



Milton Public Schools Quality Review Report

June 2021
Confidential

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Why Conduct a Quality Review?	2
1.3	Purpose of the Quality Review with an Equity Lens (QREL).....	2
1.3.1	About Cambridge Education	2
1.3.2	Use of the Report.....	3
1.4	QREL Framework	3
1.5	Methodology	5
1.5.1	Data review.....	5
1.5.2	Stakeholder input	6
1.5.3	Virtual school visits	6
2	Overview	8
2.1	District Context.....	8
2.2	Main Findings and Recommendations	8
3	Domain 1: Student Learning and Development Outcomes	11
3.1	Student Learning and Development Outcomes: Practices That Support Equity.....	11
3.1.1	Excellence with Equity Programs	11
3.1.2	Student Services and Supports.....	13
3.1.3	Promising Practices and Programming	13
3.1.4	Personal and Social Achievement.....	13
3.2	Student Learning and Development Outcomes: Practices That Limit Equity.....	15
3.2.1	Academic Achievement for All.....	15
3.2.2	Personal and Social Achievement.....	25
3.3	High Leverage Recommendations for Equitable Student Learning and Development Outcomes	27
4	Domain 2: Leadership, Management and Accountability	30
4.1	Leadership, Management and Accountability: Factors that Support Equity	30
4.1.1	Vision & Culture	30
4.1.2	Strategic Planning, Plan Management, and Use of Data.....	31
4.1.3	Governance	32
4.1.4	Structure	33
4.1.5	Professional Capacity of Staff	33
4.1.6	Fiscal Resources	33
4.1.7	IT	34
4.1.8	Communications	34
4.2	Leadership, Management, and Accountability: Factors that Limit Equity	35
4.2.1	Vision & Culture	35
4.2.2	Strategic Planning, Plan Management, and Use of Data.....	38

4.2.3	Accountability.....	39
4.2.4	Professional Capacity of Staff	39
4.2.5	Human Resources	41
4.2.6	Fiscal Resources	43
4.2.7	Operations	44
4.3	High-Leverage Recommendations for Leadership, Management, and Accountability	44
5	Domain 3: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CI&A).....	47
5.1	CI&A Practices That Support Equity	47
5.1.1	Learning and Teaching	47
5.1.2	Curriculum	48
5.1.3	Assessment and Use of Data.....	49
5.1.4	Instructional Leadership and Capacity	50
5.1.5	Professional Learning and Development.....	50
5.2	CI&A Practices That Limit Equity	51
5.2.1	Learning and Teaching	51
5.2.2	Curriculum	51
5.2.3	Assessment and Use of Data.....	53
5.2.4	Instructional Leadership and Capacity	53
5.2.5	Professional Learning and Development.....	54
5.3	High Leverage Recommendations for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.....	54
6	Domain 4: Family and Community Engagement	56
6.1	Family and Community Engagement: Factors that Support Equity	56
6.1.1	Families and Community.....	56
6.1.2	Political and Policy Alignment and Engagement.....	57
6.2	Family and Community Engagement: Factors that Limit Equity	58
6.2.1	Family Engagement and Student Voice	58
6.2.2	Extracurricular Opportunities.....	58
6.2.3	Political and Policy Alignment and Engagement.....	60
6.3	High-Leverage Recommendations for Family and Community Engagement	61
Appendix.....		1
A.	List of Stakeholder Events.....	1
A.1	Interviews (1:2 with Cambridge Education facilitators – 45-75 minutes)	1
A.2	Focus groups (5-8 participants – 45-60 minutes)	1
B.	Document Review	2
C.	Selected Resources	4
D.	Special Education Deeper Dive	6
D.1	Classification Rate	6
D.2	Composition Index	3
D.3	Relative Risk Ratio.....	5
D.4	Special Education Data of Note for Further Investigation	9
E.	Survey respondent demographic detail.....	11
E.1	Student survey demographics	11
E.2	Parent survey demographics	13

E.3 Staff survey demographics	14
F. Glossary	16

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Figures

Figure 1-1 The Quality Review Domains	3
Figure 3-1 The Calculus Project Outcomes	12
Figure 3-2 Students with Disabilities Expected vs. Actual	17
Figure 3-3 Disability by Race	18
Figure 3-4 Level of Need by Race Source: MPS Special Education Slides 20/21 Special Education Disability Type/Level of Need	18
Figure 3-5 Identification as a Student with a Communication Disability Source: MA DESE Edwin	19
Figure 3-6 Student Discipline 2019-2020 Source: MA DESE District Profile	20
Figure 3-7 Students Disciplined 2019-2020 by Race	21
Figure 3-8 Students Disciplined by Needs Designation	21
Figure 3-9 Students Suspended	22
Figure 3-10 12th grade AP Participation by Race	23
Figure 3-11 AP Qualifying Scores by Race	23
Figure 3-12 Participation in French Immersion by Race	25
Figure 3-13 Participation in French Immersion by Income	25
Figure 3-14 Student Survey Response Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity	26
Figure 4-1 - MPS Strategic Plan Goal 4 Source: Milton Public Schools website	31
Figure 4-2 Staff Survey Response	33
Figure 4-3 Parent Survey Response	35
Figure 4-4 Staff Survey Response	41
Figure 4-5 Staff Diversity Compared to State	42
Figure 4-6 Staff of Color by School	43
Figure 5-1 Student Survey Response Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity	52
Figure 6-1 Response to Family Equity Survey	57
Figure 6-2 Sports Participation by Race, MHS	59
Figure 6-3 Music Participation by Race, MHS	60

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Milton Public Schools (MPS) is a high-performing district. The district is well funded, with high-quality, experienced teachers and administrators in every school. Teachers have high expectations and provide rigorous instruction. Student outcomes on standardized tests, as well as graduation rates and student growth, exceed state averages. Parents and caregivers are fully engaged, highly involved, and supportive of the schools and their children's learning. The district has all the building blocks to provide an excellent education for all students.

However, the district has known for some time that some groups of students are not achieving at the highest levels. Efforts to close gaps in student performance have had limited success to date.

What Is the Difference Between Equality and Equity?

The distinction between equality and equity is an important one for achieving a quality education for all students.

Equality means offering everyone the same thing. It makes assumptions that everyone has had the same opportunities and experiences, speaks the same way, learns the same way and has had access to the same resources.

Equity gives each student what they need to be successful in school and beyond, and is culturally responsive to diverse backgrounds, especially those who have been socio-economically, linguistically, and culturally marginalized.

-National Association for Multicultural Education

So why do these gaps persist?

Why have the efforts to date been unsuccessful?

Achievement gaps for students have been tied to inequity in access and opportunity for some groups of students.

These are often related to social and cultural identities—including race, family income, English learner status, medical needs, and disability status.

MPS began work in 2020 to focus on these inequities in an effort to identify the systems, policies, and practices inherent in the district that may be limiting for some groups of students.

In July of 2020, the Milton

School Committee unanimously passed a resolution affirming its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism, and announced upcoming work to “raise the bar” and close gaps. The work was planned to include conducting a third-party equity audit, hiring a of Educational Equity, and adding cultural competency goals to the strategic plan.¹

In January 2021, Cambridge Education was contracted to conduct an equity audit. The review process was commissioned to assist the district in identifying the factors that both support and limit excellence and equity. In addition, the report was intended to provide some suggested actions that the district can take to enhance educational opportunities or remove barriers that may be limiting access and opportunity.

¹ Source: <https://www.miltonps.org/about/equity>

1.2 Why Conduct a Quality Review?

Conversations related to equity have increasingly extended beyond a dialogue about building cultural competencies to focus on how existing systems, policies, and practices may disadvantage persons of color, persons experiencing poverty, English language learners, students with disabilities (SWD), and other groups.

Addressing these inequities presents districts not only with a challenge, but also an opportunity—to create a truly diverse and inclusive environment for teaching and learning. Yet, systemic problems require systemic solutions. Even where districts are committed to this vision, educators may not know which steps to take to achieve it. School district central office leaders must provide support and monitoring to ensure that schools and classrooms are implementing solutions reliably and consistently.

A Quality Review can help educators understand the inequities that exist in their district and schools and inform development of the policies and practices needed to address them, so that equity is not just something that appears in documents with a (possible) check mark next to it, but becomes woven into all parts of the school community, impacting thoughts, words, and actions.

MPS elected to conduct a Quality Review with an Equity Lens (QREL) to provide baseline data that will support the updates to their long-term strategic plan and infuse equity throughout all improvement efforts. It is an evidence-based, objective evaluation and assessment of a school district's work and qualities.

1.3 Purpose of the Quality Review with an Equity Lens (QREL)

The QREL process is designed to:

- Enable all levels of leadership and staff in the district to gain a shared understanding of the quality of education currently being provided in relation to clearly articulated equity standards that define a quality school.
- Guide a process of self-reflection and directed practice.
- Develop a shared understanding within the school community of the areas that promote equity and the priorities for improving student learning.
- Identify needs using a structured process and with reference to a clear rubric. Enable the district to identify common patterns of professional practice across schools so that they can better support improved student outcomes for all.

The QREL is designed to be a positive and constructive process that helps the district, school staff, and community know their schools better. It acknowledges good practice, identifies areas that could be more effective, and enables the consistent implementation of improvement plans with purpose and fidelity.

Cambridge Education's QREL will allow the district to have an overview of the quality of education and educational experiences across the district so that they can make informed and strategic decisions going forwards with regards to support and funding. The district will be able to collaborate with school leaders and staff to ensure that there is a shared understanding of results and action plans to be reliably implemented across the whole district.

1.3.1 About Cambridge Education

Cambridge Education's approach includes reviewing administrative data, collecting qualitative data through interviews, focus groups and surveys, and conducting virtual school "visits."

Cambridge Education reviewers have expertise and skills in the areas of school improvement and school turnaround including, but not limited to, the following: knowledge of effective leadership; standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment; multi-tiered instructional systems; systems-change processes; and evidence-based practices and approaches for meeting the needs of all students—including English language learners, students with disabilities, and students from historically underserved groups.

Cambridge Education's QREL team brings together individuals with strong technical knowledge and a history of high performance at the school, district, and state levels. A Team Lead, who has substantial experience conducting quality reviews, as well as leading many other school improvement programs across the U.S., directs the QREL team. Under their guidance, our team conducted a comprehensive QREL that will help the district make decisions around its resourcing of services and organizational structures at both the strategic and operational levels.

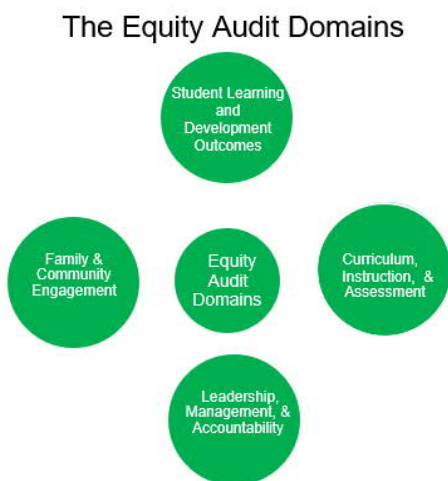
1.3.2 Use of the Report

A QREL is a snapshot in time and can only address what is in place and seen at the time of the review. Therefore, while the report can acknowledge planned work or work in the early stages of implementation (meaning there has not been sufficient time to produce data to confirm whether that work is making a difference or not), it will not ultimately “count” that work toward arriving at an outcome where support is concerned. For example, someone new to their position may not have had time to implement everything they have planned, and therefore the sections of the QREL that relate to their work and role may simply reiterate what is already known. In these cases, the report can help to inform and confirm their plans and provide a set of priorities to work from.

The QREL is not an evaluation of the performance of individual employees or schools, but an overview of the whole district.

The resulting report will guide school communities through a process of self-reflection. School leaders and staff will develop a shared understanding of the areas within the school community that promote effective student learning and the priorities for improvement. The QREL process is structured to identify needs with reference to a clear rubric. This can confirm existing knowledge and, in some cases, help the district to identify common patterns of professional practice across schools so that they can better support school improvement.

1.4 QREL Framework



The QREL Framework explores equity in four different areas, or domains, of the district's work:

- Student Learning and Development Outcomes
- Leadership, Management and Accountability
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Family and Community Engagement

Figure 1-1 The Quality Review Domains

The review considers student outcomes such as:

- State Achievement Tests (proficiency rates)
- Drop/Push Out or Graduation Rate
- High School Tracks/Curricula (percentage of students enrolled in basic, advanced, and/or college preparatory curricula)
- College Admission Testing (scores on SAT, ACT, and/or AP exams)
- Personal and social achievement of students.

The data are disaggregated for groups of students based on gender, race/ethnicity, whether they are an English language learner, whether they are experiencing poverty, and whether they have a disability.

The framework considers leadership and management support for equity by looking at:

- School and district vision and culture
- Data-informed systems and decision-making
- Governance
- Accountability
- Structure
- Professional capacity of school and district leaders
- Hiring and retention of staff, as well as diversity of staff
- Resource availability and allocation
- Appropriateness and availability of ongoing professional development for staff.

The QREL includes a look at the district's curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices to determine:

- Effectiveness of teaching practices
- Opportunities for rigorous instruction
- Cultural relevance of curriculum
- Use of data to inform instruction and decision-making
- Instructional monitoring
- Professional development opportunities
- Consistency of practice across all schools.

In addition, family and community involvement and engagement are examined to see how well the district:

- Values and considers the voices of families and students
- Develops and maintains productive partnerships with businesses, higher education, faith communities, and other community groups
- Builds support from the community to provide the resources and support needed for all students to succeed.

To assess district performance across the domains, the QREL team employed the following constructive three-point scale, which is based on the level of support required to improve equity:

1. Initiating
2. Developing
3. Established

Initiating (1) is characterized by some strengths but also some key areas for improvement. These areas for improvement are seen as having a negative impact on the quality of learning experienced by all students. *Initiating* identifies a level of provision that is below the minimum acceptable standard; it also implies the need for specific interventions and adjustments on the part of the schools and district. Districts characterized as *Initiating* should address these areas for improvement to ensure consistent and embedded improvement in student learning across schools.

Developing (2) is characterized by several strengths, which are consistent and embedded. While there are some minor weaknesses, they do not have an adverse impact on students' learning experiences to a significant degree. Areas characterized as *Developing* should address their minor weaknesses and continue to take advantage of opportunities to improve.

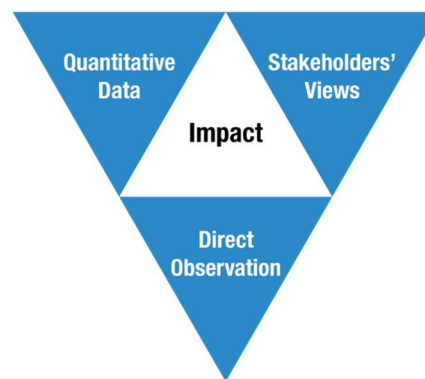
Established (3) is characterized by major strengths that have a significant and positive impact on student learning for all learners. The few minor weaknesses that may exist do not diminish the students' learning experiences. While *Established* represents a high standard, this should be achievable in all schools. It implies that a school, with support from the district, should continue to review and revise its priorities and take advantage of opportunities to continuously improve.

1.5 Methodology

The QREL team was afforded great access to MPSs' staff, schools, documentation, and data. Extensive efforts were made to gather stakeholder participation, including multiple notification methods and deadline extensions.

While it is common accountability practice to evaluate schools and districts quantitatively with student achievement data, the QREL approach includes qualitative data to acknowledge the stakeholder experience to understand how schools and districts engage, communicate with, and provide a safe, welcoming, and student-centered environment. Within the QREL framework, we use data triangulation methods to analyze various data sources, determine our findings, and make recommendations by using research-supported best practices in seeking corroborating and at times conflicting evidence from both qualitative and quantitative data.

While the study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambridge Education was able to conduct focus groups and interviews via Microsoft Teams instead of onsite. We do not believe this approach adversely impacted participation or the integrity of our process, nor was this mentioned as an issue by any participants.



1.5.1 Data review

With the support of the district, Cambridge Education reviewers analyzed achievement data and examined district policies, practices, and resource allocations. Data and documentation included, but was not limited to:

- Assessment of professional development offerings related to equity, diversity, and creating schools free of bias, prejudice, and discrimination
- Detailed analysis on district data relative to student academic performance, enrollment based on tracking, discipline, achievement, attendance, social-emotional needs, dropout and graduation rates, involvement in extracurricular activities, special education status, and English language learner classification

- Achievement data by race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, disability status, and English language learning proficiency
- Policy review of MPS practices as outlined in School Committee Policy, Employee Handbook, and the Student Code of Conduct Handbook
- Review of literature on institutional racism in public education to identify current strategies and practices that promote or inhibit equity
- Assessment of financial resources distributed across the district in order to provide recommendations on best practice strategies for how to equitably fund schools
- Examination of targeted intervention supports for academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs to identify strengths, challenges, opportunities, and effectiveness
- Review of family and community engagement practices to provide recommendations on strategies for creating a safe and welcoming environment for all families, including families of color.
- Review of curriculum to ensure it is fully representative of MPSs' diverse community, to provide recommendations on how to increase representation within the curriculum, and to suggest supports to increase student representation in advanced classes or programming
- Review of efforts to recruit and retain staff of color in order to recommend steps to improve staff recruitment and provide strategies on how to support a diverse workforce.

1.5.2 Stakeholder input

Given the purpose and scope of the study, Cambridge Education's approach was focused on a high-level understanding of equity within MPS by collecting stakeholder experience data and examining policies and practices. Throughout the study period, Cambridge Education conducted over 20 interviews with district and school leaders and hosted several focus groups with various stakeholder groups. More than 50 individuals shared their experiences through interviews or focus groups.

More than 3,000 voluntary and confidential equity surveys were deployed to parents (12% response rate), instructional staff (25% response rate), and students in grades 6-12 (45% response rate).² Although the response rate was not as high for parents and teachers as it was for students, the responses do provide access to an even wider group of stakeholders and provide opportunities to share perceptual feedback that some may not be comfortable to share in a meeting or group setting. Survey respondent demographics can be found in the Appendix.

While there was feedback from many stakeholders across the community, a limitation of perceptual data is that it relies on the willingness of participants to engage in the process. While exploring issues and opportunities related to equity, an individual's personal and professional lens and experience can inspire engagement or raise barriers to the data collection process. This affirms the need to collect and analyze viewpoints from multiple sources and look for consistency in perceptions across stakeholder groups, and not rely on a single instrument to make inferences.

1.5.3 Virtual school visits

The review team conducted virtual "visits" to every school in the district. During these visits, reviewers were able to observe learning and teaching in classrooms, interview the principals

² A total of 54 individuals' responses and/or parent and student contact information were removed from the response pool at the request of parents who chose not to participate in the survey or have their child participate. See Domain 4 – Family and Community Engagement for more detail.

and leadership teams, sit in on professional learning committee (PLC) meetings, and visit with groups of students.

2 Overview

2.1 District Context

MPS is a school district in the Greater Boston area serving some 4,500 students from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12. Bordering the City of Boston, MPS is classified as a suburban district.

MPS has a diverse student population, with students of color making up 31.2% of the students in the district. The state population for non-White students is 43.3%. The rate of economically disadvantaged students is 11.4% and the population of students with disabilities is 16%, as compared with the state average of 36.6% economically disadvantaged and 18.7% students with disabilities.

James Jette is the superintendent of MPS and was appointed in January 2021. The Milton School Committee consists of six members chosen at large by ballot from the registered voters of Milton. These members serve without compensation. The term of office is three years. Two seats on the committee were filled in April 2021 in a general election.

Massachusetts sets targets for every district and school, and in 2019, MPS received an accountability rating of “Not requiring assistance or intervention” from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)³ due to the district’s “substantial progress toward targets” for the previous school year. (Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the state waived accountability ratings for the 2019–2020 school year.) To determine each district and school’s overall classification, the state compiles and analyzes data and information related to progress toward improvement targets, accountability percentiles, graduation rates, and Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) participation rates.

In the Class of 2020, 94.9% of students received their high school diplomas on time or earlier, compared to the state rate of 89%. The dropout rate for students in grades 9–12 was 0.2% during the 2019–2020 school year, as opposed to the state rate of 1.6%⁴. The average SAT score at MPS was 1146 for 2019–2020 test-takers, while the state average was slightly lower at 1112.

As of the 2018–2019 school year, an average teacher’s salary was \$82,283, which was \$66 less than the state average. In 2017–2018, 307 teachers were evaluated; 13.7% earned a rating of “exemplary,” 80.8% were rated “proficient,” 4.9% were identified as “needs improvement,” and 0.7% were found to be “unsatisfactory”⁵ on the state’s teacher evaluation system. State-level averages for these ratings are slightly higher at 13.9% “exemplary,” and 82.4% “proficient,” but slightly lower at 3.4% “needs improvement, and 0.3% “unsatisfactory.”

2.2 Main Findings and Recommendations

Milton Public Schools is a high-performing district, with graduation rates and test scores that exceed the state average. Teachers have high expectations and provide rigorous instruction. Nearly 90% of students attend two- or four-year colleges after graduating from high school.

³ Source: <https://reportcards.doe.mass.edu/2020/DistrictReportcard/01890000>

⁴ Source: State-level data: https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/

⁵ Source: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/teacher.aspx?orgcode=01890000&orgtypecode=5&leftNavId=12505&>

The district has high-quality, experienced teachers and administrators in every school. Nearly 90% of teachers report that their school is a nurturing place to work.

District and school strategic plans have goals associated with equity, diversity, and inclusion. The district has undertaken many recent initiatives to build equity in the schools, such as introducing a more culturally responsive curriculum and resources, implementing programs to support social and emotional learning for students, and providing training on restorative practice.

MPS schools are perceived to be safe and nurturing places by many stakeholders. Most students and staff generally feel accepted by their peers and colleagues. Most parents and students feel respected by adults at both the school and district levels. Parents and caregivers are fully engaged, highly involved, and supportive of the schools and their children's learning. Families feel welcome, and teachers and administrators support two-way communication to keep parents informed on their children's progress and to understand their concerns.

The district has built partnerships with many community organizations to support the academic and social and emotional needs of students and their families.

However, although there are documents, plans, and policy statements relating to equity on the district's website and messaging comes regularly from the Director of Educational Equity to the community, more work must be done to fully embed equitable practice and behavior of all actors at every level.

Data reveals disproportionalities in student achievement, discipline, access to rigorous coursework and other opportunities, and in the identification of students with special needs. Some groups of students are matriculating into four-year colleges at a lower rate than others. Some student groups do not participate in extracurricular activities and sports at the same rate as others.

The curriculum is being updated and attention has been paid to increasing the cultural relevance in some subject areas. It is evident, however, that not all students are taking opportunities to engage in the highest-level classes at the high school. The French Immersion program is disproportionately White in most schools and includes very low numbers of students with special needs.

Accountability and monitoring are lacking in some areas. Monitoring of learning and teaching as well as regular evaluation and feedback are inconsistent. Professional learning and development are not always monitored for implementation and impact on student learning and opportunities to engage in culturally competent learning and teaching are limited and not job embedded.

School culture varies between schools, as does levels of diversity of staff and students. Stakeholder surveys show that certain groups have different experiences attending school or working in the district. The district budgeting process does not engage all stakeholders, budget decisions are not based on data, nor are the decisions centered on student need. The voices of students are not considered in the decision-making processes in their schools, or even in their classes.

Although the district has partnerships with several community organizations that support equity, diversity, and inclusion, they have been unable to effectively work with these groups toward achieving the goals that they share.

