

EQUITY AUDIT/ NEEDS ASSESSMENT BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FINAL REPORT

September, 2017

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Bloomington Equity Audit

School Equity Project

August 12, 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leaders and teachers from Bloomington Public Schools (BPS) attended a culturally responsive schooling seminar given by Dr. Muhammad Khalifa, and inquired about him working with the district. Dr. Khalifa designed a series of professional developments for BPS, and also recommended that the district conduct an Equity Assessment (also known as an Equity Audit).

BPS data reveals that children of color and children of low socioeconomic status achieve statistically below their white peers. Achievement gaps are present in the elementary grades and often widen as students enter secondary school. Students of color and low-income students are receiving disciplinary referrals at a disproportionate rate to their white peers. Furthermore, some of these same students are underrepresented in advanced/honors courses and dual enrollment and overrepresented in remedial and credit recovery programs in the district. The district has begun to put in place a plan to audit current data, practices, and expected outcomes for all learners, involving multiple stakeholders. To this end, BPS recognized the need for an Equity Audit/Needs Assessment to determine how best to move forward with meeting the needs of all learners in the district and partnered with Dr. Khalifa and his colleagues to complete an Equity Audit/Needs Assessment in the district.

Between March and May, the five-person assessment team conducted focus groups with three types of student groups at schools for students in grades 6-12; and surveyed students, staff, administrators, and parents across the district. Five doctoral students from three different major research universities (UMN, Michigan State University, and the University of Illinois) assisted Khalifa in collecting and analyzing the data for the audit.

Assessment Purposes

1. To understand the factors that contribute to achievement inequities in Bloomington Public Schools and identify areas of significant achievement differences (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.). This includes identifying home, school, classroom, and individual-level barriers to high academic performance.
2. To assist the district in identifying professional development and educational interventions to reduce achievement gaps and enhance school success for all students.

Assessment Questions

Three questions are suggested to drive this assessment:

1. What does current district data reveal about achievement inequities in Bloomington Public Schools?
2. What factors do staff, students, and parents identify as contributing to achievement inequities in Bloomington Public Schools?
3. What initiatives (district-level, school-level, classroom-level) can be implemented to build cultural competency and enhance students' schooling experiences in Bloomington Public Schools?

General Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to complete the audit. Data was conducted via survey administration, online data analysis, individual interviews, and focus group interviews. See Table 1 for total number of sample participants in qualitative and quantitative data collection. Appendix A provides a breakdown of the sample demographics.

Methodology Table: Total Number of Sample Participants in Audit Data Collection

Qualitative Data Collection	
Student Focus Group Participants	N= 286
Quantitative Data Collection	
Staff Survey	N= 700
Student Survey	N= 1,366
Administrator Survey	N= 54
Parent Survey	N= 390

Why the 8 Focus Areas?

After careful analysis and comprehensive review of scholarly research, findings were categorized according to 8 topic areas related to students', staff, administrators', and parents' overall opinions of Bloomington Public Schools and specific perceptions of factors contributing to achievement and discipline gaps for students: 1) accepting/marginalizing student identity and voice; 2) culturally relevant school leadership, teaching, and curriculum; 3) discriminatory behavior and practices; 4) school culture and climate; 5) school-community relations; 6) thoughts on achievement gaps; 7) thoughts on discipline gaps; and 8) teacher rating and expectations. What follows is an overview of major themes in each topic area based on the qualitative and quantitative data findings.

Findings Table: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

This Table share some of the most significant findings and recommendations. The full Equity Audit Report greatly elaborates on this, but this overview gives some indication of what will come in later chapters.

