, whether academic supports are effective, whether students are being heard, whether other factors are contributing to disparities or a combination of all the above and more. In other words, have we examined all with an equity lens?

² Creator, *Craig Froehle*, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati

A fundamental urgency about educational equity is that every area must be examined with an equity lens. It requires attention to demographic conditions of disenfranchised populations. Educational equity organically advocates for support and programs to exist, but it also demands deeper leveraging than academic programs. This is the first and possibly most challenging shift toward prioritizing educational equity, which is the attitudes, behaviors and actions to consider all aspects of schooling with an equity lens, because education systems have been designed to benefit White, middle-class, heterosexual, cisgender, Christian, fully cognitive functioning, able-bodied, English-speaking and other dominant social constructed identities (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Schuerick and Skrla, 2003; Dweck, 2007; Lewis & Diamond, 2015). Unfortunately, too many of those dehumanizing perspectives are not exclusive to history, which is why equity is considered one of the fundamental dynamics in the development of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – the 50-year-old national education law for equal opportunity in education among all U.S. states. When standardized assessments are reviewed, we must acknowledge the limited capacities of such tests to accurately measure student at a given time. We must disaggregate student data by demographics and special populations to investigate the underlying conditions of its existence (Johnson, 2002; Williams, 2003; Ross, 2010; Kendi, 2019). When we scrutinize racial discipline data, we must do so with an understanding of root causes to inappropriate assumptions to transform historical power and privilege (Ladson- Billings, 1994; Howard, 2010; Ross, 2010; DiAngelo, 2018). When we review the student populations participating in rigorous opportunities and those identified as readily able to partake, we must do so void of deficit thinking (Sleeter, 2012; Kendi, 2019; Gorski & Pothini, 2018). To keep educational equity at the forefront of all deliberations, there must be intentional and continuous conversations about it in every aspect of schooling (Singleton & Linton, 2006; Gorski & Pothini, 2018).

Thoughtful, critical, and systemic equity considerations ought to be embedded in all the work of an educational institution, including but not limited to curriculum development, assessments, professional development, discipline, and programmatic structures (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Chenoweth & Theokas, 2012; Gorski, 2018; Edley et al, 2019). These discourses and actions must be relentless and continuously allow for improvement contributing

to equity as foundational and a moral imperative (Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 2008; Gorski, 2018). It demands a continuous and heartfelt commitment for every child to be successful. A firm understanding of educational equity clearly imparts the knowledge that equity is transformative and good for all students (Shields, 2019); even the most advantaged pupils do better in an equitable school setting (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Shields, 2019; Smith et al, 2017; Gorski, 2018).

This is important to point out as equity can be narrowly viewed as taking from one to give to another rather than the critical recognition that sameness for all does not equate to fairness. It also must be understood that individuality does not contribute to a holistic society. Collective voices foster harmony, but too often in schools' individual interests outweigh the betterment of a community, which tend to further oppress marginalized people.

Although an equity audit can provide a comprehensive view, it cannot fully capture all the efforts to advance equity. There are educator practices occurring daily throughout any district to ensure students are getting what they need to be successful, and to address inclusion and inequities ingrained in the system and structures. However, when districts create and monitor equity-driven plans with associated measurable indicators, then the opportunity and expectations gaps experienced by marginalized students may be narrowed (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, Edley et al, 2019). The intent of an equity audit is to identify inequities, and then it is the district's responsibility to formulate a plan. When districts create a plan to advance equity, it is presumably to establish systemic improvements (Skrla et al, 2009; Edley et al, 2019). In doing so, the research is clear that there is no absolute or one way to this work. There is no one size fits all or pre-packaged program to guarantee equity for all students. Strategies that suggest "best" practices to meet the needs of *all* students or one measuring tool or assessment to demonstrate fulfillment of educational equity should be approached with caution. Such suggestions perpetuate singular attitudes that all students will be successful by utilizing one or a few approaches. Kim Anderson, Executive Director for the National Education Association (NEA), stated that the most important challenge facing public education today is equity (Peters, 2019).

Educational equity is a *continual* pursuit to enable all students to have equitable access and opportunity as demonstrated by outcomes (Blankstein et al, 2016; Smith et al, 2017). It is an approach constantly fluctuating based on the circumstances of each student while paying particular attention to a student’s diverse background and experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Kendi, 2019; Edley et al, 2019). All the recommendations in this equity audit report are firmly grounded with current research as well as the unique considerations of **West Northfield School District 31**.

National Student Demographics

The increasing demand by federal and local governments call for state boards of education and school districts to address the academic and opportunity gaps among minoritized demographics, which is the fastest-growing populations in the United States. These demographic shifts mirror the global, racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Schools must become the epicenter of modeling a deep understanding of the sociopolitical context and affirm the welcoming benefits of racial and ethnic diverse communities (Wells, et al, 2016).

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), there are approximately 56.4 million students enrolled in PreK-12 education. With a majority attending public schools – approximately 50.7 million students.

NCES reports the following:

Table 1.1: Historical, current, and projected enrollment in U.S. K-12 public schools by race/ethnicity			
Race/Ethnicity	1995	2021	2029
American Indian/Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	<1%
Asian/Pacific Islander ³	4%	6%	7%
Black	17%	15%	15%
Hispanic/Latinx ⁴	14%	28%	28%
Two or More Races	NA	5%	6%
White	65%	46%	44%

NA = not available

³ Pacific Islander was combined with Asian until 2007. Since 2008, Pacific Islander was its own racial/ethnic category, and from that time rounds to zero.

⁴ Hispanic is considered an antiqued term as it refers to people whose origin are from Spain. For the purpose of this report, Hispanic/Latinx will be used as an all-encompassing category for Hispanic/Latina/Latino.

Illinois Student Demographics

In Illinois, there are currently 2 million students enrolled in PreK-12 schools. According to the 2019-20 Illinois Report Card, the chart below represents the student demographic between 2016 and 2020.

Table 1.2: Five-year difference of racial/ethnic diversity of students enrolled in Illinois PreK-12 public schools		
Race/Ethnicity	2016	2020
Asian	5%	5%
Black	17%	17%
Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx	26%	27%
Two or More Races	3%	4%
White	48%	48%

The need to be equitably responsive to students' needs extends beyond race and ethnicity. Attention and resources are also necessary for special student populations – ELL, FRL and IEP. According to the 2019-20 Illinois Report Card, the following is reported:

Table 1.3: Five-year difference of special populations enrolled in Illinois PreK-12 public schools		
Special Populations	2016	2020
English Language Learner (ELL)	11%	13%
Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL)	50%	49%
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	14%	15%

HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS OF DISTRICT EQUITY WORK

The following is a historical synopsis of equity work at West Northfield School District 31:

Systems

- The West Northfield School District Board of Education has adopted a more equitable calendar, which includes days off for holidays beyond the Jewish, Christian, and Federal holidays traditionally taken by District 31.
- The Board of Education adopted an anti-racism statement in June 2020.
- Board of Education policies have been updated to reflect IASB PRESS recommended changes related to equity.
- For many years, District 31 has worked with their food service provider in order to accommodate free meals for those qualifying for waivers. As the burden shifted too heavily on the food service company, the district assumed extra costs to keep this program in place.
- In 2019-2020, District 31 increased food service opportunities to include breakfast in order to support more students. However, with the advent of Covid impacts on the system, District 31 became eligible for the Summer Food Service program. All families now receive 7 lunches and 7 breakfasts per week, including holidays. Families do not need to provide financial need information to receive this benefit. In addition, we also offer weekly bus drop off service for meals. This service has been available during breaks and holidays as well.
- The Board of Education has modified the fee structure. More items and services are included in the fees, which can be waived for students with financial needs. No students need to pay for individual collections for activities, programs, field trips, sports, the yearbook, etc. For the 2020-2021 school year, the PTO and District partnered to provide all school supplies to students at no cost.
- Since 2019, District 31 has engaged in an equity audit, EL audit, special education audit, and curriculum audit in order to critically evaluate all aspects of the system.
- The District 31 Board of Education has subsidized at least 50% of the cost of busing for all students, and 100% of the students who have demonstrated financial need.

Teaching and Learning

- School libraries have been building library collections that better reflect the diversity of students and contemporary topics. Emphasis has been placed on purchasing high interest and appropriate items in a variety of languages. Collection curation processes have been developed.
- Curriculum collection curation processes have also been developed. Outdated materials have been examined and purged.
- Careful consideration is given when opportunities such as field trips and assemblies are planned to ensure that it reflected a variety of backgrounds and topics.
- District 31 has invested in a 1:1 technology program in which every student is provided a device to use at home and at school. As a part of that program, District 31 will also provide “hot spots” if a students or family does not have wireless access.
- District 31 field trips, activities, and some school supplies are provided to students. These items are partially covered by fees, which can be waived for financial need.
- During the 2020-2021 school year, full in-person and full remote options were provided for all students.

- District 31 has partnered with the PTO and the community to provide supplies, cold weather gear, and other items to families and students as needed.
- Field Middle School has a building wide executive functioning program for all students. In this program all students are provided to all students to ensure equitable access.
- District 31 has been evolving the “gifted” program to be a more “Advanced Learning Program.” Included in this programming change is a more defined way to gain access, an appeals process, as well as a pathway for enrichment in less traditional subjects.
- Field and Winkelman offer (in non-Covid years) after school programs available to all students, as space allows.

Student Voice, Climate and Culture

- Field Middle School students have historically taken the 5 Essentials survey. Fifth grade students at Winkelman also now take this survey.
- Both Field and Winkelman have a student council that provides for student voice and advocacy. At Field, any student may participate in student council.
- Field Middle School students take a yearly social emotional screener designed to get feedback and information from students to increase support.
- Both Field and Winkelman offer surveys on a variety of topics including, but not limited to, remote learning, executive functioning, activities, etc.
- Field offers middle school transition opportunities for all students, as well as surveys to evaluate and adjust transition opportunities.
- Field offers weekly student spotlight to increase community, as well as “student of the month” to honor students.
- Eighth grade students participate in IEP meetings. Plans are in place to increase involvement.
- Field offers a recognition program with different pathways for student recognition including academic achievement, improvement, effort, and citizenship/leadership

Professional Learning

- Topics over the last several years have included inclusion and equity, with a goal of having multiple opportunities for discussion and reflection as opposed to “one and done”.
 - February 2020- Leading for Equity and Excellence in the School Setting (admin and DLT) - Dr. Ivette Dubiel
- 2020-2021 School Year
 - Assessment Strategies for Remote and In-Person (available to all staff)- Lisa Westman
 - Building Resilience During a Pandemic (all staff) - Dr. Doug Bolton
 - Cultivating Resilience During Covid 19 (Self Care-Choice to Attend)-Dr. Doug Bolton
 - Collaborative Problem Solving-Dr. Doug Bolton
 - Cohesive Lessons for Remote and In-Person (available to all staff)- Becky Mathison
 - Differentiation, Social Distancing, and Remote Learning (available to all staff)- Becky Mathison
 - Distance Learning for English Language Learners (available to all staff)- Veronica Gott
 - Equity 101 (all staff) - Dr. Ivette Dubiel
 - Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies (Field)- Becky Mathison
 - Fostering Community in the Classroom (available to all staff)- Leslie Redmond

- Hip Hooray...Make Your Small Groups Today! (available to all staff)- Jacqui Le-Mon and Leslie Redmond
- Inclusive Practices (all staff)- Erin Kranz
- Live Streaming (all staff)- Nino Alvarez and Becky Mathison
- Protect Yourself and Your Community with the COVID-19 Vaccine - Dr. Michael Jon TeKippe
- Rush Executive Functioning (select Winkelman and Field staff)- Dr. Georgia L Bozeday
- Signs of Anxiety (available to all staff)- Amy Sack
- The Whole Child, Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching (Field) - Becky Mathison
- Understanding Implicit Bias (all staff) – Dr. Ivette Dubiel
- Countering Coronavirus Stigma and Racism from the National Association of School Psychologists. (sent out as parent resource)
- Universal Design For Learning-West Ed
- MTSS Overview-West Ed
- MTSS Updates-West Ed
- MTSS Tiered Interventions-West Ed
- MTSS PSDA Cycle-West Ed
- West Ed Topics
- Maggie Essig from the IRC presented audit information

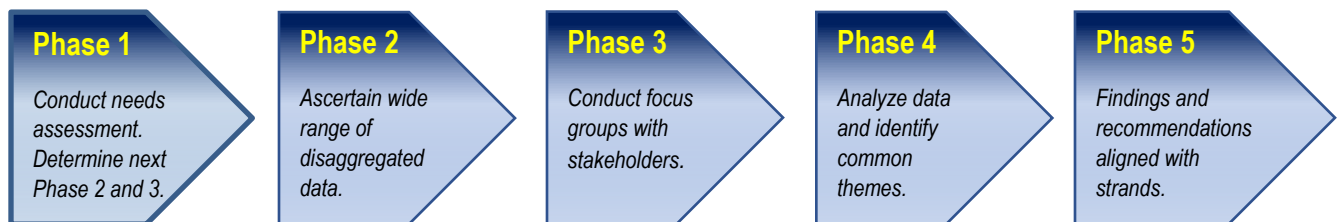
Family and Community as Agency

- District 31 has a Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC)
- District 31 has developed a Special Education Parent Advisory Committee
- PTO and Ed Foundation remain active in school fundraising and activity efforts designed to support all students and engage the community.
- District 31 has intentionally increased materials being translated into Spanish, Mongolian, and Korean, including handbooks and regular communication.
- A “Welcome to District 31” kit has been developed for new families to help them become familiar with District 31 needs.
- District 31 and building principals communicate with families regularly.
- District 31 has increased engagement with families through social media.
- For the 2020-2021 school year, a parent education/engagement series was developed and available over zoom. Topics include:
 - How to Help our Kids Thrive in a Digital World - Devorah Heitner
 - Fostering Independence at Home: Executive Functioning - Dr. Georgia Bozeday
 - Building Resilience During a Pandemic (parent presentation) - Dr. Doug Bloton
 - Equity 101 (open to community) - Dr. Ivette Dubiel
 - Protect Yourself and Your Community with the COVID-19 Vaccine - Dr. Michael Jon TeKippe
 - Community Resources - District 31 Staff
 - Who Do I Contact About... - District 31 Staff
 - Student Services Overview - District 31 Staff
 - eLearning Parent Technology Tips - District 31 Staff
 - Online Learning Platforms - District 31 Staff
 - Participation and Grading - District 31 Staff
 - Interpretation and Translation Services - District 31 Staff
- District 31 will be engaging in the strategic planning process in the summer of 2021. Process will include stakeholders including parents and the community.

EQUITY AUDIT PROCESS

The *Five-Phases of an Equity Audit*® is a fact-finding quantitative and qualitative process that aids in identifying areas of growth, and specifically recommended areas of needed improvement to advance educational equity. The timeline is approximately one year.

Illustration 1.1: Visual Representation of Five-Phases of an Equity Audit®



Pre-Phase 1

District forms a District Equity Leadership Team (DELT). Guidance is provided to district leadership by the auditor into forming a team of approximately 25-30 staff members.

Phase 1

DELT meets with the auditor and conducts a *District/School Assessment on Systemic Equity*® to discuss and rate areas of strengths and needed improvement in its organization. The results of that assessment are a data point in this report (see pages 19-25). During Phase I, DELT is provided with the *Data with an Equity Lens*® document to identify the quantitative data the district will collect and submit to the auditor to analyze. DELT is also provided a bank of sample questions for stakeholder focus groups - staff, students, and parents/guardians/caretakers. For ease of reference, the stakeholder group, parents/guardians/caretakers will be notated as families.

Phase 2

Approximately three to four months are allocated to gather the agreed-upon data.

Phase 3

The auditor conducts focus groups. In alignment with applied social research methods, all focus groups are voluntary and confidential (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). Focus group occur by stakeholder role, and there is no intermingling of stakeholders in focus groups (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). In other words, students participate with students, staff participate with staff members and so on. Names and identifying information of focus group participants are not used in this report and kept confidential.

Many quotes from all focus groups are extracted. Any assertion to identify focus group participants is based on assumption, and to protect confidentiality, any indication of identity was withheld in the extracted quote.

Table 1.4: Focus Groups and Participants		
Focus Groups	Total Number of Focus Groups	Total Number of Participants
Staff	9	41
Students	6	42
Families	6	28
TOTAL	21	111

Students

1. What are ways you and a teacher have connected? What about other adults in the school?
2. How have adults in the school setting supported your academic success? personal success?
3. How have you felt welcomed and included in your school? How have you not felt welcomed and included in your school?
4. How have your peers been welcoming and inclusive or not welcoming and inclusive?
5. In what ways has your unique identity and experience been celebrated or valued by your school? By your teachers(s)?
6. Have you felt comfortable speaking up when you need help or are having a hard time? In what ways have you been able to express what you are feeling?

7. How has the school or your teachers supported the development of your or student voice?
8. Is there anything else you'd like to add or share?

Staff

1. What are some examples of how your school has closed or narrowed the opportunity gap for students? What are areas to consider to close or narrow the opportunity gaps?
2. What are the greatest challenges your school or district face when it comes to equity?
3. How has equity impacted your instruction and relationship with students?
4. How has equity impacted your view of student discipline? Are students being treated equitably?
5. In what ways, have positive, meaningful relationships been built with students? With families?
6. Is there anything else you'd like to add or share?

Families

1. When you hear "equity" what comes to mind?
2. In what ways, do you believe your school is doing a good job in meeting the needs of all students?
3. What are the areas of needed improvement in order to meet the needs of all students?
4. How has the school/teachers supported your child(ren) academic success?
5. Have you experienced and/or do you have concerns that you believe are inequitable or unfair? Please describe.
6. Do you feel like your voice is heard? Do you feel comfortable bringing up concerns and/or ideas that you have with the school?
7. Is there anything else you'd like to add or share?

Phase 4 & Phase 5

During these phases, an extensive analysis is conducted of all quantitative and qualitative data. A draft report is submitted to the district Superintendent for review. The purpose of the draft is to allow the Superintendent and/or designees to ensure accuracy, while no edits of findings are allowed. After the review, a final report is submitted. This report serves as the definitive equity audit report.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As part of Phase I of the Equity Audit, DELT completed a *District/School Assessment on Systemic Equity*® to provide context, deeper discussion and understanding about equity. Prior to completing this assessment, DELT members were grouped to complete the needs assessment. The needs assessment provided an opportunity for self-reflection on ten components of equity against the given rubric. For each component, groups were tasked to provide a rating and rationale as well as suggestions for next steps. An “X” was marked in the needs assessment to designate the group ratings, and the bullet-point list is indicative of group responses for that “X”. If there is an “X”, but no bullet-point comment, it was left blank by the group completing the needs assessment. The rubric description is listed below:

- **Robust:** Systemic and committed throughout the district and all schools, widely communicated to all stakeholders.
- **Strong, but focus needed:** Developing stages across the district and schools, but clear expectations and directions are needed.
- **In Progress:** We’re working on it, but not yet what we’d call strong.
- **Developing:** We’re just getting started on this work

Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
1. COMMON UNDERSTANDING, CONSISTENT LANGUAGE - Our district has clearly defined equity, diversity and inclusion. We have communicated these meanings in a consistent language to our staff and community.		XXXX	X		
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative of the Board's views on equity and how they are interpreting it. We don't have a clear understanding of equity v equality. Work has started on inclusion. • Have had conversations but not everyone seems to be on the same page. There is an understanding but no consistency. Students are more aware of diversity, but they have no concept of what equity is. They think about fairness, not equity. Inclusion- students are aware but do not have a lot of background knowledge on the topic. Students can understand obvious differences but struggle to understand when it isn't as obvious. Our district has cultural and economic diversity, and we need to look at this info when determining what is equitable. • The district has offered equity and inclusion professional development in the form of outside speakers presenting to all staff. Additionally, staff complete an online course regarding cultural competence, as required by the state of Illinois. • No documentation to reference communication to staff or community. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an acknowledgement on defining this, but clear definitions have not been shared with the community. The language has been discussed with staff but not as much with the community. 				
Suggestions for Next Steps					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity audit, PD for staff, parents, board on common vocabulary to develop common understanding, follow up with development of board norms and protocols, communicating consistent language for accessing resources throughout the school district. Work with parent organizations on equity v equality, develop policy review practices. • Start opening these conversations with students. Can't ignore the topic. There needs to be an overarching theme with what is the dynamics of the school/ community. Could use advisory time to have these discussions to lead towards more comfort and acceptance. With little kids' literature can be avenue to talk about these topics. Educating parents can lead towards better understanding for little kids (they take the lead of their parents). Sharing is important verbal or written. • Develop PD goals around equity so that everyone is working with the same base knowledge and understanding of what equity is and why it makes a difference. There should be a common language across the district, in both schools. • Clearly define equity, diversity, and inclusion. Communicate to staff and community and develop a periodic evaluation process to ensure common understanding. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more staff and parent input into what makes our culture more based in equity, diversity, and inclusion. After consulting with the community have a declaration in our handbook as to what these terms mean and look like within our district. 				

Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
2: MISSION, VISION AND/OR STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT - Our district has a clear mission and vision for equity as evidenced in our Board policies, district goals, strategic plan and/or value statements.		X	XXXX		
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district vision states, "West Northfield School District 31 provides a world class, whole-child education and equitable opportunities for all students in an environment that respects diversity and fosters collaborative partnerships among stakeholders while maintaining financial strength." There is mention of equity and diversity in this vision. Included in the strategic plan core values are: "We embrace our diversity and believe it is a strength," "We believe in meaningful and authentic classroom instruction that addresses diverse learning styles and fosters creativity and innovation through a variety of modalities." Strategic Plan Goal 1 Strategy 3: "Develop a system that provides for differentiation, tiered interventions, and enrichment based on assessment results for academics and social emotional learning." Strategic Plan Goal 4 Strategy 10: "Expand two-way communication with families and community members through outreach, education, and support, including goal / progress updates." The board has the legally required policies related to equity such as 7:006, 6:026, 6:001, 6:005, 6:014. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversations have started, Board recently adopted an anti-racism statement however the statement was veiled in controversy, sent an anti-racism letter from the Board, which was also clouded in controversy, Board members asking for white privilege PD for the rest of the Board, strategic plans celebrate diversity but does not provide actionable opportunities for true equity, board endorsement of equity audit, conversation about equity in different topics and actions. These touch on topics but are not overt/ spelled out. It sounded nice in the conversation but did not get into the details. Committees were not representative of the diversity within our district. It is hard to come up with student leadership without a plan. Missing the consistency in what the mission is, and it is not embedded into everything we are doing. Need to shift the mindset, it is easy to say things, but actions need to happen to make change. There are good intentions to analyze and utilize the data in order to form goals, but we have not had adequate time to do this. Referenced in our District Vision and Core Values/Belief Statements 				
Suggestions for Next Steps					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once a common understanding of what equity, inclusion and diversity means is established, the thread of that should be pulled through each of the strategic plan's goals so that we can ensure each is formulated through an equity lens. Fewer and more focused goals to allow for easier recall, understanding and implementation. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting a new strategic plan based on the recommendations from the equity audit, special ed audit, EL audit, and curriculum audit. All of them address equity in some way or fashion (or will). Student led report to the board each month about culture and climate. More staff time to analyze data as well as PD on how to use the data to help/drive our instruction. Providing families more resources to become engaged based on their needs. Revisit Mission, Vision, Strategic Plan through the lens of equity. 				

Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
3: EQUITY GOALS - Our district has a plan that includes equity-driven goals and measurable objectives to hold us accountable for advancing systemic equity.		XXXXX			
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing much is measurable, our equity plan at this point is equity audit and related professional development. Surface conversations recognize but not following through. Just providing the topics lip service. Intention is great but how do we get there? We do not see any measurable objectives. There are not any known goals or plans. There are school improvement plan achievement goals related to special populations but not explicitly about equity, inclusion, and diversity. Refer also to responses to component 2 regarding district goals. Unable to clearly identify that current district goals are equity driven 				
Suggestions for Next Steps					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize audit in preparation for a strategic plan rewrite, compare the recommendations of all the audits that have been completed or are in the process of being completed. Survey students throughout the year about equity. Have teachers talk about how they address kindness in their classrooms to have a common language. Student focus groups monthly to share. PD on how to use data to drive instruction and form goals. We also need time to develop this. Refer to response in component 2. Revisit strategic plan-develop equity driven goals. 				
Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
4: TEACHING AND LEARNING - In each grade and within each content, we have curriculum and resources aligned with equitable pedagogical beliefs and culturally responsive instructional practices that promote elimination of implicit biases and affirmation of student self-identities.		XXXX	X		
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest but not action, actions are more surface level such as an assembly or an event, enhanced library section, purchased books in the language of the people we service, work on inclusion has begun. We are trying but not there yet. Younger grade taking baby steps. Everyone wants this but how do we get there? There is not a clear and consistent curriculum reflective of culturally responsive practice. Systematically, not with intention, however our libraries are making positive strides, and this summer our Middle School ELA curriculum is addressing this, and some elementary grade levels. We do not have a common understanding of Culturally Responsive teaching. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff recognize that our student population is diverse and want to meet their needs; however, some thinking and actions demonstrate a need for more consistency in meeting diverse needs that equity requires. 				