Some high-level recommendations for the district to improve equity for all students include, but are not limited to:

- The district must turn words into action. The most important assets needed to build an equitable school district are commitment and accountability. Currently, not everyone in the community is committed to this cause and plans do not identify those who are accountable and responsible for implementation. Many stakeholders see action as optional, someone else's job, or something to be postponed until after the pandemic. The district must hold all levels of staff accountable for achieving equity goals. To gain commitment, include stakeholders in generating solutions.
- Build a common understanding and definition of what equity is and what it looks like in MPS. Engage in a program of learning that will empower educators with the data and training they need to uncover where inequities are happening in their own schools and classrooms. Provide support for groups of educators to conduct root-cause analyses to determine why disproportionalities are occurring. Be sure to communicate findings across the district.
- The district's strategic action plan should have equity goals and metrics throughout. Equity should not be independent from other goals, but part of each goal. Select strategic goals and limit them to a number that is challenging, yet achievable. Track metrics for all goals using an equity lens and make sure that all students are benefitting. School improvement plans should be aligned to the prioritized strategic goals. The district should closely monitor and review the impact of all initiatives and amend or discontinue initiatives that are not providing the results that are needed. Do not engage in initiatives that are unrelated to the strategic goals. Hold people accountable for tracking and reaching goals
- School and district systems and practices should be transparent, implemented consistently and with fidelity, and involve input from stakeholders. Budgeting, for example, should be more student-centric and based on data. Principals and other district stakeholders should use student data to identify and budget for what their students actually need in order for all to succeed.
- Support principals to achieve their personal and professional goals by visiting schools frequently and providing actionable feedback. As instructional leaders, principals must monitor efforts in individual schools and classrooms and in turn, be consistently monitored by district staff. Likewise, all teachers need to be supported in using data to identify instructional needs. Frequent and consistent monitoring and feedback will help teachers to build skills. Principals and teachers need to be held consistently accountable for conducting personal and school improvement plans.
- Engage in professional learning that will improve the cultural competence of teachers and leaders. Ensure that all professional development is followed up with monitoring and support for implementation.
- Support the well-being of all students in every school by ensuring they have the social, emotional, and mental health supports they need. Seek solutions to remove barriers for participation in sports and extracurricular activities for all.
- Engage members of the community in these efforts. Communicate a vision, mission, and goals that inspire support and action from the community. Include the voices of parents and students in efforts to understand issues and develop solutions.

This report outlines the findings that were uncovered in the four domains during the review. It also lays out recommendations for action. The action plan, however, belongs to the district. Central leaders must work together with building principals to unpack the data and identify the areas of strength to build on as well as the areas for improvement. The district needs to prioritize the high-leverage areas for improvement, root out the causes of the inequities, and implement and monitor a plan for improvement. The plan must include stakeholders in its generation, and district leaders must hold stakeholders at all levels accountable for achieving equity for all students.

3 Domain 1: Student Learning and Development Outcomes

Rating: Initiating

Overview

MPS has many of the ingredients necessary to create an effective and equitable school district where excellence is truly for all. The challenge and opportunity lie in the ability to prioritize, cohere, align, and integrate the district's many initiatives in service of optimal student learning and development for all the district's students. The focus should be on student achievement and those initiatives that have the greatest impact on outcomes. District leadership should focus on the effectiveness and outcomes of all instruction, services, and support, ensure that all programming and resources are distributed equitably, and take an intentional and transparent approach to dismantling systemic inequities and practices that create and maintain the opportunity and access gaps in student learning and development for groups of students.

3.1 Student Learning and Development Outcomes: Practices That Support Equity

3.1.1 Excellence with Equity Programs

- As outlined in the strategic plan, there is an established objective to expand existing excellence-with-equity programs such as The Calculus Project, which is a program that is designed to increase access to higher-level math courses and close the math achievement gap for African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx students.

While 50% of Milton High School (MHS) class of 2021's African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx students as a group achieved a score of "exceeding" or "meeting" requirements on grade 10 math MCAS, that percentage jumps to 77% for students participating in The Calculus Project. This is a rate higher than the average for all students in MHS. Further, students enrolled in The Calculus Project improved at a higher level than all students in the aggregate.⁶

⁶ Source: The Calculus Project, courtesy of Dr. Adrian B. Mims, Executive Director.

Milton Class of 2021 TCP Outcomes																							
						All Black/Hispanic students (including TCP)																	
All students						10th grade Math MCAS						TCP						10th grade Math MCAS					
8th grade Math MCAS		E	M	PM	NM	Grand Total	8th grade Math MCAS		E	M	PM	NM	Grand Total	8th grade Math MCAS		E	M	PM	NM	Grand Total			
	Exceeding	27	10	0	0	37		Exceeding	3	0	0	0	3		Exceeding	1	0	0	0	1			
	Meeting	30	83	0	2	115		Meeting	4	16	2	0	22		Meeting	3	9	1	0	13			
	Partially Meeting	0	0	3	7	10		Partially Meeting	0	8	21	1	30		Partially Meeting	0	4	3	0	7			
	Not Meeting	0	38	3	45	86		Not Meeting	0	0	5	2	7		Not Meeting	0	0	1	0	1			
	Grand Total	57	131	6	54	248		Grand Total	7	24	28	3	62		Grand Total	4	13	5		22			
% E/M in G10		75.8%				% E/M in G10		50.0%				% E/M in G10		77.3%									
highest level		10.9%				highest level		4.8%				highest level		4.5%									
improved level		28.6%				improved level		27.4%				improved level		36.4%									
maintained level		52.8%				maintained level		62.9%				maintained level		54.5%									
declined level		7.7%				declined level		4.8%				declined level		4.5%									

Figure 3-1 The Calculus Project Outcomes

- Advanced Placement (AP)** — Participation in AP courses are a strong indicator of students' ability to engage in rigorous coursework, especially at highly selective colleges and universities. Milton High School (MHS) offers open enrollment into AP courses in that students do not need a recommendation from a teacher to register for an AP course.⁷
 - MHS offers 21 AP courses; nearly 60% of juniors and seniors took AP courses over a five-year period from 2012-2017.
 - In 2017-2018, 90% of students enrolled in math and world languages AP courses earned qualifying scores.⁸
 - From 2009 through 2016, the rate of qualifying scores on AP exams has steadily increased from 47% to 85%.
 - AP participation numbers steadily increased from 99 to 129 in 2012 and 2016, respectively.⁹
- Access to Higher Education and College Enrollment**
 - From 2010-2015, the average percentage of graduates attending higher education was 85% while the state average was 75%.¹⁰
 - The rate of students of color matriculating to college is reflective of the population. It should be noted that more African American/Black students attended 2-year colleges than did other groups.¹¹
- MCAS Achievement**
 - At the aggregate level, from FY 2017–20 in both English language arts & math, students in grades 3–8 consistently exceeded the state proficiency levels. This trend continued through high school for Milton students.
 - 92% scored proficient/advanced in the Legacy MCAS science grade 10.
- French Immersion** — The French Immersion Program begins with full French immersion in grade 1. 100% of the curriculum, except specials, is taught in French in grades 1 and 2, 50% of the curriculum is taught in French in grades 3 and 4, and 30% of the curriculum is taught

⁷ As indicated in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) self-evaluation.

⁸ Source: 2017-2018 MCAS & Assessment Presentation.

⁹ Source: 2016-2017 Diversity & Annual Report (November 2017).

¹⁰ Source: 2016-2017 Diversity & Annual Report (November 2017).

¹¹ Source: 2016-2017 Diversity & Annual Report (November 2017).

in French in grade 5. French language instruction continues through middle school and into high school, as do other world languages.

- **SAT participation** — The SAT participation rate is proportionate to enrollment for all subgroups.

3.1.2 Student Services and Supports

- MPS has a continuum of special education services and support that includes:
 - In-class inclusion support; co-taught classrooms; learning centers/academic support; self-contained classrooms to strands across the following domains: Autism, Language-Based, Social Emotional, Communication & Developmental Delay; and 18–22-year-old programming.
 - A partnership with the New England Center for Children (NECC) for students on the autism spectrum.
 - Comprehensive Student Services Staff, including Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), Speech-language Pathologists, (SLPs), Occupational Therapists (OTs), and Inclusion Specialists; a Team Chair in each building; Tiered support efforts in English language arts/math/social emotional learning; Behavioral Support teams; and an English Learner Education (ELE) Coordinator for students with English language learning needs.
 - Evidence-Based Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Programming — MPS currently implements Second Step, which is a Pre-K through grade 8 program designed to provide holistic SEL programming across the school day to support inclusive, equitable learning. MPS is also using the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)'s Guidebook for Inclusive Practice to support ongoing work on inclusive practice and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

3.1.3 Promising Practices and Programming

- The following are developed or in process:
 - District Task Force & District-Wide Action Plan to address discipline
 - District-wide initiatives in cultural competency and anti-bias training
 - Professional Development in Restorative Justice/Practices
 - Ongoing development of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) with a focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
 - Ongoing deepening of Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS) district wide
 - Development of a more robust Student Support Team (SST) process
 - Deeper implementation of the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)
 - Inclusive Practices Institute, DESE Inclusive Practices

3.1.4 Personal and Social Achievement

- **Support & Guidance** — The district provides multi-layered support and guidance, designed to ensure all students have access to opportunities for personal and academic achievement. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Guidance and Adjustment Counselors in all buildings with proposed increases in the current budget to align with best practice guidelines for a ratio of one counselor to 250

students. This is the rate that is recommended by the American School Counselor Association.¹²

- School Nurses in all buildings with increases in support for larger buildings.
- Robust College Counseling and post-high school supports.
- In-district age 18–22 post-secondary programming for students with disabilities.
- BRYTT Program at the high school to address students’ mental health needs.
- Post-secondary education planning.
- Robust club and activity opportunities at MHS.
- **Social Emotional Learning Competencies** — SEL competencies help students to develop important skills, from learning to manage their emotions to establishing and maintaining supportive relationships and making responsible decisions, all of which are critical to balance with academic learning. SEL is directly tied to two of five expectations (See NEASC self-evaluation 2020) for MHS graduates: 1) Practice good citizenship, personal responsibility, and character through individual and collective actions and 2) demonstrate understanding and respect for themselves and the diversity of ideas, cultures, and abilities in school and beyond. Additionally, there is a clear objective in the strategic plan to identify SEL competencies by grade level and vertically align pre-K-12 SEL curriculum.
- **Extracurricular Activities, Arts, and Athletics** — Athletics and the arts are an integral part of the foundation for personal, social, and emotional development and provide students with a more well-rounded education. The merits of participation in extracurricular activities, arts, and athletics are endless; they provide students with an opportunity to explore areas beyond academics and practice their SEL and executive functioning skills. There is a clear objective in the strategic plan to increase the overall participation of students of color in extracurricular activities to close the participation gap and optimize the academic, social, emotional and sociocultural experiences that help every student in the district realize their own full academic and developmental potential. Over half (63%) of MHS students participate in extracurricular activities.
 - *Athletics*. MHS offers 31 sports programs with 71 overall teams from first-year through varsity level. Across all seasons, about 25% or more of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) students participate in sports.¹³ More than two-thirds of MHS students participate in a sport each year.¹⁴
 - *Extracurricular Activities and Arts*. Students can choose from more than 40 clubs and a robust theatre program that will perform two musicals this year, along with two other performances that were entered into the Massachusetts High School Drama Festival. Across the district, roughly one-third of the students participate in performing arts, including band, strings, and chorus, with the same percentage of students of color participating.
- **Student Voice, Screenings & Student Surveys**. In the strategic plan, there is a clear objective to identify and complete a structure to capture student voices and experiences that can be shared with the faculty to further understand the experience of students of color within the district. As such, every two years, the Youth Risk Behavior (YRB) Survey/Youth Health Survey (YHS) are administered. Every year in grades 7 & 9, Screening and Brief Intervention and Referral (SBIR) surveys are administered. In general, students reported

¹² Source: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/>

¹³ Source: 2016-2017 Diversity and Annual Report (November 2017).

¹⁴ Source: NEASC Self-Reflection Report, 2020.

positive school experiences when data was gathered via the Intellispark student voice surveys conducted in SY20-21. An equity survey was conducted by Cambridge Education as part of this study with Pierce Middle School (PMS) and MHS students. Some of the data highlights are as follows:

- 70% & 71% of students report a high level of belonging (PMS & MHS, respectively).
- 81% & 78% of students report a high level of engagement (PMS & MHS, respectively).
- 100% of students report a high level of decision making (PMS & MHS).
- Students have good relationships (skills, networks, adult, and peer), reporting an average 88.25% and 86.75% (PMS & MHS, respectively).
- For the equity survey, students at PMS and MHS in the aggregate report that they are treated fairly and with respect by the school staff and that the teachers have high expectations and provide them with academic support.
 - 85% of students report that their teachers “really listen” to them.
 - 83% of students report that “all students have the same opportunities in class.”
 - 90% of students report that “staff will assist you if you report incidents of bullying or harassment.”

3.2 Student Learning and Development Outcomes: Practices That Limit Equity

3.2.1 Academic Achievement for All

- MPS has rich and robust data, including achievement and opportunity gap data, which it routinely gathers and tracks. Further, MPS routinely publishes and shares data with the School Committee. However, it is not clear how the district-level data is used beyond these presentations. A clearly established or vertically articulated system for reviewing data with aligned measures for action-oriented metrics that informs instruction and decision-making is not evident. Furthermore, there is seemingly a theory of action that proportionate demographic access data yields educational equity. For example, there is a proportionate number of African American/Black & Hispanic/Latinx students who participate in the SAT, yet there remains an achievement gap in the outcomes. In fact, in the Strategic Data Dashboard Presentation 2018–2019, on the slide entitled Cultural Competence: Equitable Access, it states that:
 - Our overall district goal is to promote equitable access to match the demographic of any program to that of the student population.
 - We believe that achieving this demographic match suggests equitable access to any given program.
 - We recognize that access and achievement go hand in hand, in that we must make sure all students have equal access before they can have the opportunity to achieve.

It is important to know that merely providing access does not yield equity; neither does proportionality, in and of itself, impact outcomes.

- Access to Higher Education/College Enrollment
 - Only 63% of students with disabilities reported plans to matriculate to college.¹⁵

¹⁵ Source: 2016-2017 Diversity & Annual Report (November 2017).

- Legacy MCAS & MCAS Next Generation
 - MCAS achievement gaps persist across grade levels and over time along race, socio-economic and disability status. While there have been some single-digit gains in some subgroups in certain years, the gaps between students with disabilities, students at economic disadvantage, as well as students who are African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx; and White & Asian students and all students remain persistent and large.¹⁶
 - Significantly fewer students in subgroups met or exceeded expectations; that is, only 37% of students at economic disadvantage; 19% of students with disabilities; 17% of English language learners; and 38% of African American/Black students met or exceeded expectations.¹⁷
- Disproportionality and Over-identification of African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx students:
 - *Special Education.* In MPS, African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx Students are both over-referred and over-identified in special education. More specifically:
 - African American/Black students make up 13% of MPS student population, however they are overrepresented in special education at 22%. It should also be noted that such over-referral and over-identification of students of color in special education is heightened for African American/Black boys.
 - MPS has additional disproportionality related to over-identifying African American/Black students with the communication disability category at five times the rate of White students. African American/Black students are also disproportionately in more restrictive placements than their peers.
 - While students with disabilities on the aggregate exceed state benchmarks; there are large and persistent gaps when disaggregated by race, with disproportionality between racial groups, by disability types, and educational placement.
 - MPS has been flagged by the Massachusetts DESE for potential disproportionality related to students of color in special education who have experienced discipline removals. African American/Black students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) receive out-of-school suspensions at five times the rate of White students on IEPs.¹⁸

(Information provided by Milton Special Ed Data, DESE Special Ed Data, KS Disproportionality Data.)

¹⁶ Source: Achievement Gap Reports grades 3-8, grade 10, 2017-2019.

¹⁷ Source: 2016-2017 Diversity & Annual Report (November 2017).

¹⁸ Source: DESE Disproportionality Report: Edwin.

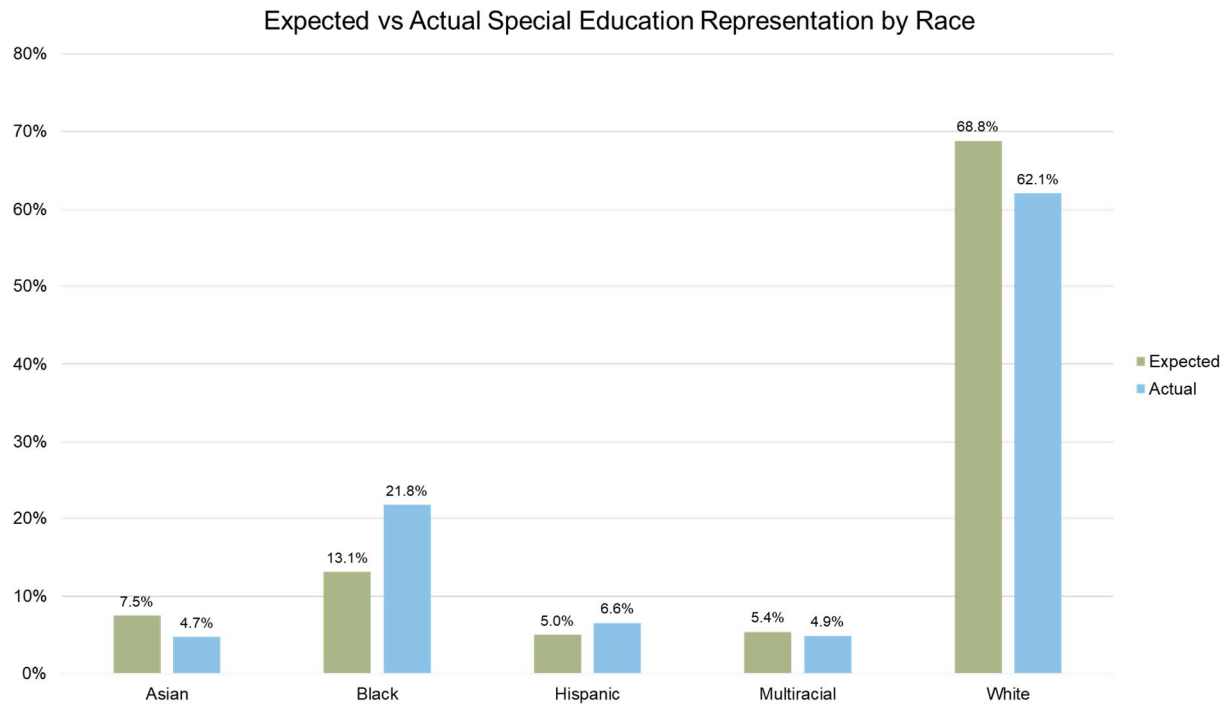


Figure 3-2 Students with Disabilities Expected vs. Actual

(See: Disproportionality Deeper Dive in the Appendix for more information.)

Some school staff are aware of this, and in the equity staff survey, 55% of the respondents disagree with the statement, “Our racial representation in special education mirrors the population as a whole.”

Special Education Disability Type by Race, 2020-21

Special Education Disability Type	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other/Multiracial	White	All
Autism	14%	39%	12%	11%	11%	13%
Communication	17%	19%	10%	11%	9%	11%
Developmental Delay	10%	11%	16%	27%	12%	13%
Emotional	9%	3%	12%	11%	8%	8%
Health	19%	11%	20%	24%	25%	23%
Intellectual	4%	0%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Multiple Disabilities	0%	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%
Neurological	3%	0%	2%	11%	7%	5%
Physical	0%	0%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%
Sensory/Hearing Impaired	0%	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%
Sensory/Visually Impaired	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	<1%
Specific Learning Disabilities	23%	11%	24%	3%	21%	21%

Figure 3-3 Disability by Race

Special Education Disability Level of Need by Race, 2020-21

Level of Need	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other/Multiracial	White	All
Low - < 2 hrs of services per week	7%	19%	6%	14%	21%	16%
Low - ≥ 2 hrs a week	3%	6%	10%	5%	10%	8%
Moderate	67%	36%	61%	57%	46%	52%
High	22%	33%	16%	19%	14%	17%
N/A	1%	6%	8%	5%	9%	7%

Figure 3-4 Level of Need by Race

Source: MPS Special Education Slides 20/21 Special Education Disability Type/Level of Need

Student Communication Disability Identification, 2019-20

	Risk Ratio	Total # of Students	Total # of Students with a Communication Disability	% of Students with a Communication Disability
African American/Black	3	624	31	5.00%
White	0.3	3,096	30	1.00%
District Total		4478	74	1.70%
State Total		959,354	24,418	2.50%

Figure 3-5 Identification as a Student with a Communication Disability
Source: MA DESE Edwin

- *Discipline.* The district is in the process of developing a model to address DESE's identified disproportionality in discipline for subgroups of students. While the district's aggregate discipline rates are lower than the state average, the district is on the state watchlist for disproportionality related to students of color in special education who have experienced discipline removals.
 - In FY19, students with disabilities and students who are economically disadvantaged received in-school suspensions at almost four and five times the rate of White students.
 - African American/Black students receive out-of-school suspensions over four times the rate of White students.
 - Of students with disabilities, African American/Black students have over three times the rate of a disciplinary removal than White students.

From the qualitative school visits and focus groups, it appears that the disparity in the district's discipline data may not be widely known beyond special education and district leadership.

Student Discipline Data, 2019-2020

Student Group	# of Students	# of Students Disciplined	% of Students Disciplined	% In-School Suspension	% Out of School Suspension
All Students	4,504	52	1.15%	0.50%	0.80%
English Learner	117	0	0.00%		
Economically Disadvantaged	539	16	2.97%	1.70%	1.90%
Students with Disabilities	720	21	2.92%	1.40%	1.90%
High Needs	1,200	28	2.33%	1.30%	1.30%
Female	2,253	10	0.44%	0.30%	0.20%
Male	2,250	42	1.87%	0.70%	1.40%
American Indian/Alaska Native	5		0.00%		
Asian	319	1	0.31%		
Black	633	26	4.11%	1.60%	2.70%
Hispanic	222	2	0.90%		
Multiracial (non-Hispanic)	226	2	0.88%		
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3		0.00%		
White	3,096	21	0.68%	0.20%	0.50%