Equity Areas Name	Summary of Findings (Qualitative and Quantitative)
Accepting or Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice (AMSIV)	<p><u>Findings</u>: Minoritized students, in particular Native American Students, Black and Somali Students, and Students who did not report a race reported lower feelings of acceptance of their voice and identity. Minoritized students reported that their voices were silenced, and that their voices and cultures were unwelcomed in school. <u>Recommendations</u>: are: more social spaces for minoritized students, consistent ways to allow for and engage student voice, a positive embrace of all minoritized identities, and more professional development.</p>
Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum (CRSLTC)	<p><u>Findings</u>: Teachers and staff indicated that they were not well-prepared to engage culturally responsive leadership, teaching, or curriculum. Students’ comments suggest there is a lack of CRSLTC as well. <u>Recommendations</u>: district should begin with building more culturally responsive leadership capacity, revise curriculum to include cultural referents, language, and experiences in the core area curriculums.</p>
Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices (DBP)	<p><u>Findings</u>: Nearly all students—white and black—perceived injustices in school. Many suggested that these were because of race, ethnicity, language, legal status, sexual orientation/identity or religion. Discriminatory/oppressive behaviors are being automatically reproduced in the district, and students shared many stories of this. <u>Recommendations</u>: New ‘anti-bias’ policies and best practices are needed; a recognitions of the problems; challenging staff who are denying problems, and anti-oppression PDs are needed.</p>
School Culture and Climate (SCC)	<p><u>Findings</u>: In general, students felt their school climate was respectful. While there were some differences in school culture and climate across the district, students in all schools complained of bullying, shaming, teasing, and silencing by staff and other students. There were some best practices that helped students feel comfortable—such as some of the OEE weekend and evening activities—but much more needs to be done to improve SCC for minoritized students. Minoritized students say their language, dress, and mannerisms are often disparaged. <u>Recommendations</u>: more social spaces need to be established so minoritized students feel comfortable; clear messages from district leadership must explicitly address bigotry and oppression some students face; parents/community must be brought in more to improve SCC.</p>

Equity Areas Name	Summary of Findings (Qualitative and Quantitative) cont..
School Community Relationship (SCR)	<p><u>Findings:</u> Overall, minoritized students felt that their parents did not have a good relationship with the some teaching and administrative staff. Some did report that their parents had a better relationship with support staff such as counselors or OEE personnel. It was reported that some teachers only reach out to parents when there is negative news to report. Students report discomfort and lack of trust their parents have with district. <u>Recommendations:</u> BPS must take the initiative in establishing deeper, more trusting relationships with minoritized families and communities. Schools must feel safer for all students; policing and immigration surveillance should not be allowed on district properties, or in coordination with district if districts are to be safe spaces. Parents should be given opportunities to contribute to policy and practice in BPS.</p>
Thoughts on Achievement and Discipline Gap (TAG and TDG)	<p><u>Findings:</u> All students—Minoritized and White, high and low-SES, female and male, etc—say that they notice clear patterns in how some teachers and some administrators treat students different based on student demographic. For example, they all say that Black male students are chastised in class and punished more for offenses for which other students are not. Minoritized students say that they are not encouraged for advanced classes, and when they are there, they are uncomfortable. And finally, they shared that they felt that their teachers, and some administrators, are in denial about racism and other forms of oppression in the district. <u>Recommendations:</u> Teachers need more support in becoming culturally responsive educators. This should begin with ant-bias training, but should not stop there. They need curricular resources, equity-based learning groups, functional School Equity Teams, and more contact with parents and community (including middle and high school). But there must also be accountability measures put in place that measure the specific behavior of teachers (who may be disproportionately punishing or failing minoritized students). This type of explicit and intentional reform is what will allow teachers and administrators to more specifically recognize patterns of biases they exhibit in classrooms or schools.</p>
Expectations and Teacher Ratings (TR)	<p><u>Findings:</u> Teacher expectations and perceptions of student ability have mixed findings. On one hand, staff held high expectations. But on the other hand, some students and their communities are often viewed as problematic, and are blamed for low student achievement. And minoritized students reported that their teachers had low expectations of them. <u>Recommendations:</u> Anti-bias training, improved school-community relations, better informed PLC learning groups, culturally responsive MTSS and AP enrolment would all improve TR.</p>