Suggestions for Next Steps					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD for curriculum staff on culturally responsive practices to promote intentionality. • Look at resources and PD opportunities. Need to review curriculum to make sure we are not missing racial undertones and look for diverse perspectives. • More time to develop and collaborate culturally responsive curriculum vertically. • Training and implementation of Culturally Responsive curriculum and instruction. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional development to help staff understand what implicit bias is and how to approach instruction in a culturally responsive manner. 				
Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
5: ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING - Across the district, we have and continue to take a critical lens to our academic programming (e.g., ESL, SPED, Gifted/Honors/AP, etc.) to analyze student representation by socially constructed identities.		XX	XXX		
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are aware of socially constructed identities, but we don't use that in how students are placed in classrooms/programs. • Placement into programs is primarily based upon academic performance and not the community demographic. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated studies on special education, EL, curriculum. We have brought back to D31 students who are typically placed out, we are working on more push in models for services for EL, work has started on reviewing our gifted/enrichment program. • Discussions have started on this topic. Need to meet the needs of students from different backgrounds. • Placement into programs are primarily based upon academic performance and not the community demographic. 				
Suggestions for Next Steps					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special education-continue to work on an inclusion model, build co-teaching models, more work with the board to understand the recommendation made with an equity lens, revisit gifted/accelerated programming recommendations for implementation post-pandemic, review EL programming at the middle school. • Educate staff on how culturally constructed identities affect academic programming. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district that needs to provide financial support to bring in speakers for students to see experts in different fields. • Examine placement into programs by special populations. Expand placement processes to include more than academic performance so that make up mirrors the district demographic. Provide needed professional development so that adjusted placement processes include equitable practices while maintaining program integrity. • Consider alternative measures to identify placement beyond test scores. 				

Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
6: DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR/STUDENT SUPPORTS - Our district regularly analyzes student discipline data and disaggregates said data by race and special populations categories, as well as intersectionality of known social constructs. We have proactive practices in place (e.g., restorative justice, trauma-informed resources, SEL approaches, etc.) to support all students, especially historically marginalized populations.		XXX	XX		
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would not be having this conversation if this was occurring. There is a self-taught course being offered by the district. Covid is the catalyst for trauma informed practices but need to recognize other traumas that we need to be cognizant of. Need to recognize adverse childhood experiences. There is not consistency with handling redirection. There are not any consequences there are only opportunities for growth. No systemic process in place, however, we have the ability. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screenings for all students, we have some restorative practices, we have SEL programming, we are not consistently reviewing discipline data by special populations. Discipline data is not reviewed by special populations. However, there are proactive supports in place such as CHAMPS and SEL Tier I programming via Second Step. 				
Suggestions for Next Steps					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More PD/ education for staff. Having consistent expectations across all grade levels. Training on methods for redirections for all staff. Having a PBIS system to encourage better behavior. Develop a system to periodically review discipline data and align PD district-wide-this is an ongoing process of reviewing data and provided needed PD. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTSS leadership team to develop consistency between buildings in data review practices, for 20-21 a social emotional task force is working on resources for teachers and for programming for students around trauma. Review discipline data by special populations, provide professional development so that staff understand the why behind this practice. Provide professional development in the area of trauma informed instruction, and trauma informed classrooms. 				
Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
7: STUDENT VOICE, CULTURE AND CLIMATE - We consistently seek out ways to solicit students' feedback and experiences. We adjust our organizational culture and climate based on needs (e.g., extracurricular activities, athletics, clubs, LGBTQ+ accommodations).		XX	XXX		
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubs are developed more around staff interests than student interests, limited surveys, limited student leadership opportunities and advisory groups. We occasionally survey students, but not consistently. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We would like to see more student driven clubs; teachers do all the direction. We should hear what their perspective is (right or wrong) and let them lead. 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field does survey students on feedback on extracurricular activities to plan for the future. Winkelman has not previously surveyed students on their interests. Student surveys are conducted, and the data is utilized in various ways depending on the context. It is used to inform planning- for example, Foundations surveys regarding lunch and recess and subsequent planning. 			
Suggestions for Next Steps				
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop regular survey practices for students, consider student leadership opportunities. Elicit ideas from students. Incorporate student voice in the improvement of climate and culture. 			
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for student feedback continuously. Ask the younger parents what types of extracurricular activities would your child enjoy. Sometimes surveying students in their interests. This practice needs to be done more consistently rather than as needed. A process needs to be developed in order to continuously gather student feedback as a means of improvement. Professional development should be conducted to ensure the process is understood and improved as needed. 			
Component	Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
8: EMPLOYMENT & RETAINMENT - We have implemented practices to attract and retain highly qualified, diverse teachers and administrators at our district.	XXXX	X		
Rationale for Rating				
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are more traditional in our hiring practices, have done little to recruit, traditional mentoring program but the focus has not been on retention. The diversity of our student population does not match that of the staff. The district attracts highly qualified teachers and administrators but has had a difficult time retaining them. Team has no information to support on current system 			
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No one looks to find new hires that are bring in the cultural aspect to education. School is open to it, looking for the most qualified people. The turnover in administration does not help culture of school. 			
Suggestions for Next Steps				
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a more robust recruitment plan that includes social media, literature, job fairs, etc. Review salary schedule to see if it supports retention. Having a hiring committee to train staff on the criteria we are looking for in order to make a more inclusive staff. Review recruitment process and implement practices to recruit diverse staff Review recruitment process and implement practices to recruit diverse staff. 			
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be open to diversity. 			

Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
9. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Our district has demonstrated its commitment to equity by offering a continuum of professional development and growth to all staff.		XXXX	X		
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More consistency with offering topics in continuous strands such as inclusion and MTSS, etc., the PD is still "one size fits all" • No equity discussions at PD, mostly at teacher-to-teacher level. • We are conducting an equity audit. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of some of the PD was not geared towards implementing change. There is not much follow through with some of the PD that is presented to staff. 				
Suggestions for Next Steps					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a PD plan that offers more differentiated choice in addition to the PD needed for all. • Provide opportunities to talk at more of a district level about these topics. • Results of audit-follow recommendations. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More quality PD geared towards change and time to implement strategies that are presented. Following up with PD and not overloading all at once. 				
Component		Developing	In Progress	Strong, but structure needed	Robust
10: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AS AGENCY - We have a structure in place to actively seek out and/or sustain communication and engagement with parents/guardians/caretakers on issues of equity.		XXXX	X		
Rationale for Rating					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of communication/different modes, increased translation, communication is not two-way, involvement in parent organization tends to be homogenous, SPED advisory committee established, BPAC was established, for the pandemic we started parent staff advisory group and two parent opportunities for learning in the fall. • There are protocols but not communicated to all groups. There are missing voices when decisions are made. • No evidence of a structure 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do translate documents into many different languages as needed. We offer translators during meetings (conferences, IEP meetings). We do have some staff that are able to translate for families. 				
Suggestions for Next Steps					
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent university cycle, add town halls on specific topics, including equity. • Provide avenues for different groups to have voices. How do we make sure someone who doesn't have access to what their rights are get that access and know their voice is valued? • No evidence of a structure. 				
In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do translate documents into many different languages as needed. We offer translators during meetings (conferences, IEP meetings). We do have some staff that are able to translate for families. 				

Section 2

QUANTITATIVE DATA

All submitted data has been analyzed with an equity approach. A table and/or chart of all data is included in this report. Quantitative data that revealed inequities contributed to the audit findings. Data that did not show inequities is listed below the table.

The table below is an index of quantitative data submitted.

Index of Quantitative Data Submitted	
Table/Chart 2.1 – 2.2	Student count by race/ethnicity ⁵ Student count by special populations ⁶
Table/Chart 2.3 – 2.4	Student demographic by IEP
Table/Chart 2.5 – 2.6	Student demographic in ELA ⁷ and Math advanced learning programming
Table/Chart 2.7 - 2.8	Student demographic in MTSS ⁸
Table/Chart 2.9 – 2.12	Student demographic by discipline
Table/Chart 2.13 – 2.18	Student demographic in MAP ⁹ benchmark assessment
Table/Chart 2.19 – 2.24	Student demographic of achievement in standardized assessment
Table/Chart 2.25 – 2.26	Student demographic by absenteeism
Table/Chart 2.27	Demographic of languages spoken by students
Table/Chart 2.28 – 2.29	Demographic of Education Foundation members
Table/Chart 2.30 – 2.31	Demographic of Board of Education members

- Table/Chart 2.1 & 2.3: Student demographics
- Table/Chart 2.9-2.12: Student discipline data
- Table/Chart 2.17 & 2.18: Student percent that met or exceeded growth in ELA and MATH on MAP by intersectionality race/ethnicity and special populations
- Table/Chart 2.21 & 2.24: Student percent that met or exceeded growth in PARCC by ELA and MATH by intersectionality

⁵ Race/ethnicity includes students that identify as Asian, African American, or Black/African American/African American, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx, Latino/a/x, Pacific Islander, Two or More races, White or Caucasian. None of the data included American Indian as there was no self-reporting identity. For the purpose of this report and/or in alignment with Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the following racial categories were used; Asian for Asian or Pacific Islander, Black/African American for African American or Black, Hispanic/Latinx for Hispanic or Latina/o, and White for White/Caucasian.

⁶ Special populations refer to English Language Learners (ELL), Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) and Students with Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

⁷ ELA = English Language Arts

⁸ MTSS = Multi-Tiered System of Supports

⁹ MAP = Measure of Academic Progress is a districtwide benchmark assessment.

Table 2.1: Student demographic count by race/ethnicity

Year	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latinx	Two or More	White	Total
2015-16	304	27	116	27	420	894
2016-17	314	26	96	44	392	872
2017-18	318	18	97	62	388	883
2018-19	320	21	95	72	360	868
2019-20	323	20	87	80	359	869

Chart 2.1: Student demographic percent by race/ethnicity

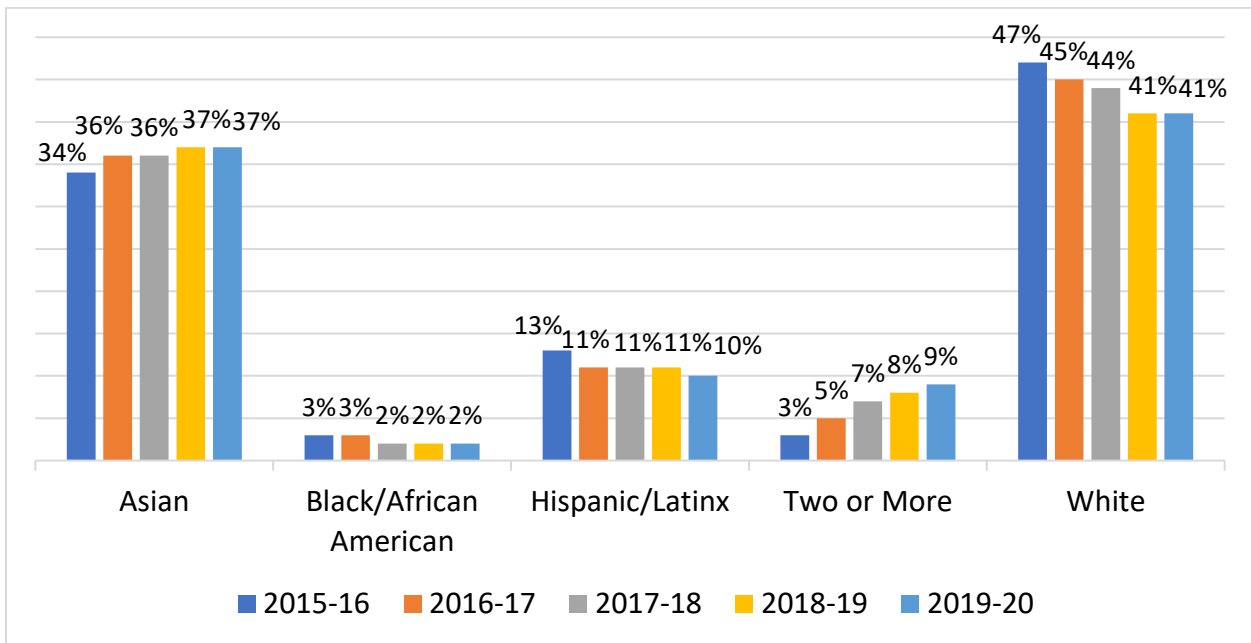
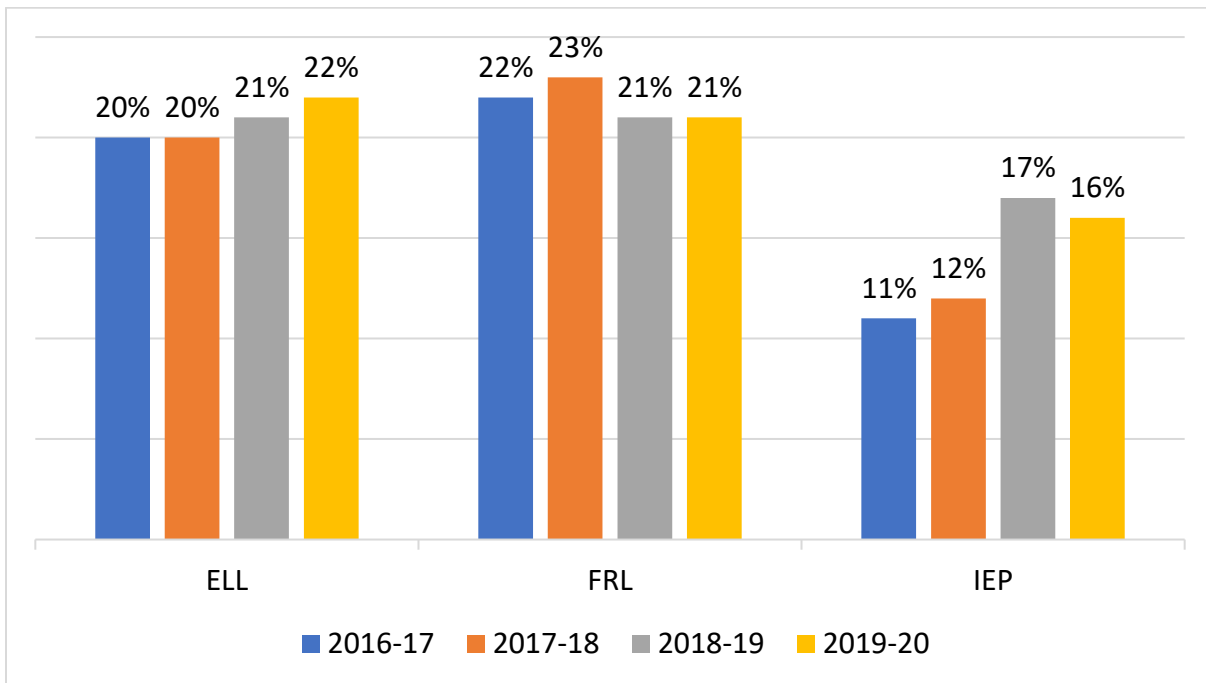


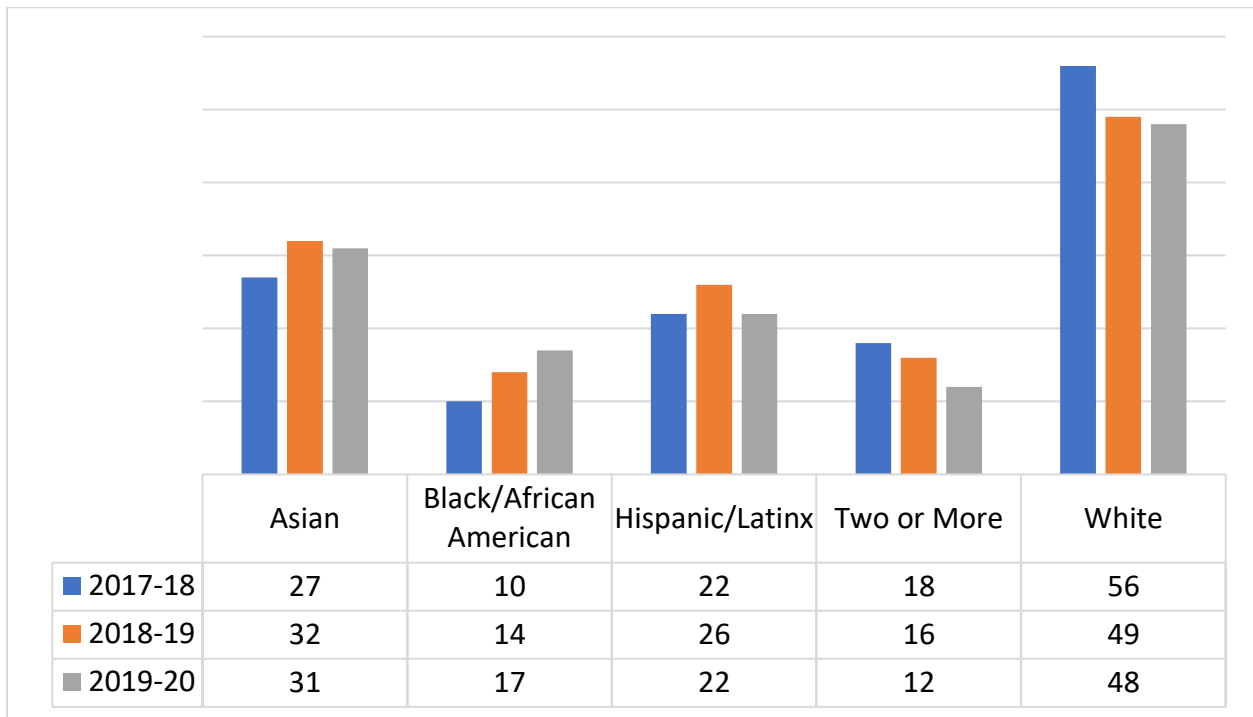
Table 2.2: Student demographic count by special populations

Year	ELL		FRL		IEP	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
2016-17	174	698	192	680	92	780
2017-18	175	708	200	683	105	778
2018-19	181	687	179	689	144	724
2019-20	190	679	183	686	137	732

Chart 2.2: Student demographic percent by special populations



Table/Chart 2.3: Student count of IEP by race/ethnicity



Table/Chart 2.4: Student count of IEP by gender

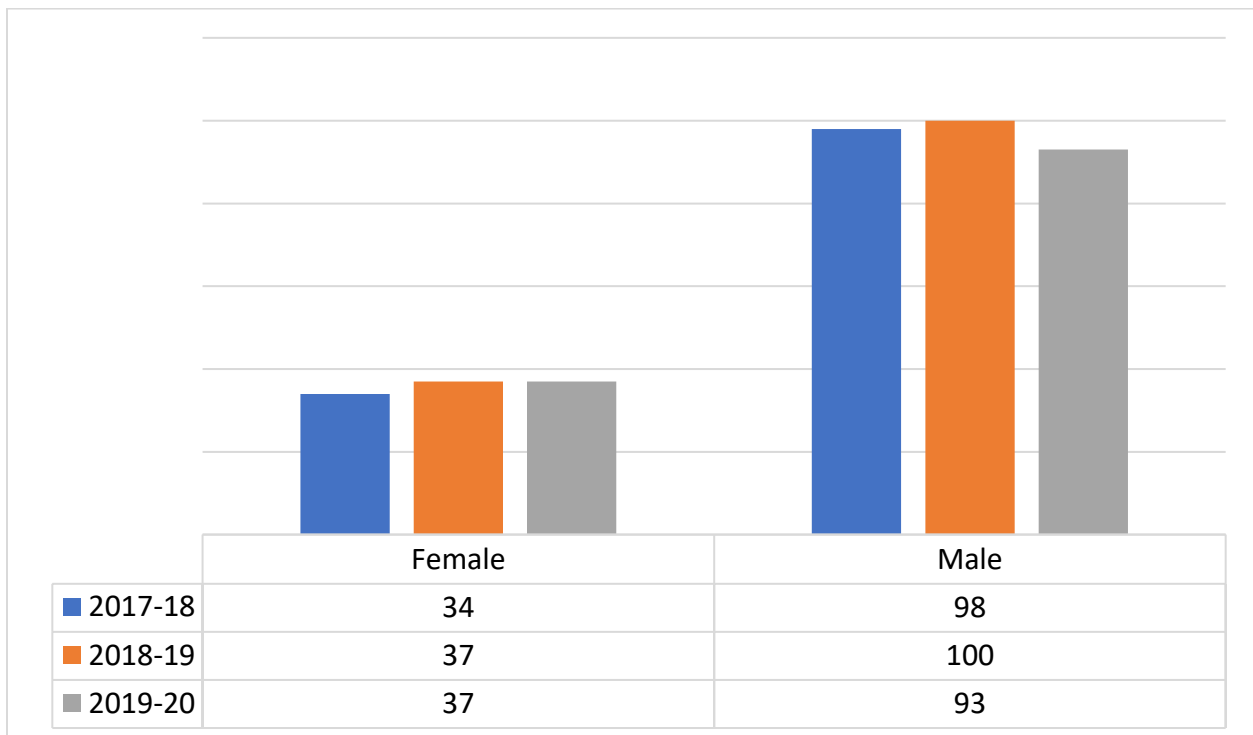
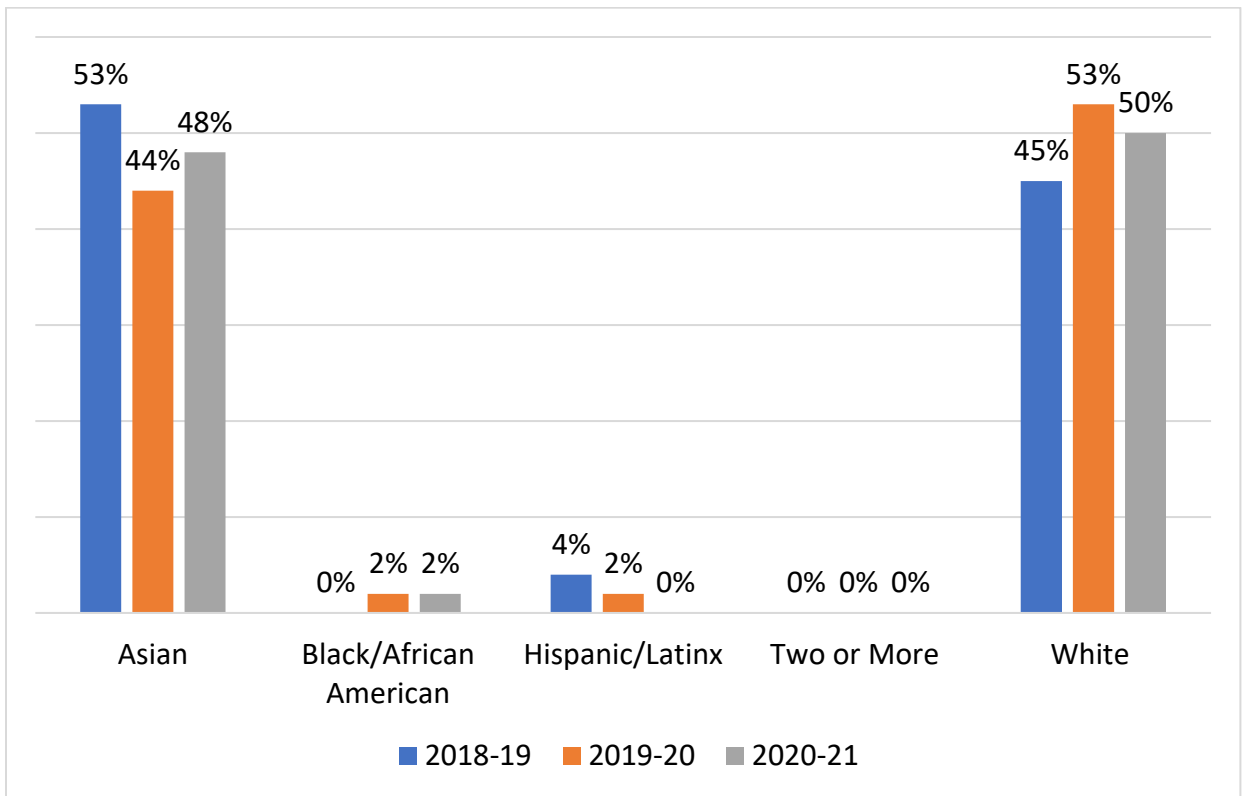