Figure 3-6 Student Discipline 2019-2020

Source: MA DESE District Profile

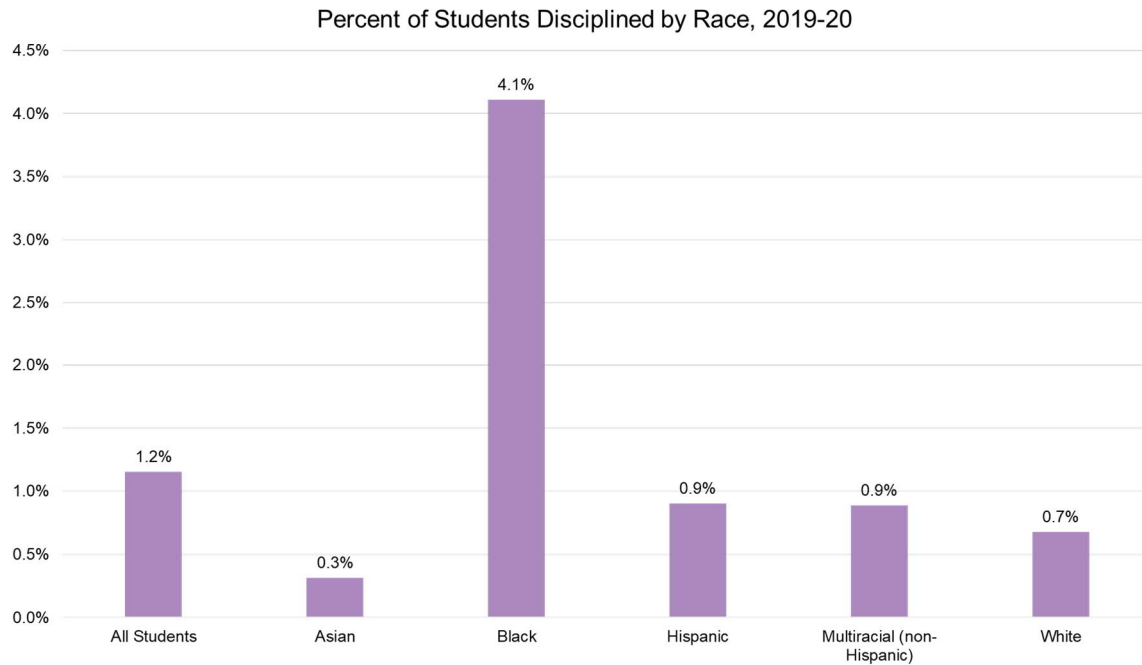


Figure 3-7 Students Disciplined 2019-2020 by Race

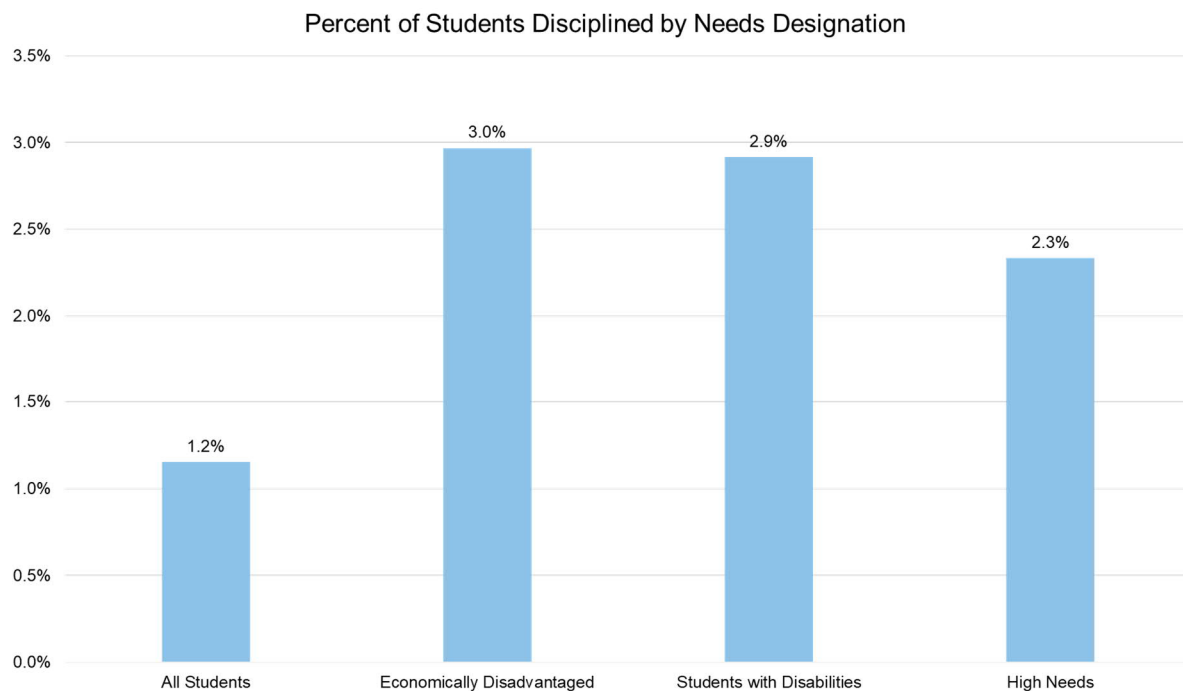


Figure 3-8 Students Disciplined by Needs Designation

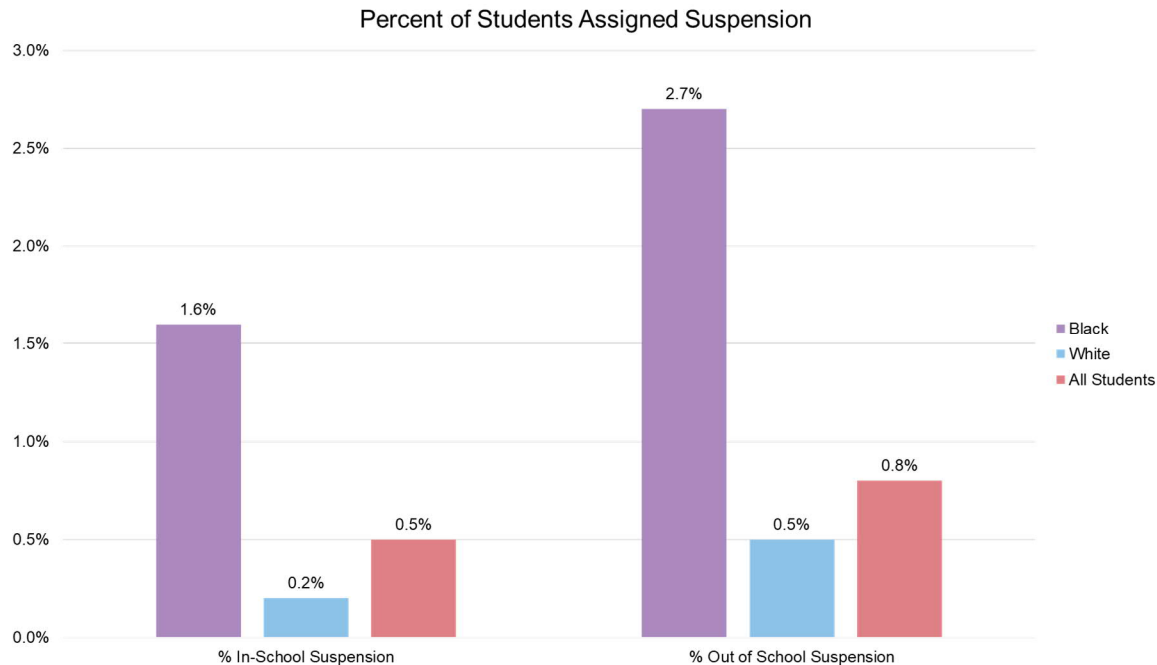


Figure 3-9 Students Suspended

- **Advanced Placement (AP)** — Participation in AP courses is a strong indicator of students' ability to engage in rigorous coursework, especially at highly selective colleges and universities.
 - While there are robust AP program offerings at MHS, the percentage of African American/Black students participating is low compared to other groups. For the 2018–2019 school year, for instance, African American/Black students made up 21% and 18% of the school population respectively, but only 8% and 11% of the AP participants. For all other races/ethnicities, the representation in AP is comparable to the percentage of students in that demographic group.
 - Similarly, the qualifying score rates for African American/Black is the lowest of all subgroups with White & Hispanic/Latinx scores slightly above 80%.
 - In 2017, African American/Black students achieved qualifying scores at a lesser rate than multiracial/other (81%), Asian (84%), Hispanic/Latinx (88%), and White (87%).
 - The differential of the qualifying score for low-income students and non-low-income students is about 14%, although there has been a steady improvement from 2015 (57%).

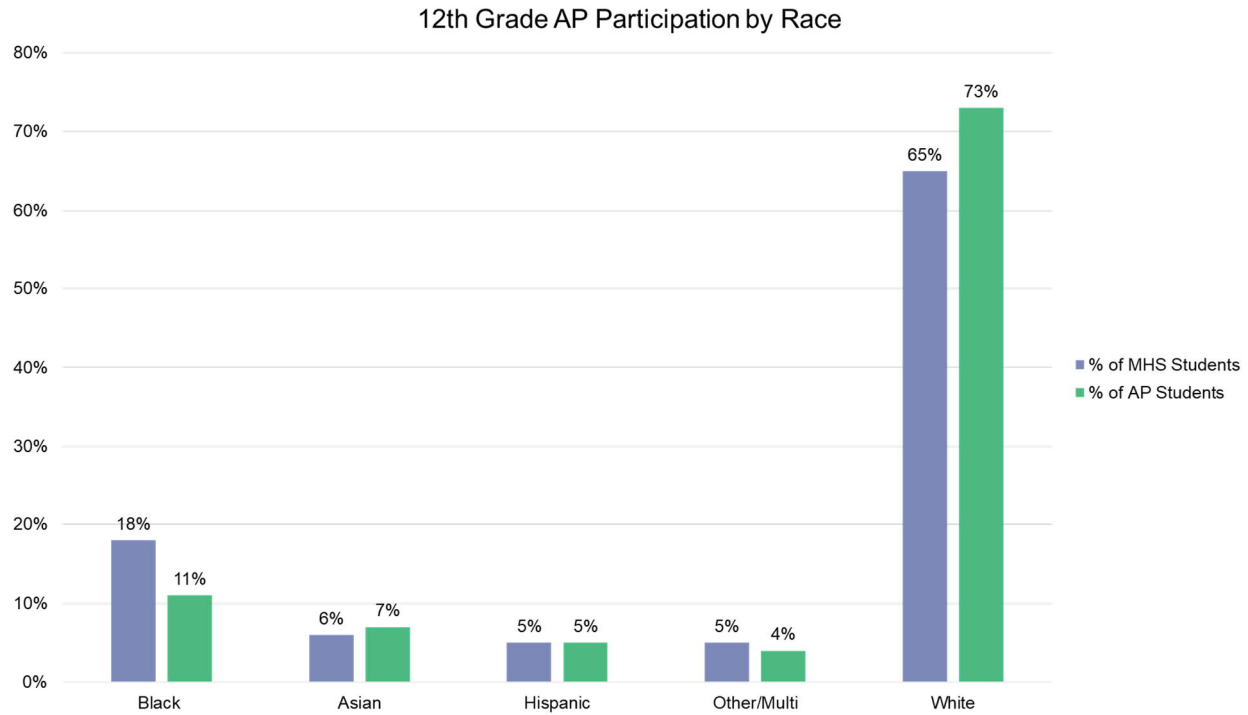


Figure 3-10 12th grade AP Participation by Race

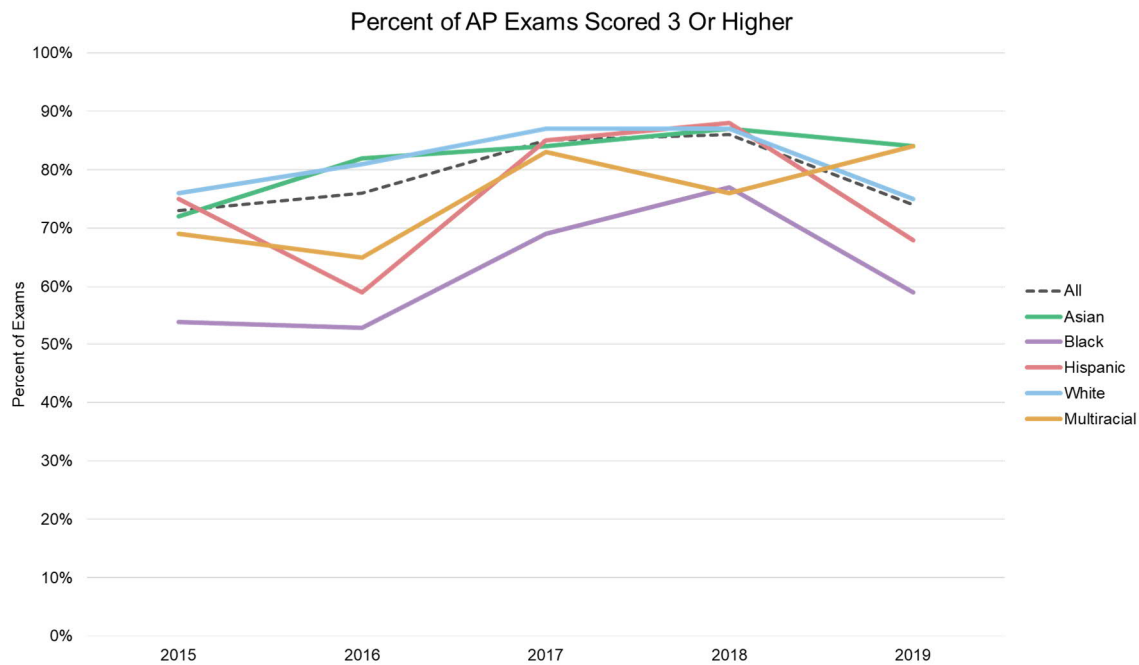


Figure 3-11 AP Qualifying Scores by Race

- **SAT** — The SAT is an important metric because it is one indicator to determine academic preparedness for college. The SAT performance for students of color and students who qualify for free and reduced lunch is noticeably lagging—35% and 40% meeting the SAT college and career benchmark¹⁹, respectively, compared to 67% in the aggregate.²⁰
- The **French Immersion Program** is a fully established and coveted program in MPS. However, the access is limited as students are unable to enter the program after grade 1. There is a disproportionately low number of African American/Black students in the program. While grade 1 enrollment in French Immersion data from 2020 shows that all races participate in the program proportionally, in grades 3–5, French Immersion students of color and students with disabilities are fewer and the differences are statistically significant. It should be noted that the French Immersion Program is limited at the Tucker School—the district's most diverse elementary school in terms of race and economic status. Students of color are under-represented in the French Immersion Program, as are students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students. While the rate of low-income/economically disadvantaged students in the district is around 15%, only 6% of students in this status enrolled in French Immersion in grade 1 in 2020. The entry access at Kindergarten appears to serve as a gatekeeping mechanism.

¹⁹ The College Board's SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks are the minimum SAT scores that studies show are necessary for students to be ready for college and career. Specifically, the benchmark score represents a 75% likelihood of a student achieving at least a "C" grade in a first-semester, credit-bearing college course in a related subject. Overall college and career readiness are defined as achieving both benchmarks – Evidence-based Reading and Writing (ERW) and Math.

²⁰ Source: District Data Overview.

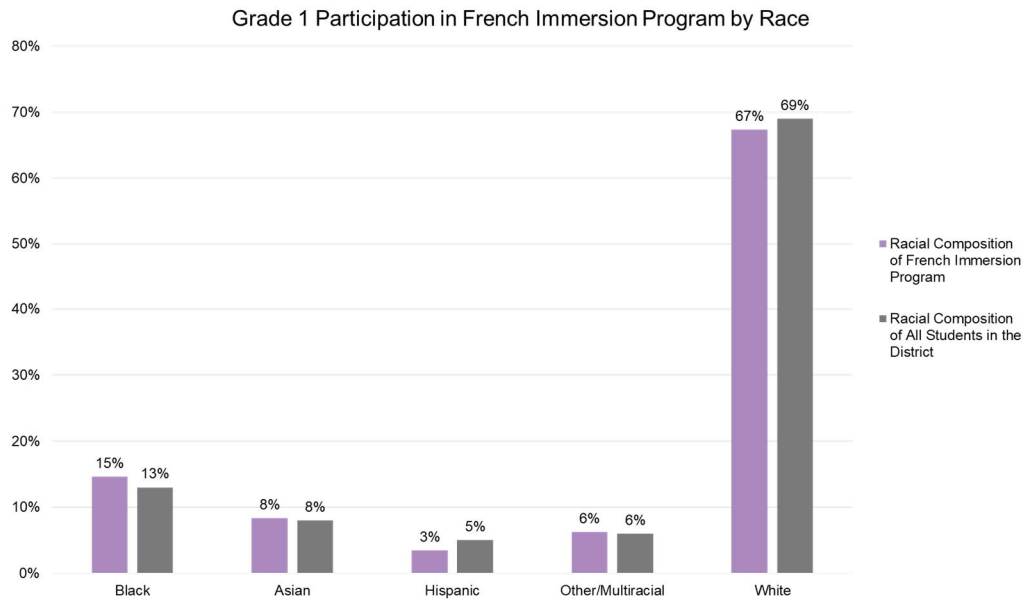


Figure 3-12 Participation in French Immersion by Race

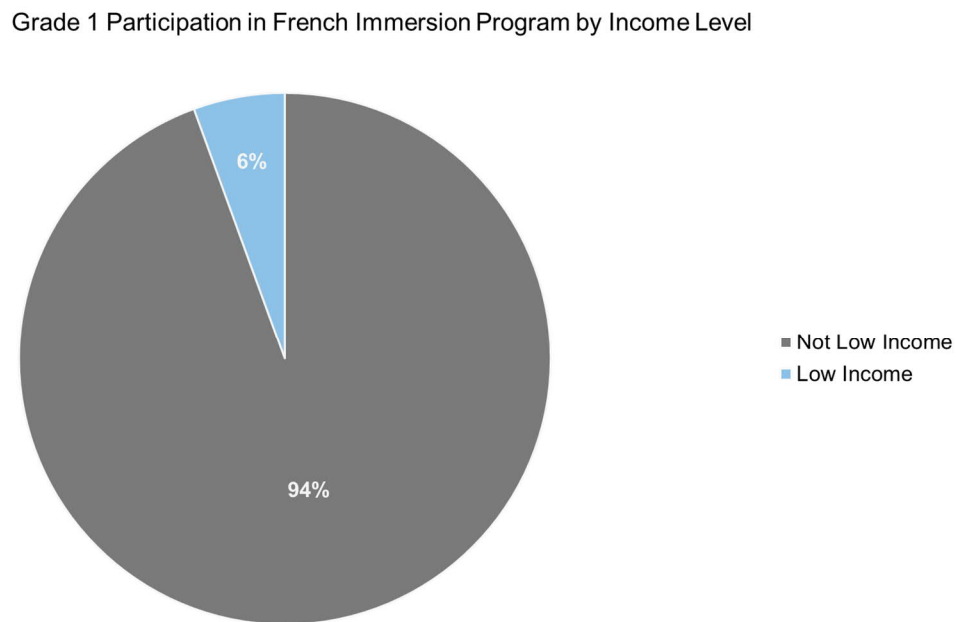


Figure 3-13 Participation in French Immersion by Income

3.2.2 Personal and Social Achievement

- Student Voice, Screenings & Student Surveys.** Every year in grades 7 & 9, Screening and Brief Intervention and Referral (SBIRT) surveys are administered. Some of the data highlights that illuminate the disparities in BIPOC students' experiences are as follows:

- African American/Black & Hispanic/Latinx students reported 16% and 24% less than White students when agreeing with the statement “*students respect one-another.*”
- 50% of economically disadvantaged students indicated that “*students respect one-another.*”
- Compared to other subgroups, more African American/Black students report that “*in my school, groups of students tease or pick on one student.*”
- 55% of African American/Black students (more than any other subgroup) report that “I have been called names or made fun of by other students more than once in school.”
- In the equity student survey, 95% of students report that their school supports them academically, but the number was far lower for emotional support at 68%. This is especially true for Asian students, who only agreed that the school supported them emotionally at a rate of 57%.

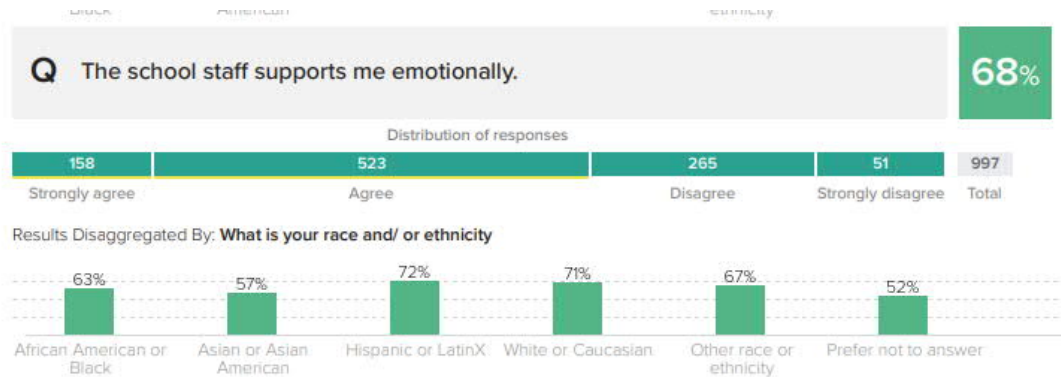


Figure 3-14 Student Survey Response Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity

- Self-reported mental health and substance abuse issues on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2014-2019.
 - On the 2019 YRBS, 29% of MHS students reported having depressive symptoms—a higher percentage rate than reported in the 2014 YRBS and higher than the state average.
 - The rate for suicide ideation (15%) also increased from 2014 and doubled for male students at MHS from the last survey (12%).
 - A high rate (45%) of students reported that they experienced persistent anxiety symptoms.
 - In the equity survey, students report that they experience a great deal of stress and that mental health issues often go unrecognized. One student writes, “We are met with immense amounts of pressure and unrealistic expectations that are pushed by ourselves, our peers, and those around us, and then no one has consideration for any outside factors that may be influencing our behavior or school work.”
 - Certain groups of students report a high rate of alcohol and drug abuse, including White athletes, and Caribbean, LGBTQI+, Hispanic/Latinx, and Asian students.

In the equity survey, some students noted that COVID-19 school disruption only exacerbated mental health issues for many because of the social isolation of remote learning and the stress of the pandemic. This limits equity, as students who are grappling with mental health issues or substance abuse issues are not able to fully engage in learning.

3.3 High Leverage Recommendations for Equitable Student Learning and Development Outcomes

- **Create a Data Culture.** One of the (2020) goals of the strategic plan is data use: to create and sustain a data-rich culture in the district where stakeholders can use data effectively to make informed decisions that drive student learning and growth, student well-being, access and equity, and other strategic priorities. MPS has a robust set of multi-layered, multi-year data across grades. Yet there is not clear evidence of a vertically articulated and disaggregated data culture from the students in the classrooms to the teachers in the schools to the leaders in the district. For this to occur, there needs to be ongoing professional learning and opportunities for dialogue aimed at unpacking and understanding the data, the relevance of the data, and how it impacts current student outcomes and the changes the district is hoping to make moving forward. At the school level, leaders and teachers need to know, understand, and use the data consistently to set clear benchmarks, and monitor student level and school level progress. The use of the rich data that MPS generates should be leveraged through a structured data culture that ensures an equity lens for the achievement data, including, but not limited to, standardized tests. There is enormous potential to actualize and enable improved instruction and outcomes for all students.
- **Calibrate and Deepen the Strategic Plan, Priorities, and Processes.** It is evident that MPS is in the process of taking steps to address the many structural and systems inequities that have been identified by MPS and DESE that impact student learning and development. There is evidence of initiatives to address these inequities (e.g., Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist Professional Development, MTSS, PBIS, UDL, Restorative Practices, Inclusive Practices, Curriculum Reviews, SEL Surveys, etc.). However, there is no clear evidence of a coherent district vision and map for how all the initiatives integrate and what outcomes are expected, monitored, and customized to meet the needs of all students. To achieve equity, it is critical to center the needs of students who have historically been underserved in MPS. This needs to be coupled with clearly defined priorities, focus, and an intentional through-line to dismantle all inequitable systems and structures. These systems, structures, processes, and outcomes need to be defined, articulated district-wide, and systematically measured for progress, supported by the robust data production already in place at MPS. MPS would do well to establish strategic priorities that proactively use the rich data the district generates in service of continuous improvement at all levels of the system.

 - **Connect Strategic Plan to Annual Priorities.** The five-year strategic plan is a 59-page document with clear actions, steps, timeline, expected outcomes, and anticipated resources. However, the key priorities are not clear. It is recommended to translate this plan into achievable and accessible quarterly/yearly priorities with relevant interim and yearly metrics that are well articulated and shared with all key stakeholders; subsequently, these priorities should be aligned with the school improvement plans. Budget and resources need to be focused on these areas for improvement at the school and district levels.
 - **Set Metrics and Outcomes for Programs and Practices.** The numerous programs and practices that are intended to lead to equitable outcomes are not clearly set to metrics. For example, The Calculus Project should be intricately linked to student outcomes in math, including tracking the participation rate. The Restorative Practice professional development needs to be linked to improved student survey data and reduced suspension rates.
 - **Strategically Align Systems Work & Integrate Professional Development Initiatives to align with Outcomes.** There are many rich and robust professional development opportunities in MPS. Existing and new systems and structures work, such as PBIS, UDL,

and MTSS and Inclusive Practices should be prioritized and cohered with timetabled metrics. To be effective and lead to change outcomes, the goals of professional development need to be clear and strategic. For example, the Restorative Justice PD (scheduled to begin in 2021–2022 school year) will provide teachers with the skills and expertise to address behavioral concerns directly with students in a restorative manner such that behavioral referrals will hopefully be reduced. The metrics will be monitored with data that is reviewed by teacher and leadership teams monthly. At the system/structure level, for example, MPS should establish a system that requires restorative conferencing at the building level and conferencing with the superintendent by all principals before any out-of-school suspension (that does not fall under 37H²¹).

- **Disrupt Disproportionality.** Disproportionality occurs when students are overrepresented in special education services due to inappropriate referrals to special education. Overrepresentation can occur in classification, placement, and suspension. Disproportionality can also mean student groups are underrepresented in intervention services, resources, access to programs, and rigorous curriculum and instruction—either through placements in more restrictive special education services or through discipline policies that remove students from school.²²

Tiered instruction²³, behavior referral and discipline processes, SST processes, referral patterns, and pathways at the teacher, IEP team, and school level are critical levers that can either perpetuate or disrupt the patterns and practices that lead to disproportionality. It is important to note that disproportionality in special education and discipline are often aligned with increased suspension or expulsion for students of color and students with disabilities. The following are recommendations to begin to disrupt disproportionality:

- *Engage stakeholders to understand the root causes of disproportionality.* At the district and school levels, conduct root-cause analyses of why these patterns are occurring for certain groups of students. While special education disproportionality citing occurs in special education, many of the root causes, and therefore the solutions, are in general education. It is important to recognize that all school-based and team processes are socially mediated and subjective. Utilizing MPS's anti-bias/anti-racist work to unpack the narratives as to why the data shows disparate practices along racial lines is an essential step.
- *Be strategic and intentional about professional development.* Provide effective professional development to all educators in understanding disabilities versus diversity as well as understanding disability types for special educators. Provide Professional Learning to all educators on the history of the racialization of disability and how the disproportionality data in MPS currently maps. Additionally, professional development on anti-bias/anti-racism must be coupled with broad dissemination and knowledge of the disaggregated special education and discipline data by school and by district. To build collective agency for change, anti-bias professional development and restorative practices/justice professional development should unpack the narratives that educators, families, and students hold about students of color and students with disabilities in the district. It is integral to show and connect the data on referral and discipline practices at

²¹ Massachusetts School Discipline law: MGL c.71, § 37H Schools must have policies about student discipline, and students must get a handbook that explains the rules. A student who brings a weapon or drugs to school or assaults a staff member may be expelled.