INTRODUCTION

This Needs Assessment/Equity Audit for Bloomington Public Schools reveals that minoritized children—including children of color, language minorities, low socioeconomic status, refugee, among other groups—still face significant hurdles in the district. It was already known that these children achieve statistically below their white, middle-class peers. Achievement gaps are present in the elementary grades and often widen as students enter secondary school. Additionally a review of referrals at the secondary level indicates that students of color and low-income students are receiving discipline referrals at a disproportionate rate to their non-white peers. Furthermore, some of these same students are underrepresented in advanced/honors courses and dual enrollment and overrepresented in remedial and credit recovery programs in the district.

The district has begun to put in place a plan to audit current data, practices, and expected outcomes for all learners, involving multiple stakeholders. To this end, Bloomington Public Schools recognized the need for an Equity Audit to determine how best to move forward with meeting the needs of all learners in the district and partnered with Dr. Khalifa and his team to complete an Equity Audit/Needs Assessment in the district.

In February and March of 2017, the five-person assessment team a) surveyed students, staff, administrators, and parents across the district and, b). conducted focus groups with four types of student groups at schools for students in grades 6-12. One recent PhD and three doctoral students in education, quantitative research methodology, and psychology all joined Dr. Khalifa in collecting and analyzing the data for the audit and preparing this report.

Assessment Purposes

3. To understand the factors that contribute to achievement inequities in Bloomington Public Schools and identify areas of significant achievement differences (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.). This includes identifying home, school, classroom, and individual-level barriers to high academic performance.
4. To assist the district in identifying professional development and educational interventions to reduce achievement gaps and enhance school success for all students.

Assessment Questions

Three questions drove this assessment:

4. What does current district data reveal about achievement inequities in Bloomington Public Schools?
5. What factors do staff, students, and parents identify as contributing to achievement inequities in Bloomington Public Schools?
6. What initiatives (district-level, school-level, classroom-level) can be implemented to build cultural competency and enhance students' schooling experiences in the district?

Data Sources

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to conduct the audit. Data was collected via online survey administration and focus group interviews. Our research methodology and description of data is described in Chapter 1.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1 Quantitative Data Methodology

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Quantitative data portion of this Equity Audit Report was based on statistical analyses of survey data. Of the 4,329 respondents who started the survey, 2,578 completed the survey and are included in the analysis. The characteristics of those who completed the survey are presented here to provide context on the generalizability of the results.

School/Building Affiliation

	n	KSH	JSH	OGM	VVM	OIM	Wash	HE	IME	OIE	OGE	NHE	PBE	RE	VVE	WWE	EdSC	PFC	CEC	Board
All	2571	5%	13%	25%	17%	21%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	2%	-	1%	-
Admin	57	7%	7%	4%	5%	4%	2%	2%	4%	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%	5%	2%	33%	2%	2%	12%
Parents	400	18%	32%	9%	4%	15%	2%	4%	1%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	-	-	-	-
Staff	716	1%	23%	7%	8%	7%	7%	2%	5%	4%	6%	4%	3%	3%	9%	1%	3%	1%	2%	-
Students	1398	3%	2%	40%	25%	30%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: There were a few Staff respondents from the Bloomington Transition Center, Southwood ECC, Beacon ALC, and Transportation as well

Biological Sex

Respondent	n	Male	Female
All Respondents	2510	37%	63%
Administrators	54	57%	43%
Parents	390	24%	76%
Staff	700	23%	77%
Students	1366	47%	53%

Race/Ethnicity

Respondents could identify with multiple racial/ethnic groups, so decision rules were put in place when combining responses into a single race/ethnicity variable for those who selected multiple racial/ethnic groups. The rules are designed to maximize representation in minority groups. Priority was given to identification of, in order, Native American, Hmong, Somali, Latino/a regardless of any other identification. Thus, those included in the Multiple Races category did not identify with any of the aforementioned groups. This also means that Black does not include those who identified as Somali and Asian does not include those who identified as Hmong.