Table 2.5: Student count in ELA¹⁰ advanced learning program by race/ethnicity

Year	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latinx	Two or More	White	Total
2018-19	29	0	2	0	25	56
2019-20	28	1	1	0	34	64
2020-21	19	1	0	0	20	40

Chart 2.5: Student percent in ELA advanced learning program by race/ethnicity

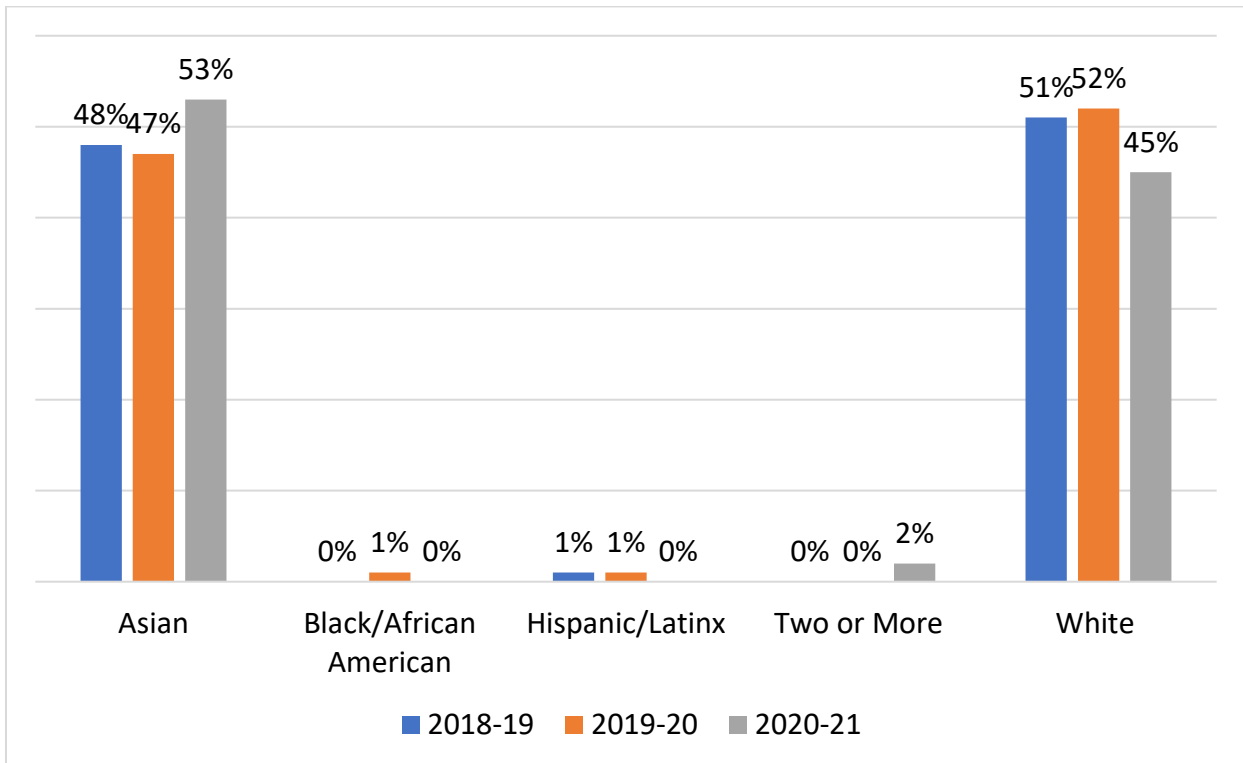


¹⁰ ELA = English Language Arts

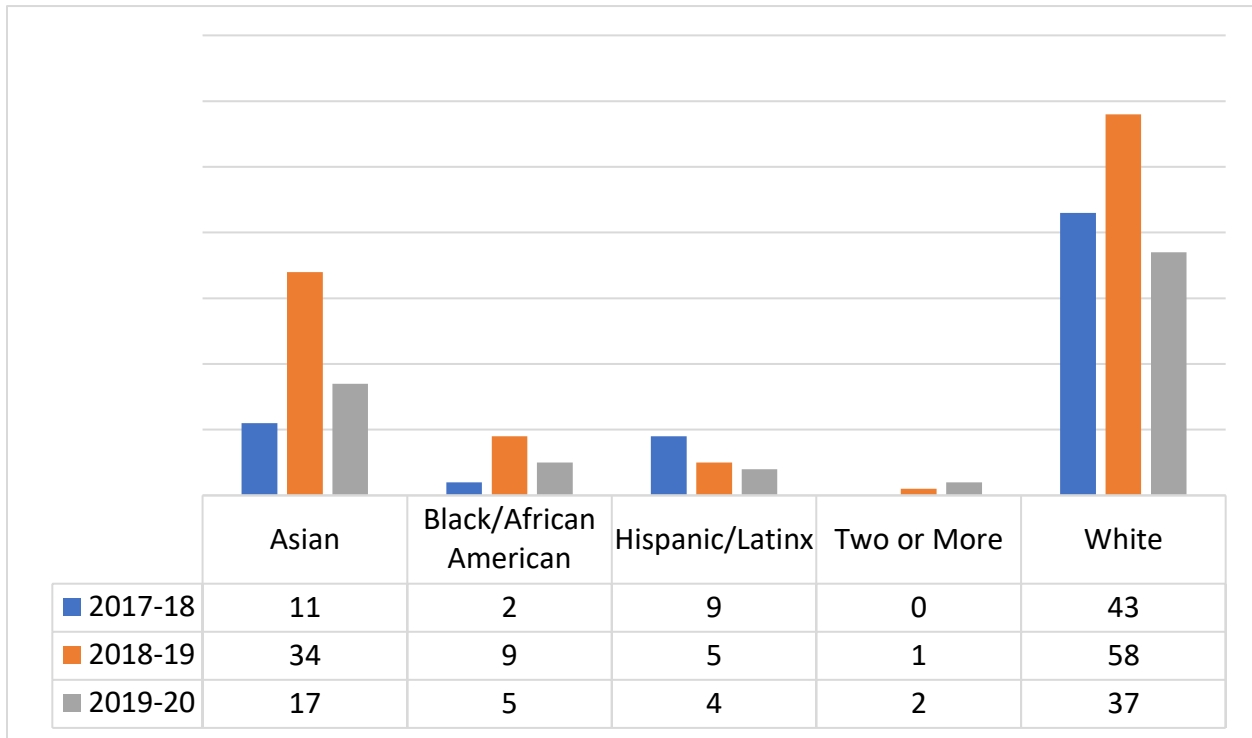
Table 2.6: Student count in MATH advanced learning program by race/ethnicity

Year	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latinx	Two or More	White	Total
2018-19	92	0	1	0	97	190
2019-20	84	1	1	0	94	180
2020-21	56	0	0	2	48	106

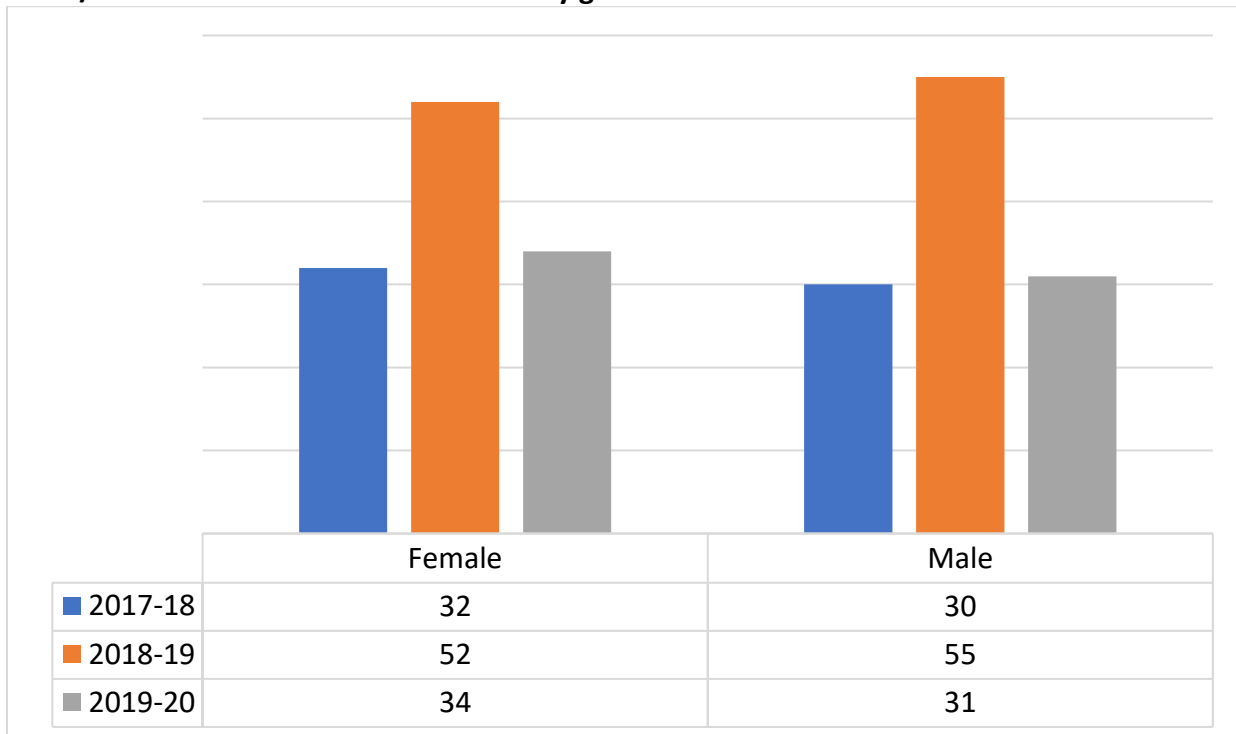
Chart 2.6: Student percent in MATH advanced learning program by race/ethnicity



Table/Chart 2.7: Student count in MTSS¹¹ by race/ethnicity

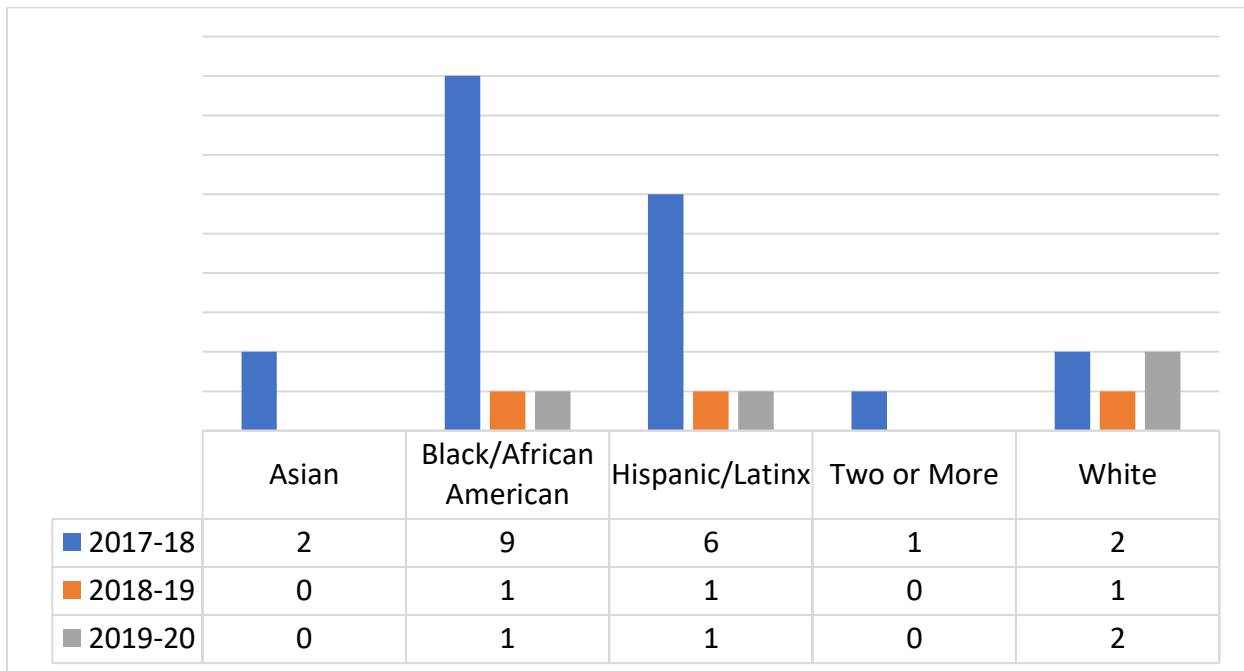


Table/Chart 2.8: Student count in MTSS by gender

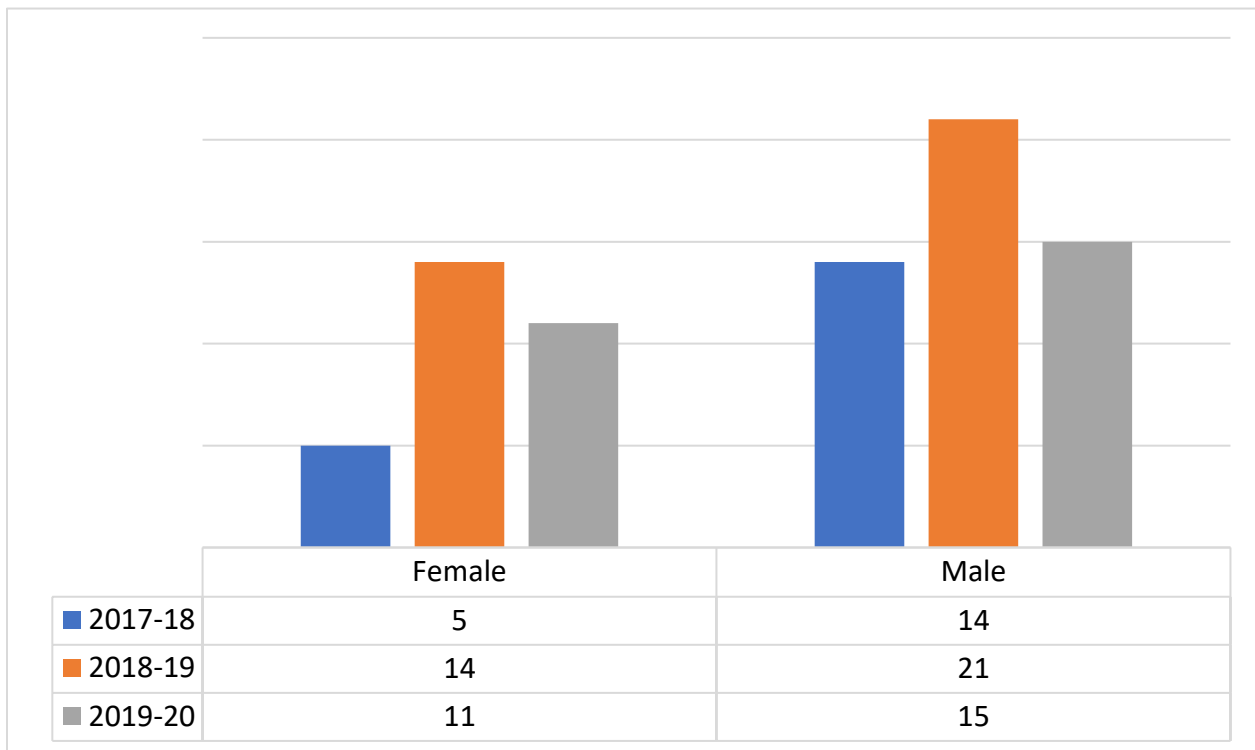


¹¹ MTSS = Multi-Tiered System of Supports

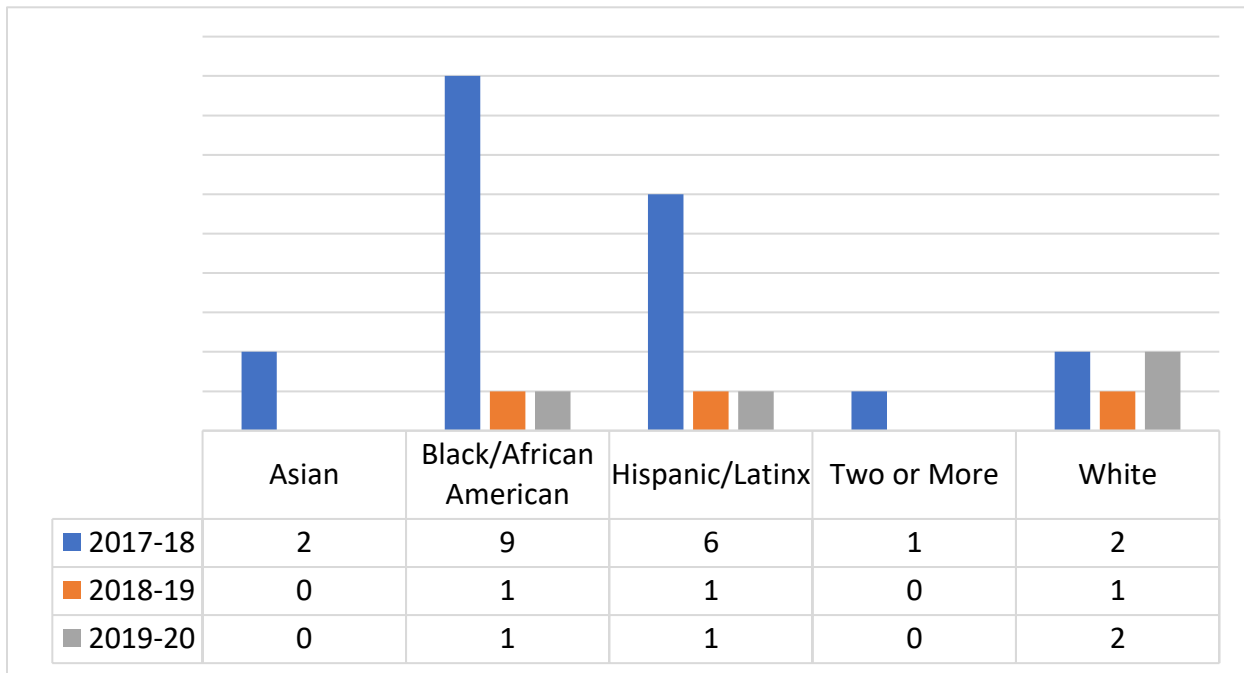
Table/Chart 2.9: Student count of in-school exclusion by race/ethnicity



Table/Chart 2.10: Student count of in-school exclusion by gender



Table/Chart 2.11: Student count of out-of-school suspension (OSS) by race/ethnicity



Table/Chart 2.12: Student count of OSS by gender

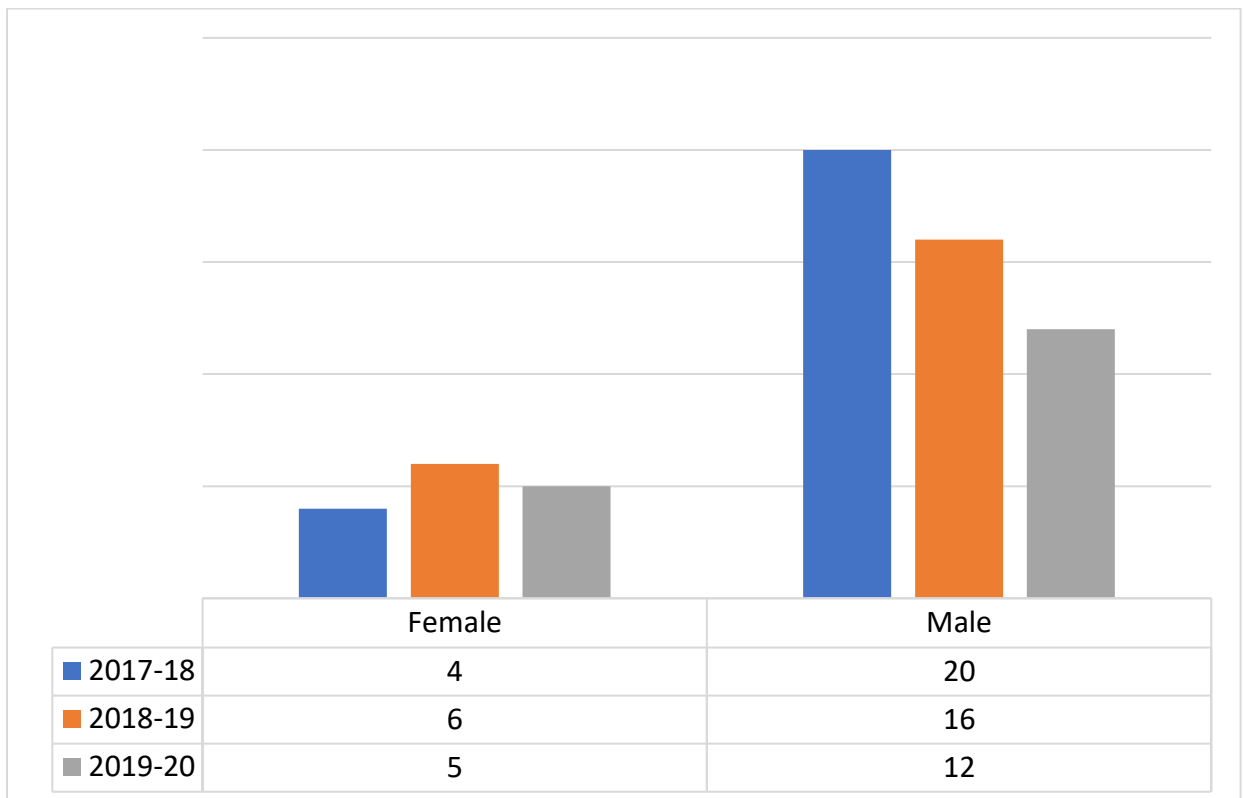
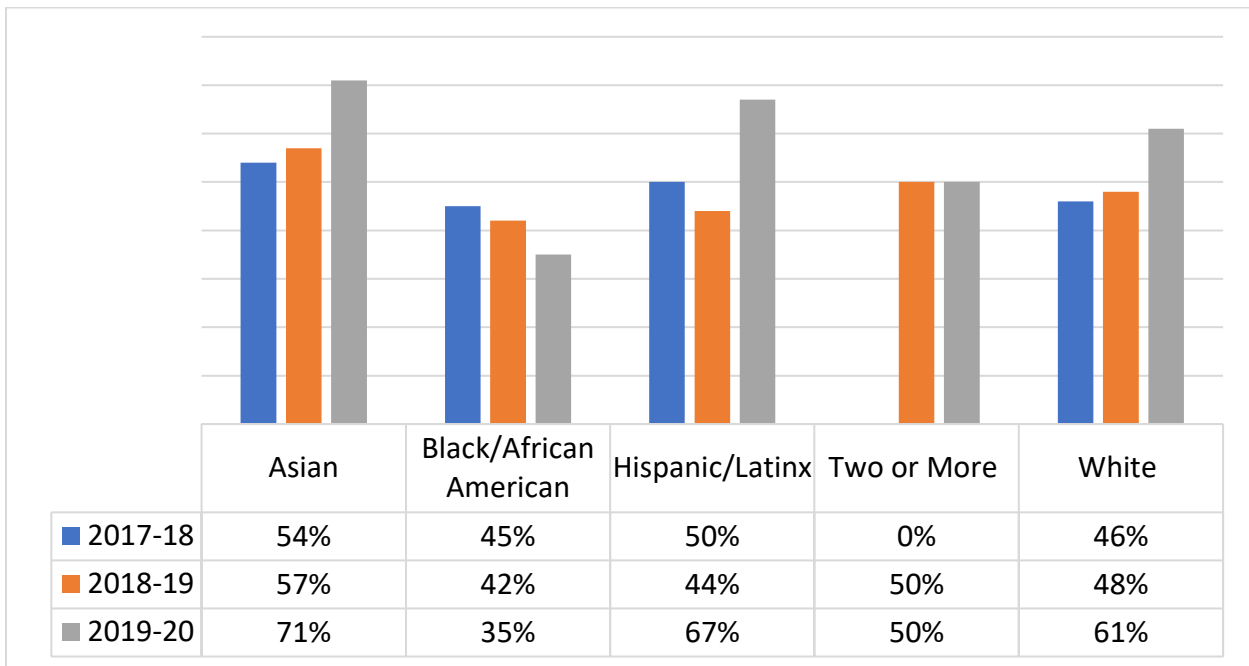


Table 2.13: Student count that met or exceeded growth in ELA on MAP¹² by race/ethnicity

Year	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latinx	Two or More	White
2018-19	171/241	6/17	16/24	1/2	177/292
2019-20	128/226	8/19	14/32	1/2	133/277
2020-21	124/230	9/20	21/32	0/1	140/307

Chart 2.13: Student percent that met or exceeded growth in ELA on MAP by race/ethnicity



¹² MAP = Measure of Academic Progress is a districtwide benchmark assessment. Percent aligns with annual winter growth.