²² NEA Truth in Labeling, 2007.

²³ In a multi-tiered system of support, adults work together through coordinated systems to provide all students the support they need to succeed. DESE guidance can be found here: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/leading-mtss/>

the educator beliefs and bias level in order to surface, address, and interrupt the practices that lead to over-identification, misidentification, and disproportionality.

- *Disaggregate data.* Establish data practices at the school level that allow general education and special education faculty and staff to better understand and ultimately own their students' data, which can then inform instructional decisions and create change from the ground up.
- *Center, deepen and embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL).* MPS has shown commitment to UDL since 2014. The most immediate next step in this work is to ensure that UDL is deeply embedded in all teachers' instructional practices through structures such as: ongoing professional development, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), coaching, and supervision/evaluation. Center and integrate MPS's work on UDL, Inclusive Practices, and building tiered systems of support (MTSS) into a coherent whole.
- Share ownership and integrate all systems of support work with general education and special education leadership and educators.
- *Create the requisite guardrails and gatekeeping mechanisms.* While broader systems work is underway, it is important to immediately create guardrails with accountability to ensure referral patterns and eligibility determinations are not predicated along racial lines as they are now. For example, create cross-campus level & district eligibility review teams that review eligibility determinations with evaluation data on a monthly basis. This will ensure accuracy in both special education eligibility findings and disability types. Ensure that a data driven, multi-tiered instruction and intervention process is required in the SST process before a staff-referred student is evaluated for special education.
- *Ensure that equitable access to effective instruction, universally designed for all students, is a central focus and priority.*
- **Prioritize mental health.** For many students, school is the primary provider of, or gateway to, mental health resources. Remote learning limited students' access to diagnosis and treatment while adding new stresses, including social isolation. As students return to school in the fall, they will all need immediate support to cope with the events of the past two school years. The trauma of the pandemic will outlast the virus itself, and schools must be equipped to provide appropriate and equitable mental health treatment.

4 Domain 2: Leadership, Management and Accountability

Rating: Initiating

Overview

District leaders have started to enhance equity across the district, but the importance and urgency of this initiative has not yet been fully understood or accepted by all district stakeholders and community members. The district has started to re-visit the strategic plan, but they have not fully articulated specific areas in which to disrupt inequities for specific subgroups. Valuable data is being distributed to schools in a timely and effective manner. However, the use of this data in schools to effectively inform instruction varies across the district. Community stakeholders are pleased with the communication received from the district, and most parents interviewed are pleased with the communication they receive from their children's teachers and principal. The district should enhance the level of accountability of principals by implementing a consistent evaluation program, providing them with timely and meaningful feedback, and ensuring that decision-making for each school is aligned with the equity vision of the district. The district should create more equitable processes that are grounded in data, such as those for hiring and budgeting.

4.1 Leadership, Management and Accountability: Factors that Support Equity

4.1.1 Vision & Culture

- Most district leaders model and promote the shared value that all students can achieve academic and social success. Several district leaders understand and engage with a diverse community (racially, ethnically, linguistically, socio-economically, and culturally) and proactively promote a culture of equity in the district. This supports equity, as several district leaders are dedicated to enhancing diversity and equitable access to programming across the district.
- During district-level interviews, district leaders stated, "It's important that we infuse equity into all of our policies and practices moving forward," and "...we cannot allow [stakeholders] to feel like this is a passing phase or some initiative that's just going to go away."
- Some of the areas outlined in the strategic plan speak to equity-based goals for the district. There are goals set to increase teacher diversity, increase the number of students of color in extracurricular activities, and a goal to increase the cultural competency of all staff members. Some of these goals have actions and success criteria against them.

<p style="text-align: center;">MPS DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN (2018-2023)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Goal 4: Cultural Competency</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To cultivate the cultural competence of all stakeholders and incorporate strategies to foster and sustain the organizational cultural competence of the district.</i></p>			
<p>Objective 4.1</p> <p>For new hires, increase the teachers of color to 22%.</p>	<p>Objective 4.2</p> <p>Increase the overall participation of students of color in extra-curricular activities to close the participation gap.</p>	<p>Objective 4.3</p> <p>Increase the cultural competency of all staff members.</p>	<p>Objective 4.4</p> <p>Increase home/school collaboration and engagement with families using culturally competent practices.</p>

Figure 4-1 - MPS Strategic Plan Goal 4

Source: Milton Public Schools website

4.1.2 Strategic Planning, Plan Management, and Use of Data

- The district sets achievable and moderately challenging goals based on some performance indicators, as outlined in the district strategic plan. The plan focuses on a set of issues deemed necessary to accelerate improvement in students' achievement, while focusing on a set of priorities to address anti-racism and equity in education. The plan also has some systems for annual review against intended outcomes. This supports equity, as district leaders are now consciously including equity-informed language into their goals and expectations.
- The district plan states that the district aims to “consistently facilitate a rigorous, research-based, culturally sensitive anti-racist curriculum with exemplary instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of every learner.” The strategic plan addresses inclusivity in policy refinement in section 1.3.1, where it states a commitment to “[r]efine and update current policies and procedures regarding inclusive instructional practices at all grade levels and in all disciplines.”
- The district has developed policies and procedures that are supported by an effective data system to provide all schools with ready access to a wide range of high-quality relevant data. The strategic plan also supports “a data-rich culture in the district where stakeholders can use data effectively to make informed decisions that drive student learning and growth, student well-being, access and equity, and other strategic priorities.” This theoretically supports equity, as the timely sharing of meaningful data enhances all educators' ability to make more data-informed decisions regarding instruction. However, the current limitations of this are outlined in section 3.2.
- District and school-level stakeholders shared great praise for the Director of Data and Analysis. One school leader mentioned, “I’m always impressed with how quickly and accurately [the director] shares data when I request it.” A district-level employee stated that the director “is excellent when it comes to providing meaningful data.” For years, the Director

of Data has analyzed and presented data pertaining to achievement and opportunity gaps as required to district and school leaders. The Director of Data has also advocated for more systematic use of data at the school and classroom level for identifying struggling students and for use in resource allocation.

4.1.3 Governance

- The School Committee's stated goals for 2020–2021 included three goals specifically aimed at improving cultural competency:²⁴
 1. *Engage in an equity audit, conducted by an external consultant, to assess issues of equity and inequity across all academic and operational aspects of the district, and commit resources to implement recommended changes or initiatives.*
 2. *Establish and fully incorporate the new role of Director of Educational Equity as a strategic partner with the Superintendent and all levels within Milton Public Schools to: support parents, students, and educators on issues related to equity and anti-racism, design and lead implementation of anti-racism initiatives, coordinate professional development in equity and anti-racism to staff in all schools and central offices, and bring additional expertise and accountability to the district's ongoing work in recruiting and hiring a diverse teaching staff, developing an anti-racism curriculum, and other critical issues, and commit resources to carry out the work of the Director of Educational Equity.*
 3. *Convene an Anti-Racist Action Team (ARAT) that will be charged with drafting an Anti-Racism Action Plan, with action steps, timelines, resources needed, and reporting and monitoring structures, to guide the district's work moving forward in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, with a particular focus on anti-racism.*

The School Committee is beginning the process of identifying opportunity gaps and providing resources to help address them.

- The district has processes to ensure that policies, procedures, and practices are aligned with laws and regulations. The Superintendent is new in the position as of January 2021 and has been adjusting to his new roles and responsibilities. As a result, he is working collaboratively to provide a common vision and stable direction for the district's work. Clear communication and implementation of the new equity-aligned vision for the district will support the growth of equitable practices district wide. But since this has yet to be completed, it cannot be evaluated for impact at this time.
- The district is developing a plan to devote the necessary time and resources to equity discourse, deep learning, assessment, action planning, and implementation. The district is developing equity leadership, equity policy, and practice. This aligns with the strategic plan in the area of cultural competency, which states the goal: *"To cultivate the cultural competence of all stakeholders and incorporate strategies to foster and sustain the organizational cultural competence of the district."*
- On the equity survey, staff report that a commitment to equity is built into district and school plans.

²⁴ Source: Milton Public Schools Website: https://www.miltonps.org/application/files/7316/0224/8291/2020-2021_SCHOOL_COMMITTEE_GOALS.pdf



Figure 4-2 Staff Survey Response

4.1.4 Structure

- District leaders have the education, skills, experience, and certifications/degrees that provide the foundation of knowledge necessary for their current roles. Some district leaders continue their own professional learning to provide better support for schools. The appointment of the new Superintendent supports stability in the district, as he served as the Principal of MHS for several years and is aware of the strengths and challenges of the district overall. The hiring of the Director of Educational Equity in December 2020 supports the district's goals as well, as the director will collaboratively strategize and support implementation of initiatives to increase equity.

4.1.5 Professional Capacity of Staff

- The working environment at the district office and between district and school personnel is professional, respectful, and focused on the goals of the district and supporting schools. Schools report that they have positive and supportive interactions with district office personnel. This potentially supports equity, as the groundwork for professional learning and discourse has been laid.
- During focus groups, school leaders describe strong relationships with district leaders. A school leader stated, "I have great relationships with [central office leadership]. Our conversations are always supportive, and they are generally able to provide me with what I need to effectively run my school." Another school leader shared, "The communication from the district is strong. Expectations and goals are usually clear, and I know that they want what's best for the students in the district."

4.1.6 Fiscal Resources

- Parents, staff, and students report that whenever additional resources (materials or equipment, for example) are requested, the district responds to the need. School leaders stated that although budgeting is not always transparent, their requests for materials or resources are always met. One school leader said, "I don't always know what my budget lines are for specific areas but when I make requests to the district, I always get what I need." Another school leader stated, "I don't always know my budget for materials for students with disabilities, but I have never been turned away when I request resources for my subgroups." When asked if the district provides sufficient financial support to run their schools effectively, all school leaders responded affirmatively.
- All school buildings, grounds, playground equipment, sports facilities, and other district grounds are well maintained (including appropriate landscaping maintenance), kept clean and safe, and provide an environment where all teachers and students are safe and can focus on learning and teaching. School and activity buses are well maintained and serviced as needed to ensure safety. Structural problems with the buildings are quickly addressed so they rarely or only temporarily interfere with the functioning of the school.

This supports equity in the district by providing all students with a safe, clean environment to learn. This also aligns with the district plan, objective 6.2, which states a commitment to *“[e]nsure that our facilities offer the adequate elements necessary for a strong 21st century education.”* The plan to ensure that schools in the district remain clean and safe is outlined in the strategic plan in area 6.3 as: *“Effectively utilize our 20-year facilities maintenance plan to ensure that our buildings are well maintained.”*

4.1.7 IT

- School staff and district leaders have access to data systems that could support data-driven decisions. All teachers, schools, and district leaders report that they can easily access classroom and individual student data. School assessment data is consistently represented in a user-friendly format for school-level employees and data can be easily used to generate reports to meet the needs of the district and each school. This supports equity, as district stakeholders are provided with the appropriate technology and resources to effectively enhance instruction across schools.
- As seen during virtual school visits, teachers use technology to engage, enhance, and improve the quality of learning for all students. This aligns with the district’s strategic plan in goal 2, which aims *“[t]o comprehensively integrate technology to personalize learning, promote excellence, and prepare students for success in an evolving digital culture.”* Teachers were observed using multiple online platforms to provide individualized instruction, play digital learning games, and facilitate breakout rooms to work with students through targeted, small-group instruction.

4.1.8 Communications

- Open, two-way communication is established between the district and community stakeholders, including translated materials for families that need them. Stakeholders report that they feel well informed and can easily communicate with and access district personnel as needed. This supports equity, as the district is working to keep all stakeholders informed about district initiatives.
- Parents felt that the leaders in their children’s schools were responsive and that teachers are available when parents have questions or want to discuss their child’s academic outcomes. In the equity survey, 89% of parent respondents report that teachers are available when they need to talk to them. In the same survey, 88% of the responding parents noted that the principal is responsive when they share concerns.
- During focus groups, when asked to rate the district’s communication as it pertained to meaningfulness and timeliness, the district averaged an eight on a scale from one to ten. Most stakeholders agreed that the communication was effective and that they preferred to receive emails. One parent stated, “I have students in three different grades at three different schools and I receive everything from the district, times three.” Another parent shared, “I don’t always agree with what is being shared but I can’t say that I’m not informed. It feels like I receive communication from the district three or four times per week.”
- In the equity survey, parents report that the two most common ways that teachers and schools communicate with them are email (51%) and newsletters (23%). The top two best ways to receive communications were reported as email (44%) and personal phone calls (23%).

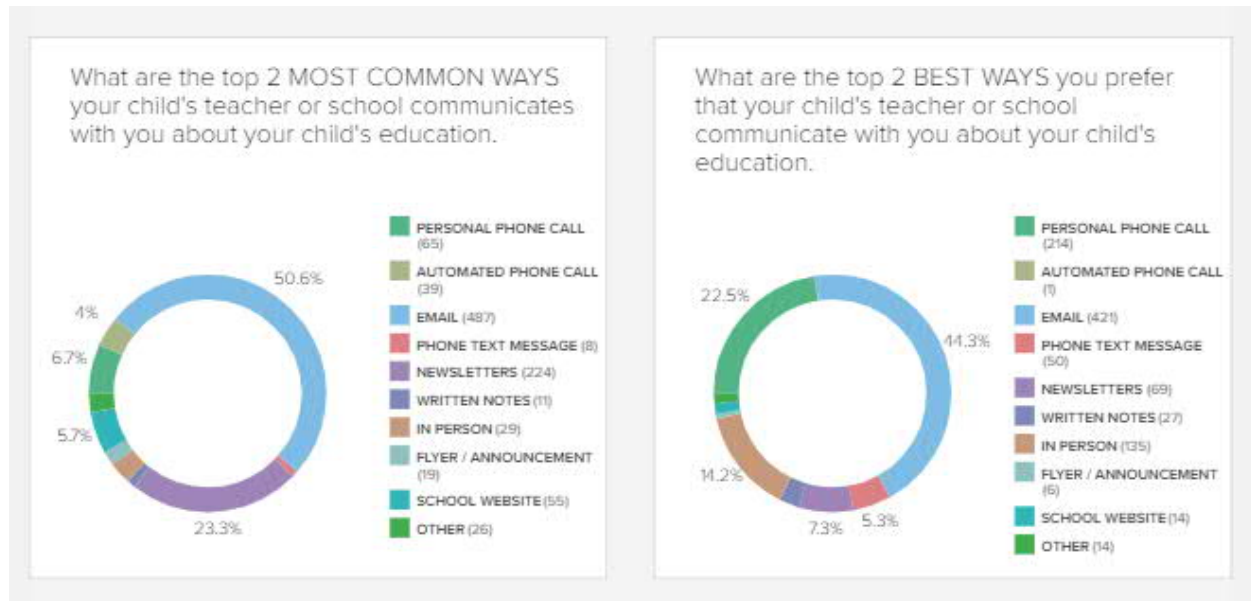


Figure 4-3 Parent Survey Response

4.2 Leadership, Management, and Accountability: Factors that Limit Equity

4.2.1 Vision & Culture

- District leaders have yet to successfully communicate a vision for equity for all students. They have revisited the vision, mission, and core beliefs, but these guiding principles are not being effectively transferred to district stakeholders. In interviews, district and campus leaders were unclear about the mission of the district, and there is no common understanding or clear definition of equity. Not all stakeholders see equity as an issue that needs to be addressed with urgency. When asked about a plan for achieving greater equity across the district, a district-level employee stated, “The district has no clear vision, and we are very reactive.” When asked about a vision towards equity in multiple teacher focus groups, no one could articulate what the district’s goals were.
- The district has many competing priorities, and initiatives are often pursued without proper support and resources for implementation. One principal described district practice as “island-hopping” from initiative to initiative. Administrators at the school and district level reported that they are often busy “putting out fires.” This limits the time they can devote to monitoring the multiple initiatives at the school. Several administrators pointed to Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) mandates and the COVID-19 disruptions as a root cause of the lack of follow-through. One stated that the current situation “makes it hard to plan and follow up.” This limits equity, as too many initiatives can cause fatigue and overstretch limited resources. In addition, initiatives that are not implemented with fidelity or monitored for impact have little chance of being successful.
- Some principals attributed parental confusion about initiatives to either lack of a consolidated source of information or to parental neglect of reading school emails, postings on school websites, and messages sent home with students. This limits equity, as the district and schools may not be fully engaging with all their families currently.
- When asked about equity efforts, many interviewees at the district and school levels mentioned that a Director of Educational Equity had been hired. However, when asked about

the role and responsibilities of this person, no employee had a clear idea as to what they were.

- Many stakeholders expressed discomfort when discussing equity, especially when concerning race.
- Staff of different races report different experiences at school:
 - 38% of staff responding to the equity survey agree with the statement, “Racism is a problem at my school.” When responses are disaggregated by race, the agreement rates change.
 - 29% of African American/Black staff agreed
 - 57% of the Asian staff agreed
 - 37% of African American/Black staff agreed with the statement, “I have heard racist comments or jokes from staff members at my school.”
 - For this same statement, White/Caucasian staff agreed at a rate of 17%.
 - In a survey of retained staff in July 2020, 26% of staff responding reported that they have experienced negative interactions from colleagues they felt were due to race, culture, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

These differences in perception can result in difficulties with communication and understanding among staff and can cause issues of trust that can limit commitment and buy-in from all staff.

- Students of different races and identities also have different perceptions of their school experience. On the equity survey:
 - Students of color report that they are unable to share their views and have been bullied at higher rates than White students.
 - 39% of African American/Black students report that they have been bullied this school year, as opposed to 22% of White students.
 - 37% of Hispanic/Latinx students agree with the statement, “I feel unable to share my views in class because of my race,” while 29% of African American/Black students and 13% of White students agree.

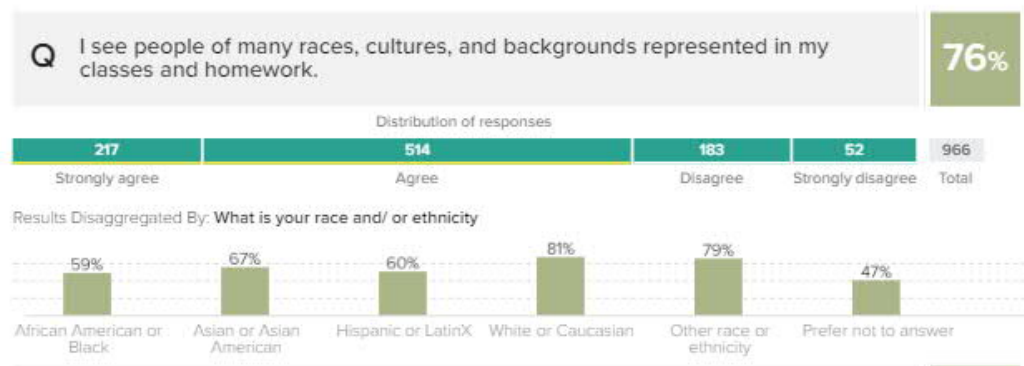


Figure 4-4 Student Survey Response, Disaggregated by Race

- While 81% of White students report that they see people of many races and cultures represented in the curriculum, only 59% of African American/Black students and 60% of Hispanic/Latinx students report the same. As with staff, these differences in perception among students can lead to distrust and feelings of isolation.

- Overall, 14.6% of student respondents to the survey identified as LGBTQI+, 68.3% do not identify as LGBTQI+, 7.5% of students preferred not to answer, 7.6% left the item blank, and 2% responded that their identify was not listed. All students agreed that teachers are incredibly supportive academically, listen to students, and care about learning for all students. However, there were some marked differences in perception between students who identify as LGBTQI+ and those who do not, especially in their social and emotional experiences. LGBTQI+ students report a higher incidence of bullying and feel less of a sense of belonging. Some examples of these differences are outlined in the table below:

Survey items	Agreement percentage for respondents identifying as LGBTQI+	Agreement percentage for those who <u>do not</u> identify as LGBTQI+	difference
If I have problems in class, I am comfortable talking to most of my teachers about it.	54%	68%	-14%
The school staff supports me socially.	51%	69%	-18%
There are opportunities to discuss differences in identity in my classes.	42%	59%	-17%
I see people of many races, cultures, and backgrounds represented in my classes and homework.	63%	80%	-17%
I see myself as valuable member of my class and school.	63%	86%	-23%
My contributions are valuable to the school.	61%	77%	-16%
I have chances to help decide what is best for the class or school.	40%	61%	-21%
I feel unable to share my views because of my gender.	70%	87%	-17%
The punishment for breaking a rule at my school is the same no matter who you are.	60%	75%	-15%
I know I would receive the same punishment as others for breaking a rule.	65%	79%	-14%
I have been verbally bullied.	36%	16%	-20%
I have been socially bullied.	39%	14%	-25%
I have been cyber-bullied.	26%	11%	-15%
My school takes appropriate action against bullying.	60%	87%	-27%
Students try to stop bullying when they see it at my school.	45%	63%	-18%
I have heard disrespectful comments about gender from other students.	32%	11%	-21%
I have heard negative comments about sexual orientation from other students.	44%	11%	-33%
Teachers and students work together to address problems or conflicts.	37%	57%	-20%
Students in my school act in a way that is sensitive to the feelings of others.	45%	58%	-13%
I feel like I belong in my school.	66%	89%	-23%
I fit in with other students at this school.	58%	86%	-28%
I feel close to people at this school.	62%	81%	-19%

4.2.2 Strategic Planning, Plan Management, and Use of Data

- The strategic plan was updated in 2020 and includes cultural competency as a goal, which encompasses objectives and actions such as promoting a more diverse staff; increasing the diversity of students participating in extracurricular activities; optimizing the academic, social, emotional, and sociocultural experiences of all students; increasing the cultural competency of all staff; increasing home/school collaboration; conducting an equity audit; and hiring a Director of Educational Equity. However, the plan does not fully communicate a theory of action and why it is believed that the particular activities identified will have an impact on educational equity. It is often unclear how the impact of the actions and activities will be monitored or how these goals and objectives are interrelated to other goals in the plan. If equity efforts are not fully integrated with the other areas of the strategic plan (curriculum and instruction, technology, data use, social and emotional learning, and facilities), equity can be limited. Equity should cut across all areas of the plan. Streamlining the plan to infuse equity and monitor access and opportunity throughout will help to focus and consolidate strategic and operational efforts to improve outcomes for all students.
- The district strategic plan does not specifically address support for English language learners and students with disabilities. Although the district is working to address equity in its planning, statements in the strategic plan are often not specific. For example, in section 1.1.1 it states, *“Advance all students’ growth and achievement through the implementation of a rigorous and innovative literacy curriculum in grades K–3.”* Section 1.4.2 in the strategic plan states, *“Monitor percentage of students, including subgroups by race and socio-economic status, that are meeting targets for core instruction and identify and monitor students not meeting targets.”* While a plan to identify and monitor subgroups by race and socioeconomic status is mentioned, no specific action or strategy is identified, nor are English learners and students with disabilities included.
- Improving data use is a strategic goal. Although the district provides schools with robust data and tools for analyzing data, the effective use of this data at the school level to drive instruction and improve student learning varies. Most principals believe their teachers are skilled at understanding academic data, especially MCAS data, but there were few examples provided of ways that teachers use data to make instructional decisions. The systems (e.g., Otus, Lexia, iReady) for data use and analysis are available, but educators are not using them to their full capacity to record and analyze student achievement. There is no consistent usage of Otus across the district; only a handful of teachers truly take advantage of this system to collect formative assessment data. Some elementary teachers access assessments that the ELA director provides through Otus.