Respondent	n	Native American	Latino/a	Asian	Black	Somali	White	Multiple Races	Missing Race
All Respondents	2578	-	7%	4%	4%	1%	63%	15%	5%
Administrators	57	2%	9%	4%	9%	-	58%	12%	7%
Parents	403	-	5%	3%	3%	-	76%	5%	5%
Staff	720	-	-	2%	1%	-	88%	5%	4%
Students	1398	-	11%	6%	6%	1%	48%	24%	5%

Language Spoken at Home

Respondent	n	English	Spanish	Arabic	Hmong	Other
All Respondents	2515	88%	7%	1%	-	4%
Administrators	54	93%	6%	-	-	2%
Parents	395	94%	5%	-	-	1%
Staff	713	99%	1%	-	-	1%
Students	1353	80%	11%	1%	-	7%

Years of Experience

Parents and Students

How many years have you (has your child) been at your (their) current school?

Respondent	n	Less than 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 or more years
All Respondents	1748	15%	17%	33%	28%	3%	4%
Parents	397	5%	25%	31%	22%	9%	8%
Students	1351	18%	15%	33%	30%	2%	3%

Administrators and Staff

How many years have you worked in education?

Respondent	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Administrators	50	17.3	8.7	0	40
Staff	714	15.4	8.4	0	47

How many years have you worked in your current school district?

Respondent	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Administrators	49	10.5	8.3	0	34
Staff	716	11.8	7.7	0	47

Lunch Status - Parents and Students

Which best describes your (your child's) lunch status?

Respondent	n	bring lunch from home	do not eat lunch	pay for lunch at school	receive free lunch at school	receive reduced price lunch at school
Parents	397	42%	1%	44%	8%	5%
Students	1348	33%	5%	31%	25%	5%

Interpretation of Figures

Responses to the survey are presented in two ways across the equity areas: A) As a standardized mean difference between groups on a scale score or B) the proportion of members of a group selecting a certain response on an item. For all figures, groups must have > 14 responses for the group to be represented on the figure.

Figures With Scale Scores

The scale score for each equity area was created by taking sum of the responses to the items that belong to that equity area. Before creating the final scale score, however, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on each scale to ensure the items appropriately measured the equity area as intended. Standardized mean differences were then calculated to compare groups' scale scores.

A standardized mean difference is the difference in mean score between two groups divided by a common standard deviation. There are two primary benefits of using a standardized mean difference rather than the more basic difference in average scale score: 1) they account for variability in responses rather than relying on potentially biased point estimates of the average and 2) they measure the magnitude of the differences in standard deviation units which allows for comparisons to be made across scales because the differences can be interpreted in the same way.

For most of the figures with standardized mean differences, the average scale score of all Students in a given equity area is used as the reference point. Thus, in the figure, 0 represents the average scale score on the equity area reported by all Students. The bars extending from 0 represent the standardized mean difference between Students' average scale score and the average reported by the group being compared. The groups include all Administrators, all Parents, and all Staff, as well as the racial/ethnic groups of Students. When Students' average scale score is used as the reference, smaller bars indicate that the group's average scale score is similar to Students' average scale score whereas bigger bars indicate the group's average scale score is quite different to Students' average scale score. More specifically, **a standardized mean difference of .2 is considered small, .5 is medium and .8 or higher is a large difference.**

Figures With Item Responses

Figures displaying the responses of groups to one or more items are most often displayed as horizontally stacked bar charts where each bar represents a different group and each section within a bar represents the proportion of members of that group who selected a certain response option. All numbers presented in the bars are percentages (%).