Table 2.14: Student count that met or exceeded growth in ELA on MAP by special populations

Year	ELL		FRL		IEP	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
2017-18	38/77	275/501	70/151	243/427	17/50	296/528
2018-19	39/81	243/477	69/132	213/426	29/56	253/502
2019-20	44/85	264/514	65/150	243/449	26/52	282/537

Chart 2.14: Student percent that met or exceeded growth in ELA on MAP by special populations

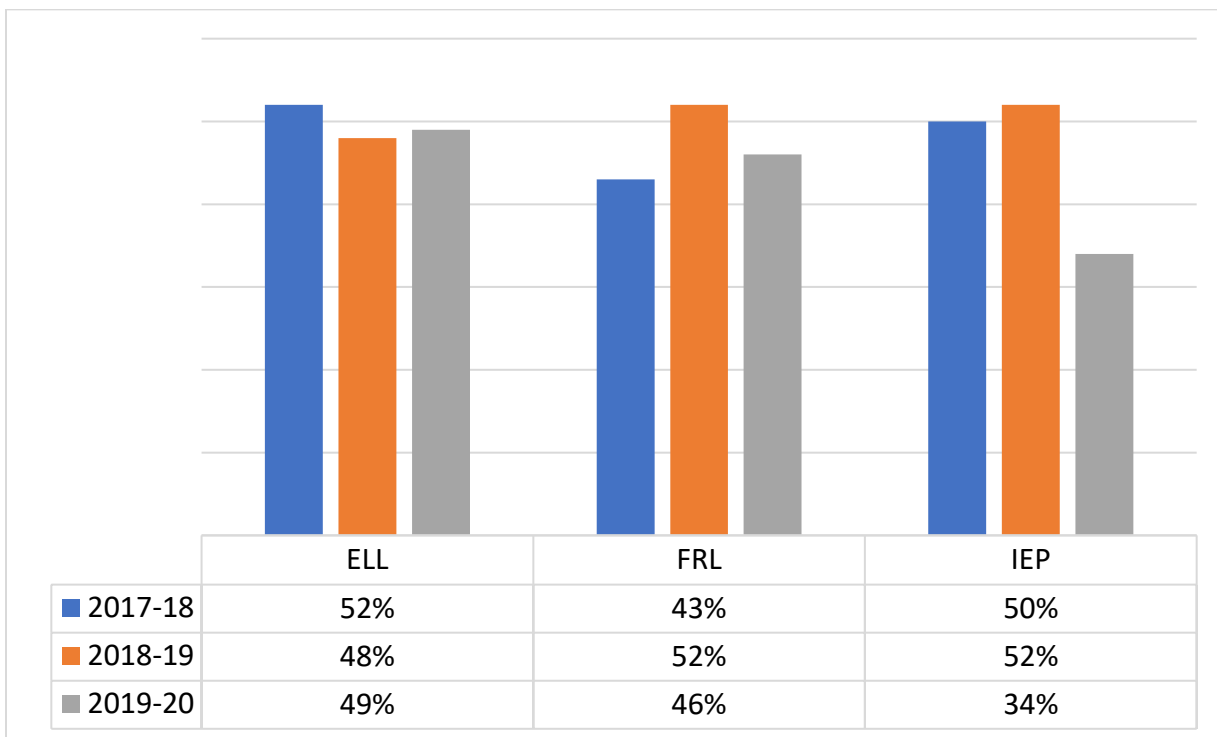


Table 2.15: Student count that met or exceeded growth in MATH on MAP by race/ethnicity

Year	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latinx	Two or More	White
2018-19	171/241	6/17	16/24	1/2	177/292
2019-20	128/226	8/19	14/32	1/2	133/277
2020-21	124/230	9/20	21/42	0/1	140/307

Chart 2.15: Student percent that met or exceeded growth in MATH on MAP by race/ethnicity

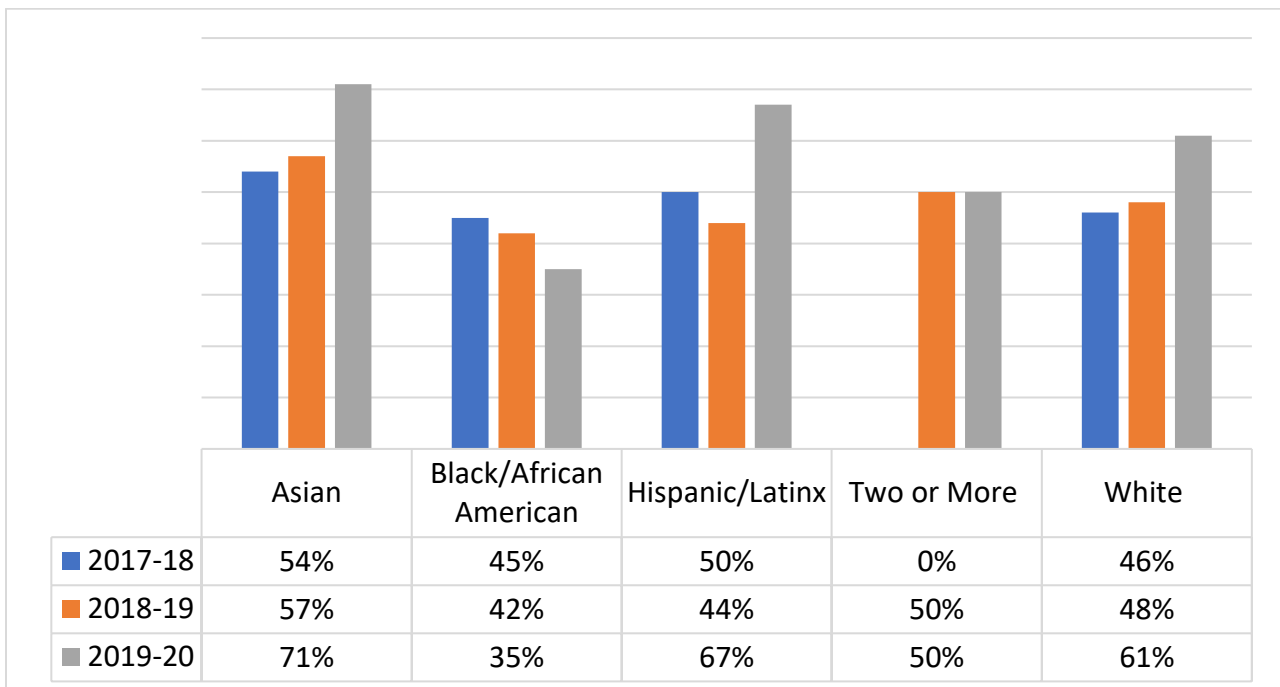
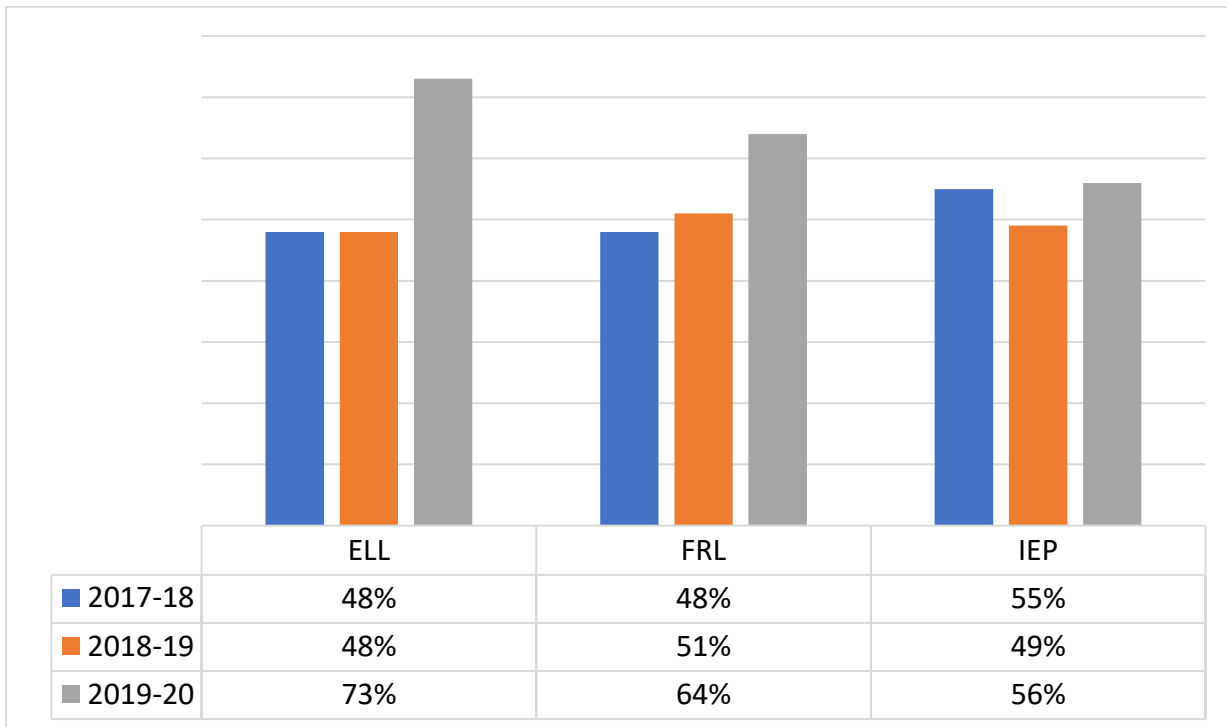


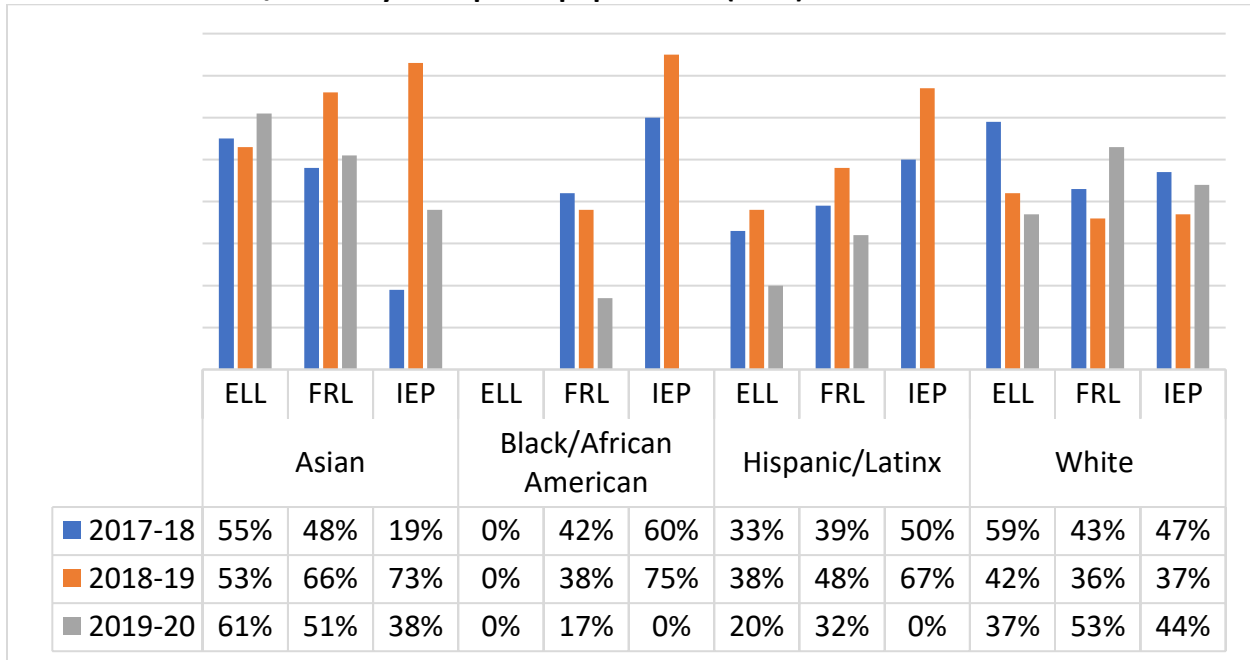
Table 2.16: Student count that met or exceeded growth in MATH on MAP by special populations

Year	ELL		FRL		IEP	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
2017-18	56/77	317/502	96/151	277/428	28/50	345/529
2018-19	39/81	245/477	67/132	217/426	28/57	256/501
2019-20	41/86	255/517	73/151	223/452	35/64	261/539

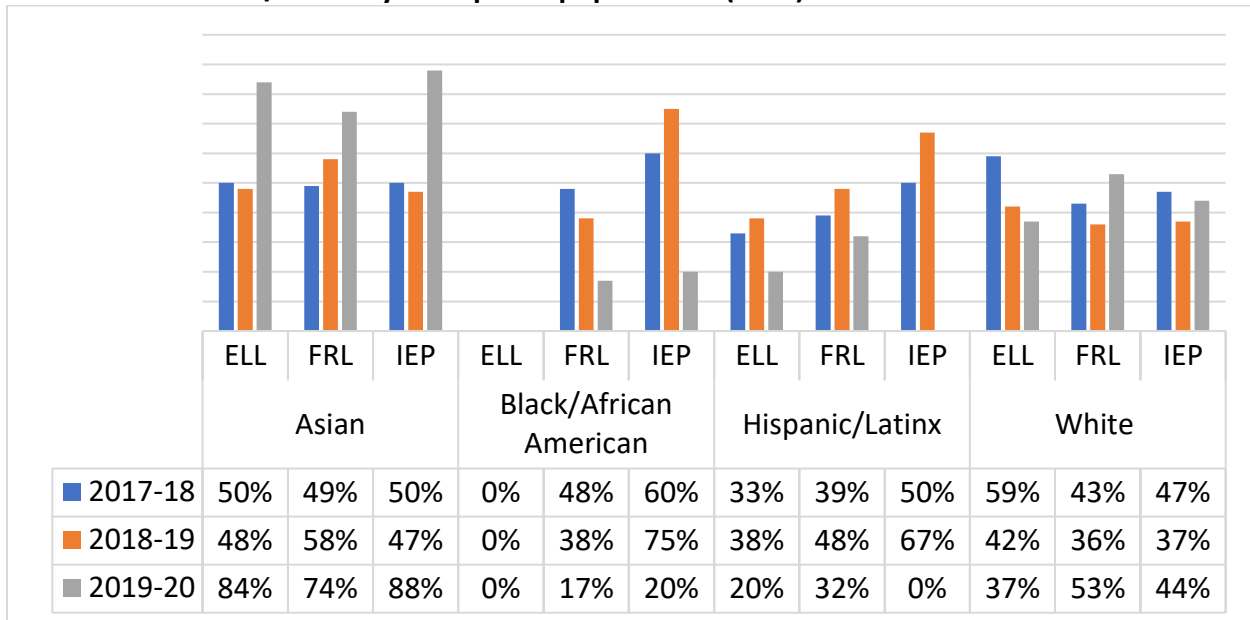
Chart 2.16: Student percent that met or exceeded growth in MATH on MAP by special populations



Table/Chart 2.17: Student percent that met or exceeded growth in ELA on MAP by the intersection of race/ethnicity and special populations (0%¹³)



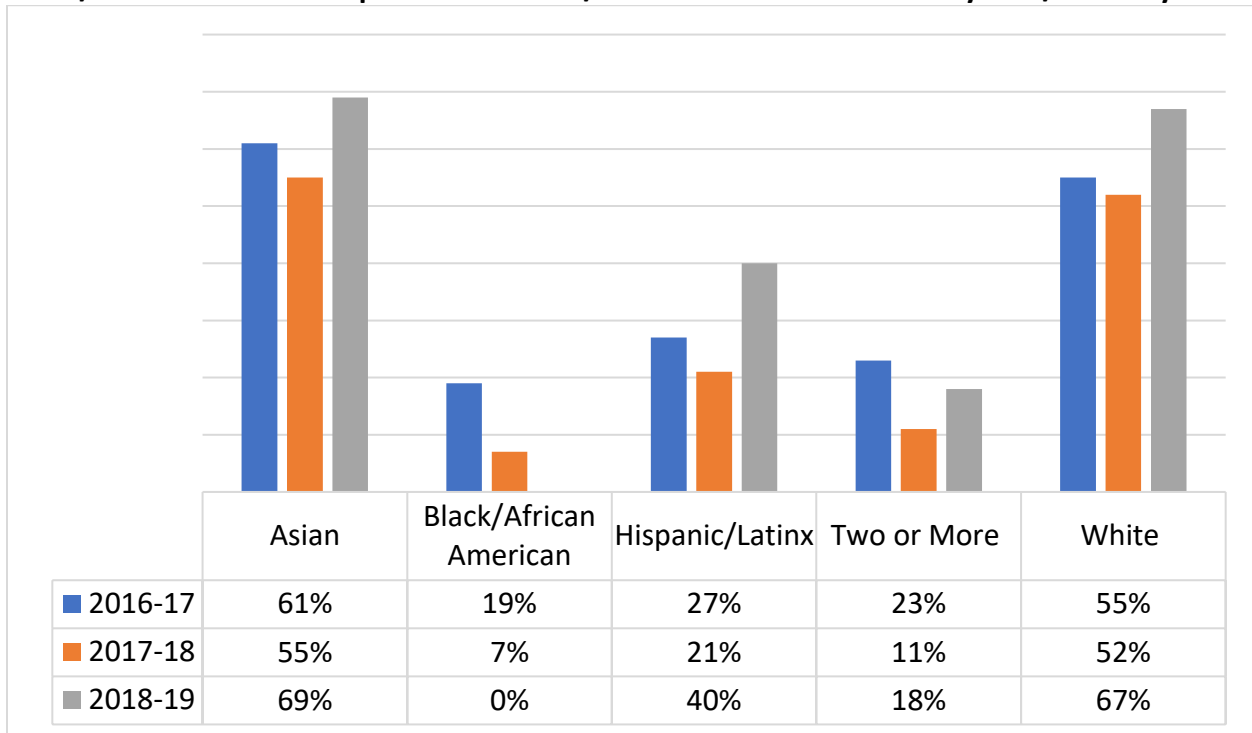
Table/Chart 2.18: Student percent that met or exceeded growth in MATH on MAP by the intersection of race/ethnicity and special populations (0%¹⁴)



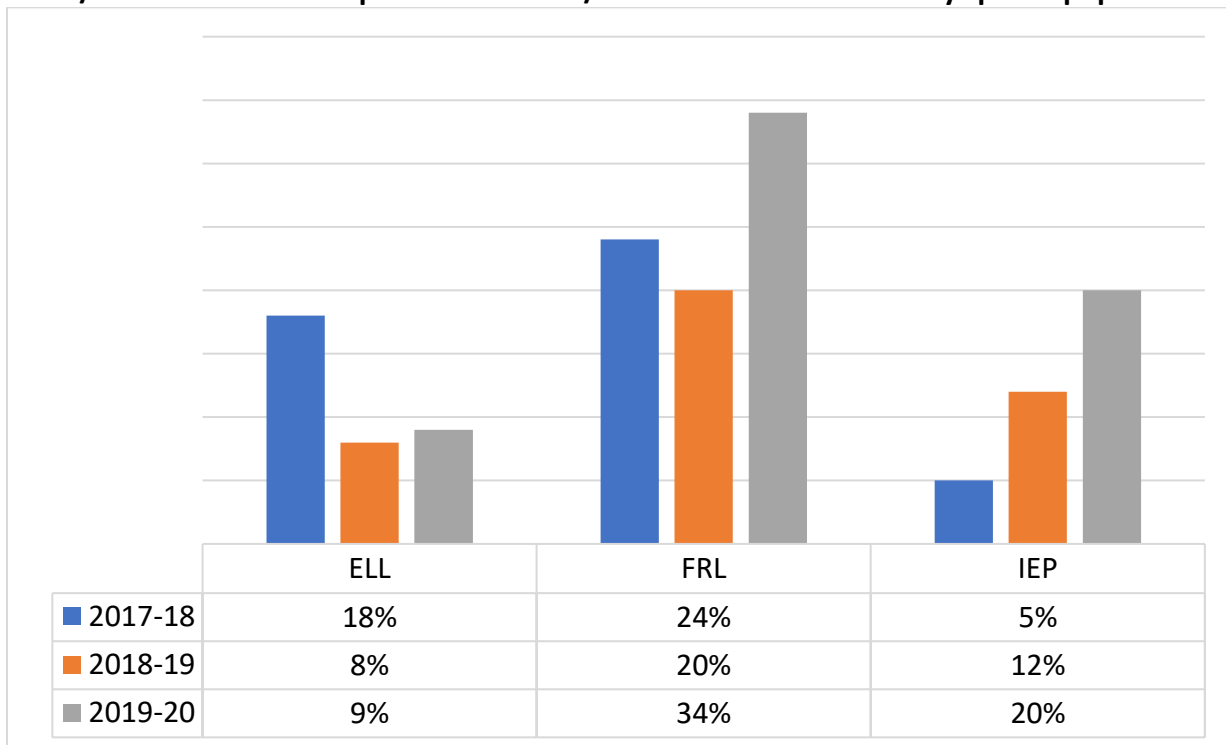
¹³ 0% signifies none reported in data set

¹⁴ 0% signifies none reported in data set

Table/Chart 2.19: Student percent that met/exceeded on PARCC ELA¹⁵ by race/ethnicity

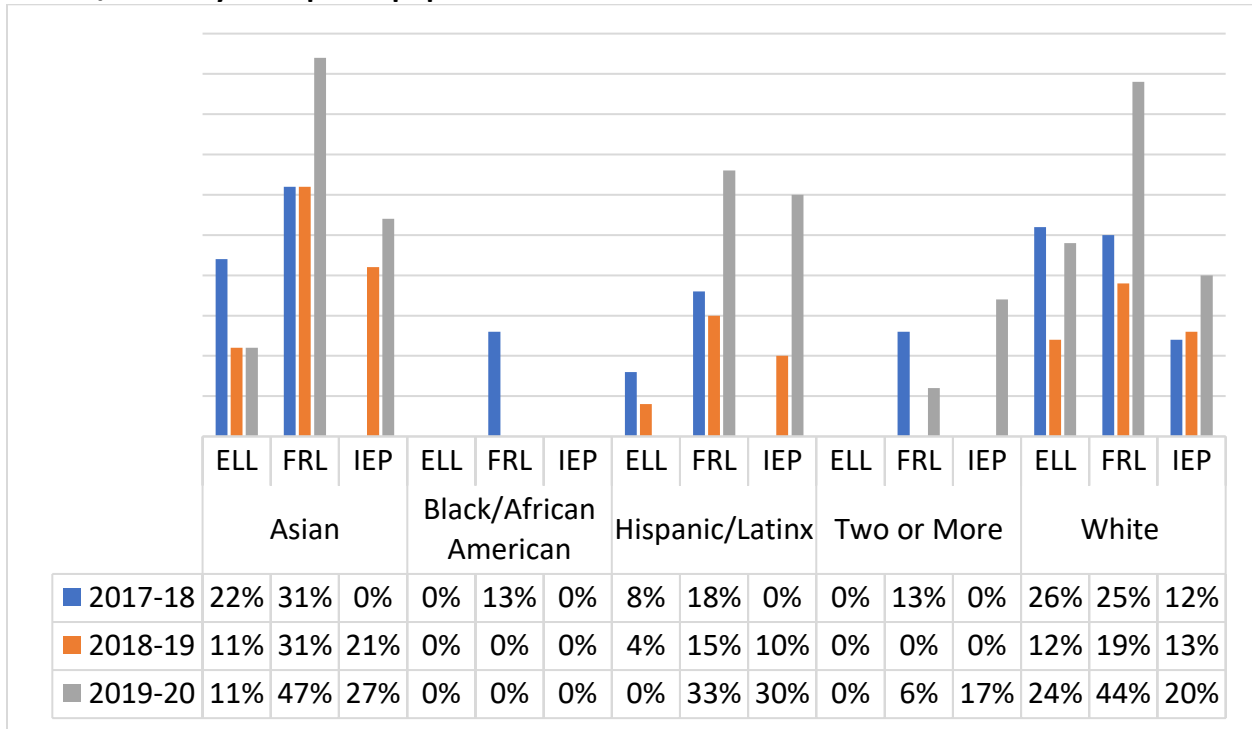


Table/Chart 2.20: Student percent that met/exceeded on PARCC ELA by special populations

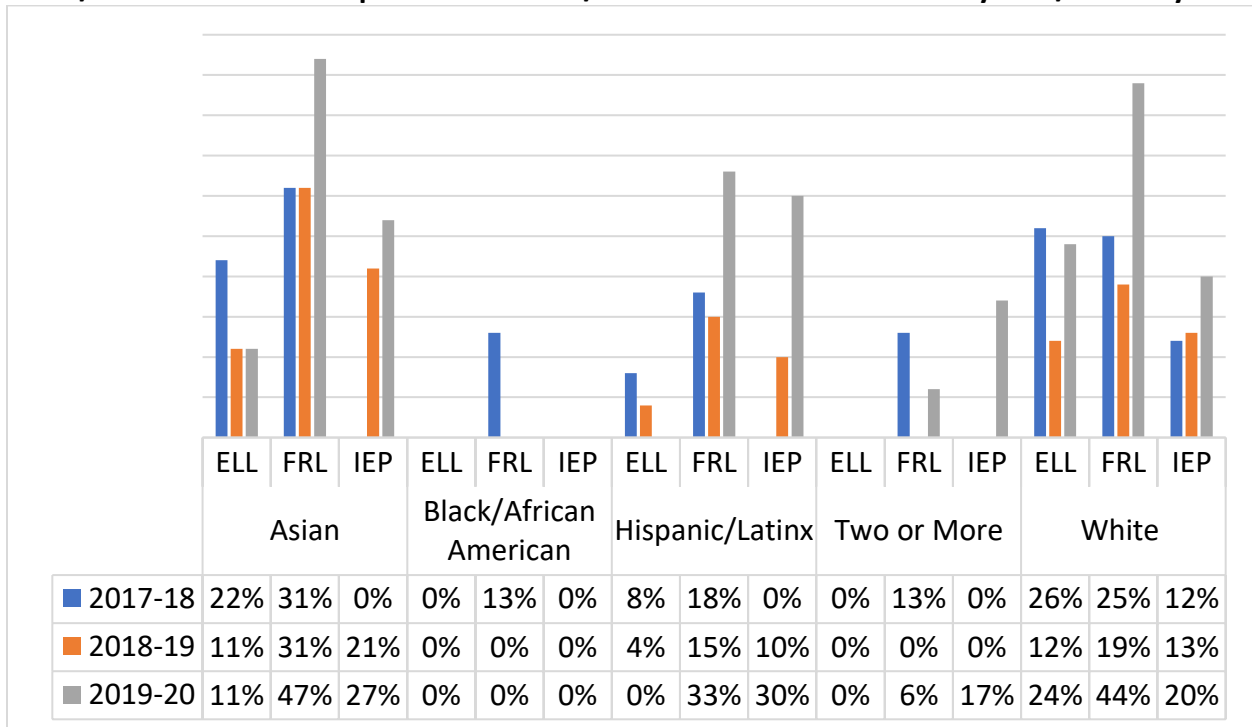


¹⁵ PARCC = Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. Data set reflects students who earned a 4 (met) or 5 (exceeded) on this standardized assessment for combined grades of 3-8.