Throughout the pandemic, data analysis was used effectively to identify students who were not engaged. Behavioral teams meet every week and share updates on the same students, but adjustments to the SEL programming have been limited in some schools. School leaders shared that the SEL advisory team does not have enough substantive, trackable data, and student survey and parent involvement data is less robust. This limits equitable academic outcomes for students because teachers are not consistently and effectively using data to inform individualized instruction that will support student growth.

A district-level director stated that “Milton educators don’t use data effectively.” This employee mentioned that “[i]n MPS, [school leaders] are theorizers who don’t know how to implement the best practices they have researched in the Milton environment because they lack data on the context of the district and the community.” Three other district-level employees mentioned that they believe “the data analysis protocols in schools are weak,” and that “most teachers are still at the beginning stages of using data to effectively make instructional decisions,” and “the data meetings at the school level are not where they need to be.” When observing a grade-level meeting in one school, teachers discussed student

academic outcomes on an assessment but did not discuss next steps or instructional adjustments to better meet the needs of students.

4.2.3 Accountability

- District personnel, departments, teams, and schools are not held accountable for monitoring gaps in access, opportunity, and expectation. Schools are occasionally monitored and reviewed for progress toward agreed-upon goals and improving student achievement. Few actions are taken in response to levels of progress toward goals and levels of student achievement. The district has an inconsistent and ineffective system of accountability of departments and personnel.
- Principals have indicated that they have not been formally observed in recent years. Supervision from the central office has been informal, often occurring at regular meetings or walk-throughs. This is a barrier to equity because district leaders are not building the capacity of school leaders in key areas of instructional leadership. The lack of supervision detracts from a culture of continuous improvement and hinders the advancement of strategic goals.

One district level employee stated, “There is a lack of accountability in the district. School leaders are not held accountable and there are teachers who have taught for years without a formal evaluation. Principals and teachers knew that they could get away with [poor academic outcomes] and it was all based on who you were being observed by.”

When interviewed about the evaluation of school administrators, all school principals confirmed that their supervision by central office was informal. Principals check in with central administrators at meetings and during walk-throughs of their buildings and receive an annual evaluation write-up. In recent years, no principal has been formally observed and two principals stated that they had not been observed in more than five years. One district-level employee stated, “Supervision structures are not used with fidelity. The central office personnel do check-box evaluations... and supervision is not based on using data.”

The lack of oversight and accountability limits equity, as students are in schools where their instructional leader is not held to account for the academic outcomes of the school they preside over. Since principals are not closely supervised, it is unclear whether learning and teaching is monitored effectively and consistently across schools.

- Systems for measuring the impact of policies and initiatives are not effective or consistently applied. There are many competing initiatives in the district and in schools. If an initiative has a champion or someone willing to lead the implementation, it is usually supported. The district does not have clear policies and practices for selecting or monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives, curriculum and programs, and action plans. As a result, it is unclear whether initiatives are having the necessary impact to improve outcomes for all students. Everyone is working extremely hard to keep up with the myriad initiatives, but the lack of focus and priorities leads to inequity, as resources, especially educators’ time and energy, is spread out over too many projects.

4.2.4 Professional Capacity of Staff

- There are no formal processes in place to support the personal and professional development of central office personnel to ensure increased equity in all schools. The district has not fully developed the individual and organizational knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices to create culturally responsive learning environments that expect and support high academic achievement for learners from all groups. Few in the district have undergone cultural competence training beyond the introductory level. In a survey deployed by the

district for retained staff in July 2020, only 26% of teachers report that the district has prepared them to use culturally responsive practices.

Do you feel the district has prepared you to utilize culturally responsive practices?

125 Responses

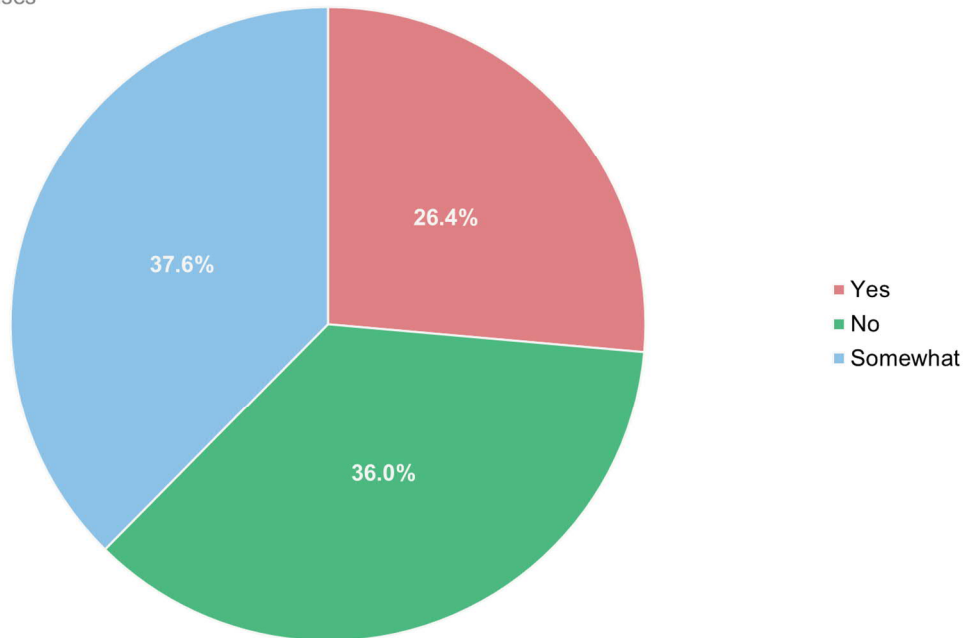


Figure 4-5 – District Stayers Survey 07/07/2020

- All teachers, counselors, principals, curriculum coordinators, directors, and other staff participated in 12 hours of professional development with cultural proficiency coach Dr. Kalise Wornum, entitled, “Becoming a Culturally Proficient Educator.”²⁵ Most attendees also opted to complete an application of learning training for an additional three hours. Of the course, one attendee stated, “The training was good, but it was more about reflecting on our own thinking and less about how to better address students.” Another attendee stated, “I thought the training was fine, but it did little to impact my instructional practice.” Multiple district- and campus-level employees shared that the Wornum training was the only training they had ever attended that addressed implicit bias, race, or culture, and there had been no follow-up action planning. No other opportunities for professional learning on these topics have since been offered.
- Issues and incidents of individual racism in the community and in schools were reported in parent, staff, and student focus groups and interviews throughout the QREL process. All agreed that these acts need to be condemned, but students and educators related that these incidents are often ignored or put aside because some educators are not comfortable discussing or confronting such issues. Incidents of individual racism are dealt with inconsistently across the schools. The district’s strategic plan specifically mentions anti-racist action planning and professional development, but there is no evidence of an action plan to achieve these specific goals.

²⁵ For course description, go to Dr. Wornum’s website: <https://kwdiversityinc.com/>.

4.2.5 Human Resources

- Studies show that teachers of color tend to provide more culturally relevant teaching than their White peers, and that they better understand the situations that students of color may face. These factors help develop trusting teacher-student relationships.²⁶ Milton teachers in some racial and ethnic groups feel less prepared to deal with issues of racism, homophobia, and sexism. While 88% of African American/Black teachers feel prepared, 57% of Asian and Hispanic/Latinx teachers feel prepared, and 66% of White teachers feel prepared.

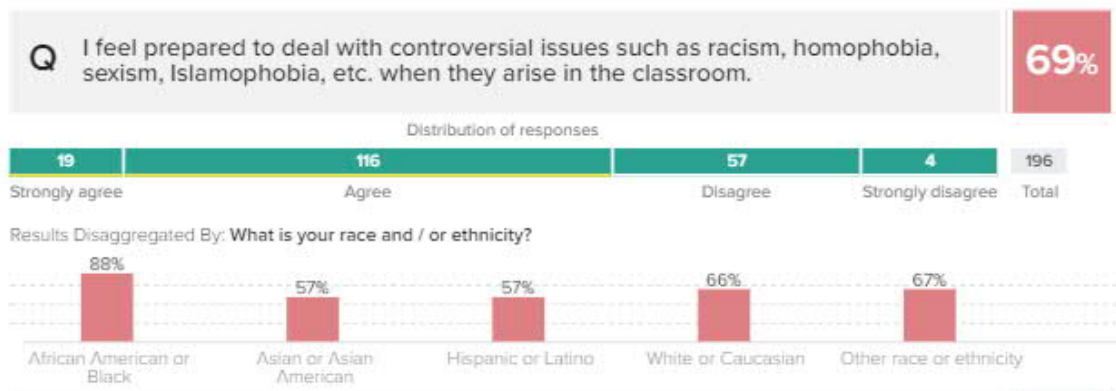


Figure 4-4 Staff Survey Response

- Teachers of color can help students feel welcome at school and can potentially become role models for students.²⁷ Teachers of color tend to have more positive perceptions of students of color—both academically and behaviorally—than other teachers do. A recent study found that African American/Black teachers are less likely than White teachers to perceive African American/Black students' behavior as disruptive.²⁸ The benefits extend beyond school culture and behavior. When Florida researchers analyzed test scores for about 3 million students and 92,000 teachers over seven years, they found a positive effect in both reading and math scores when African American/Black students were taught by African American/Black teachers. For students who performed at the lowest levels, the positive effect of having a teacher of their same race was even larger.²⁹
- The district does not currently have a clear plan for recruiting and retaining skilled staff who reflect the racial makeup of the student population. Although section 4.1.1 of the strategic plan directs the district to *"Examine research and trends including that from other districts to develop a robust process to reach high but attainable goals to increase the diversity of MPS staff,"* no principal knew of any research or plan in the district to increase the diversity of the teachers in their schools. When asked about the diversity of the staff members in their schools, all school leaders stated that they needed to increase the diversity.

²⁶ Dilworth, M. & Coleman, M. (2014). *Time for a Change: Diversity in Teaching Revisited*. National Education Association. [https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Time_for_a_Change_Diversity_in_Teaching_Revisited_\(web\).pdf](https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Time_for_a_Change_Diversity_in_Teaching_Revisited_(web).pdf).

²⁷ McNulty, C. & Brown, M. (2009). Help Wanted: Seeking the Critical Confluence of Minorities in Teaching. *Childhood Education* 85(3), 179.

²⁸ Wright, A. (2015). *Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Disruptive Behavior: The Effect of Racial Congruence and Consequences for School Suspension* University of California Department of Economics. <https://aefpweb.org/sites/default/files/webform/41/Race%20Match,%20Disruptive%20Behavior,%20and%20School%20Suspension.pdf>.

²⁹ Egalite, A., Kisida, B., & Winters, M. (2015). Representation in the classroom: The effect of own-race teachers on student achievement. *Economics of Education Review* 45, 44–52.

Phillips, K. (2014, October 1). *How Diversity Makes Us Smarter*. Scientific American. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>.

- Section 4.1.6 of the strategic plan states, “For new hires, increase the teachers of color to 22%.” It is unclear why this percentage was chosen as the goal. With a staff population of a little over 10% staff of color, to reach a level of diversity that reflects the student population would mean more aggressively recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff of color. Outside of hosting an annual diversity and inclusion recruitment fair and partnering with local colleges, there are no specific steps to achieve this goal and results to-date have been mixed. For three out of the last four years, diversity in teacher hires increased from 16% in 2017–2018 to 20% in 2018–2019 to a high of 23% in 2019–2020. However, for the current school year, the percentage of new hire teachers of color went down to 17%.
- Of all the schools, only Tucker Elementary has managed to recruit and maintain a more diverse staff and had an average of 23.3% staff of color from 2015–2019. Thus, Tucker school staff is two to three times more diverse than other schools in the district.
- Parents and staff reported that families who are districted to other elementary schools but wish to send their children to Tucker can petition for a space. Some reported that students can transfer if there are extra seats in a program they would like to enroll in, such as French Immersion classes. Others believed that this was not an option for all children in all schools. The district does not have a documented policy and procedure for this process. This is not equitable, as without a policy, it is unclear who might take advantage of this option and in what circumstance it may be considered.

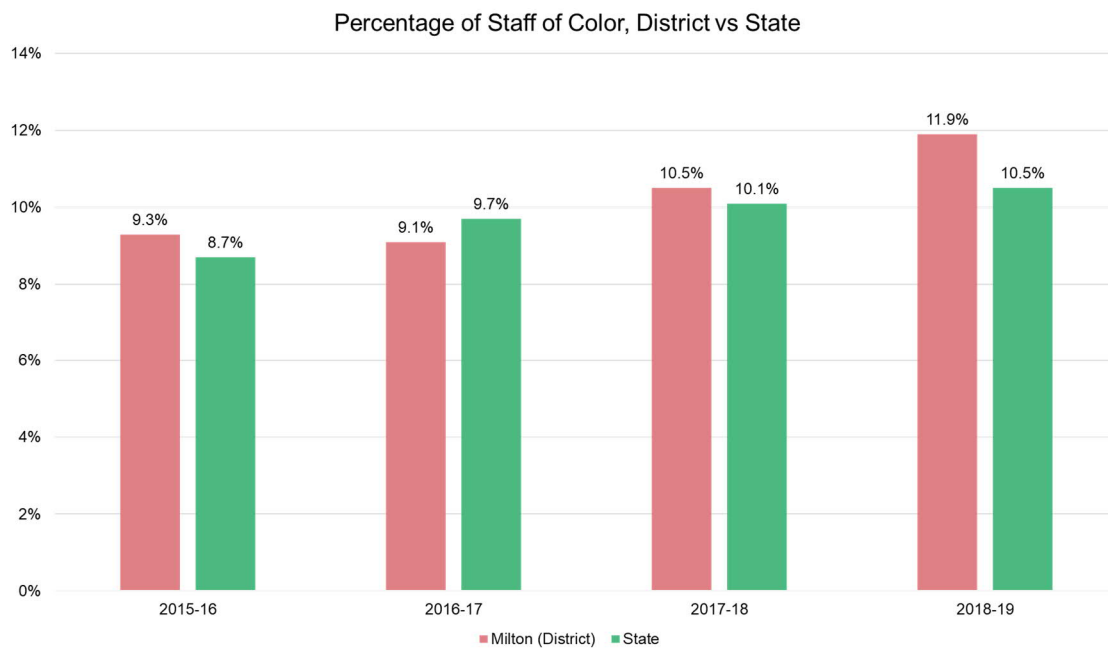


Figure 4-5 Staff Diversity Compared to State

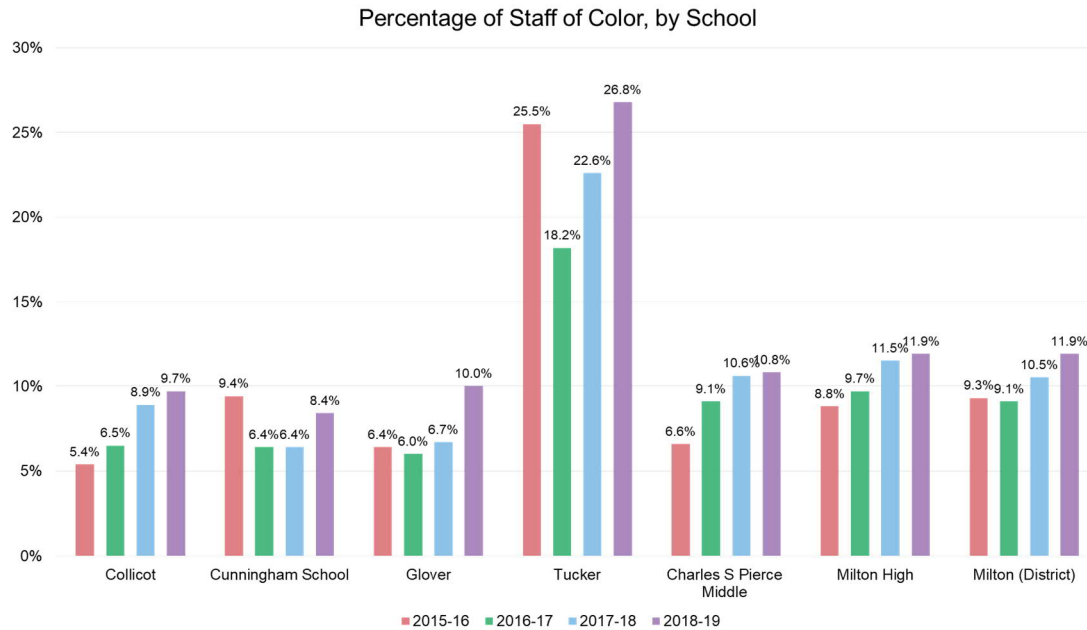


Figure 4-6 Staff of Color by School

4.2.6 Fiscal Resources

- School leaders reported that there are historic issues regarding salary parity across the district. A district-level employee mentioned that there was no clear salary step guide for school principals, and as a result, principals negotiated their own salaries. Principals mentioned that they did not negotiate for higher salaries, but all reported feeling uneasy about pay gaps. Some teachers and assistant principals with fewer years of experience earned higher salaries than some principals with more experience, and principals noted that it is especially uncomfortable when a staff member they supervise is earning a higher salary than they are. One principal said, “I can point to two people right now in my building who make more money than I do but I can’t let that affect the way I run my school.” Another school principal suggested, “If the district wants to be more equitable, there should be greater equity in the salaries of school leaders across the district.” Although there is no collective bargaining for school administrators in Massachusetts, the lack of transparency and clear policy for designating and negotiating salary can cause feelings of distrust and make hiring and retention of the best quality staff difficult.
- The district does not have a transparent, data-driven process for setting its annual budget to ensure financial resources are distributed equitably and efficiently to support student learning. When asked, principals and interviewees were not aware of a process for using data to focus resources where they are needed most. Budget documents and presentations describe the amount of funding needed, but do not describe a process or system by which the need was identified. Spending is not directly tied to student outcomes. Finance and school committee meeting notes on budgeting processes and decision-making are not available on the district web site.
- Struggling learners, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students with significant health issues often need additional support to be successful in their learning. Only 62% of teachers responded in the staff equity survey that they believe they have enough

financial and material resources to instruct all students successfully. This can affect equity, as the students who really need additional resources may not be getting them.

4.2.7 Operations

- Performance management systems for departments and cross-functional work have infrequent reviews of performance milestones, and/or adjustments and corrective actions taken to address lags or gaps in performance. The district's performance management policies and procedures have only a limited impact on actively supporting and promoting student achievement. Although milestones are set, there are no effective tracking systems in place to ensure that these are met. Actions to address lags or gaps in performance are inconsistent and seldom address the underlying causes. (See section 2.4, Accountability.)

4.3 High-Leverage Recommendations for Leadership, Management, and Accountability

- **Clearly communicate the need and urgency for action.** District leaders must more clearly message the equity goals and initiatives to community stakeholders and ensure that they are understood. District- and school-level administrators must be well versed in the language of equity, so they can better communicate these initiatives to staff, students, and families. Community stakeholders must be made aware that equity considerations are not only about race but about creating a district where all students can thrive and succeed. Achieving equity is not the job of a single person, or department of people, but must always be part of everyone's job. Engage the stakeholders in sessions to understand the meaning of equity, arrive at a shared definition and understanding, and raise awareness of existing gaps. The messaging should be transparent and delivered in an equitable manner to reach all constituents. District leaders must challenge long-standing inequitable systems and structures. Leaders must be willing to disrupt disproportionality by adjusting policies and protocols regarding opportunity and access to programs such as sports, extracurricular activities, and the French Immersion program.
- **Enhance the Strategic Plan.** It is not sufficient to generally state what will be done for all students. The updated strategic plan must include specific language to better address the achievement of specific populations, for example, African American/Black students with disabilities, English language learners, students with disabilities, and struggling readers. A root-cause analysis of performance for each underperforming group should be conducted to determine why the gap is occurring, and the strategic plan should include specific action steps and benchmarks to ensure effective monitoring and provide opportunities to adjust. The only way to effectively disrupt inequity is to call it out and make specific, detailed plans to remedy it.
- **Use data to inform decisions at all levels.** The district should develop and implement a district-wide protocol for using data in teacher team meetings to better support individualized instructional plans for students. This protocol should be implemented across the district and then closely monitored by school principals. District leaders must then hold principals accountable by visiting teacher team meetings to assess fidelity with the protocol. District leaders should monitor the academic growth in each school to determine if the data protocol is having the desired impact and then adjust supports accordingly. Central office should use data to monitor the efficacy of initiatives and other purchases. Budgets should be based on school and student need and principals should be given flexibility to adapt their budgets to fit their school.
- **Devise a protocol for identifying, monitoring, and evaluating initiatives.** Having too many priorities leads to a lack of clarity on what needs to be accomplished and when. At both the district and school levels, all initiatives should be aligned to the strategic plan. Every

initiative should be monitored for fidelity of implementation and for its impact on student outcomes. Streamlining the district priorities can begin with creating a list of all ongoing initiatives and evaluating them for their impact on student learning and outcomes. Initiatives should be prioritized based on their alignment to the district strategic plan and their impact on students. Clear decisions need to be made on what the district and/or schools need to start doing, what needs to be continued with monitoring, and what needs to be stopped.

- **Ensure accountability.** To support both growth and impact of school leadership, it is critical that the Superintendent collaborate with principals each year to identify priority indicators and/or elements around which to focus principal evaluation.³⁰ To begin the process, principals propose priority indicators and elements based on a self-assessment and student data. Consistent and frequent school visits and feedback are essential to this process. Principals should prioritize indicators around academics, attendance, discipline, and parent participation and set the goals on a yearly basis. Each leadership team should be held to account for achieving the agreed-upon goals. Principals should regularly measure the impact of initiatives and partnerships on student outcomes. Academic and disciplinary goals should be factored into their evaluations, and they should receive support to address equity issues in their respective schools.

In addition to ensuring accountability for school principals, it is also essential that directors, Assistant Superintendents, and the Superintendent be formally evaluated. As with the principals, indicators should be chosen based on individual needs and goals, and impact should be measured in student outcomes. Frequent and actionable feedback is part of this process.

- **Create a long-range plan to increase the diversity of staff.** One school has demonstrated that a more diverse staff can be achieved. The district should study what is being done differently at Tucker Elementary and evaluate what approaches can be applied across all schools. Set an incremental diversity goal that eventually results in the diversity of staff being more reflective of the diversity of the student body. Complete the actions set forth in the strategic plan with urgency. Name those who are accountable to complete the actions and assign challenging yet achievable timelines for the activities outlined. Assemble a task force of teachers and leaders across the district to determine strategies to increase the diversity of the staff in schools. This group can research innovative ways to reach the diversity goal and create an action plan with the resulting information. Continue and enhance district partnerships with local colleges and universities to continue to support this effort.
- **Involve school leaders in the budgeting processes.** Base the budgeting process on objective student characteristics, such as economic status, English language learning classification, students with disabilities status, grade enrolled, low academic performance status, or high academic performance/gifted status, among others. The budget process should ensure that resources are distributed equitably based on student need. Support a budgeting process that has clear and easily understood policies for where, how, and why dollars flow. School leaders should be invited to define the resources they need to drive student achievement. This process will enhance the principal's management capacity as it pertains to data-based budgeting and planning.
- **Implement discussions and provide support for anti-racist work in the district.** The district's strategic plan specifically mentions anti-racist training and action planning. Educators need the training and tools to contend with issues of race in classrooms and schools. Further, educators need to see and acknowledge that certain groups, including students of color, have not been served well by the system. This is caused by multiple

³⁰ The Massachusetts DESE rubric for principals can be found here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/rubrics/>.

complex factors, so it is imperative that time be dedicated to identifying and address the systemic beliefs, policies, procedures, and practices that contribute to racial inequities.

5 Domain 3: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CI&A)

Rating: Developing

Overview

Guided by the September 2020 strategic plan, the district is in the midst of transforming MPS teaching and learning, curriculum, assessment programs, instructional leadership, and professional development. Some programs, such as K–8 math, employ differentiated instruction and have developed pacing guides and standards-based grading. The district is aligning courses of study to state standards, while simultaneously adopting anti-racist and culturally relevant curriculum. Moreover, employing data from MCAS, common assessments, and English language arts (ELA) and math screenings, the district is gathering data to help measure student learning and inform programmatic decisions. In addition, the district is developing a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Lastly, the district has hired a Director of Educational Equity who oversees cultural competence training and has recruited MPS teachers and administrators for a working committee to guide the development and implementation of the district quality review and action planning process. The district should continue to enhance equitable high-quality learning opportunities by such actions as de-leveling courses in grades 7–12, recruiting a more diverse student demographic for the French Immersion program, aligning all curricular scope and sequence documents to state standards, and implementing a comprehensive professional development plan.