1.2. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The data collection process for the qualitative portion of this equity audit was comprised of student focus group interviews conducted at the two high schools and three middle schools within the Bloomington Public Schools District. This equity audit was to showcase the richness and diversity of student voices regarding issues of educational (in)equities. The students that were interviewed represent a diverse array of racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, religion, sexuality, and linguistic backgrounds. The purpose of the student focus group interviews was to provide insight into school culture and climate, achievement, and the disciplinary practices within the school sites. Each student focus group interview was administered in a quiet location at the students' respective school building, and lasted for approximately one hour. The qualitative (interview) data analysis was only collected in some of the core equity areas because the data was only collected from student interviews. For a more complete analysis, we recommend that staff and parents are also interviewed in future years. We requested assistance from the Office of Educational Equity at Bloomington Public Schools District to select students at each of the schools to participate in the focus groups. Administrators in each school building constructed student groups. The recruitment criteria was as follows:

- Two student groups of 10-15 students of color
- One multicultural student group of 10-15 students
- One all white student group of 10-15 students

The aforementioned criteria were followed as closely as possible. Please note that the "Multicultural" student focus groups, at times, also included white students and self-identified bi-racial students who come from both "White" and "Non-White" parents. We also asked for groups to include students with both good and poor academic achievement, good and poor behavior, and good and poor attendance.

See Table 1 for a demographic breakdown of each student focus group that was conducted. Four focus groups were conducted at five different schools, resulting in data from a total of 20 focus groups.

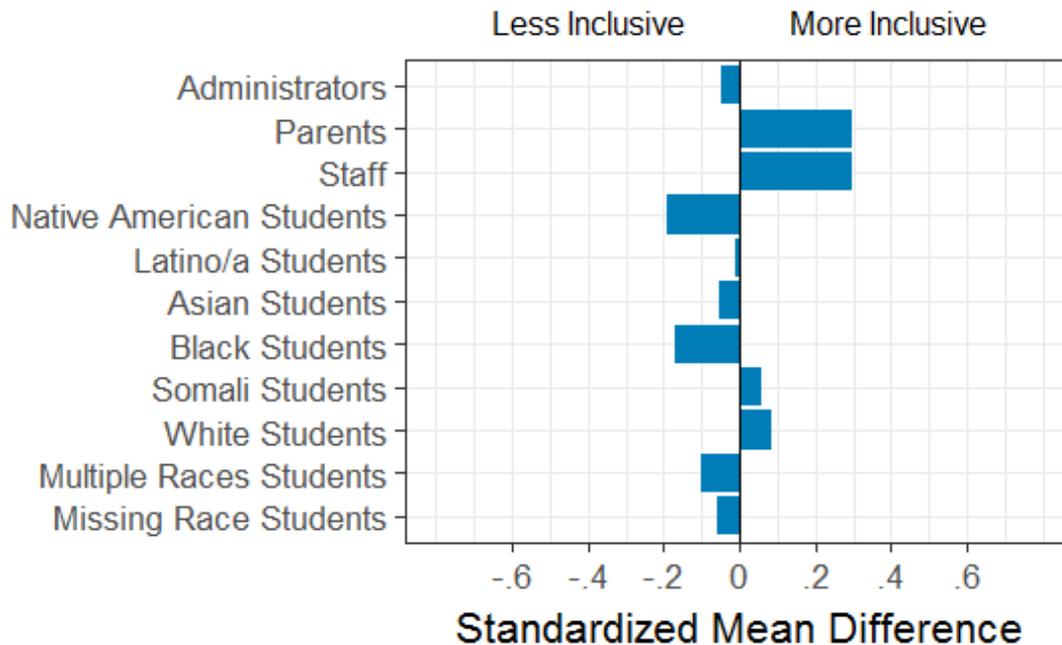
Table 1. Bloomington School District Student Focus Group Participants by Race/Ethnicity

School	Focus Groups Conducted
Jefferson High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black (African Diaspora) • Multicultural (Non-White) • Somali • White
Kennedy High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural (Non-White) • Multicultural (Non-White) • Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White) • White
Oak Grove Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural (Non-White) • Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White) • Somali • White
Olson Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black (African Diaspora) • Chican@/Latin@ • Multicultural (Non-White) • White
Valley View Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chican@/Latin@ • Multicultural (Non-White) • Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White) • White

Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness is an overall measure of how included people perceive themselves and others to be in the school. Using 4 items from the survey, higher scores indicate higher perceptions of inclusion. The average student score was 10.2 out of 16 (64% of max score). This indicates that, on average, Students feel their school was somewhat to very inclusive.