Table/Chart 2.21: Student percent that met/exceeded on PARCC ELA by the intersectionality of race/ethnicity and special populations¹⁶

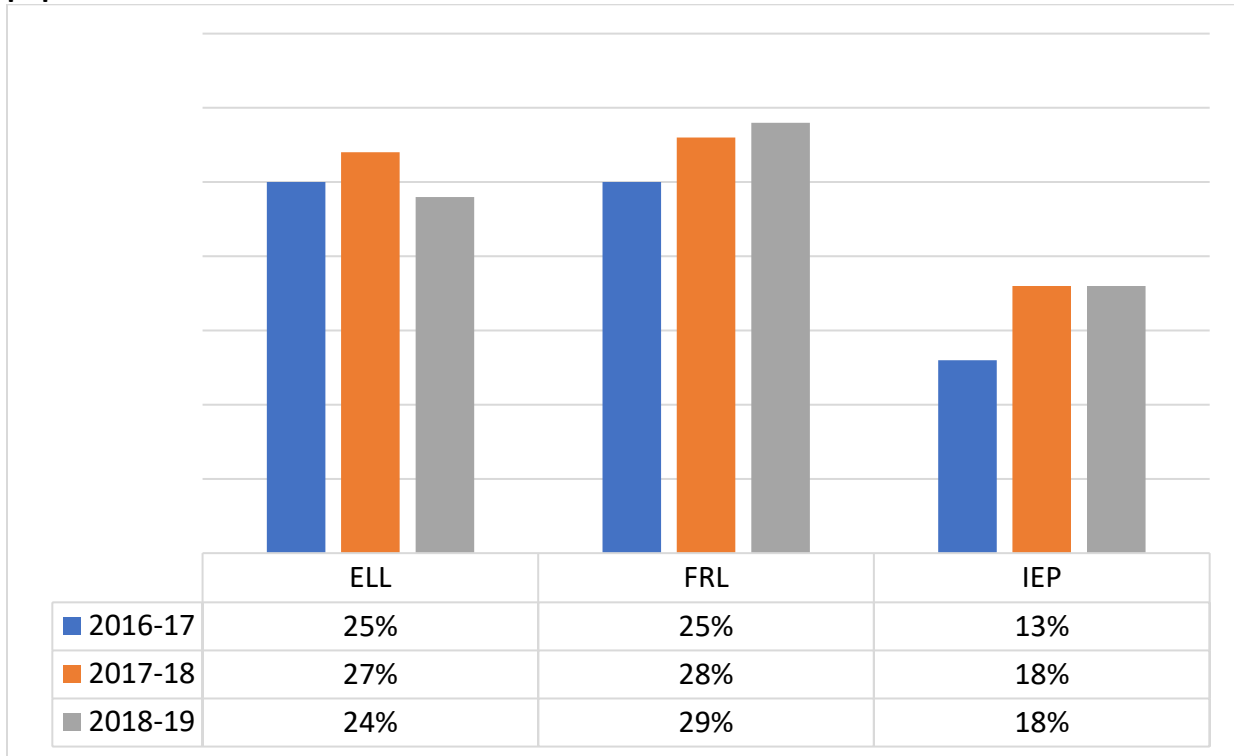


Table/Chart 2.22: Student percent that met/exceeded on PARCC MATH by race/ethnicity

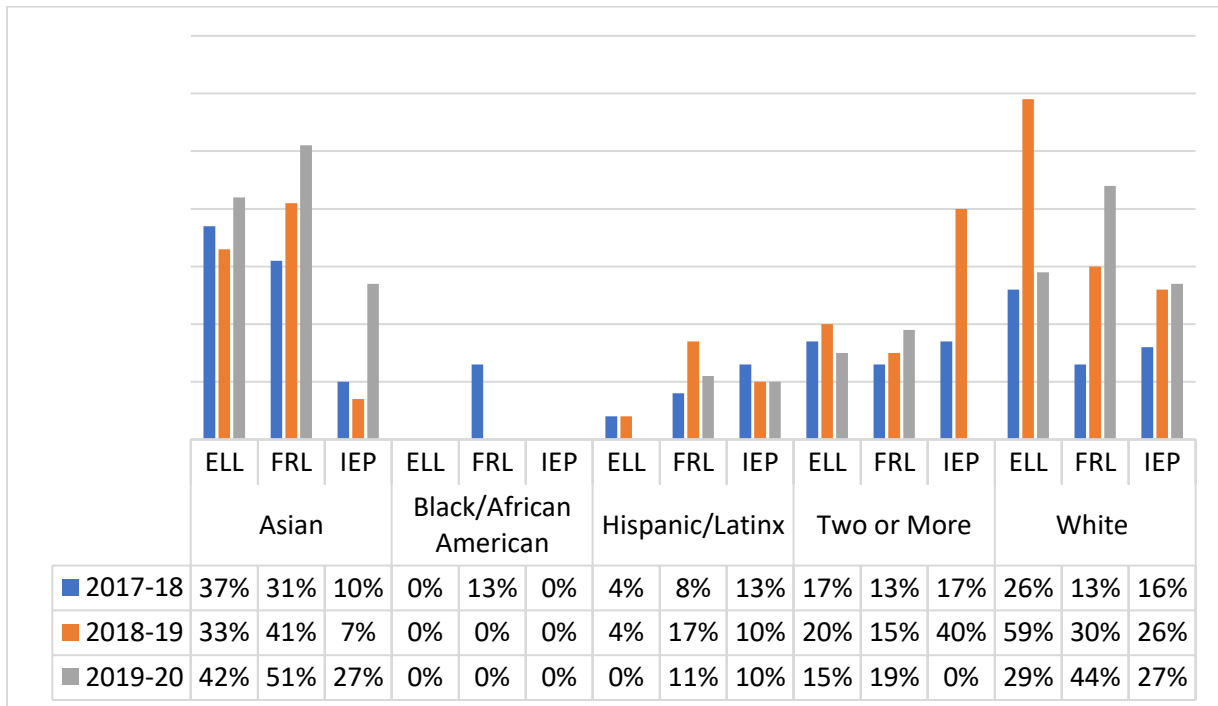


¹⁶ 0% signifies none reported in data set

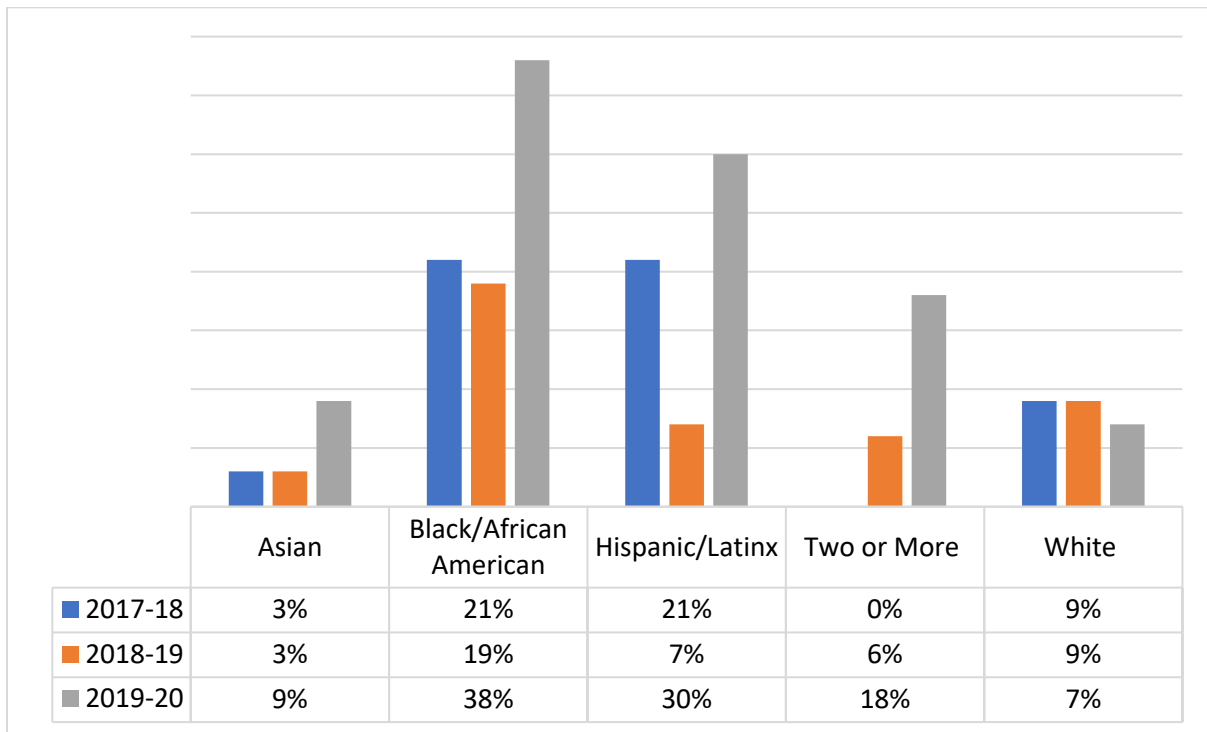
Table/Chart 2.23: Student percent that met/exceeded on PARCC MATH by special populations



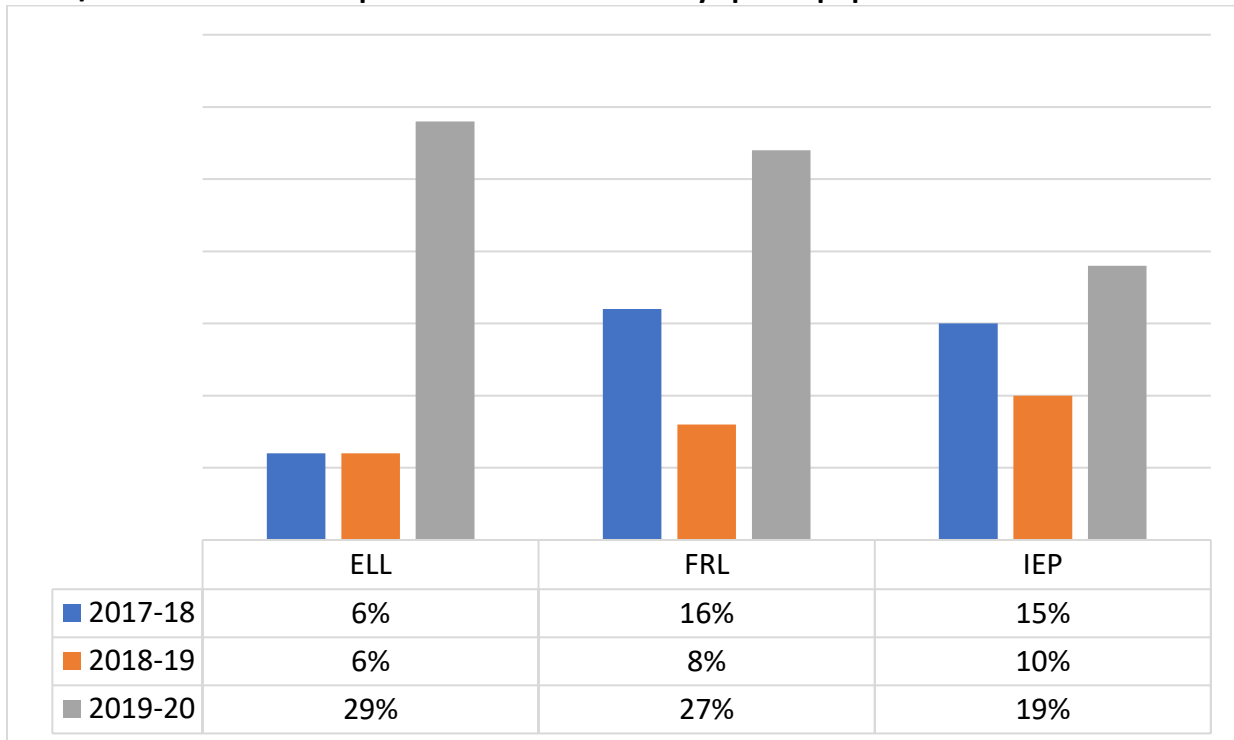
Table/Chart 2.24: Student percent that met/exceeded on PARCC MATH by the intersectionality of race/ethnicity and special populations



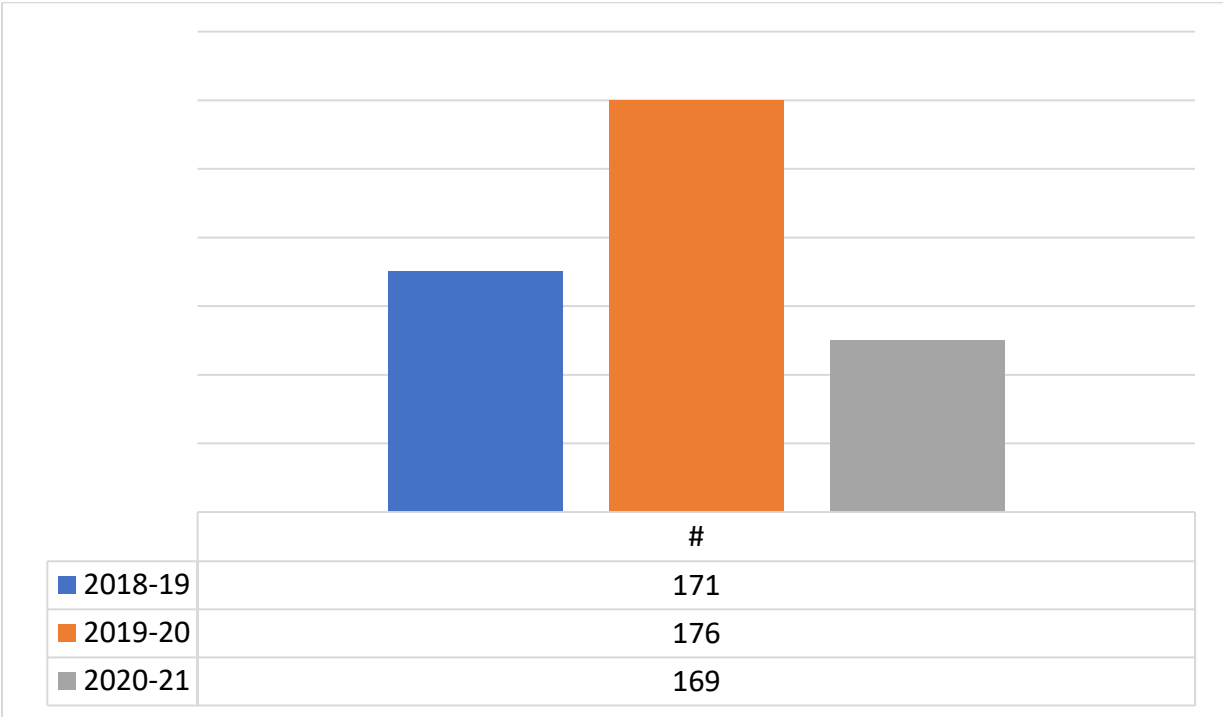
Table/Chart 2.25: Student percent of absenteeism by race/ethnicity



Table/Chart 2.26: Student percent of absenteeism by special populations

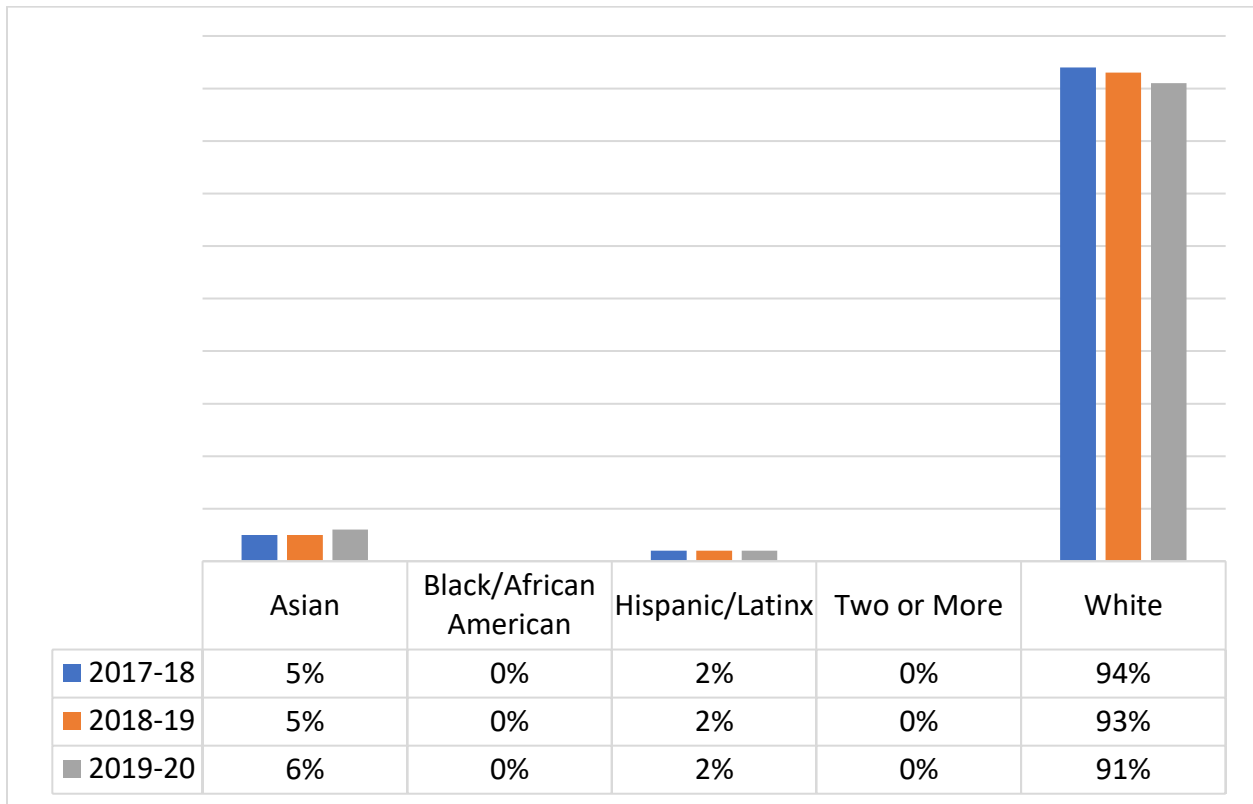


Table/Chart 2.27: The number of languages¹⁷ spoken by students other than English

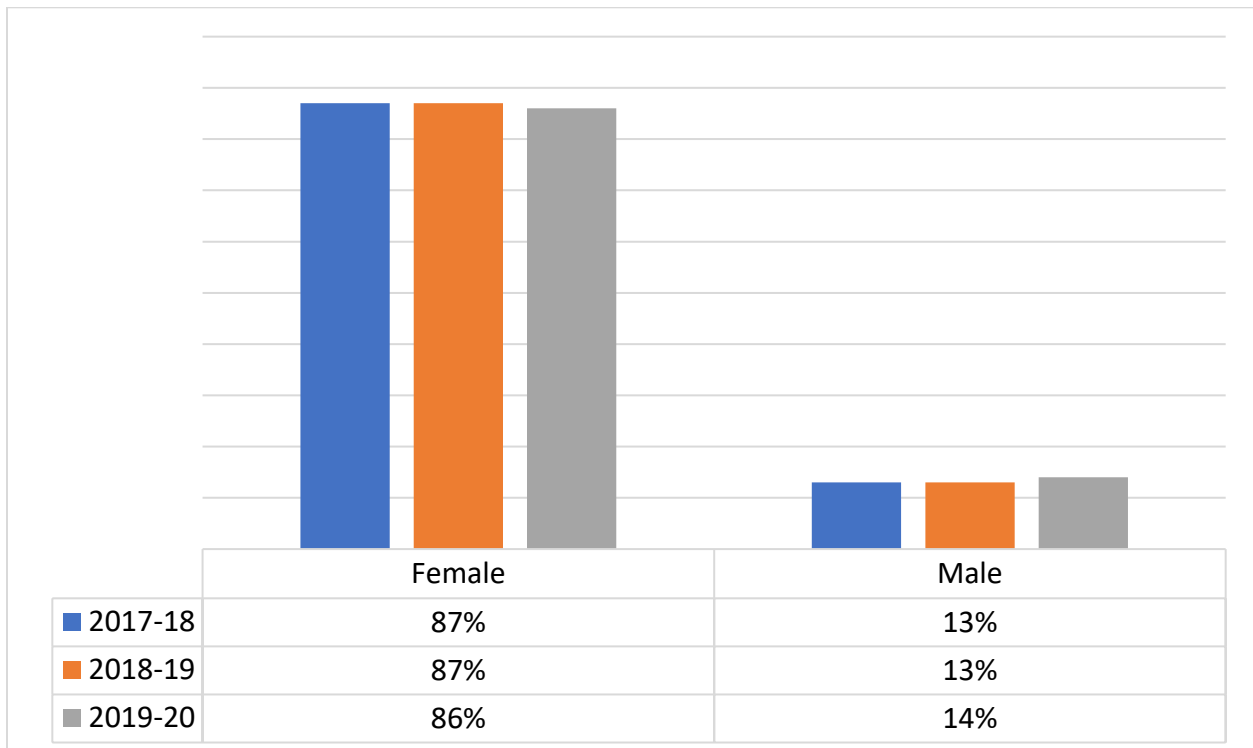


¹⁷ The number does not include native English speakers

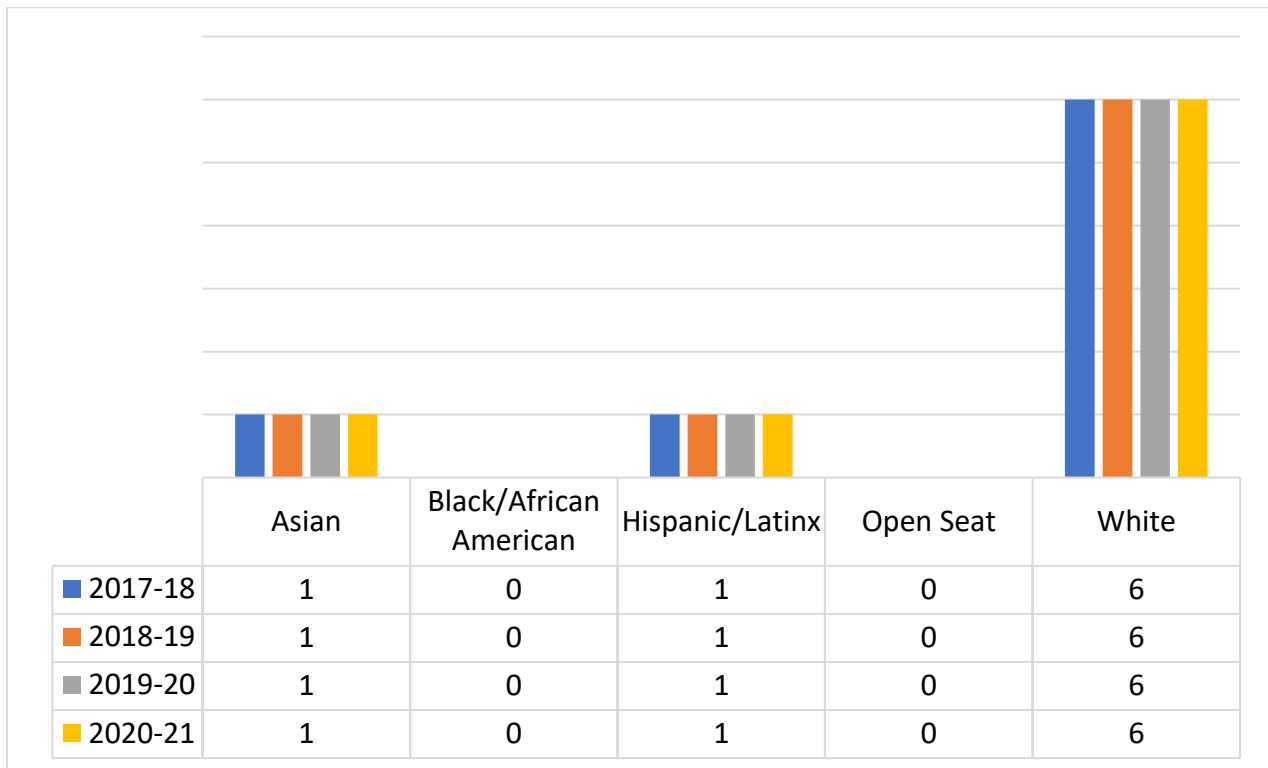
Table/Chart 2.28: Teacher and administrator demographic percent by race/ethnicity