5.1 CI&A Practices That Support Equity

5.1.1 Learning and Teaching

- The middle school math curriculum, Desmos, supports rigorous, standards-based instruction. Assessments are matched to standards and rubrics spanning “meets/exceeds, moderate, developing, and beginning.” Grade 6 math has been de-leveled. The resulting heterogeneous environment allows all students to collaborate with one another and all voices to be heard.
- The district has developed standards-based K–5 report cards with MA framework-based math and science content learning expectations.
- There is a district pacing guide for elementary math. The program review is currently examining its coherence across grades and strands.
- The district has launched several curriculum programs that offer effective differentiation strategies. For instance, the Amplify ELA 6–8 curricula pairs high expectations with strong supports and multimodal differentiation. In addition, the grade 6 Illustrative Math course of study offers “Info Gap” activities to give students more frequent opportunities to practice math language routines, such as “How Many Would It Take?”
- Observation of French Immersion classes indicates some instructional complexities related to the program. In some classrooms in grades 1 through 5, teacher and students’ discourse about multiple subject contents (math, science, and English language arts, as well as conversational French) took place entirely in the target language. Moreover, classes were

observed in which students stayed fully engaged as teachers employed pedagogy that gradually released students from whole group instruction to pair practice.

- In 2019, the core values, beliefs, and vision of the graduate mission statement were adopted. It states, “By engaging students in a rigorous, supportive, enriching educational program that emphasizes respect, achievement, and citizenship, MHS graduates students who reach their potential and contribute to the global community.” The expectations of student learning for MHS graduates are stated as follows:
 1. Effectively apply critical thinking skills to make connections and solve problems.
 2. Employ technology to engage, explore, and evaluate our community, nation, and world.
 3. Be original and innovative in individual and collaborative work.
 4. Practice good citizenship, personal responsibility, and character through individual and collective actions.
 5. Demonstrate understanding and respect for themselves and the diversity of ideas, cultures, and abilities in school and beyond.

5.1.2 Curriculum

- Milton’s K–5 math and English language arts curricula adhere to the most recent MA framework standards, as do 6–8 math, English language arts, social studies³¹, and science courses of study.
- The district has established protocols and processes for revising the K–5 math curriculum in comparison to other high-performing districts. The K–5 math review is examining how a new curriculum can incorporate diverse perspectives and incorporate all voices in the classroom. This process supports the development of cultural competence.
- MHS has launched some exciting and relevant courses that will appeal to a wide range of students. For example, alongside more conventional courses like psychology, law, and government, the social studies department offers inclusive and timely elective courses. Two examples are Comparative Cultures within the African Diaspora, that investigates the “dispersal of African peoples and cultures throughout the world, both throughout history and in today’s global community,” and The Four Estates: Government and the Media, which examines how the media serves as a check on federal, state, and local government so as to better foster democracy.
- The district is actively seeking out learning resources that are culturally relevant to all students. For instance, this year the district has adopted Amplify ELA’s 6–8 Middle School 100 Lesson Pathways program with readings that introduce students to a range of identity factors, including socio-economic status, age, ability, race, ethnicity, country of origin, and religion. The MHS English language arts department chair has initiated a process for analyzing the texts that grades 9–12 students read for coursework. She has compiled data on the gender and ethnicities of authors and main characters, as well as instructional questions and book publication dates. Consequently, the MHS English language arts department has recently developed common assessment for grades 9–12 students, addressing several writings produced by diverse authors and works such as Achebe’s Things Fall Apart, Noah’s Born a Crime, Wilson’s Fences, Hansberry’s Raisin in the Sun, Cisneros’ House on Mango Street, and Gladwell’s Revisionist History. In addition, the MHS social studies department has developed some inclusive common assessments, such as

³¹ The reviewers did not have access to the 6-8 grade social studies curricula, but it is described on the PMS website as conforming to the 2018 HSS framework.

“Andrew Jackson Judgment: Guilty or Not Guilty of Crimes Against Humanity?”, “Washington/DuBois: Primary Source Analysis,” Mamie Phipps Clark’s biography, and “Imperialism Research Assignment.”

- The district provides a content specialist to support some content areas and grade levels. School- and district-based curriculum directors support the core content areas. The district is also budgeting for math and reading interventionists.
- The district now employs the “DESE Quick Reference Guide: Evaluating and Selecting High-Quality Instructional Materials Process” for curriculum material selection. As a result, in 2017 the district opted to purchase and deploy National Geographic’s K–5 ELA Reach for Reading Program.
- The K–5 English language arts program’s anchor standards enable students to engage in reading and writing that builds vocabulary and language, provides opportunities to use higher order thinking skills, and facilitates continuous monitoring of individual student progress.
- The written science curriculum is broad and offers a wide range of learning experiences. There is flexibility and choice for students on topics that connect to potential career paths. At the high school level, these include engineering, astronomy, climate crisis, and biotechnology. At the elementary level, there are several integrated STEM units or challenges (Lego We Do, creative computing, Project Lead-the-Way).
- The district has established a curriculum review process for 2020–2025 and is engaging all curriculum programs to review all K–12 curricula.

5.1.3 Assessment and Use of Data

- The district piloted the Intellispark student voice surveys this year as part of the effort to document SEL data among students. Consequently, the district has developed a SEL curriculum and training on resources such as Second Step.
- There is some evidence of use of qualitative and quantitative data for operational and instructional decision-making. The K–5 math program review is creating a vision and examining materials using an equity and social justice lens.
- Some of the district programs use MCAS results, common unit assessments, and beginning- and end-of-year assessments to assess student learning. District educators recently researched and selected the iReady math diagnostic numeracy screener for grades K–8, and Lexia Rapid Assessment for K-8 English language arts. The district gathers this data to help measure student learning and inform programmatic decisions. MHS teachers give students common formative and summative assessments for shared courses and discuss student assessment results in meetings. As of the 2019–2020 school year, MPS has implemented Otus as a centralized platform for student data storage. Some teachers now use Otus to collect and examine assessment data.
- At all elementary schools, teams of teachers and administrators attend weekly common planning meetings to employ data to assess progress of students, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The district also maintains school-based Student Support Teams (SSTs) that meet to prescribe learning interventions for struggling students.
- Pierce Middle School has launched common assessments in several courses of study. For instance, beginning in September 2020, the English language arts department deployed Amplify ELA’s grades 6, 7, and 8 common assessments. These assessments evaluate students’ proficiency in the main reading skills practiced in each unit. To evaluate students’ understanding of unit texts, the assessments utilize text-based prompts by which students develop a claim supported by evidence. In grades 6–8, math teachers employ Desmos

common unit assessments on such topics as area, positive and negative numbers, and proportional and linear relationships. In addition, the PMS music program employs online lessons, video performance exhibits, rubrics, and linked assessments.

5.1.4 Instructional Leadership and Capacity

- The district has generated a MPS strategic plan, rewritten in September 2020. This 57-page document addresses the revision of multiple district programs.
- The district is utilizing the “DESE Guidebook for Inclusive Practice” to develop an effective SEL curriculum based on UDL, SEL and PBIS. The district is also adopting teacher and administrator rubrics to support SEL implementation.
- Some systems for monitoring and evaluating programs and strategies are established. The K–5 math program review committee consists of building leaders, curriculum leaders, and math teachers. They have consulted the “DESE Quick Reference Guide” in their process to examine materials using an equity and social justice lens. Their information will be disseminated across the district and will guide future planning, programming, and professional development in math.
- The district’s Director of Educational Equity is recruiting MPS teachers and administrators for a working committee to guide the development and implementation of the district quality review and action planning process. This steering committee will “analyze equity audit results, identify root causes of equity challenges that are within the district’s sphere of influence, identify goals and objectives for equity planning that lead to increased equity at all levels of the organization, and focus on five key areas—awareness, staff development, voice, student supports, and analysis—to drive excellent and equitable outcomes for all students.”

5.1.5 Professional Learning and Development

- The district has hired a Director of Educational Equity whose job description includes overseeing cultural competence training and the use of a cultural relevance curriculum scorecard, however the current system and structure does not allow her oversight yet. To date, the director’s work has been focused on collaborating with principals and district administrators to understand the equity opportunities and issues in the Milton schools. In addition to engagement with many departments and schools and chairing the steering group, the director has identified three areas of focus, which are tied to the district strategic plan. The director hopes to: continue the work to create equitable hiring and retention practices, refine the discipline incidence reporting process to better include restorative practices, and spearhead the curriculum review process to ensure equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant experiences for all students. To date, the systems and structures have not enabled her to effectively oversee these activities. The director also writes and disseminates “Behaving Equitably,” a monthly newsletter to the community that provides information about the district’s equity actions, curricula, and support groups, such as the school-based diversity, equity, and inclusion committees that the director coordinates.
- Milton elementary schools provide professional development through school curriculum coordinators with a focus on new math and English language arts programs, such as Reach for Reading. District curriculum coordinators oversee other subjects, such as science. Milton has built-in half- and full-day release time for professional development. In elementary schools, professional development is delivered in regular half-day sessions; one half of each session is committed to curriculum coordinators and the other half to teacher collaboration. Common planning meetings for instructional feedback and discussion of curriculum topics, primarily English language arts and math, are held weekly. Due to a recent curriculum

review, math is slated to be at the forefront of Milton professional development. Specialists like the occupational therapist and special education teachers attend these sessions, which help them support classroom instruction.

- In support of equity work, principals and central office staff attend bi-monthly professional development sessions focused on race, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Over the past two years Dr. Kalise Wornum and Dr. Nicole Braithwaite have conducted two-hour cultural competence trainings with Milton administrators. Dr. Wornum has already begun to train teachers. Attendees have said that Dr. Wornum's workshops were immensely powerful because all MPS leaders learned together, helping the leadership staff to develop a common language. They found Dr. Wornum to be approachable and comforting, thereby creating an open and safe place that made them feel that "their voice was heard and valued." One administrator attested that these trainings made teachers more comfortable talking about race and related one incident in which she acted based on her "increased willingness to name things."

5.2 CI&A Practices That Limit Equity

5.2.1 Learning and Teaching

- The district has researched and developed a set of twenty-first century learning expectations to provide a framework of skills standards that will guide instruction of course units. This list of skills has so far only been incorporated into a few social studies unit plans. The lack of incorporation into all 9–12 course syllabi will limit equity until the skills are consistently included in all MHS curricula.
- While the district has developed standards-based K–5 report cards with MA framework-based math and science content learning expectations, this has not been the case for English language arts, social studies, art, and music, where the outlined skills are more generic. The MHS report card has traditional letter grades with little information pertaining to student learning. Conduct and effort are described in one word ("good" and "fair," for example) and course comments are preset ("is a pleasure to have in class," for example). This is a barrier to equity because the report cards as constituted do not illuminate what all students have learned and are able to do.
- In the French Immersion program, some classes observed were taught exclusively by means of teacher-centered large group instruction with individual students presenting pre-prepared projects in a performative manner. This is a barrier to equity because this pedagogical style may not engage all students and may not be developing their ability to become independent or higher order thinkers.

5.2.2 Curriculum

- In the equity survey, students report that they learn about people like themselves at differing rates based on their own race and/or ethnicity. While 86% of White students agree that they "learn about the contributions of people of races, cultures, and backgrounds" similar to their own, only 61% of Asian students and 73% of both African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx students agree.

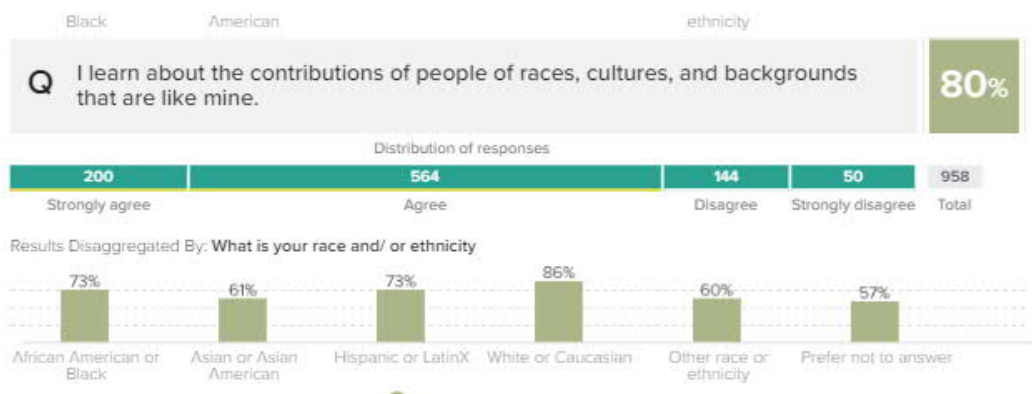


Figure 5-1 Student Survey Response Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

- As previously stated in section 5.1.2, the MHS English language arts department chair has initiated a process for analyzing the texts that 9–12 students read for coursework. At present, teachers are suggesting and piloting alternative texts that might better represent the identities, interests, and concerns of current Milton students. Until this work is completed, it represents a barrier to equity, as groups of students do not see themselves in the curriculum.
- MPS curricula have been revised to the current MA frameworks with inconsistent fidelity. For example, K–5 science curricula incompletely address the MA science and technology/engineering curriculum framework, and the K–5 social studies curricula retain units from the superseded 2003 MA history/social science framework. In addition, while most courses at MHS have been aligned to current state frameworks, some courses, like the MHS biology course, reference the 2006 science framework. This infidelity to MA frameworks culminates in a lack of access for students to standards-based learning in all subject areas and so represents a barrier to equity.
- Because of leveling at the middle school, students begin being tracked into leveled courses early on in their high school experience. In addition, there are inconsistencies among high school teachers concerning how they recommend students for AP courses. This is a barrier to equity because whether there is implicit bias or not, the demographics of the AP courses do not reflect the overall student population. Students of color are underrepresented in the highest-level courses.
- The district is at the inception of the development of a K–12 anti-racist curriculum. For example, the district has disseminated the “Movement to Prioritize Anti-Racist Mathematics.” Until this work is complete across the district, barriers to equity will continue to exist.
- Elementary educators have access to social studies program materials from Discovering Justice (curriculum developed to teach students about the justice system, practice the historical knowledge and literacy skills to navigate it, and explore pathways to engage effectively in civic life) and Learning for Justice (a program designed to create inclusive school communities where children and youth are respects, valued, and welcome participants). In general, teachers reported that these curricula have been on the “back burner” and are only taught “if I get to it.” This limits elementary educational equity. However, now that a new social studies coordinator has been appointed, school administrators think that this situation will change.
- It is difficult for students to enter the French Immersion program after grade 1 because of a lack of sufficient language acquisition. A disproportionately low number of students with special needs participate in French Immersion. A few students who may move into the district from Francophone countries can go into HS French Immersion. Thus, the

demographics of the French Immersion programs across the district are 88% White. Most elementary school administrators agree that, on one hand, the French Immersion program offers students great camaraderie, a stimulating learning experience, and college-level French language ability by the end of high school; on the other hand, it tends to be a separate program with an elitist reputation whose students are neither in special education, nor students of color, nor subject to suspension. Principals are hopeful that now that the elementary school English programs offer Spanish and STEM, K–5 classes will become more inclusive. Previously, principals had to look for opportunities for English and French program students to spend part of the school day with each other in PE, art, music classes, and recess. One principal was concerned that some MPS students can go through elementary school with few experiences of being in classes with students from differing cultural backgrounds. Another principal says that her students of color are in the French Immersion classes. The nomenclature about the French and English programs is that the “French Fries are on a higher track than the English Muffins.” We have also heard from an administrator that there is no data on how to make the program more equitable, nor is there professional development to guide program revision. Therefore, the French Immersion program as currently constituted represents a barrier to equity.

5.2.3 Assessment and Use of Data

- High school math assessments reveal significant direct recall of facts and many multiple-choice formats. Open-ended problems were not identified, and there was no evidence of standards-based rubrics or student work samples. Furthermore, as a universal screener for elementary math, iReady is associated with rote skills and fact fluency. Common formative assessments are helpful, but iReady alone does not provide students opportunities to display high-level thinking.
- While there are common assessments in grades 6–8 English language arts, science, and math, there was no evidence of common assessments in social studies. These inconsistencies represent barriers to equity when learning is measured relatively rather than against standards.
- MHS teachers have access to SAT and MCAS data, but their use of it varies from department to department. There is reportedly little time to analyze data, and the platforms are not streamlined. In addition, elementary teachers who must enter feedback for several different courses find the overall process to be tedious. This is a barrier to equity because it does not allow for a thorough analysis of the performance of all students, and by extension, opportunities to improve outcomes for all students.
- The district does not systematically review student outcomes against C&I initiatives. Data are not used to determine the areas of the curriculum that need reviewing, or where to place curriculum resources and interventionists based on student need.

5.2.4 Instructional Leadership and Capacity

- There is no evidence of a systemic process by which all students can enroll in the highest-level courses at the high school. In math in particular, an abundance of fact-based multiple-choice assessments limits students' ability to build stamina in problem solving and does not provide all students the opportunity to think critically at the highest levels. To place students in levels, teachers default to letter grades from traditional tests or observing behaviors perceived as able to manage rigorous content. This is a barrier to equity for three reasons: it does not convey high expectations for all students, the measurement tools do not reflect what students know and are able to do, and there does not exist a leadership vision to support actively changing the placement process.

- Principals have reported instances among teachers and families that convey a deficit mindset for students, that is, the notion that some students “can” while other students “can’t.” In conversations and focus groups, staff revealed that some educators hold low expectations for some groups of students. While there have been attempts to change this mindset, it continues to represent a barrier to equity because it reveals different levels of expectation for students.
- Although the district has hired a Director of Educational Equity, the director does not yet have the authority and resources to implement and oversee the district equity plans. There is no dedicated budget for equity activities and professional learning, other than the salary of the director. The director’s time is spread thinly across many different initiatives and departments and all schools; therefore, the impact of the director’s activities is limited. It not yet clear what her authority level and accountabilities are in relation to the district’s strategic goals and how her performance will be monitored and evaluated.

5.2.5 Professional Learning and Development

- MPS has developed a professional development (PD) mission statement. However, this document does not outline how a comprehensive PD program would work, nor does it specify the year-by-year focus of PD or how PD goals are established. In addition, the plan is silent on how professional learning should be monitored for implementation at the classroom levels, and by whom.
- Because of the pandemic, some schools chose to implement technology PD, that is, use of webcams and Pear Deck, to support remote instruction. At the end of the year, the school-based Cultural Competency teams will meet to plan PD for the next academic year. It seems that because Milton has launched so many initiatives in the past couple of years (SEL, Math, ELA, PBIS, Cultural Competence, etc.), following-up systematically with PD support for specific initiatives is a true challenge.

5.3 High Leverage Recommendations for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- **Complete the de-leveling of all content areas through grade 8.** Although the district has begun efforts to de-level grade 6 math and English language arts and intends to de-level grades 7 and 8 math and English language arts, we recommend beginning discussions about processes for the de-leveling of high school courses starting in grade 9. For high school courses that remain leveled, outline and communicate processes by which student placement is determined, including describing opportunities for any student to enroll in any level class.
- **Document a system of tiered supports for students in literacy and math** that identifies how students are assessed and how their needs are supported. When describing students’ needs, engage in conversation from an asset-based mindset. In other words, illuminate what students know and can do, and portray high expectations for supporting improvement.
- **Update and publish all curriculum scope and sequence documents** so that they align with state standards. Continue to realign all MPS curricula to meet or exceed state standards in all subject areas.
- **Develop common formative and summative assessments** in all grades and content areas to determine what students know and can do in relation to identified standards. Gather and share student work exemplars that correlate to the standards in each grade and subject. Provide more open-ended prompts in these assessments.
- **Design standards-based report cards** for high school students. Revise elementary and middle school report cards so that English language arts, social studies, art, and music

grading references student performance related to specific learning standards instead of generic skills.

- **Develop a comprehensive professional development plan** for the district that is long-term, geared toward improving the learning of all students and skills of teachers, data-driven, research-based, and with systematic session follow-up, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure improved skills for teachers and better outcomes for students.
- In addition to formal professional development opportunities, **develop structures for job-embedded professional learning** that incorporates curriculum leaders, building leaders, and teacher leaders as capacity builders. This includes supervising and supporting principals as instructional leaders who can advance the mission of the district.
- **Develop a plan to make the French Immersion program more inclusive.** This might include actively recruiting students of color in pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten or providing French Immersion teachers with professional development on differentiation and small group work based on universal design principles. These approaches will create more accessible classrooms that utilize a variety of instructional formats to better address the learning needs of students with a variety of backgrounds, learning modalities, and abilities, and allow the setting up of special educator student support teams for French Immersion teachers.
- **Prioritize the program review of social studies curriculum** under the leadership of the social studies coordinator and the MHS social studies chair. K-8 social studies curriculum should be written based on the 2018 history/social science framework standards.
- **Continue to revise the curriculum with an equity lens.** Diversity, equity, and inclusion committees should meet to design a plan and protocols for assessing curriculum and instruction with an equity lens.
- **Clarify a role and a plan for the Director of Educational Equity.** The director is one person spread across many new and ongoing programs and initiatives across the district. To achieve equity, however, equitable practice must be everyone's work, at every level. This will take effort over time and requires a focus on professional learning across the district. The systems and policies need to afford the director the authority to lead, implement, and evaluate equity strategies and actions. The director can then identify the resources and access needed to achieve the prioritized goals and make a plan to meet them. It will be crucial to monitor the implementation of the equity activities and assess the impact that the efforts yield. The director should be held accountable for reaching planned goals and likewise be empowered to hold others accountable for their roles in achieving equity goals.

6 Domain 4: Family and Community Engagement

Rating: Initiating

Overview

The district responds to community members and educators in the district and has developed a strong rapport with most families. District leaders have developed partnerships with several organizations that work to support the academic and social-emotional growth of students in schools, and they are working to include the voices of diverse community groups in decision-making. Student voice is not being consistently used in district-wide, school, or classroom decision-making and there are still too few students of color participating in sports programs and extracurricular activities.

6.1 Family and Community Engagement: Factors that Support Equity

6.1.1 Families and Community

- The district values the diverse voices of families and caregivers when making decisions that will impact the community. All schools have highly engaged parent-teacher organizations (PTOs) working to support teachers and the schools. Some schools in the district have developed and implemented family and community engagement plans that promote family and community support to enhance student learning at some levels. A large percentage of families are actively engaged in school events that support positive outcomes for students. The district and schools occasionally use parent opinions as part of their self-evaluation process. This supports equity across the district, while aligning to the strategic plan section 1.4.5, which states, “*Engage with families to highlight strategies to reinforce academic development.*”
- Parents in focus groups mentioned that they had positive interactions with the teachers and school leaders in their children’s schools. Parents of students at one school consistently provided positive feedback about the principal of that school and her ability to listen to parents and provide thoughtful feedback. One parent shared, “[The principal] is always responsive and genuinely listens to my concerns. I’m amazed at her ability to respond to parents with everything else she has going on.” Of the same principal, another parent stated, “I feel like the culture at [this school] is like no other... I always feel heard by the principal and the teachers.” Parents of students attending other schools in the district also had accolades for school leaders: “The principal is responsive, and I think he’s doing a great job of listening to parents’ concerns,” and, “The teachers at my son’s school are incredible. They work incredibly hard and they keep me informed about his academics and behavior.”



Figure 6-1 Response to Family Equity Survey

- The district develops and maintains productive partnerships with the business, philanthropic, higher education, and non-profit communities that support the social and emotional growth of students across the district. There is a plan for maintaining and developing new partnerships with external organizations. The district seeks support from external partners and works to align them with district goals or with clear descriptions of how they can support positive outcomes for students. One example of a strong partnership is the connection to The Calculus Project. This program supports students in enhancing their math abilities in middle school in order to engage in calculus and other high-level math classes in high school and beyond. This supports student academic outcomes, as participation in high-level math classes will make for stronger candidates for college acceptance.