But there were clear differences in how student groups responded. Overall, Parents Staff, Somali Students, and White Students all have positive perceptions of inclusion in the quantitative data. But Black students, Low-SES (FRPL), Special Education (SPED), transgender students, and those often disciplined had more negative perceptions of being included in the school and district.



In this figure, 0 represents the average Inclusiveness score of all Students. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical perception of inclusiveness of all Students.

Main Findings:

- A) The quantitative (statistical) results reveal that, on average, Parents and Staff report slightly higher levels of inclusion than Students and Administrators. Sense of inclusion is slightly higher for Somali students than Students as a whole, and moderately higher than non-Somali Black students. There are no other meaningful differences by Students' race/ethnic group.
- B) On average, Parents and Staff report higher levels of inclusion than Students and Administrators.
- C) Native American Students report the lowest perceptions of inclusiveness, but the difference from the average scale score of all Students is considered small.
- D) The quantitative data also show that students who receive Free/Reduced Price Lunch, Special Education, identify as Transgender, or are Disciplined once a week or more, on average, report slight to moderately lower sense of inclusion than their non-FRPL, non-SPED, Cisgender, and sparsely disciplined peers.
- E) The qualitative (interview) data offers a different type of data and tends to complement or add further description the statistical, quantitative findings. Interviews tend to offer more narrative and descriptive data, and often add deeper meanings to the general findings that the statistical analyses have found.
- F) The qualitative data reveal that minoritized general do not feel a high level of inclusiveness. Throughout the interview data, they informed us that they often did not feel welcomed at school, sometime by staff as well as students. Some reported staff and student shaming, racial bullying, exclusionary practices by school staff, and targeted discipline.

1.3. ORGANIZATION OF EQUITY AUDIT FINDINGS

In the sections that follow, we present the findings of the 8 each equity areas covered in this Equity Audit. This report includes quantitative survey data for all 8 areas. The report also includes school-level qualitative data in three areas of qualitative assessment. See **Table 2** for a breakdown of analysis and organization of findings.

Table 2. Organization of Analysis and Findings

Equity Areas Name	Equity Area Description	Analysis Present in Report	
		Quantitative	Qualitative
Accepting or Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice (AMSIV)	Addresses how comfortable students feel voicing opinions and expressing behaviors in school?	XX	X
Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum (CRSLTC)	Address perceptions of how well diverse backgrounds and experiences are incorporated in classroom content and responded to in classroom interactions	XX	X
Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices (DBP)	Addresses perceptions about discrimination that some students experience. (i.e., are certain student characteristics or groups treated better than others?)	XX	X
School Culture and Climate (SCC)	Addresses how respectful adults (and students) in the school building are when speaking to students as well as the overall positivity of student experiences.	XX	XX
School Community Relationship (SCR)	Addresses how comfortable parents feel attending school events, approaching school staff, and effectiveness of communication between parents and schools	XX	X
Thoughts on Achievement Gap	Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in achievement (i.e., achievement gaps) exist.	X	XX
Thoughts on Discipline Gap	Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in discipline (i.e., discipline or suspension gaps) exist.	X	XX
Expectations and Teacher Ratings	Addresses perceptions on how committed and successful students from various backgrounds can be, and the expectations that are held of various student groups.	XX	X

XX=Full Analysis Reporting; **X**=Partial Analysis Reporting (due to limitations in data collection)

We provide a description of each of the themes and how it is situated within Bloomington Public Schools; a brief analysis of the assessment within Bloomington Public Schools; excerpts from student focus groups; and an additional document that will provide recommendations and sources for schools and educational stakeholders.