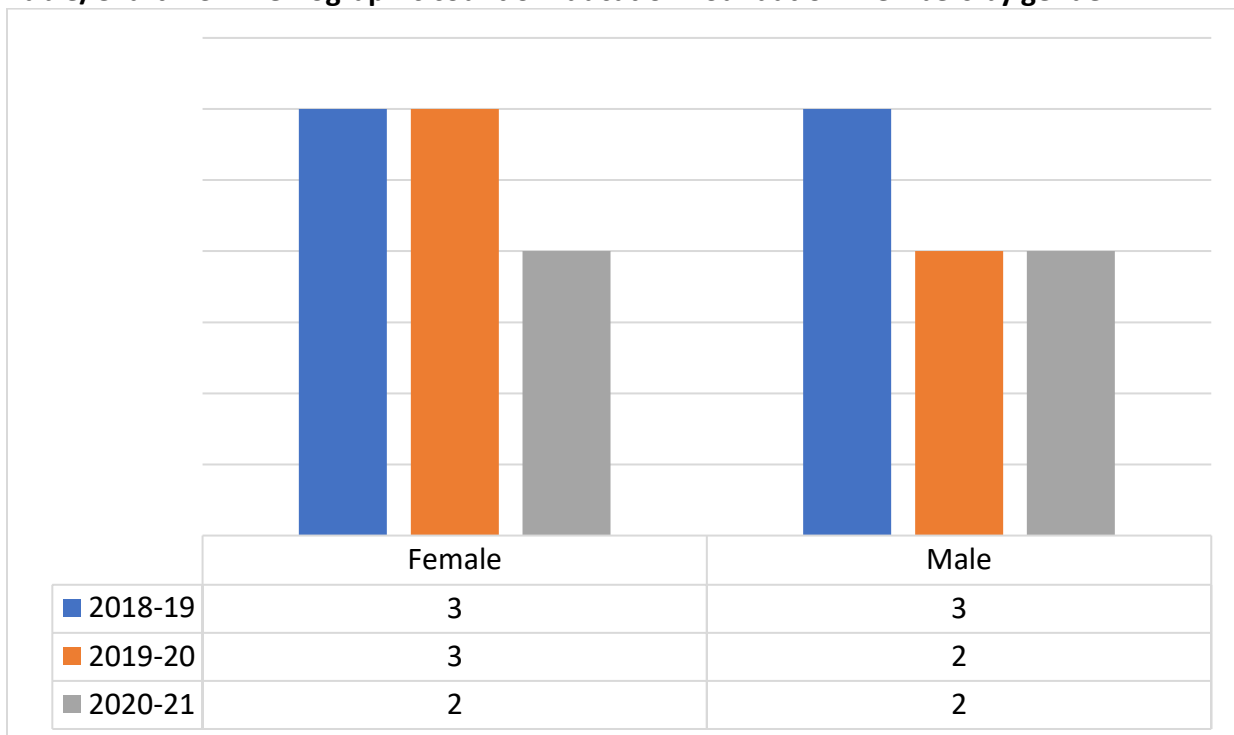
Table/Chart 2.29: Teacher and administrator demographic percent by gender



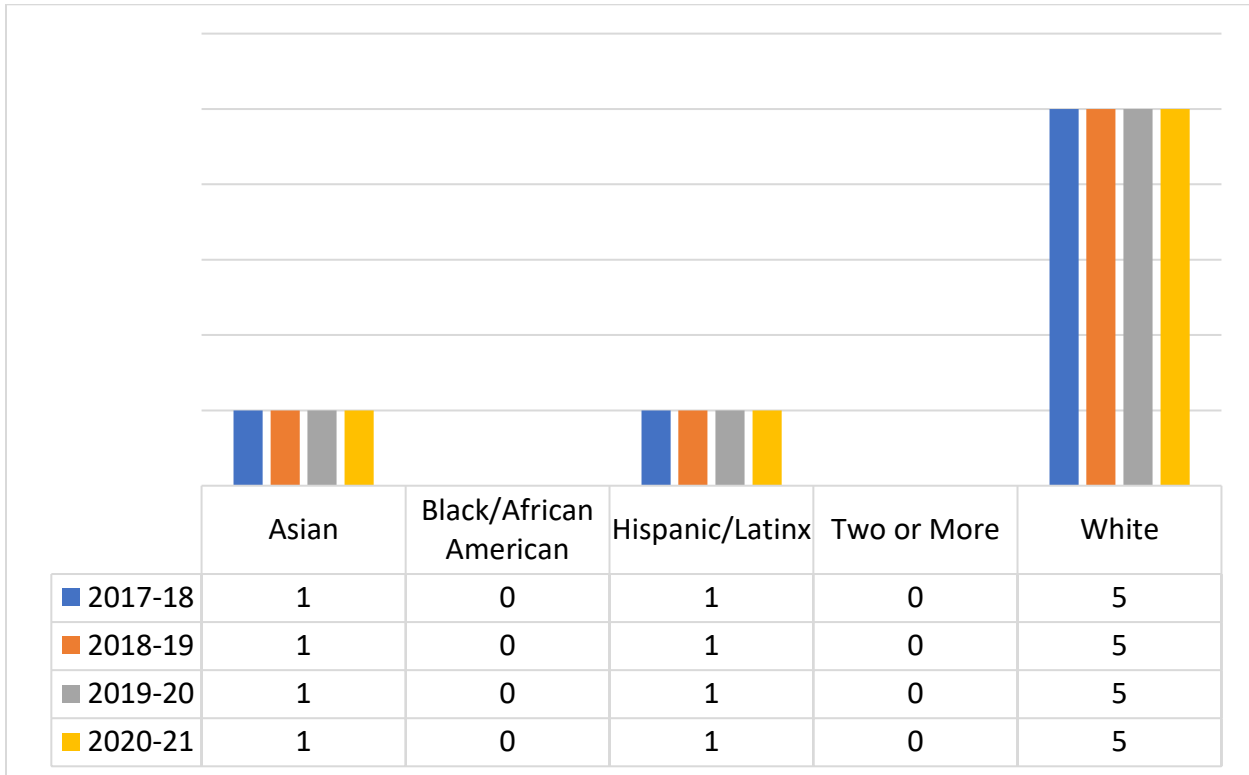
Table/Chart 2.30: Demographic count of Education Foundation members by race/ethnicity



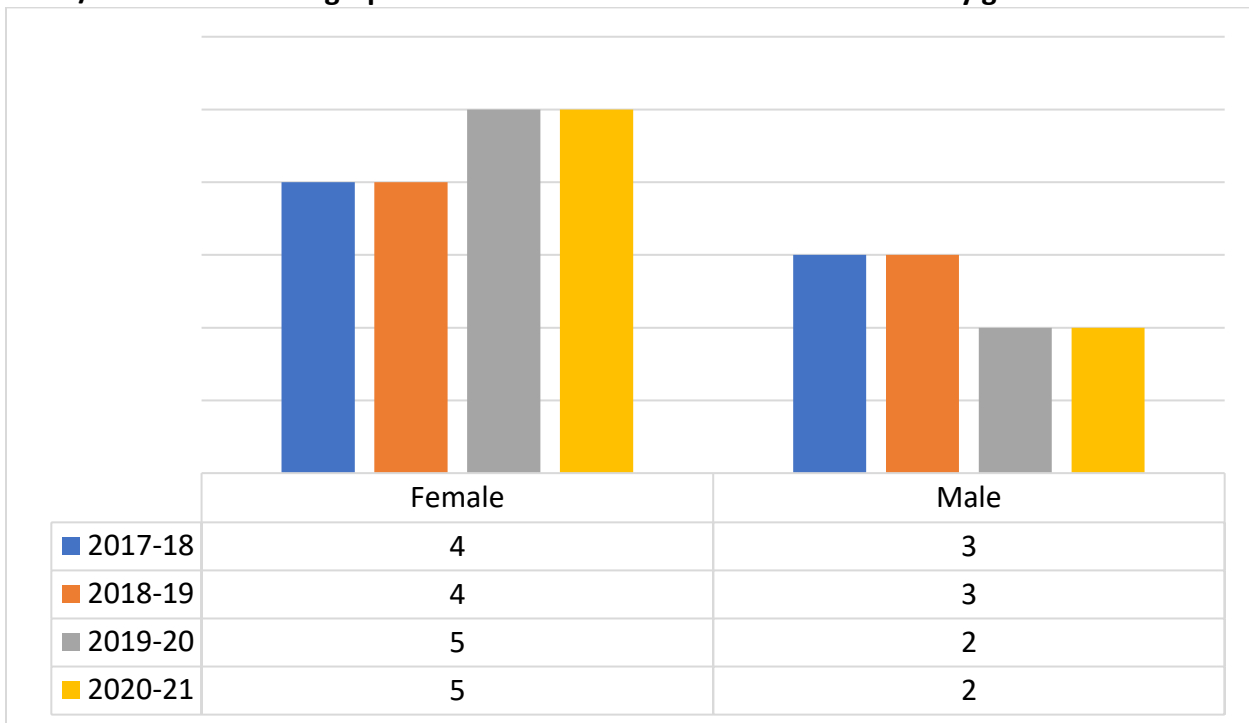
Table/Chart 2.31: Demographic count of Education Foundation members by gender



Table/Chart 2.32: Demographic count of Board of Education members by race/ethnicity



Table/Chart 2.33: Demographic count of Board of Education members by gender



Section 3

QUALITATIVE DATA

Focus group responses were analyzed and categorized into the accountability framework - *Five Strands of Systemic Equity*[®]:

Systems: To ensure a systemic and continuous development toward advancing equity within all policies, processes, procedures, initiatives, decision-making, and fiscal responsibility.

Teaching and Learning: To intentionally embed equity-driven pedagogy and practices in the curriculum, resources, instructional approaches, use and consideration of assessments and academic programming for the purpose of advancing equity for and among each student.

Student Voice, Climate and Culture: To consistently seek students' feedback and experiences, and nurture a positive, authentic, and meaningful organizational culture and climate.

Professional Learning: To provide a continuum of professional learning and growth opportunities for all staff in pursuit of fully understanding and infusing educational equity in all aspects of schooling.

Family and Community as Agency: To partner with families and the community for authentic opportunities to serve the students, the school(s), and the district.

As such, responses that aligned with districtwide or building-wide decision-making such as policies, programs, procedures, processes, and personnel were categorized under **Systems**. Responses that correlated with instruction, curriculum, assessments, culturally responsive practices, and academic programs were categorized under **Teaching and Learning**. Responses that aligned with student behavior, discipline, adult-student relationships, SEL, trauma, restorative practices, climate and culture among student and staff were categorized under **Student Voice, Climate and Culture**. Responses about professional development and growth were categorized under **Professional Learning**. Finally, responses that aligned with family and community communication, engagement and empowerment were categorized into **Family and Community as Agency**.

Areas of strength and needed improvement were identified to determine emphasis. Below is a visual representation of the qualitative thematic coding and analysis.

Quotes from the stakeholders related to **Systems** was extracted. Themes under each strand are listed in Table 3.1.

From students

- “By giving [us] more holidays off for more cultures, our school board helps people. Feels more inclusive and like a community. Before holidays only for Christians and Jewish people, and now more Indian holidays off. That brings more diversity to us and feels like we’ve made progress by this especially since our district is one of the most diverse ones.”
- “I think that there should be a little bit of time during the day where you can ask your teachers about assignment not just at the morning. Not consistent.”

From staff

- “One thing our school has done, over the last couple of years is taken equity seriously and making sure Bilingual teachers represent student population. For example, Mongolian population has grown over 7-8 years so have translators. Have tried to hire Mongolian Bilingual teachers and trying to have people that can translate for that population.”
- “We cover fees for everybody. It’s small but meaningful and everyone gets a yearbook. Parents don’t have to pay the fee. There is not one child that did not receive the yearbook while everyone gets this treasure so these type of financial help is great.”
- “Thinking about this [pandemic] time, we have done a lot with technology and getting students 1:1 tech devices.”
- “In this pandemic year, we have provided resources and school supplies for all of our students, and get them what they need in the classroom setting. Same thing for everyone.”
- “Any student is able to join [extracurricular clubs] and bus will take anyone home even if not regular bus rider.”
- “Glad district is going through this [equity audit] process and hope follow through with to areas grow on and celebrate.”
- “At middle school level, executive functioning program includes materials for every student. They get same backpacks, folders. System is set-up equally for all students.”
- “We do have extracurriculars and bus provided for students, but does not help for students playing sports against other schools, because it [bus] goes beyond the time. Had students who did not participate because the bus doesn’t work for their schedule.”
- “Sometimes district or schoolwide bilingual translator does not get information until after it goes out to parents. So [bilingual parents] get it later than everyone else. Not for everything, but happens more often than it needs to. Finding a way to get it out at the same time for multiple languages.”
- “The first thing that comes to my mind is the difference among SES (social-economic status) groups. Some students come from large, beautiful homes and some students are homeless. Such a large disparity. Can have six students in one bedroom apartment in their homes and that is really challenging.”

- “We have two extremes in some respect. The entire structure of our district lends itself to not being equitable.”
- “A lot of it is parents with hearts of gold and want to do good, and they want to feel good. They are not always looking out for all students. Donating coats makes them feel good as opposed to promoting dignity of people. Parent groups are lovely, kind but don’t understand equity. They think it’s about giving and not about the systems.”
- “In BOE we need more diverse parents. There are no parents from EL population or low SES who are living that life so BOE members can hear that information. There should be BOE members from special populations.”
- “We do provide report cards in many different languages and we offer translation services for all parent/teacher conferences. Some opportunities do feel like our district sends out communication to families that are lengthy and difficult language, only in English and worry that some of our families are missing out in this information. Don't see much information about state programs (e.g., ISBE funded grants) and didn't see that communicated from district to families.”
- “It's not just being White, but a matter wealth, and advocating. Those that speak the most or have the opportunity are the ones that get the most benefit.”

From families

- “Pleased to see new people of color hired. Good for school.”
- “When there are concerns, teachers and administrators put students’ best interest first. They have been very transparent. More so than ever this year - sending a note, constant communication, the updates/transparency.”
- “I think we have the best teachers around. They are available. They have great ideas. Think outside of the box. I can't say enough good things about the teachers. I don't think we've had one teacher that we did not love. When class size was too big, we went to BOE meetings and they brought in aides.”
- “Thankful for the district for wanting to do this audit.”
- “Hyper focused on the improvements and the teachers are hyper focused on student needs. Small class sizes. From my personal experience did not notice things slipping through the cracks. Do notice they have a hard time with ESL parent communication; although, I see good things that the teachers do to try and communicate to everyone. Think they are doing a good job.”
- “How to navigate [school website] for self. But, wonder if ESL parents or working parents don't have time to call school multiple times. That information should be readily available. It’s hard and should be information easy to sign-up for conferences.”
- “More diversity needed. All of my children’s teachers have been White.”
- “With Columbus Day, could we at least say Indigenous People's Day?”
- “We need more diverse representation in staff and faculty.”
- “Acknowledging Indigenous Peoples' Day. Engagement of more families. We sell our diversity in the district but it's the students and families that are diverse, not the teachers. We are a diverse community. Hire staff that represents our students is

conscious thing the district could do. I have voiced to district many times. When POC are hired, they tend to be support staff, custodial and that sends a message too.”

- “If someone would like assistant in multiple languages in meetings or BOE, we don't offer that. The district does not put information out where translation could be offered. If people want or need at the BOE level, the district should be more proactive that interpreter services is available.
- “BOE composition is not represented diversely by community. We could assume that more diverse recruitment is needed or maybe it can a bias.”
- “Constant rotation of staff. Criticism about curriculum development but haven't had someone in place long enough to implement and change it. Different approach to the curriculum or staffing. There is no ability to make changes because they are let go. Then critique by BOE that we haven't made any changes, but the reality is that nobody has been in place as a staff member long enough to put those changes in place. It is not hard if you build relationships with people and understand what they need. Go through the curriculum and instruction.”
- “There could've been a better job in choosing the school calendar. A lot of students' religions and ethnicity as well as social holidays that go on the calendar. I know it's impossible for school to accommodate everybody, but does feel that Christian/Jewish community large and Muslim ignored.”
- “It's highly inequitable that we don't have an ESL director. Tacked on to responsibilities to SPED or C&I director and partially a resourced stipend for teachers instead. We have a high percentage of ESL students mainly at elementary. There needs to be a greater attention to talking about ESL students when discussing equity.”
- “BOE meetings is very divisive. In regards to calendar, which religious holidays to have off, which I support, but as a working parent, it would've been nice to have more forewarning. Now having an additional 8 days off and gets to be equitable, but maybe more notice could have fared better especially this school year. Calendar does not align with high school and if high school students are watching elementary students [difficult]. Students agree to approving calendar, but I think in being equitable lost sight of how to inform parents.”
- “We're the ones who show up, engaged and we know about the accelerated program, but no one to discuss what it is, how to test, how to get in as well as education foundation meetings too. For example, if you would like assistant in multiple languages in meetings or BOE, we don't offer that either.”

Table 3.1: Focus group themes aligned with SYSTEMS

Theme	Stakeholder	Areas of strength	Areas of needed improvement
Districtwide policies, processes, procedures, resources, and equity-focused decision-making	students	-increased inclusivity of historically marginalized religions	-universal check-ins with students for assignment support
	staff	-heightened attention to equity action -mitigating technological needs with supports and devices during remote learning -eliminating fees to leverage access to resources (e.g., yearbook) -access to extracurriculars -resources to all students -well-resourced district -increase Bilingual personnel -pursuit of an equity audit	-community communication readability -community communication released in multiple languages simultaneously -advocacy disadvantages based on socio-economic levels -diverse representation on BOE -community SES disparities compounded in views of privilege and access -inequitable attention based on SES status
	families	-student centered -small class sizes or additional support provided for larger classes -regular communication from district to community -highly, qualified staff -caring teachers -increased transparency to the community -consistent willingness to improve -growing desire to communicate to all -incremental improvements to the hiring of people of color	-hire of diverse certified staff -amplify equity through recognition of historically marginalized religions and groups (e.g., Indigenous People’s Day) -contentious BOE relationships and communication with community -lack of information about access to accelerated programming -inconsistent or absence of communication translated in languages other than English to families

In this section, some of the quotes from the stakeholders related to **Teaching and Learning** was extracted. Themes under each strand are arranged in Table 3.2 that follows.

From students

- “The teachers simplify work to us. They do hard work to explain to us and make sure we understand and end of each lesson, the teachers ask us if anyone needs confirmation and what we're doing like doing a lesson and if don't understand, raise our hand and ask to be explained more. I honestly like how they take their time to go through it and explain the lessons clearly.”
- “There are some teachers when we're talking about certain topics and different views let us include our own opinions and how we interpret different parts of history.”
- “I feel welcomed and included in my school because when do lesson and work, we get time to share out our ideas and teachers write our ideas on the board, and that makes us feel included and part of something.”
- “The learning is personalized and we're all different. Try to make sure that the learning is all personalized like if miss school due to religious holiday, they are understanding. Teachers careful with making sure everyone is valued individually and no one is grouped together and everyone has different needs. That each are their own person. People always accept who we are and our beliefs. Few friends asked questions about my culture, and how we celebrate, and we ask each other. I asked other students to come to my dance recital for my culture. My teacher came too.”
- “As far as culture, there were some instances last year where people were not nice about different religions, cultures, not make fun of them, but the teachers didn't really talk about different religions. Like sometimes talk about it but not that much.”

From staff

- “Overall, as a school, grade level is really trying to be more mindful of materials that are chosen like variety of books, anchor books with characters of all SES, faces, ethnicities and all types of characteristics. Updated our classroom resources and there has been a focus on that, improvements still need to be made but moving in that direction.”
- “I do reading groups not limited to students' range on test scores. I try to see students as a whole. I have math groups and put in highest math group so not limited to just test scores. I wonder how they are doing, look at information they come in with, trying to see whole picture - equity as race, language skills - and I try to see the whole students.”
- “Try to make instruction as accessible as possible. I redo a lesson from the previous year, think about learning style, resources kids have available, - we started making videos, continued doing that so kids have access to those lessons. I color code, I write out, use colors so kids can see things more clearly. I make myself available before and after school and during lunch. Answer my email all hours of the day and on weekends, maybe they don't have another resource to answer at home.”
- “There was student supposed to have domains opened up in spring. Mom never brought up and process started anyway. Then process had to start over again. This

would never happen if BOE student. If I didn't advocate nothing would have happened for this child."

- "Providing accessible curriculum and instruction that allows translation. We need access to be culturally relevant. Some of our EL students cannot access a packet - providing time for our support staff to make accommodations that are necessary. We have great staff that want to help students with their needs but aren't given curriculum early enough to make accommodations necessary to help those students."
- "I think we need to address at some point all issues surrounding politically equity and Black/African American/African American Lives Matter. Population of students is quite diverse. We want to make sure kids know how to handle those tough conversations about politics, nationality, and race. Raising kids that are empathetic to each other. I think we need to allow for kids to have more of a voice and express how they feel about things - in a way that is helpful as a group."
- "We need to address the discrepancy in performance when looking at special populations."
- "Challenge for us is the inconsistency of services. We've had literacy support and intervention and a lot of students receive that support, but it changes yearly."
- "Another thing that changes from year to year is whether we have ways that make a student qualify for services. It's ambiguous."
- "It's the system that is not in place. We have all of these departments doing the best we can. We are overwhelmed because we don't have the system especially for EL. Viewed that they [students] have years needed for language development and using that blanket statement to not provide those services and easier to cut our numbers down. And then come to them later but later they are then behind."
- "Sometimes they [students] don't even take the test. Data doesn't support them in core plus and if they push enough, we allow them, see how they do, monitor and make changes if needed. Small group of parents who are vocal and know how to work the system and make it happen for their kids."
- "When looking at curriculum, people married to their curriculum and they love that unit. More to be done with culturally relevant to students. Battle to change. To teach X and Y for this topic and a struggle because we love certain things but not necessarily relevant or good for all of our students."