Other partnerships include:

- Curry College
- Milton Interfaith Clergy Association (MICA)
- Milton Anti-Racist Coalition (MARC)
- Citizens for Diverse Milton (CDM)
- Milton Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (MSAPC)
- Boston University (social work interns at each school)
- BID Milton
- Milton Police Department
- Milton Foundation for Education
- Boston College
- Milton Academy

6.1.2 Political and Policy Alignment and Engagement

- Milton has many community organizations devoted to increasing equity in schools and the community at large. These include Milton Anti-Racist Coalition (MARC), Milton Public Schools Anti-Racism Action Team (ARAT), Citizens for a Diverse Milton (CDM), Equity and Justice for All Advisory Committee, and others. In June 2020, MARC (comprising more than 400 concerned parents and community members) challenged MPS to accelerate and focus its equity work and “transform Milton Public Schools to an excellence-with-equity, anti-racist

exemplar educational system that works for all students.” MARC leaders crafted the MPS reform platform, which features reform goals, strategies, and a phased action plan to achieve equity goals.³² In July 2020, the reform platform was presented to the Milton School Committee and the then-Superintendent pledged to act upon the plan.

Members of these community groups participated in QREL focus groups. This supports equity, as district leaders are working to include the voices of community stakeholders in this pivotal process.

6.2 Family and Community Engagement: Factors that Limit Equity

6.2.1 Family Engagement and Student Voice

- Parents report being unclear on how to engage or support the schools. On the equity survey, one parent wrote, “Besides joining the PTO, I don’t know of any other way to really be involved in any school decision-making.” Many parents report that de-leveling of courses at PMS and MHS was something that happened without them knowing about it or without their input. Parents of students with special needs and struggling learners wanted more updates directly from teachers. One parent reports, “We often get emails with links ...[and] there’s very little personal communication. We do not hear from teachers except for newsletters so it’s difficult to know what my child experiences in the classroom.”
- Student feedback is not consistently sought or used by the district. Students report that they have few opportunities to provide feedback to the district on meaningful issues, and they feel their feedback is not highly valued and respected by some district leaders. In the equity survey, only 56% of students report that they help decide what is best for their school. In focus groups, few students could cite examples of when feedback was provided to the district and positive change occurred due to the feedback. This is also not in alignment with the strategic plan section 4.3.3, which prompts the district to *“Identify and complete a structure to capture student voices and experiences that can be shared out with the faculty to further understand the experience of minority students within the district and to self-reflect on role and impact.”*
- In focus groups, when students were asked if they had a hand in the decision-making in the district, 100% of students replied “No.” One student stated, “I was able to speak at a district meeting with my teacher once.” Another student commented, “We should be able to voice our opinions and ideas to the (district) leaders,” and another asked, “How can they make all the decisions for students, when they don’t even ask the students?” This limits equity, as student voice is not currently a contributing factor to bring about change in the district.

6.2.2 Extracurricular Opportunities

- Sports programs and extracurricular activities are often avenues to increase the engagement and participation of students. These experiences provide students the opportunity to forge strong relationships with their peers and coaches outside of the traditional classroom environment. Caroline Waldman, author of “How Sports and Coaching Influence Social Emotional Learning in Young People” states, “While sports might be a unique arena, it’s part of a broad array of places in which young people learn, grow, and develop. There’s unbelievable opportunity to think about sports as a place in which young people can take ownership of their own learning.” She goes on to say, “Sports are a critical space in which [kids] get to both see modeled, and practice, this core set of competencies across the social,

³² https://www.miltonps.org/application/files/7315/9590/3426/MARC_MPS_Platform_Final_five_pages.pdf.

emotional, and cognitive domains. It's a really important opportunity in which young people can get and create a continuous feedback loop with their coaches and with other athletes." The district recognizes the benefits that participation in extracurricular activities provides; objective 4.2 in the strategic plan prompts the district to "Increase the overall participation of students of color in extracurricular activities to close the participation gap, and optimize the academic, social, emotional and sociocultural experiences that help every student in the district realize their own full academic and developmental potential."

- The participation gap is much wider for low-income students. There are currently low numbers of economically disadvantaged students in extracurricular activities and sports. According to multiple parents and district-level employees, there has been little growth in this area thus far. The district Director of Athletics shared, "There is a flat fee to play sports and join other art programs and activities. This serves as a barrier in the district. Many students cannot afford to play." He then said, "We do offer some waivers to families, but they are limited. ... We need to do a better job of interesting students about the sports programs at a younger age to build skills and interest. This will increase participation and they will perform better as they grow in the district." The financial barriers for entry continue to limit equity in this area, as economically disadvantaged students might miss these crucial opportunities to realize their full potential.

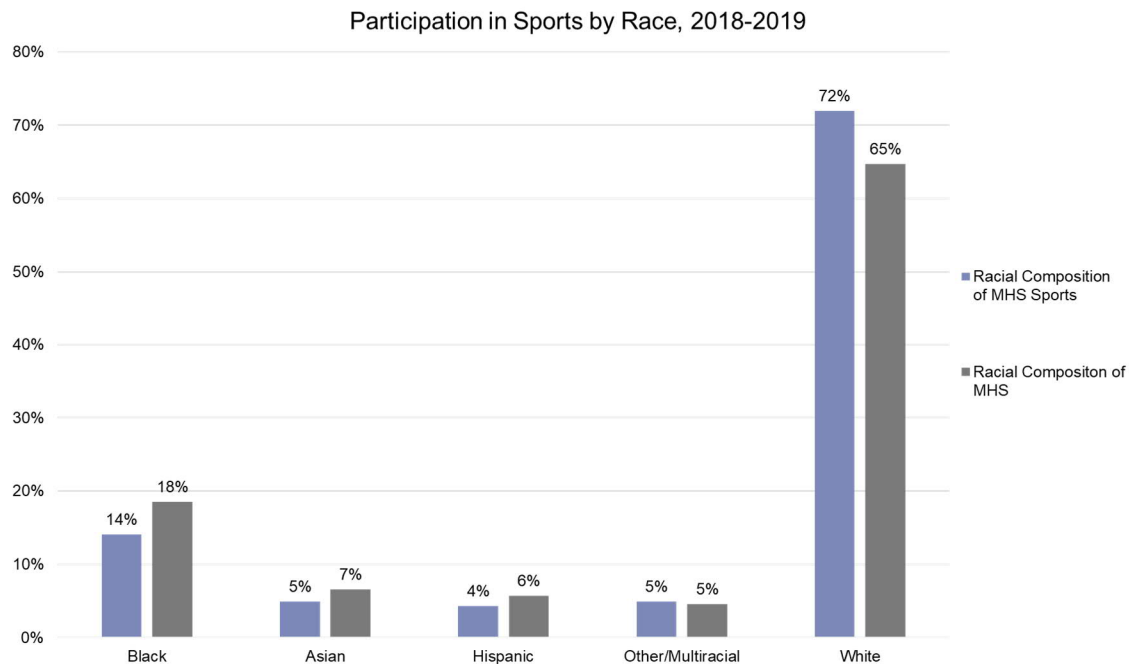


Figure 6-2 Sports Participation by Race, MHS

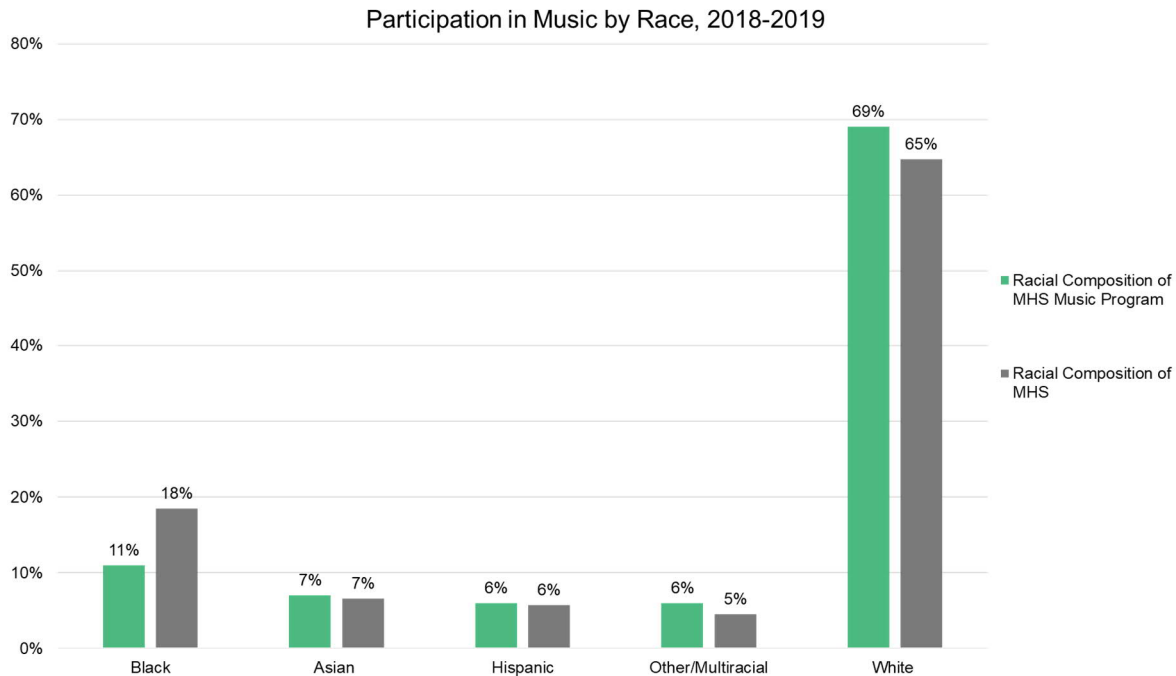


Figure 6-3 Music Participation by Race, MHS

6.2.3 Political and Policy Alignment and Engagement

- Although the district leaders and school committee have adopted anti-racist and equity goals that are now documented in the strategic plan, the community is very much divided on the issues of equity. Although most stakeholders report that issues of equity need to be addressed, and that resources should be focused on underserved or underperforming groups, there is a general feeling that the district's efforts have been largely reactive, chaotic, and controversial. Some have pushed hard for the district to address many longstanding equity issues, starting with hiring a Director of Educational Equity and conducting this QREL. For some, however, the discussions around equity in the district have made them uncomfortable or angry. The current climate in the district is what one parent described as “outrageously tense,” pitting neighbor against neighbor and parent against parent. People on both sides of the equity debate have reported “genuine fear” of speaking their piece due to potential retaliation. Only certain, often extreme, voices are being heard, which makes it difficult to find common ground and create safe spaces to have student-centered conversations.
- Some school staff and leaders have expressed concern with the timing of the QREL, given the pandemic. Some staff are, at best, uncomfortable confronting issues of equity, and, at worst, do not support or prioritize equity in their classrooms and schools.
- Groups that support equity goals of the district have also been vocal about what they see is a lack of leadership, commitment, and action on the part of the district. In focus groups, public comment at school committee meetings, and in letters to the editor of local newspapers, members of MARC and CDM have expressed disappointment and frustration with the lack of urgency and progress.
- According to a town advisory committee, the issues in the schools are reflective of the greater community. The Milton Equity and Justice for All committee, which was appointed in September 2020 to examine issues of race in Milton, recently reported to the select board

that “There is no town-wide commitment to diversity,” noting initial observations that the town’s employees do not reflect the diversity of the residents, and residents of color are more likely to face enforcement actions from the town’s police.³³

6.3 High-Leverage Recommendations for Family and Community Engagement

- **Create more formal opportunities to collect and use student voice in decision-making.** Student perception surveys can be utilized two to three times a year to determine areas of challenge and opportunity for students. The district could then use this collected data to better meet students’ needs around academic, social emotional supports, extracurricular activities, and college and career prep. The Superintendent could hold monthly roundtables that allow students from different schools to present exemplary work and projects that they have created, while voicing their concerns and desires for change in their schools. Student-led equity teams could be developed in the middle and high schools with support from lead teachers. These groups could examine data in their schools and determine an area of inequity or disproportionality that they want to work to address. Some of this work could be done via video conferencing to make it convenient for all families and ensure greater participation. This would provide students with greater voice, while aligning with the district’s goal to increase equity across all schools.
- **Increase access of economically disadvantaged students to extracurricular activities and sports programs.** Direct some fiscal resources to provide free intramural games in the lower grades. These games would help increase the interest of students and enhance their desire to participate in sports as they enter the upper grades. This would also provide opportunities for students from different cultures and different schools to forge relationships and interact outside the classroom before entering middle school. The district could also lower or limit the cost of entry to programs in the upper grades to eliminate the entry barrier for economically disadvantaged families.
- **Extend opportunities for dialogue and leverage the expertise and skills that community members bring.** School committee and district leaders have set goals and have begun to create policy to eliminate barriers to achievement for all students. These goals and policies will fall short if the community is not engaged in the process. Engage community groups to help define, document, and implement action plans. The community’s role in holding the district accountable should be structured and maintained.
- **Work to build a climate and environment where stakeholders can discuss issues and actions around equity.** Take the emotion out of the equation as much as possible by focusing on data and outcomes for groups of students. Work with stakeholders to create action plans, monitor implementation, and measure the impact of all activities. Plans that are proactive, transparent, include stakeholder input, and monitored have a better chance of being successful.

³³ Source: <https://www.patriotledger.com/story/news/2021/05/06/milton-committee-says-town-lacks-commitment-diversity/4967979001/>

Appendix

A. List of Stakeholder Events

Stakeholder events were held from February through May 2021. These events included interviews and focus groups conducted by two reviewers from the Cambridge Education team. Some interviews took place over several sessions.

A.1 Interviews (1:2 with Cambridge Education facilitators – 45-75 minutes)

- Chair, School Committee, Ms. Sheila Egan Varela
- Superintendent of Schools, James Jette
- Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Human Resources, Dr. Karen Spaulding
- Director of Educational Equity, Somaly Prak-Martins
- Director, Data & Analytics, Vy Vu
- MPS Family Outreach Liaison, Marti O'Keefe McKenna
- Director of Nutrition Services, Jacqueline Morgan
- Director of Nursing, Kimberly Coughlin
- Director of Athletics, Ryan Madden
- Educational Technology Director, AJ Melanson
- Transportation, Rachel Schewe
- Administrator for Pupil Personnel, Susan M Maselli
- Affinity Group Lead, Lawrence Jordan
- Director of the Milton Community Schools, Martha Sandoval
- Director of Fine and Performing Arts, Magen Slesinger
- Director of World Languages, Zeina Hamada
- Principal, Milton High School, Karen J. Cahill
- Principal, Pierce Middle School, William Fish
- Principal, Collicot Elementary School, Holly Concannon
- Principal, Cunningham Elementary School, Jonathan Redden
- Principal, Glover Elementary School, Karen McDavitt
- Principal, Tucker Elementary School, Elaine McNeil-Girmai

A.2 Focus groups (5-8 participants – 45-60 minutes)

- Teachers – grades PK-2; grades 3-5; middle school; high school
- Parents – elementary, middle, and high school
- Parents – families of students with disabilities or special needs
- Students – grades 3-5, middle, and high school
- Community partners (including CDM, MARC)

B. Document Review

Domain	Administrative data and documentation requested and reviewed
Domain 1: Student Learning and Development Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master schedules • Course offerings (high school) • Gifted and talented program information • College matriculation rates (as well as military, workforce entry data) • Enrollment in advanced, AP, IB courses by race/poverty • Rate of enrollment in grade 8 algebra by race/poverty • Rate of AP/IB test-taking by race/poverty • Rate of success in advanced/AP/IB courses/tests by race/poverty • Attendance by race/poverty • Successful course completion by race/poverty • Graduation and dropout rates by race/poverty • College readiness test scores by race/poverty • Enrollment in dual credit courses by race/poverty • Participation in youth employment/internship programs by race/poverty • Completion of college applications and FAFSA by race/poverty • Graduation rates • Credit accumulation/on-track rates for high school students, by group • Grades, passing rates, GPA data • Test scores and outcome data by race/poverty • Grade 3 reading proficiency by race/poverty • Grades 8 and 11 math proficiency by race/poverty • Social and Emotional Learning program information • Demographic distribution data for staff and students (poverty, race, SWD, EL) • Rates of identification for services • MTSS data • Academic supports for students with disabilities; English learners • Pre-K availability and enrollment • Kindergarten readiness data • Student handbooks • Stakeholder survey data • SAT/ACT participation by race, poverty, SWD • Tracking policy/practice • Ratio of students to counselors • Student access to counselors by race/poverty • Participation in extracurricular activities by race/poverty • Policies/practices to facilitate participation. • List extracurricular activities offered • List youth employment, internship, college readiness programs • Participation in these programs by race/poverty • Rates of referral and enrollment to special education by race/poverty • Information about community and district support services • School climate data/survey results • Rate of referrals for disciplinary actions by race/poverty

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List restorative justice policies and practices Discipline policy for the district; ladder of consequences Rate of disciplinary action by race, income, gender, and disability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic plans School improvement plans List professional development opportunities Professional development/onboarding offered to new teachers and new-to-district teachers Teachers' years of experience Teacher certification status Teacher diversity Hiring and retention rates for teachers (by race) Participation in these professional development opportunities Ratio of administrative/teaching staff diversity to diversity of student body Rate of racial and economic segregation in schools, classes, and programs Methodology for collecting disciplinary data Methodology comparison: district and state Data collection includes race, socioeconomic, special education information Data collection tracks number of incidents for individual students Quality of physical environment Maintenance of school facilities (maintenance records) Physical plant review (physical plant records) Teacher experience, training, and evaluations in relation to poverty of school List participants in school/district budgeting processes Equity as part of budgeting process: review of procedures/meeting notes List participants in decision-making processes Equity goals and processes (review of meeting notes/perspective of participants) Vision, Mission statements
Domain 2: Leadership, Management, and Accountability	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum maps Curriculum scope and sequence Culturally relevant course syllabi, lesson plans, and units Curricula (texts/materials) inclusive of diverse cultures Anti-racist lessons and materials
Domain 3: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family engagement rates Policies and practices that facilitate teacher/family connection Promotional materials inclusive of diverse cultures/experiences Reading level of written communication compared to education level of parents List modes of communication List family engagement opportunities Rate of participation in engagement opportunities by race/poverty of families List opportunities for parent engagement in planning and decision making Rate of participation in parent leadership opportunities by race/poverty of families Rate of participation of parents, representative of school population in budgeting Transparent process/parent input: review of site council notes Inclusion of student voice in policy and decision-making Community resources available and the geographic distribution
Domain 4: Engagement of Families, the Community, and Other Stakeholders	

C. Selected Resources

Selected list of resources and research materials:

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Kramarczuk Voulgarides, Catherine, and Zwerger, Natalie. n.d. Identifying the Root Causes of Disproportionality. New York University: Metropolitan Center on Equity and the Transformation of Schools.

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D. Special Education Deeper Dive

Three main data tools (calculations) are used to explore disproportionality in special education: **classification rate**, **composition index**, and **relative risk ratio**.

D.1 Classification Rate

The classification rate identifies what rate, or percentage of risk, students of a particular racial/ethnic group have of being classified as students with disabilities (SWD).

D.1.1 MPS Overall Classification Rate

Title	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	9.6	23.4
English Language Learner	2.1	10.5
Students with Disabilities	16.0	18.7
High Needs	26.4	51.0
Economically Disadvantaged	11.4	36.6

D.1.2 MPS Overall Classification Rate of Students with Disabilities by Race/Ethnicity

	African American/ Black	Asian	Hispanic/ Latinx	Multiracial/ other	White	Total #
SWD Enrollment	156	34	47	35	445	717
Total Enrollment	422	296	173	220	2572	4400
% Observed/	36.9	11.49	27.16	15.9	17.3	16.29

Classification Rate = Number of SWD in a racial/ethnic group *divided by* Total number of students in the same racial/ethnic group *multiplied by* 100.

Analysis & Interpretation:

Of _____ students, _____ % are classified with special education services.

Of students **who identify as African American/Black**, **36.9 %** are classified with special education services.

D.2 Composition Index

D.2.1 MPS Composition of Students with Disabilities Compared to the Racial/Ethnic Composition of the District

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White	Total #
District Enrollment	422	296	173	220	2572	4400
District Composition	13.10	7.5	5.00	5.40	68.8	
SWD Enrollment	156	34	47	35	445	717
SWD Composition	21.75	4.74	6.55	4.88	62.06	

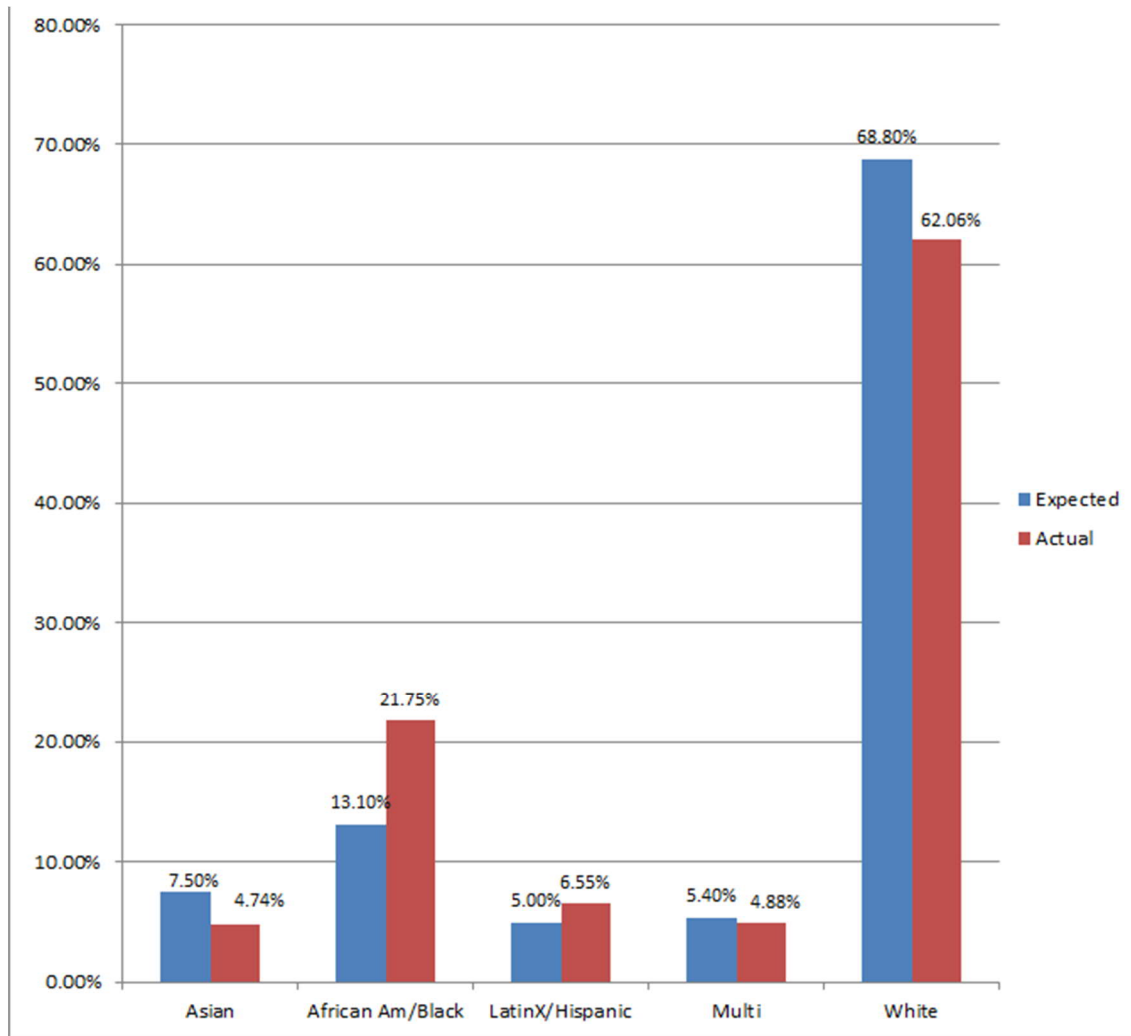
The composition index gives the proportion of students by race/ethnicity in a particular situation. Composition indexes are used to determine if a particular group is over- or under-represented in special education, in a particular disability, or in a particular classroom setting. (Composition Index = Number of SWD in a racial/ethnic group *divided by* Total number of SWD *multiplied by* 100.)