The Qualitative sections of this report responds deeply to three areas of analysis: school culture and climate, achievement, and discipline. Other areas such as culturally responsive leadership, school community relations, teacher expectations, and other areas were difficult to *qualitatively* assess because only student interviews were conducted. This qualitative analysis strengthens the quantitative analysis, and provides the respective schools and educational stakeholders in Bloomington Public School District with measures of success as well as areas of needed growth.

The combined qualitative and quantitative analysis sections of this report allow BPS schools and district to identify gaps, and invest in and enact equitable and inclusive policies; this includes reforming school improvement plans (SIPs), culturally responsive leadership and instruction, and enhancing learning for all student groups.

2. Analysis of Core Equity Areas

2.1. Accepting/Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice (AMSIV)

Overview

Stakeholders, including school leadership, parents, and teachers, in this category identify cultural diversity as one of the top positive attributes of the district. However, there is evidence that African-American and Latino students and parents do not always feel their racial and ethnic identity or cultural heritage and language are represented within the schools. At times, these groups feel marginalized within the district where White culture is celebrated as the norm and reinforced with an overall color-blind approach by many teachers in the classroom. Both teachers and students value positive relationships and respect, but may have different opinions about how it is conveyed in the classroom. Students who expressed having positive relationships in their schools felt affirmed in their identity, and felt they had voice and ownership in their educational path.

Definitions:

Student Identity

- Various aspects of students’ background such as race/ethnicity, gender, language preference, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and family structure-but is not limited to these categories
- Student identity is often a reflection of their backgrounds, but can also be a hybrid, and can even be something that students actually embrace at an adolescent (or later) stage of their lives.

Student Voice

- Opportunity for students to express admiration or concern, ownership for their learning, or choice within the school system
- Student voice can also be authentic and artistic expressions of their interests and can also be other student expressions

Figure 2.1.1. Qualitative Findings

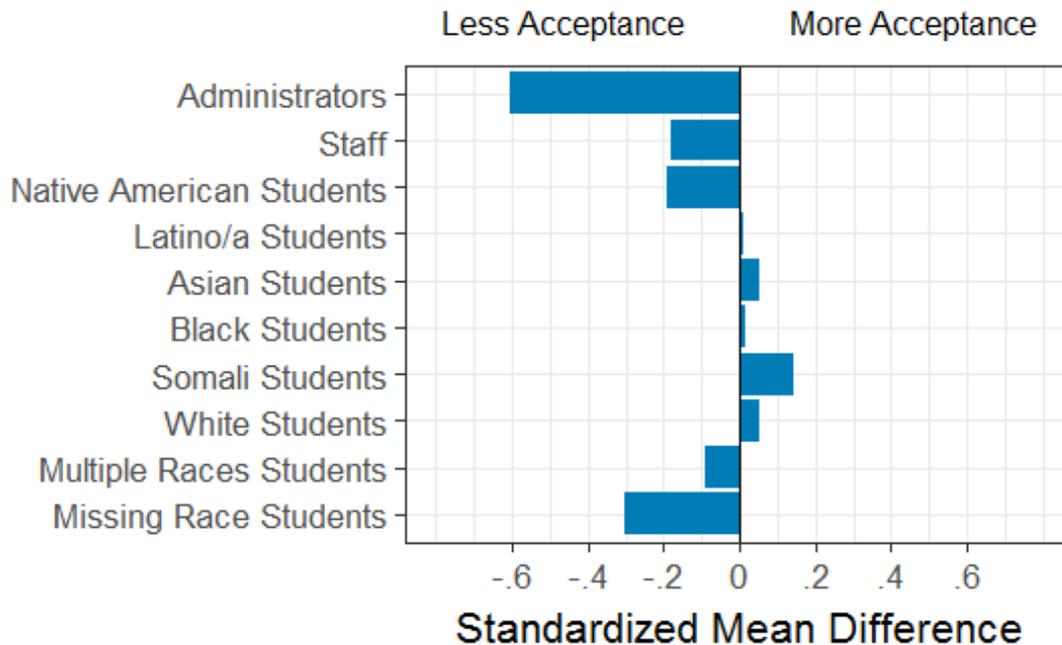
School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Oak Grove Middle School	Multicultural (with White Students)	“If you talk in any other language, they will mostly assume you are swearing”
	Multicultural (with White Students)	“One of my teachers will just say ENGLISH, when we are talking in a different language.”
	White	“I feel like they don’t respect us, I feel minimized sometimes- oh you’re just a middle schoolers you don’t know what you’re doing.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“Our teachers told us to dress up, like most people wore suits and stuff like that, so I wore a suit and they were calling me Obama. Because I was, black and I had a suit on. So I felt bad, just because I’m black and have a suit on, doesn’t mean I am Obama.”