From families

- "My son is in PreK and he has severe disability. We're previously from another school district when introduced to this school district, we went to school and no equipment available based on his needs. But, within a couple of weeks of starting, the school was able to get a lot of equipment for him by Day 1. They have gone beyond to design the room to fit his needs. Staff really cares for him. Good experience with the school."
- "One of my children has a disability and she is very aware of students with IEPs and disabilities. Seems as though the extra help is provided. Good job in that area."
- "District has come a long way for SPED. We're fortunate enough to have private insurance and if he need additional services can access it, but know that not everyone

has access to it. If needed an outside advocate for SPED, I can access it, not sure if everyone can.”

- “How do we incorporate other cultures? Don't want to see things relegated to month or week. Things more incorporated in every lesson like ELA and history. Like to see a variety of cultures represented. Haven't seen that here and is district considering that? We need more than one month.”
- “Curriculum could be more inclusive.”
- “I know our students are learning. The question from me is the pace that they are learning or being exposed to appropriate? Students are supported but not necessarily the students with unique needs. For instance, if your students falls above needs improvement, what do schools do more? Is that we don't really bother unless the student is in the lowest category? How personalized do we meet the students' needs? Who decides the barriers? is it systemic? Otherwise, you don't have access to extra services.”
- “Robotics and coding are available but as additional after-school program. Wish it was part of the curriculum on par with other schools.”
- “I would like to see proactive anti-bias, anti-racist curriculum in addition to teaching more diverse culture beyond food and holidays as well as racism, stereotypes, and cooperative education. I learned one of the biggest ways in working in diverse groups is through cooperative learning.”
- “Tracking into 3rd grade that leads to the highest SES groups clicking together and also ends up being reflected in racial friendships. Clickish behavior, but don't know of other options available other than what I see that in my own students.”
- “Students need to learn about White supremacy. Because they are White, they have privileges that other non-White don't have (e.g., diverse au pair). It is responsibility of school to provide opportunities we're talking about, but mainstream and privileged people need a bit more perspective on that privilege. Not many opportunities for students to share like we would like to because any opportunity to share gets shut down by teachers because they feel they are not able to have those conversations.”
- “Would like to see proactive ABAR curriculum in addition to teaching more diverse culture beyond food and holidays as well as racism, stereotypes, and cooperative education. I've learned one of the biggest ways in working in diverse groups is through cooperative learning.”

Table 3.2: Themes aligned with TEACHING AND LEARNING

Theme	Stakeholder	Areas of strength	Areas of needed improvement
Academics, academic programming, Instructional supports, resources, assessments	students	-supportive and dedicated teachers -instruct with care -personalized learning	-inconsistent, responsive supports to students for assignment understanding and completion
	staff	-personalized learning -commitment to offer supports -increased access to curriculum and learning supports	-inequitable access to academic programming and services (e.g., EL, SPED, advanced learning) -performance discrepancy among special populations
	families	-quality SPED supports -students learning -flexible, supportive staff	-curriculum pacing -lack of attention to average-scoring students -integrating STEM, robotics, and similar curriculum during the school day for all students
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	students	-the opportunities to learn about cultures -student voices in the learning -culturally responsive opportunities	-lack of cultural representation in curriculum, resources, and instruction -consistent discussion and navigation of equity-related topics
	staff	-increased resources of culturally representative books -an increase in embedding culturally responsive practices -growing thoughtfulness on diversifying resources aimed to be reflective of student population	-teachers not culturally responsive -lack of diverse representation in curriculum -differentiate for middle-level students -unfair tracking systems -lack of sufficient instruction to students about equity, anti-bias, and anti-racist topics
	families	-incorporation of culture in ELA and Social Studies	-need for expanded and/or in-depth culturally responsive instruction -need for diverse curriculum

In this section, some of the quotes from the stakeholders related to **Student Voice, Climate and Culture** was extracted. Themes under each strand are arranged in 3.3 table that follows.

From students

- “Like when teachers are able to congratulate us by nominating us as students of the week or month if we’re doing great. Consistent with our work and give us positive feedback.”
- “I think that there should be a little bit more time during the day when you can ask your teachers about assignments and not just at the morning.”
- “My peers are welcoming and inclusive to me.”
- “I feel welcomed when people choose me for small group.”
- “All of my teachers give each person an opportunity to say or do something they want, so if one student wants something, teachers recognize students in a different way.”
- “We do learn how people are different and the same because of the color of our skin and know at one point of the school year we talk about that.”
- “If I’m scared to compete with best students in class, my teacher tells me to be confident and that really helps me.”
- “I know other people haven’t felt welcomed when they say we don’t want you in our group. And sometimes people don’t like other students because they think they are weird or mean to them a lot and they don’t want them in their group.”
- “Teachers and staff members have helped me with student voice by giving us a level of confidence, strengths and learning ability. Teachers making us video in class or homework to help us learn because sitting there reading isn’t the most fun. Asking questions and helping us gives us more confidence. This year with option of in-person and online helps with student comfort level. Feel like teachers are very conscientious about how we have different needs. Help different people and keep trying to help us be better people and basically help us with the best ways to learn.”
- “Teachers are good at encouraging the students and no shame if not meeting expectation. It’s ok for you to ask questions. Before Covid, we talked about speaking up if something happened to us and we read books about confidence during ELA times.”
- “I’ve only had a bond with one person and that was a bus driver. Sometimes he makes jokes. Sometimes fun. I think maybe if I had that bond with teachers, it would be a lot better for me.”
- “Sometimes I feel different than others and know that being different in most ways is a good thing, but don’t know a lot of people that have the same religion as me. There are people I like because they stand up for me and if something goes wrong, they ask me what happens. Think we’re good with each other and understand each other and we should be treated the same no matter religion, wherever you are from. We’re all in the U.S. right now and thinking that everyone isn’t the same is a good thing.”

- “Some people when express feelings with teachers, they sometimes overexaggerate on what actually happened, even if they did something wrong. They try to make it sound like another person did more wrong. Sometimes teachers don't understand, and they think students are smart enough to not over exaggerate but some are.”

From families

- “Teachers attend events outside of school, attend students’ extra -curricular (e.g., sports, performance) and support their students in these external events. Teachers and students love it. It really builds awesome relationships.”

From staff

- “For coaches and those leading extracurriculars, it allows for connecting with students. Allowing for different opportunities for clubs. Finding those connections that way.”
- “We have a done a wonderful job on educating parents. They are the ones advocating for some and also want their checklist too. Have not done a lot of restorative justice. Been some, but not really systemic approach to remediation. There are individuals that do it, but not part of our system.”
- “The challenge of getting staff to understand that discipline is not about being equal either. That it is about equity. Circumstances dealing with students that it is not a one size fits all, just like instruction. That can create friction sometimes with lack of understanding.”
- “If there is a child who is struggling, we have one person to make a positive connection with the child and parent - someone who can help them come back to the level we know they can be - always a positive thing, never a negative way.”
- “We have some talented teachers that really get to know who the students are, and the goal is every student has a connection like that. Many teachers gifted at building relationship with students and finding out what is unique, fun, important to that students.”
- “For the first time, we have an administration team that views discipline in similar way of knowing that not one size fits all. But not all staff gets it. Sometimes they [staff] want checklist based on behavior at for all students, because they do not understand students’ culture, background or what’s going on at home. It’s a myriad of factors, but want checklist because segment of population, as opposed to all the students, are well-resourced. It’s disproportionate amount of students that are in trouble, are not wealthy or who are white students.”
- “One thing that has been good this year is we started a bunch of read a louds and SEL every day. Read alouds related to hot topics (e.g., equal rights, BLM). While we don't have large Black/African American/African American population, the students wanted to talk about it. They have a lot of feelings about racism for themselves and making SEL block times to talk and not just about dance and food, but more than that. The students want a voice, and it has to be embedded in the conversation with students. What's going in their lives? What’s happening before and after schools? That we value what they are going through.”

- “There has been a big problem with discipline over many years and how you can have two students that exhibit behavior, but follow-through will look differently depending on who their parents are. No consistency. Should it be consistent? Look at students individually and understand. Look at differences. Have one student gets ISS or OSS and another student gets a laugh-off or OK, we’ll call parents. Students know it and see it.”
- “Discipline is not equitable and how not been for years. This is nothing new.”
- “This year, we have offered more teaching programs for parents to help them learn about the district. Help their child at home during this pandemic since teaching remotely this year. I have gone to each students’ home several times to read to them in their yard. Make connections with them in a safe way.”
- “There is no discipline in terms of the way we let the students treat adults which is awful. The way students treat adults. There is no respect and maybe something is not taught at home, so we teach at school, but not follow-through. Students see the way other students treat teachers and nothing has been done about it. Look at it as if students having issues and need to work on it. Teach coping skills but also look at rest of the class, and what they see or what they think is acceptable. In primary grades, teaching students how to behave and see other students misbehave. Teaching them that’s ok. Sweeping problem under the rug rather than addressing it.”
- “Discipline/behavior management needs to be every day. Reinforcements of behaviors are only effective when dealt with immediately. We collect the tickets and all they know is that their names announced over intercom to get free lunch with administration. Discipline is most effective when dealt with immediately. Many of these students are 5-7 years old and they don’t remember what they did for what they are being acknowledged. We need a bit more TLC (tender, loving care) and not face consequences. It’s more about soften their life and be more kind to them.”
- “Behavioral part of the culture sometimes if student is yelling. Made me stop and kind of think that in some cultures, communication is different. Rather than raising their hand, I have to learn more about background, where students come from and think if behavior is rooted in that particular culture.”
- “A lot of things are eye-opening. I have noticed that when it comes to power or lack of power for some students. I am their only advocate and the seriousness of that. Some students have no other options. They all start from different places in life and the amount of catching up they have to do like knowing how to ask for something. Difference between students who may ask for help and a student that is yelling because it’s the only way know how to ask. How much that sets them apart?”
- “Been in district long time and feel like I can speak up but have definitely gotten in trouble for speaking up trying to advocate for students. District needs to take more open approach to teachers’ opinion, and we don't always have a good response. Newer teachers are still scared and do not advocate for what is right. Sometimes they don't want to fight that battle, because feel so defeated, and because said no to so many times.”

Table 3.3: Themes aligned with STUDENT VOICE, CLIMATE AND CULTURE

Theme	Stakeholder	Areas of strength	Areas of needed improvement
Student climate/culture, student voice, student experience, student input	students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -recognition for academic performance -extracurricular club opportunities -inclusivity and increased discussion of students' lived experiences -teachers attend external events for students -caring teachers -positive, meaningful relationships with teachers -students feel cared for -students are learning 	-irregular exclusion by peers
	staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -coaching and extracurricular opportunities contributing to relationship-building with students -ensuring adult connection for each student -strong relationships with students between teachers and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -need for restorative practices -inconsistent perception of student misbehavior and subsequent discipline -meaningful SEL throughout the school day and perceived as an add-on
	families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teachers attend students' external events outside of school day 	-lack of student development on issues of equity and its impact on culture and climate

In this section, some of the quotes from the stakeholders related to **Professional Learning** was extracted. Themes under each strand are arranged in Table 3.4 that follows.

From staff

- “Think a lot of us as educators vary in the cultural proficiency continuum, and the last being action. Getting to that point where we just don't know it, agree with it, but we're taking action and looking forward to next step of this audit.”
- “We have staff that love students and want them to be happy. They do a good job. But, when students are placed in a situation outside of their comfort zone, they misbehave. They come out of their box. Speak back to you and maybe say bad words. How do we make sure we are fair when taken out of our comfort zone? We need to think deeper. More training needed.”
- “Finding more of a need to create background information knowing some of our students. They go to high end programs, museums and others have never experienced it. Different means of reinforcing thing so if parents don't have someone at home to support and read to them at home, they still have an opportunity to learn.”
- “We could use more PD in regards to differentiation. Lot of ways we could be differentiated differently for students.”
- “Staff don't understand anti-racist and that shift. I love all my students and not realizing how I might impact students. A lot of education for staff needed.”
- “Staff buy-in that there is an issue with equity and don't delve deeper into numbers and special populations, and areas of need in our schools.”
- “Understanding what the different cultures are what they do to represent is an area of need for staff and students.”

From families

- “We need to build teacher capacity on race and conscious conversations. Anti-racism focus on PD for staff growing attention. Teachers are not comfortable engaging in the conversation. When teachers don't engage students about John Lewis and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, it's a missed opportunity because that's how we can create more race conscious students. Students would like to see staff doing more with that.”
- “Talking with my neighbor about district [withheld] and how positive the experience was; but for her, they asked if she [belonged] in the district. She is of a different race than I am. All we can surmise is that the experience was different because we are different races. We dealt with the same person. Perhaps implicit bias training can be beneficial.”
- “Teachers comfortably discussing religion diversity. We have a large representation of different faiths. School districts just gave us days off based on religions, but teachers have said not comfortable bringing those conversations into the classroom because they've told them they can't discuss religion. District giving days off doesn't necessarily guarantee knowing those religion.”

Table 3.4: Themes aligned with PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Theme	Stakeholder	Areas of strength	Areas of needed improvement
Professional development continuum	staff	-growing attention to equity PD	-inconsistent exposure, experience, and comfort level with equity-related topics -need for differentiated PD on equity and ABAR -existence of cultural indifference among staff member
	families		-lack of racial consciousness, and competency to racial equity -implicit bias training -teachers uncomfortable talking about different religions and cultures

In this section, some of the quotes from the stakeholders related to **Family and Community as Agency** was extracted. Themes under each strand are arranged in Table 3.5 that follows.

From staff

- “The amount of technology has led to increased and frequent teacher/parent connection. Teachers and parents commenting on technology and it helps with more meaningful relationships in the year.”
- “There has been a great effort for parent education this year. Trying to reach parent community. Don't know if participation as great as hoped for that would've benefit but effort was there to provide parent education.”
- “Gone so far as provide hot spots to families that don't get great net service. There is effort to translate in the 3 main languages is an effort at least to try and close the gap so families know what is going on. Students feel more comfortable at what looking at, communication has helped with families to close that gap.”
- “We're two district school. We see students from K-8th. As a small district, we have a loving, nurturing environment. These families become who you are and it does not end at district level. It continues past 8th grade. We have the ability to really grow with the students and their families.”
- “There were a few activities after school where families are invited. It is also how we can build relationships with families. Any time they can come to the school can help build relationships, like winter activity where parents can come. It's nice to get parents inside the school some way or another.”
- “Enjoy having parent/teacher conferences in October rather than coincide with report cards. Gives real opportunity to have conversation with families, and more conversation about students rather than exclusively academics. Get to know the families a bit more. Also, academic and SEL goals.”
- “[Bilingual supports] has helped to foster meaningful relationships with families. Help to get families involved in school functions. A great asset for the district.”
- “We have large EL population and we have to look at it in different ways. ELs whose language is only concern, but also ELs who have low SES or limited education themselves while some EL families know how to use that information. But some low SES EL families don't know how to access it, and using students to explain to the parents, but not quite working as well as it should be.”

From families

- “With E-learning, district did provide students that did not have right technology at home. Some through help of PTO and foundation fundraising.”
- “I think we have a lot of vocal parents. A lot is discussed and not sure if outcome is what everybody is desired but not hesitate in doing. Communication is pretty open and have not had any negative feedback in providing communication.”
- “Teachers are really good responding to families.”

- “PTA donated school supplies for all students because mix of income levels. After school clubs are offered and helps to get students involved for working families, being watched after school to support families.”
- “For the remote students, expectation is that families will provide things, and it is not assumed all families are starting from the same point, so the district is providing the same materials for all students, so every student is being afforded the same opportunity.”
- “Would like to see the district plan help parents navigate the system. Maybe pairing them up with a school pro to help. This is who you can contact if you need help. Buddying up with other parents. That was a connection I sought outside of the district.”
- “Regarding language, I have noticed if you need a translator, you have to let so-and-so know but if people need help, they may not seek it out.”
- “The communication that gets sent home is sometimes so language heavy and late. There has to be an opportunity for translation at the very beginning and pare down the language. Too much information. Too wordy.”
- “Needs to be awareness that communication is more than sending information home, especially if not being heard or understood. We're not communicating properly.”
- “I’ve been years in the district, sometimes never get a response back. Some teachers get back really quickly and are fantastic. It’s more often than not. But others, never get a response from.”
- “Make emails more readable.”
- “Heard comments that people think racism doesn't exist in our district because it's so diverse or not talked about. That does not mean it doesn't exist. Diversity does not mean anti-racist. Hope our district can take all of our strengths and train the rest of Northbrook. Great thing to have many different SES, religions, cultures - bring to bigger level, not just district level.”
- “Communication is my big thing. Extreme opposite and feel like outlier in communicating to all. See teachers struggling to get those partnerships and communicate with families. I do see how hard it is to get communication to other parents and that half don't speak English and wonder how good of a job we do in encouraging that communication.”
- “We need help in recruiting more parent participation. Not sure how much more get diversified representation, even at the BOE members. Lots of people stepping up for these positions but yearning to hear from many more. I hope people encourage someone in their network to encourage them to be more actively involved.”
- “Being new to the district, I had emailed several people and let them know I did not know what I was doing and received no response. Then issue at school with [withheld]. Emailed a higher up. Did not get a response. It was dealt with but never received communication. Regardless of the situation, should've got an email from any administrator. Don't know if that was theme throughout year because they don't know who I am, maybe they are getting bombarded with emails, but what was said to my student was unacceptable and that should've been a phone call, but I didn't even get a phone call.”

Table 3.5: Themes aligned with FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AS AGENCY

Theme	Stakeholder	Areas of strength	Areas of needed improvement
Family inclusion, community care and empowerment	staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -staff cares for the community -provide technical support to families -translation services provided to families -early parent/teacher conferences during school year -increased Bilingual supports for families -increase in family education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supporting low SES and low SES/EL families through communication and navigating the school systems
	families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supporting families by offering extracurriculars to students -open communication -teachers communicate frequently to families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -family-to-family supports to navigate school systems -lack of communication to families in multiple languages -communication home is too language heavy -sense of partnership and communication between school and home lacking especially for EL families -inconsistent responses to families when they reach out to the school

Section 4

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the district implements any of the equity audit findings, the following is suggested for implementation:

1. District leadership distribute full report to BOE members
2. District leadership distribute the Executive Summary (or full report) to DELT members
3. District leadership adopt all equity audit findings utilizing an accountability framework
4. District leadership create, implement, and monitor progress of equity goals each year with accountable, measurable, and transparent features.
5. District leadership maintain the existence of DELT to collaboratively develop and monitor equity goals.

The findings and recommendations in this Equity Audit report are not exhaustive. It is the district's responsibility to determine next steps, and continuously monitor progress and improve toward systemic equity. The district must invest time and resources to consistently advance systemic equity. To aid in the implementation practice of an accountability framework, each finding is arranged by the *Five Strands of Systemic Equity*®. Each of these strands are equally critical and should be pursued simultaneously. They are numbered for reference, not by importance.

1. **Systems:** To ensure a systemic and continuous development toward advancing equity within all policies, processes, procedures, initiatives, decision-making, and fiscal responsibility.
2. **Teaching and Learning:** To intentionally embed equity-driven pedagogy and practices in the curriculum, resources, instructional approaches, use and consideration of assessments and academic programming for the purpose of advancing equity for and among each student.
3. **Student Voice, Climate and Culture:** To consistently seek students' feedback and experiences, and nurture a positive, authentic, and meaningful organizational culture and climate.
4. **Professional Learning:** To provide a continuum of professional learning and growth opportunities for all staff in pursuit of fully understanding and infusing educational equity in all aspects of schooling.
5. **Family and Community as Agency:** To partner with families and the community for authentic opportunities to serve the students, the school(s), and the district.

SYSTEMS

To ensure a systemic and continuous development toward advancing equity within all policies, processes, procedures, initiatives, decision-making, and fiscal responsibility.

1.1 DEVELOP COMMON LANGUAGE AROUND EQUITY, AND EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE IT WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

EVIDENCE

Findings

The needs assessment revealed that there was no consistent language on equity. Focus group responses provided further evidence that the equity interpretations varied. Besides a one-time, anti-racism district statement, there is no policy or structure to demonstrate the district’s commitment to equity signifying performative equity.

Recommendations

The first systemic goal for the district is to determine what equity means to their institution. DELT may be in the best position to research critical definitions or develop their own. The district should be mindful that educational equity should actively identify barriers that perpetuate disenfranchisement often experienced by historically marginalized populations while ensuring that *all* students benefit from equitable structures and systems.

Research

Critical race theory is studied in numerous disciplines and scholarships. It is a foundational framework to interrogate educational equity achievement to disrupt racial injustice (Ross, 2010). This auditor expands educational equity to encompass a long list of historically marginalized identities in addition to race. To be clear, however, critical race theory and the identity of race remains the central approach in establishing the existence of institutional and structural inequities. It is important to point this out as equity has become loosely used (Aguilar, 2020). By clearly defining equity, the district positions itself to develop critical reflection and discourse to combat systemic racism and other forms of -isms (Bocala & Holman, 2021). School leaders have the capacity to lead their staff in developing a vision and common language aimed to achieve equity (Diem & Welton, 2021).

1.2 DEVELOP A BOARD POLICY, A BOARD STATEMENT AND/OR DISTRICT STATEMENT ON EQUITY.

EVIDENCE

Findings

As of the date of this report, the district has not established any official documentation to demonstrate systemic commitment to equity. To amplify the district’s responsibility to equity, a BOE policy, BOE statement and/or district statement is a critical action.

Recommendations

The purpose of a policy and/or statement is to signify leverage to advance systemic equity. This is a common, legal understanding and strategy to support equity work. In researching existing policies and statements in other districts, a glaring difference among them is the explicit or absent language used in naming the various forms of biases and oppression -

racism, sexism, classism. etc. Research reveals that a district’s adoption of equity language will be based on their community – students, staff, and families. In other words, to cater to the unique needs of the district, it may be beneficial to work with DELT in developing a stakeholder survey without compromising understandings associated with equity. The district will want to include the newly developed equity definition into its BOE policy, BOE statement and/or district statement.

Research

Through the implementation of a board policy and/or statements, the district will be in a leveraged role to acknowledge the systemic way its practices and narratives obstruct equity work. Board of education members can rally behind equity through these powerful statements and critically examine the structural changes needed (Savage-Williams, 2018). The need for explicit policies on anti-racism are necessary to uphold the district’s stance and long-term commitment of equity (Diem & Welton, 2021).

1.3	DEVELOP TRANSPARENT, INTENTIONAL, MEASURABLE, AND ACCOUNTABLE EQUITY GOALS.
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EVIDENCE

Findings

As of this date and according to the need’s assessment, there is currently no systemic equity action plan in place. Through the implementation of an equity action plan or equity-specific goals, the district is positioned to intentionally mitigate inequities.

Recommendations

The district should adopt an accountability framework that allows for intentional equity action. Such a framework should offer measurable opportunities to monitor progress. It should also lend itself to identifying alignment to existing policies and structures. As the district journeys through this process, it is urgent that an equity lens be applied in all its policies, procedures, processes, interactions, and resources. In doing so, the district critically considers how it is identifying and removing barriers while advancing equity. Ideally, equity action plans contribute to robust, systemic, and transformative culture and climate shifts. Systemic equity movement in any organization requires information.

Research

Consistent, reliable collection of quantitative and qualitative data allows critical analysis that can enlighten the district toward transformative shifts (Edley, et al, 2019). Through the implementation of a specific equity plan, the district may readily identify indicators to monitor progress of its culture and climate shift. A design process that is feasible through an equity plan, and not a typical districtwide strategic plan. Equity must be systemic to ensure collective responsibility in disrupting inequities especially encountered by historically marginalized groups (Singleton & Linton, 2006; Shield, 2019).

1.4	IMPLEMENT PRACTICES TO ATTRACT HIGHLY QUALIFIED DIVERSE TEAMS BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER.
EVIDENCE	
<p><u>Findings</u> White teachers and administrators have represented 94%-95% of staff over the last three years. During SY 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, Asian teachers and administrators represent 2%-3% while Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx teachers and administrators have consistently represented 2%.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u> Across the country, school districts struggle to recruit racially diverse candidates as less people of color seek a career in education. The district can explore recruitment efforts through the education of young people to describe the importance of teachers. Although there are infinite ways to attract and recruit high-quality teacher candidates, the district may find it needs to consistently be innovative in its recruitment process. For instance, outreach to affinity groups at local colleges and universities as well as local affinity groups in the community. The district may need to consider its interviewing and hiring practices for implicit biases. This will provide an important insight to one’s identity, positionality, and critical understanding of equity. Unfortunately, it must be clearly stated that in no way does this suggest the district lower their bar of a qualified candidate, but it is to indicate that people on interviewing teams often select candidates that share their experiences and backgrounds.</p> <p><u>Research</u> The benefits of a historically marginalized diverse staff include increased positive adult-student relationships, higher student engagement, meaningful connections to the school, mitigating access and expectation gaps, as well as improved intergroup relations, role-modeling and combating of stereotypes and biases (Ladson & Lewis, 2016; Wells, et al, 2016; TeachPlus, 2019).</p>	

TEACHING AND LEARNING

To intentionally embed equity-driven pedagogy and practices in the curriculum, resources, instructional approaches, use and consideration of assessments and academic programming for the purpose of advancing equity for and among each student.