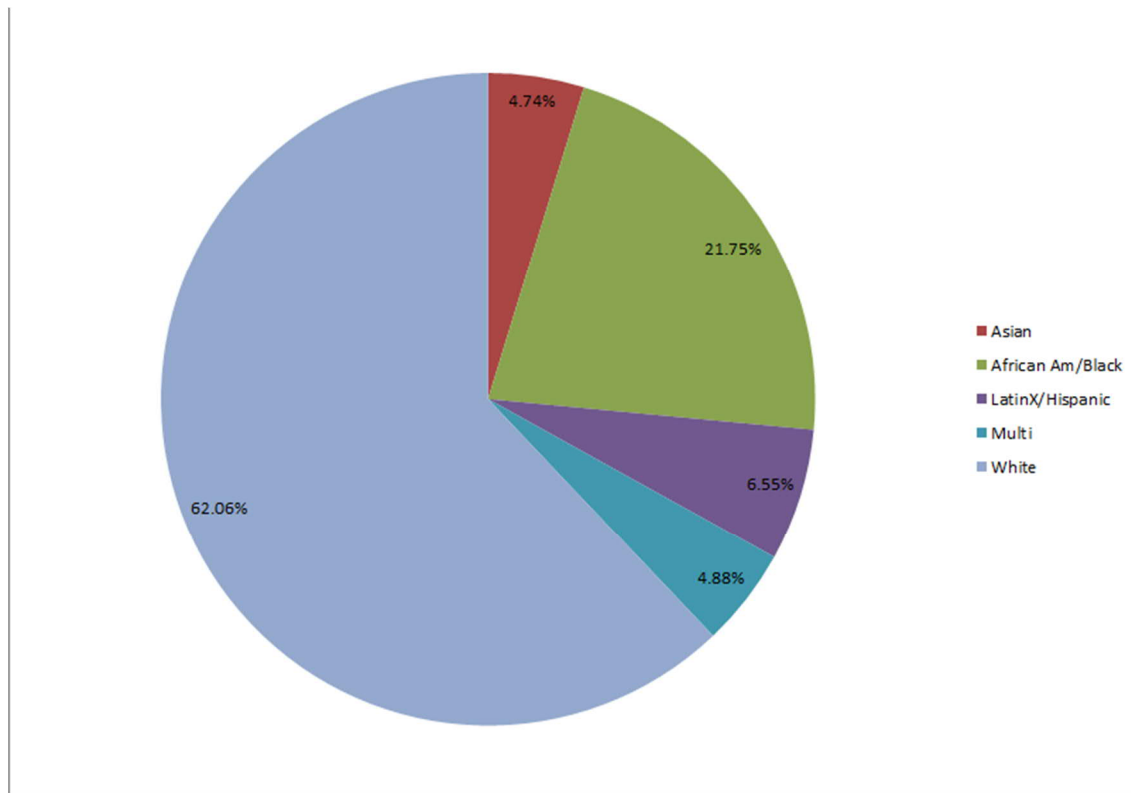
Analysis & Interpretation:

_____ students make up _____% of the district population and make up _____% of students in the district classified as having a disability.

422 African American/Black students make up **13.10%** of the district population and make up **21.75 %** of students in the district classified as having a disability.

D.2.2 Racial Composition of Special Education





D.3 Relative Risk Ratio

How much more likely is it that a student from a given racial/ethnic group will be identified with a disability?

The relative risk is similar to the composition index in that it is the number of students in a particular racial/ethnic group classified as SWD divided by the number of total students in that same racial/ethnic group. A Relative Risk Ratio (Risk Ratio) is a comparison of the relative risks of a particular racial/ethnic group compared to the relative risks of the remaining racial/ethnic groups.

Risk Ratio

____ SWD ÷ ____ enrollment) ÷

[(Total SWD – ____ SWD) ÷ (Total enrollment – ____ enrollment)] = ____ **risk**

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	2.64	0.68	2.09	0.9	1.1

The **relative risk ratio** gives a comparison of risk for classification of one group in relation to the risk for all other groups. A risk ratio of 1 indicates that there is equal risk. An increase in the risk ratio is indicative of increased risk.

D.3.1 Risk Ratios By Disability

Communication

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	3.75				0.30

Specific Learning Disability

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	1.71		1.19		0.97

Emotional Disability

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	2.12	-	-	-	0.72

Intellectual Disability

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	2.70	-	-	-	0.84

Other Health Impairment

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	2.70	-	-	-	0.84

Autism

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	1.72	1.78	-	-	0.58

D.3.2 Risk Ratios By Placement**Substantially Separate**

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	1.24		-	-	0.87

Separate School

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	0.46		-	-	1.11

D.3.3 Risk Ratios By Discipline**All Discipline**

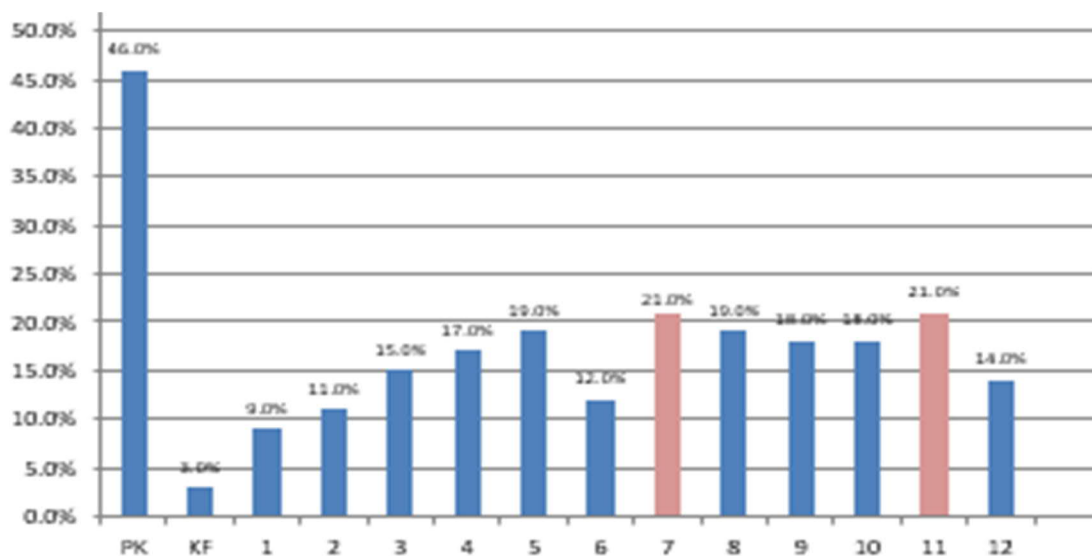
	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	3.31		-	-	0.42

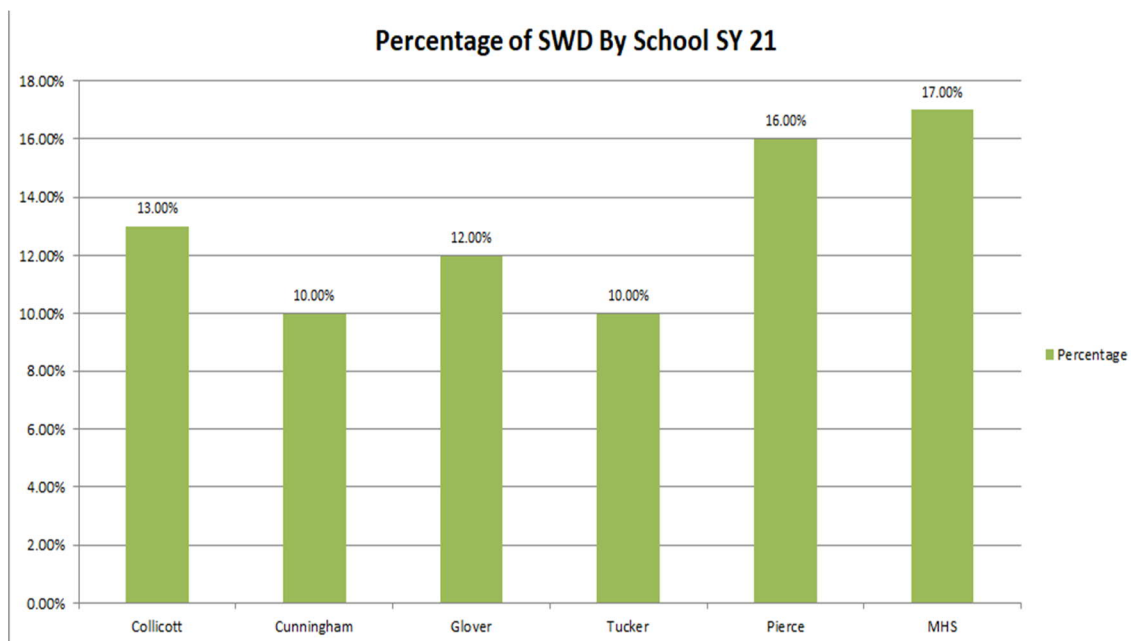
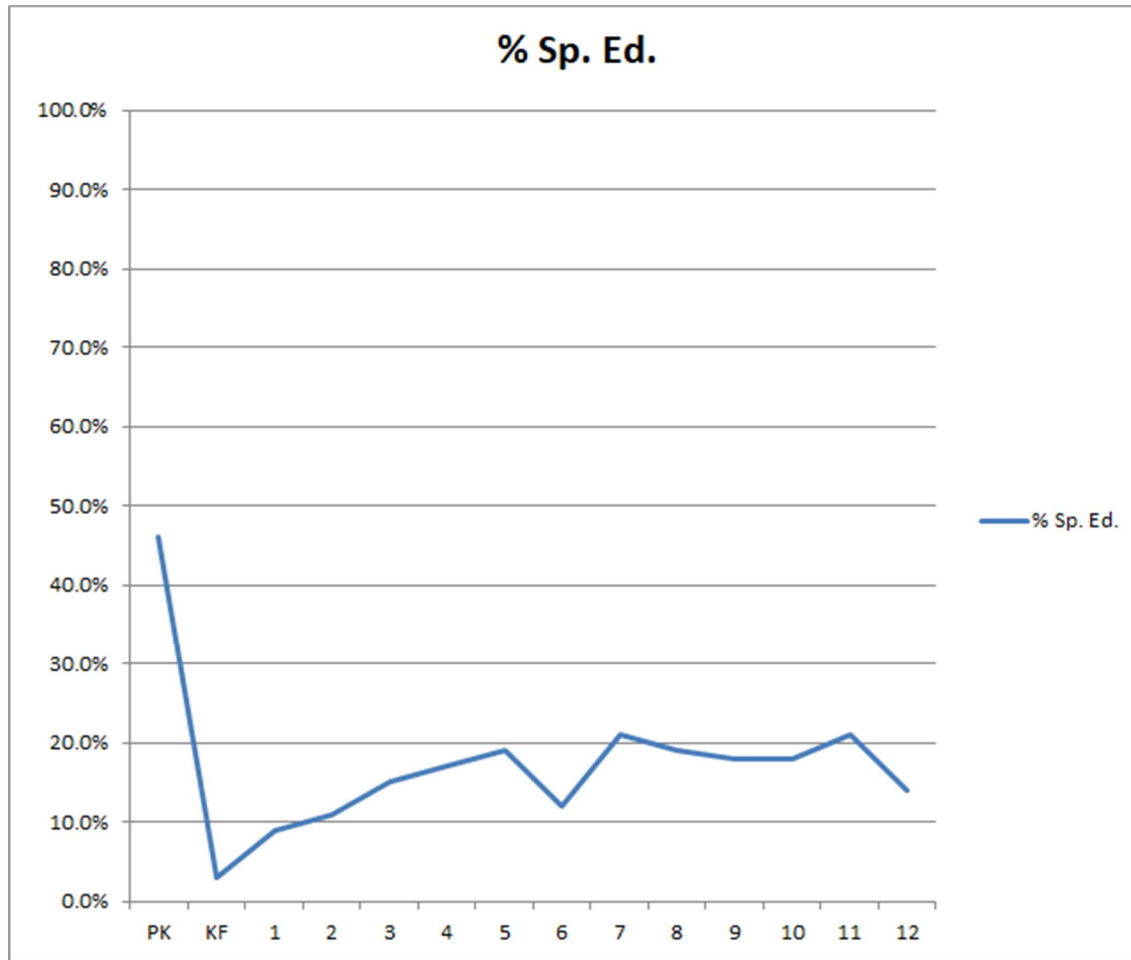
Out of School Suspensions (10 days or fewer)

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	4.31		-	-	0.34

In-School Suspensions (10 days or fewer)

	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiracial/other	White
Risk Ratio	2.27		-	-	0.52

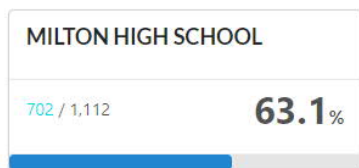
D.4 Special Education Data of Note for Further Investigation**Special Ed By Grade**



E. Survey respondent demographic detail

The following graphics display how those who took the equity survey responded to the demographic questions that were included. This allows us to understand the attributes of the survey respondents.

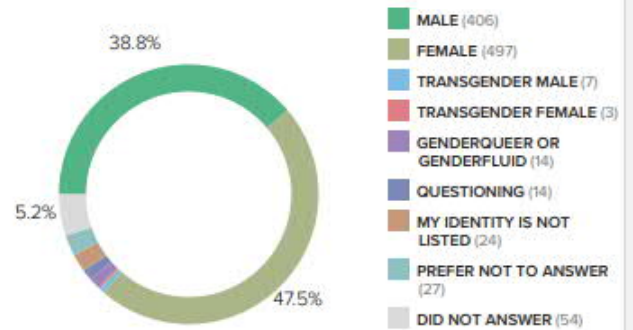
E.1 Student survey demographics



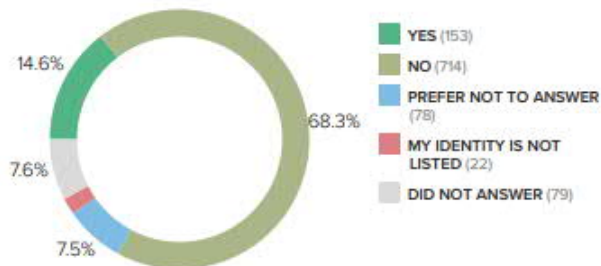
What grade are you in?

This item did not receive the number of responses needed to appear in the results

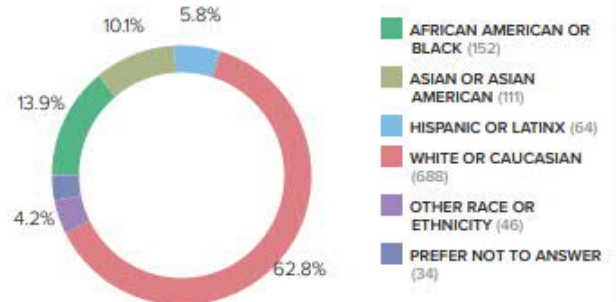
What is your gender?



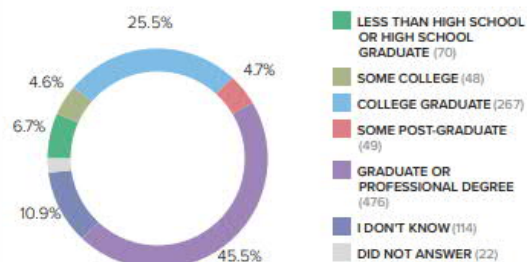
Do you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, aromantic/asexual, or questioning?



What is your race and/ or ethnicity



What is the highest level of schooling achieved by your parent or guardian?

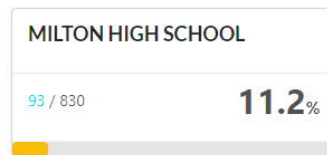
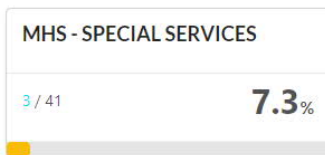
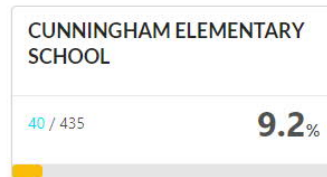
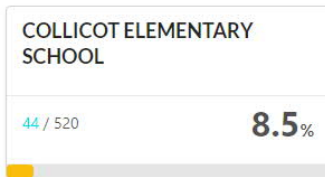


E.2 Parent survey demographics

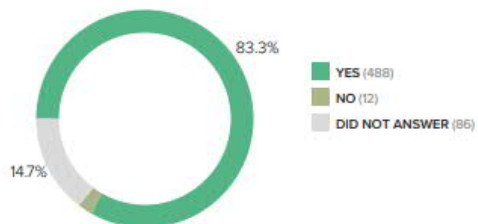


Milton Public Schools

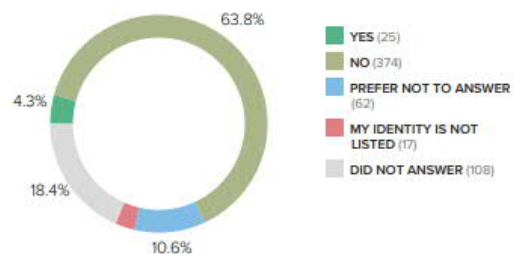
366 COMPLETED / 2,991 TOTAL SURVEYS

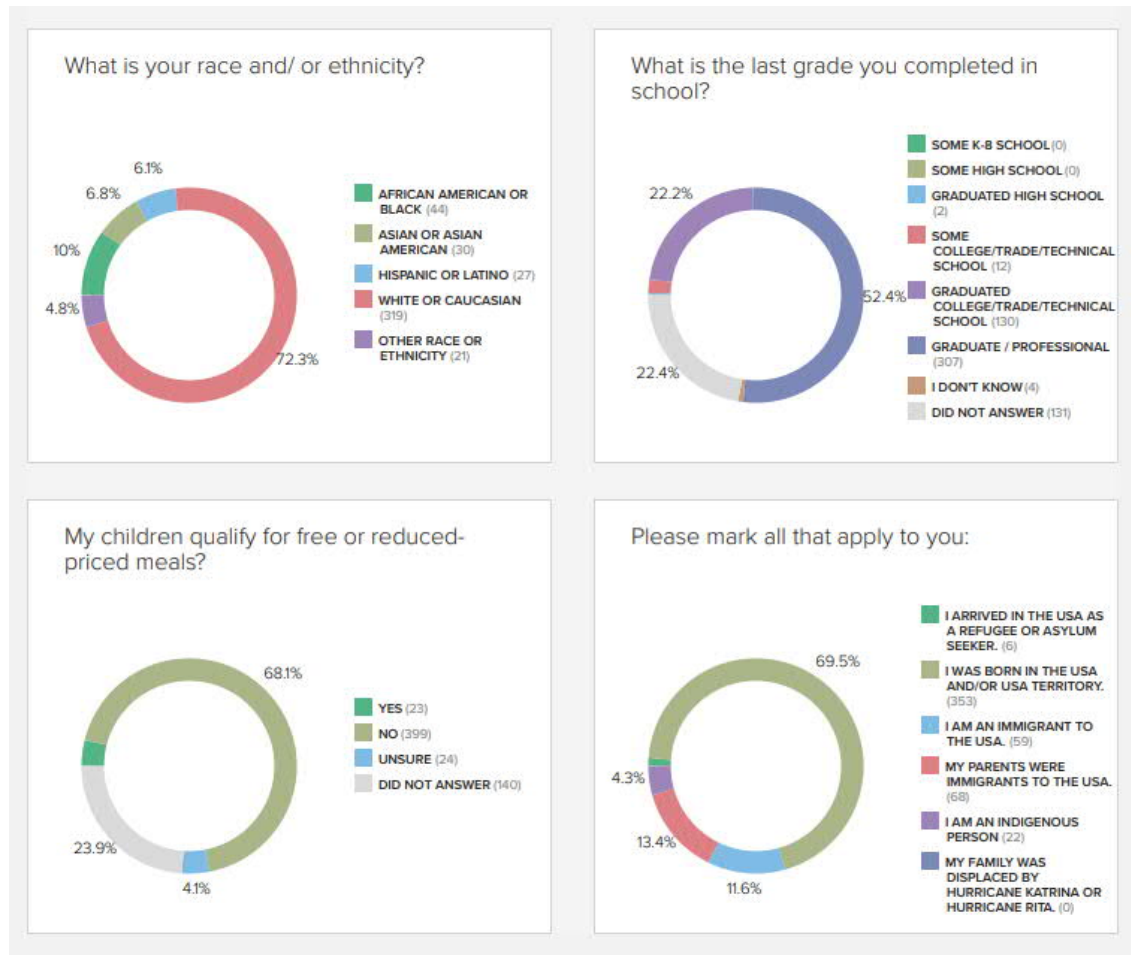


My home language is English



Do you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, aromantic/asexual, or questioning?



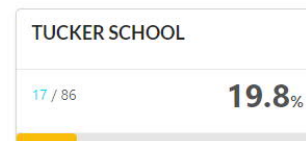
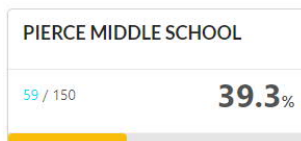
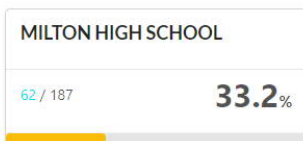
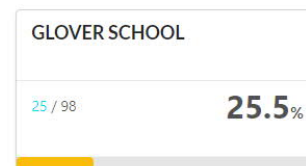
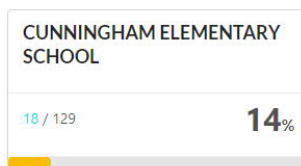
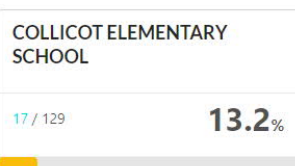


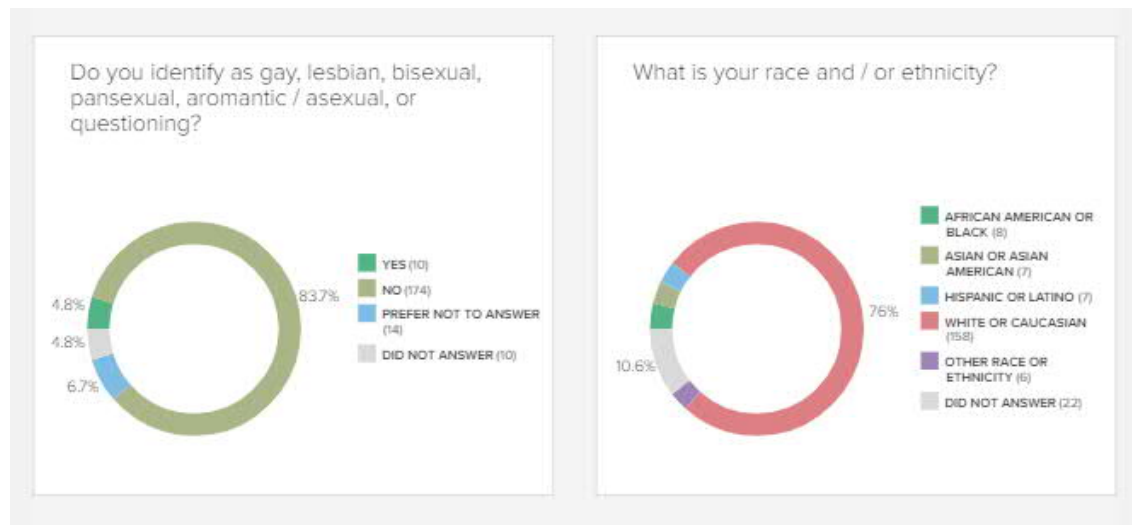
E.3 Staff survey demographics

25.4%

Milton Public Schools

198 COMPLETED / 779 TOTAL SURVEYS





F. Glossary

DCAP: District Curriculum Accommodation Plan

DESE: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Economic disadvantage

Calculated based on a student's participation in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) foster care program; and MassHealth (Medicaid).

(Source: See *Understanding the Economically Disadvantaged Indicator* available here:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/ed.html>.)

MCAS: Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

MPS ARAT: Milton Public Schools Anti-Racism Action Team

MTSS: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

In a multi-tiered system of support, adults work together through coordinated systems to provide all students with the support they need to succeed. DESE guidance can be found here: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/leading-mtss/>

NEASC: New England Association of Schools and Colleges

PBIS: Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports

PD: Professional Development

Restorative Practice:

Restorative Practice (RP) is an approach that helps students to strengthen relationships, build community, and prevent conflict.

SEL: Social Emotional Learning

SST: Student Support Team

SWD: students with disabilities

UDL: Universal Design for Learning