2.1 DEVELOP EQUITABLE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY OF ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAMMING FOR BIPOC STUDENTS WHILE DETRACKING TO AMPLIFY TALENT DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS.

EVIDENCE

Findings

With urgency, the district should act upon the racial and special population inequity in its advanced learning programming. The multiple year data revealed significant racial disproportionality. This trend is indicative of inequitable access, opportunity and expectations gaps affecting Black/African American/African American, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx and Two or More races’ students.

In 2017-18, the advanced learning program for ELA comprised of 56 students of which Asians represented 52% and Whites represented 45%; however, during the same school year, the Asian demographic was 36% and White 45% of the total student population. In other words, there is a balance or over-representation of Asian and White students in the advanced learning programming compared to the total number demographic of these racial groups. There is absolute disproportionality or absence represented in the advanced learning programming among Black/African American/African American, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx or Two or More students during 2017-18. During this same school year, there were zero Black/African American/African American or Two or More Races students in advanced learning ELA programming, and 2 Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx students in the program or 4% compared 11% of the total student population. This racial inequitable trend continues in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

During 2018-19, the ELA advanced learning program comprised of a total of 64 students, which 44% of Asians and 53% of Whites compared to 2% of Black/African American/African American, 2% of Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx and zero Two or More races’ students. Again, revealing disproportionality compared to the racial demographic of that year: Asian- 37%, Black/African American/African American-2%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx - 11%, Two or More – 8% and White – 41%.

During 2019-20, the ELA advanced learning program comprised of a total of 40 students, of which 48% were Asians and 50% were Whites compared to 3% of Black/African American/African American and zero for Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx and Two or More races’ students. The racial demographic of students for 2019-20 were as follows: Asians – 37%, Black/African American/African American-2%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-10%, Two or More–9% and White-41%.

The inequitable racial disparities in advanced learning programming are not exclusive to ELA. It is also evidenced, and with greater imbalance, in math. During 2017-18, 190 students were in advanced learning math, more than double of ELA, yet Black/African American/African American, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx or Two or More races' students were hardly represented. In 2017-18, Asians made up 48% and Whites made up 51% of advanced learning math, while zero Black/African American/African American and Two or More races' students were in the group, while 1 Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx or less than 1% was included.

In 2018-19, the advanced learning math program comprised of 47% of Asian and 52% of White, while there was less than 1% or 1 Black/African American/African American and 1 Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx student in the program during the same year. The racial demographic percent during 2018-19 was as follows: Asian- 37%, Black/African American/African American -2%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-11%, Two or More-8% and White-41%.

In 2019-20, the advanced learning math program comprised of 53% of Asian and 45% of White, while there were zero Black/African American/African American or Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx students, and 2% of the Two or More races students. The racial demographic percent in 2019-20 was the following: Asian-37%, Black/African American/African American-2%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-10%, Two or More-9% and White-41%.

Recommendations

Analyze multiple entry possibilities for students to be recommended into advanced learning programming, such as teacher recommendations. The district could benefit in the exploration of advanced learning education possibilities for ELL students and/or twice exceptional programs. There may be resource limitations for such considerations, but a long-term plan to consider the possibilities and/or incorporate practices that work well in these programs for students should be thoroughly explored. A growing number of districts throughout the country are also extinguishing their advanced learning /talented programs as it perpetuates tracking, and unfair caste system among learners. Instead, many districts are providing rich, robust supports to general education teachers so they may be able to challenge learners in their own classrooms.

Research

Low expectations for students of color is considered one of the most egregious forms of structural racism in schools (Kendi, 2019; Aguilar, 2020). Yet, homogenous ability grouping reveals that Asian and White students have considerable advantages. This is a national epidemic. The Office of Civil Rights has consistently reported disproportionate representation of Black/African American/African American and Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx students in advanced learning programming, even when socioeconomic status and classroom environments are similar. This is indicative of systemic structures and individual biases that may be unintentionally selective of White and Asian students for advanced learning identification.

There must be critical understanding to the distinction of non-bias versus anti-bias in tracking and its impact on equity (Mickelson, 2020).

2.2 | INTERROGATE THE IEP PROCESS TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY.

EVIDENCE

Findings

The quantitative data over a few years indicate racial disparities for students with an IEP, and the staff focus groups overwhelmingly point out that IEPs are being considered for privileged and advantaged community members compared to underprivileged and disenfranchised students. The quantitative data reveals the following. In 2017-18, there were a total of 133 students with an IEP. The racial make-up of those students were as follows: Asians-20%, Black/African American/African American-8%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-17%, Two or More-14% and White-42%. The total racial demographic for that year was, Asians-36%, Black/African American/African American-2%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-11%, Two or More-7% and White-44%. In 2018-19, there were a total of 137 students with an IEP. The racial demographic during that time was as follows: Asians-23%, Black/African American/African American-10%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-19%, Two or More-17% and White-36%; while, the percent racial demographic of students was the following: Asians-37%, Black/African American/African American-2%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-11%, Two or More-8%, and White-41%. In 2019-20, there were a total of 130 students that qualified for IEP services. The percent of students with an IEP by racial categories during this time was as follows: Asian-24%, Black/African American/African American-13%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-17%, Two or More-9%, and White-37%.

In comparing students that qualify for advanced learning programming and IEP, there is a trend in the district that Black/African American/African American and Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx students are overrepresented in a different [dis]ability categories while grossly underrepresented in advanced learning programming, or a positive academic offering.

Additionally, staff and community focus groups overwhelmingly stated that there were inequitable biases associated with access to IEP services for students.

Recommendation

The district would benefit from examining its authentic access to SPED programming by each student while also eliminating any favored advocacy based on a families' socio-economic or social capital positionalities. A students' ability status is not the same as a students' needs. In other words, access to additional support should not require financial and personal allocation unless there is a critical [dis]ability that is preventing the student from learning. While, at the same time, if a student necessitates intensive reading intervention that should be received as opposed to issuing an IEP if it is not warranted, or worse yet, because it is rooted in a socio-political context and inequitable power structures. Typically, when families advocate for students, districts have 14 days to respond to requests. This may not be enough time as staff members often require additional time to ascertain additional information, such as access to supports and the MTSS process. Gaining access to IEP services should consistently be

equitable based on a student’s needs, and how the [dis]ability may adversely affect the pupil’s access to their education. It will always be necessary to provide the supports, accommodations and supplementary aids and services.

Research

Students that are positioned to believe in themselves in certain situations such as belonging in an Honors and AP class are likelier to succeed (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). A common element in schools where a large percentage of students performed at high academic levels tended to have a climate of respect and high expectations for all students (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003).

2.3 REVIEW, WITH A CRITICAL LENS, THE MTSS IDENTIFICATION PROCESS FOR STUDENTS TO RECEIVE TIER 2 AND TIER 3 SUPPORTS

EVIDENCE

Findings

Interestingly, there is a racial disproportionately of students that have an IEP, yet Black/African American/African American and Brown Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx are hardly represented in MTSS supports compared to their Asian and White counterparts. In other words, MTSS is a process that typically allows for intentional, personalized supports, often prior to IEP evaluation, but it appears mostly Asian and White students receive this differentiated and elevated assistance. During 2017-18, the following racial make-up percent existed for MTSS-qualifying students: Asian-17%, Black/African American/African American-3%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-14%, Two or More-0%, and White-66%. In 2018-19, the racial percentage of MTSS-qualifying students were as follows: Asian-32%, Black/African American/African American-8%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-5%, Two or More-less 1%, and White-54%. For 2019-20, the racial percent of students receiving MTSS supports were the following: Asians-26%, Black/African American/African American-7%, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx-6%, Two or More-3%, and White-57%. No gender inequities were identified in reviewing the quantitative data for students accessing MTSS services.

Recommendations

Equity is grounded on eliminating barriers and widening access, voice, and centering for ignored, negated minoritized identities. The supports derived from an MTSS, when done well and is part of a Tier 1 environment, is a critical component to disrupt isolation. The district may consider Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an instructional design framework to mitigate inequities. The district may benefit in its practice as there appears to be intersectionality disproportionality of MTSS supports. Following this audit, the district will want to interrogate the reasoning behind the disparity. Progress-monitoring the culture and climate of students’ learning environment in the Tier 1 setting may provide important information to their Tier 2 and Tier 3 designations. An equity report card to the MTSS process decision-making (McCart & Miller, 2020) may be an added, systemic process.

Research

MTSS practices that center critical and reflective scrutiny on organizational attitudes on equity lends toward universal beliefs that all students can achieve at high levels (McCart & Miller, 2020). Equity-based MTSS harnesses working systems, and allows for continuous, critical assessment (McCart & Miller, 2020). UDL was created to eradicate inequities as the process begins by identifying barriers that perpetuate unequal access and engagement (Cardin & Novak, 2021). UDL provides tools to be accountable by empowering students' potential and diverse ways of success (Fritzgerald, 2020).

2.4 EXAMINE UNEQUAL GROWTH CONSISTENCIES IN THE BENCHMARK AND STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS.

EVIDENCE

Findings

According to MAP percentage of growth over three consecutive years, there is inconsistent growth in meeting or exceeding benchmarking in ELA or math. Between 2017-18 and 2018-19, all racial categories of students increased in ELA from the previous year with the exception of White students, who dropped 10%. However, between 2018-19 and 2019-20, all students decreased in meeting or exceeding benchmarking, except White students who jumped 13%. There are inconsistencies in growth among racial groups in math MAP as well. The comparison for 2017-18 to 2018-19 revealed only Asian and White students met or exceeded while Black/African American/African American and Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx growth decreased from previous year. From 2018-19 to 2019-20, all racial groups increased, with the exception of Black/African American/African American students.

In the standardized assessments of ELA in race/ethnicity over three years, at least 50% of all Asian and White students that partook in the assessment met or exceeded growth while Black/African American/African American, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx and students of Two or More races have not for three years. This same disproportionality exists in PARCC MATH by race/ethnicity over the same year, wherein at least 50% of all Asian and White students who partook the assessment met or exceeded growth. Neither Black/African American/African American, Hispanic/Latinx/Latinx or Two or More races student groups met or exceeded growth beyond 27% during the same three years.

Recommendations

Standardized assessments are often riddled with biases as they do not typically allow for individual growth monitoring over time. It is simply one measure during a brief period. Districts are critically aware of this reality. It is good practice for continual, critical acknowledgement by all stakeholders that standardized assessments should be checked for biases and the underlying assumptions that position privilege. To be clear, district benchmarking and standardized assessments are considered important student data on academic growth; however, when possible, a collection of assessment evidence in addition to benchmarking data and standardized assessments is recommended as it lends itself to authentic analysis of pupil development. Such assessments can include learning growth targets, individual goal setting, proper utilization of formative assessments and summative

tests. Although there is no indication during this audit that the district was not utilizing a series of measures to determine academic achievement, there remains a need to examine some of the growth inconsistencies in the benchmarking data whether that be through the creation of individual student profiles to analyze further and/or simply being aware of assessment biases through PD.

Research

The skills and proficiencies owned by each student is a reminder that educational spaces are placed of development, and not perfection. Liberating students to their untapped talents and cultivating their genius can never be fully captured with one measure (Muhammad, 2020).

2.5	EMBED CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES IN EACH CONTENT AND GRADE.
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EVIDENCE

Findings

Based on the needs assessments and focus group responses from each stakeholder group, the district must infuse culturally responsive pedagogy and practices to advance equity. Transforming the district culture to recognize cultural responsiveness as embracing diverse identities to accelerate care and humanity may take time, as district is only begun systemic equity journey. All certified staff may benefit from the professional development of recently approved Illinois Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leader Standards that provide performance indicators.

Recommendations

Extensive, long-term professional development to support educators on culturally responsive practices will aid in centering the voices and experiences of BIPOC, Bilingual and other marginalized students. Administrator and teacher evaluations that include the expectation of culturally responsive pedagogy and practices catapult its urgency. An equity lens of all curricula, resources and assessments will be necessary to identify the numerous ways the dominant culture is centered. The Understanding by Design (UDL) framework is a powerful opportunity for educators to collaborate, personalize learning, tap into students’ funds of knowledge, and sustain culturally responsive pedagogy.

Research

Culturally responsive pedagogy must be intentional, affirming, and explicit in its practices (Hammond, 2018; Espana & Herrera, 2020; Muhammad, 2020). This is not only obvious in daily practices like cultural games, poetry, song, art, and adult self-examination, but in output as well demonstrated by social justice and community-based projects (Johnson, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2007; Blankstein et al, 2016; Hammond, 2018). UDL lends itself to social justice by calling for transformative calibration and evidence-based intentional learning (Chardin & Novak, 2021).

STUDENT VOICE, CLIMATE AND CULTURE

To consistently seek students’ feedback and experiences, and nurture a positive, authentic, and meaningful organizational culture and climate.

3.1 REFORM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEL WITH AN EQUITY LENS.

EVIDENCE

Findings

The district would benefit from implementing SEL that applies an authentic equity lens. The fragmented and “SEL time” mentality speaks to the lack of understanding to SEL. SEL should not be viewed as an advisory, but as meaningful emancipation to be culturally responsive to students. It appears to be viewed as an add-on, and not the transformative shift of its original purpose. In other words, SEL textbook knowledge does not translate to SEL practices.

Considerations

Developing culturally competent stakeholders would be the initial steps in securing SEL practitioners. When SEL is viewed as a minute-by-minute interaction that can be anti-oppressive and anti-bias, it maintains the potential of collective healing. In the improvement implementation of SEL, the district may couple its stakeholders’ view of student behavior as an opportunity to reflect upon oneself as SEL is not about ‘fixing’ students. As adult practitioners of SEL, we must own the impact of our inward manifestations that produce inequities.

Research

SEL must address the sociopolitical reality of our injustices while demanding culturally responsive adults (Simmons, 2021; Simmons, 2019). Building trust and vulnerability for and among the adults at the school with students necessary for socio-emotional partnerships for learning (Hammond, 2015).

3.2 DEVELOP A STUDENT EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

EVIDENCE

Findings

Currently, there is no student voice at the districtwide level to leverage equity.

Recommendations

Fostering student voice is at the heart of equity. Intentional nurturing, input and co-creation from historically marginalized students that have been harmed by educational institutions is critical. By centering the often-negated experiences of marginalized populations, it positions overdue attention and action. The district could benefit on proactive measures of equity by systemically ensuring gender neutral restrooms in each school. They could also be responsive to students’ social justice passions by incorporating a recycling program. District may consider student opportunities as advisory to BOE members.

Research

Racial discipline disparities in schools across the country cultivates the dangerous school-to-prison pipeline. The urgency to address discipline issues is paramount to academic success, student engagement, student view of self, affirmation of self-identities, individual prejudices and biases, institutional racism, power, privilege, and other forms of realities that impact oppression (Tatum, 1997; Singleton & Linton, 2006; Kincheloe, 2008; Howard, 2010; DiAngelo, 2018; Gorski, 2018).

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

To provide a continuum of professional learning and growth opportunities for all staff in pursuit of fully understanding and infusing educational equity in all aspects of schooling.

4.1 TRAIN ALL STAFF ON EDUCATIONAL EQUITY.

EVIDENCE

Findings

The district had invested little resources on building staff capacity on equity and its related paradigms. Though the district had offered all-staff professional development, it was limited in time. The knowledge to be achieved with the complex, pervasive and layered understanding of equity requires continuous, and often differentiated, learning.

Recommendations.

Following mandated deep learning of equity and social justice for staff, the district should consider an onboarding process to ensure all new hires participate in foundational professional learning to equity. To further support equity knowledge and development, the district may develop a differentiated approach. One that includes continual understanding for staff that require honing of knowledge. Another option for staff members that are well-versed on equity topics and able to navigate their own practice to leverage a just education. A strong onboarding for new staff to share the district’s equity work and consistency in the training will be beneficial in demonstrating its commitment. Affinity groups serve as an opportunity for employees to interact based on shared experiences, and the district can be supportive of its forming with the knowledge that racially, ethically, and linguistically minoritized groups are not represented in education and educational leadership.

Research

Equity work and development is never-ending. There is no destination to it. It requires understanding inequities and how it manifests in schools. Organizational change management to advance equity includes culture, identity, and healing as part of the professional learning (Dugan, 2021). Equity and social justice are complex topics that are not exclusive to education. Many other institutions have demonstrated long histories of oppression against minoritized groups (Ferguson et al, 2020). Education is another entity entailed in the larger society. With that, comes limited understanding and experiences to the depth of equity and inequities (Tatum, 1997; Dweck, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gorski, 2018). Hesitations, uncertainties and outright rejection and anger can be expected in broaching such topics. Leadership must understand that transformative movement is often contentious (Williams, 2003; Singleton & Linton, 2006; Sleeter, 2012; Shield, 2018; Minor, 2019). Equity shifts often take time, but it a never-ending journey (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2012; Howard, 2015; Peters, 2019; Muhammad, 2020).

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AS AGENCY

To partner with families and the community for authentic opportunities to serve the students, the school(s), and the district.

5.1 | DEVELOP AND ACTIVELY COLLABORATE WITH A COMMUNITY EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

EVIDENCE

Findings

There is no organized community voice to leverage equity. The racial demographic among the education foundation and school board members has consistently been predominately White.

Recommendations.

Establish a community committee of historically marginalized identities to serve as advisory to the Superintendent and/or DELT. Such a committee can provide critical guidance to cultivate just and liberating structures in the district. Personal invitations from district leadership of minoritized community members may contribute to positive, meaningful relationships. Offer education on policy-development and school structures to encourage active involvement and BOE possibilities.

Research

Community-development model serves as an agency for continual intellectual and humanity growth (Stefanski et al, 2016; Ishimaru, 2020). Families can be levers in the education of their child(ren). School-community collaboration has proven to empower active participation and investment in the education of children. Meaningful partnerships between schools and the community are necessary for justice among minoritized people (Costanza-Chock, 2020).

5.2 | DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE TRANSLATIONS TO FAMILIES IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES.

EVIDENCE

Findings

Community and staff stakeholders relayed the need for streamlined and increased communication in multiple languages. This is also evidenced by the number languages known by students, ranging from 171 to 169 languages other than English over the last three years.

Recommendations

Develop a structure for systemic translation after families have self-identified and requested translated communication. All critical documents should be translated, and proactive steps taken for clear and concise communication.

Research

The identity-affirmation of students naturally encompass their families (Muhammad, 2020; Ishimaru, 2020). Deliberate acts to value a student’s home and family cultivates trust, and influences relationships. All members of the school community should aim to diligently connect with students and their families (Ishimaru, 2020; Espana, C. & Herrera, L. 2020).

As the district chose this preemptive and proactive measure to conduct an equity audit, it is assumed the district will engage in next steps to continue to move the equity needle forward. Research explains the criticality of equity audits as a tool to strategically identify inequities in systems and structures (Skrla et al, 2009; Smith et al, 2017). Equity cannot be achieved if the organization does not deliberately identify the barriers that perpetuate biases. Intentional deconstruction of inequities and such biases require schools and all impacted stakeholders to relentlessly reflect and transform their beliefs. Developing equity literacy is a constant journey and requires critical and considerable reflection to our personal, interpersonal, and structural unpacking (Gorski, 2018).

These recommendations are not exhaustive, and the district must be cognizant that equity work never ends. Although each finding is important, the district should be thoughtful as to which recommendations will be short-term and others that require consistent oversight. It is recommended that district implement an equity plan that includes metrics and accountability. In developing an equity action plan, the district should identify current initiatives to also include in the equity plan. This demonstrates a systemic commitment to consider all initiatives with an equity lens. As the district explores their next steps, they can expect resistance from a variety of stakeholders. The findings and recommendations can be difficult realities to accept. Despite the district's proactive undertaking to pursue an equity audit, the magnitude of improvements needed may be a challenge. Systemic transformation is a process, and implementation on any of the recommendations will take finite time. To execute, it is recommended the district reconvene DELT and share the audit report. From there, DELT should work closely to prioritize and identify each finding. Determine the measure for each finding, if applicable, and monitor progress of equity achievement. With each transformative shift, the district may adopt the implementation of additional findings and/or recognize other inequities that need to be addressed. It is critical for the district and its stakeholders to fully understand there is no final destination to reach equity. There is no stopping point. It is a constant, prevalent, and complex paradigm in efforts to maximize humanity and social justice for historically marginalized identities.

List of Abbreviations

ABAR = anti-bias/anti-racist

BIPOC = Black/African American/African American, Indigenous and People of Color

BLT = Building Leadership Team

BOE = Board of Education

ELA = English Language Arts

ELL = English Language Learners, maybe used interchangeably with EL or LEP

ES = Elementary School

ESL = English as a Second Language

GenEd = General Education

FRL = Free/Reduced Lunch

IEP = Individualized Education Program

ISS – In-School Suspension

LEP = Limited English Proficient, may be used interchangeably with ELL

LGBTQ+ = Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and other identities within
the LGBTQ community

MTSS = Multi-tiered System of Support

OSS = Out-of-School Suspension

PLC = Professional Learning Communities

PD = Professional Development

POC = People of Color

PTA = Parent Teacher Association

SEL= Social-Emotional Learning

SES = Socio-economic Status

SPED = Special Education

SY = School Year

Glossary

Agency: The efficacy to navigate systems and institutions.

Anti-bias/Anti-racist (ABAR): To be anti-bias and/or anti-racist is to actively identify and disrupt explicit and implicit forms of biases and racism in and among individuals, cultures, and institutions.

Bias: An organic information process of the human brain to identify preferences, inclination, disposition, or preferences.

Cisgender: A person that identifies their gender to their biological sex.

Classism: The oppressive state of discrimination, exclusion and prejudice based on socio-economic status.

Diversity: The mix of unique backgrounds, identities, and experiences, not limited to culture, language, or race/ethnicity, but as often misused to describe minoritized racial and ethnic groups.

Dominant (dominant culture): All dominant identities such as White, male, heterosexual, cisgender, upper class, abled-bodied, U.S. born, native English-speaker, college-educated, Christian, young, desirable in stature, size, and appearance.

Ethnicity: Groups of people that share common ancestry, heritage, history, geography, and language influenced by background and culture.

Historically marginalized identity (group or population): Any socially constructed identity based on race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexuality, ability, socio-economic status, language, age, national origin, religion/non-religious affiliation, physical attributes, education attainment and family status that has experienced institutional oppression. May be used interchangeably with minoritized identities, groups, or populations.

Inclusion: The act of being involved or active participation,

Equity: In terms of educational equity, equity is intentional identification of barriers to ensure every student has access and opportunity to academic and whole child needs in the school setting as measures by quantitative and qualitative outcomes, while examining the policies, procedures, processes, resources, and practices of the institutional structures that explicitly or implicitly, knowingly, or not, perpetuate inequities.

Institutions: The wide range of public goods and private entities developed to serve society such as criminal justice, education, employment, health care, housing, and policing.

Intersectionality: The intersecting of marginalized identities. Such identities include one or more intersections of race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexuality, ability, socio-economic status, language, age, national origin, religion/non-religious affiliation, physical attributes, education attainment and family status.

Minoritized (also known as minority): The non-dominant social constructs of race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexuality, ability, socio-economic status, language, age, national origin, religion/non-religious affiliation, physical attributes, education attainment and family status. May be used interchangeably with historically marginalized identities, groups, or populations.

Oppression: The exercise of power to unjustly manipulate resources and treatment against others, often experienced by minoritized identities.

Power: The capacity and ability to exercise influence among individuals, or at a structural or systemic level.

Racism: The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs, and actions of oppression that manifest privileges to White people, or those that identify or are perceived White, based on devaluing the experience and humanity of Black/African American/African American, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC), or those that identify as BIPOC. Racism is fueled by White supremacy ideology.

Sexism: The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs, and acts of oppression that manifest privileges to men, or those that identify as males, based on devaluing women, or those that identify as female. Sexism is fueled by male supremacy, also known as the patriarchy.

Social Constructs: All dominant and non-dominant identities that exist in visible and invisible social stratification systems of one's value, positionality, and full humanity.

Social Justice: The relationship of historically marginalized identities measured by full and equal participation in distribution, resources, and opportunities to leverage humane privileges.

White privilege: Unearned privileges associated with light skin color, or race, which manifest visible and invisible benefits to White people, acknowledged or not, within every socio-economic and political aspect of society.

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