	White	Asking is there a place to go in the school to help you deal with race and gender bullying. “Yes counselor.” “I trust my counselor more than anyone at this school.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“You can be you self, because no one is going to judge, and we have different groups, clubs to help you.”
	Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	I feel like teachers don’t like it when people talk in different languages in their class because if they don’t speak the language, they’re usually like ‘what are they saying about me or what are they talking about’ and they usually say ‘stop’ doing that. It’s not even like all because of a [specific] language...like even if they just can’t understand it period, then they will be like “oh, you need to stop this...I don’t appreciate you doing this...you need to stop that right now”...One of my teachers would just say “English” when they [students] are talking in a different language.
	Latino	What is your opinion of the other staff in the building? “I think it is the same as I said before, because, let say I get in trouble at lunch and one teacher goes and tells the office, he was doing this and that. They don’t really ask what happen, they don’t really take in “hand” or don’t really open to. It’s what the teachers says and that’s what happened.” “They let you talk, but they don’t really view your perceptive.”
	Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	“There is this one teacher who doesn’t really teach, she just gives us worksheets and expects us to know the stuff, she doesn’t really explain stuff out, she just gives us a worksheet and expects to know”
	Latino	What do you like Best about the School? “Well at least there is less bullying then the other school”; “Support/ friends”; “ More people getting along” “friends”; “ I like that we get to interact with other people, who are nice, and they don’t discriminate against us because we are Latinos.” Another student:
	White Student Focus Group	“They don’t respect pronouns, or people.”
	Latino	What is your opinion of the other staff in the building? “I think it is the same as I said before, because, let say I get in trouble at lunch and one teacher goes and tells the office, he was doing this and that. They don’t really ask what happen, they don’t really take in “hand” or don’t really open to. It’s what the teachers says and that’s what happened.” “They let you talk, but they don’t really view your perceptive.”
	Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	“There is this one teacher who doesn’t really teach, she just gives us worksheets and expects us to know the stuff, she doesn’t really explain stuff out, she just gives us a worksheet and expects to know”
Olson Middle School	Black (African Diaspora)	“Minorities are treated differently than whites.” <u>Another student:</u> “And not just about race, sometimes people treat other kids differently because of their sexuality” <u>Another student:</u> “I had this special ED... and the teacher would laugh at him, not help him and if he doesn’t understand something, she will just yell.”
	White	“I know some people have been treated differently because they’re in special ED...people make fun of them, its messed up.”
Jefferson High School	Somali	“Just because Trump is president doesn’t mean like you can say whatever you want to say or like whatever you want to feel...so like people would say “What are you hiding under your scarf...a bomb?” or like “Hey do you understand English?” or something like really

		retarded like “Go back to your country”...so like my friends were complaining about it, and I’m like ‘why don’t you tell on them’...and like nothing happens, it doesn’t matter...For example like my sister, one kid called her “Isis” and they didn’t really do anything [didn’t discipline the student].” —“...that’s just like the stigma since because the school is primarily white people they [parents and students] think that the school is more ‘higher’ in like academics, but since Kennedy has like way more diverse students...they [parents and students] think that school is like trash basically.”
	White	“I feel like I can be myself, but it’s like a harsh reality that I’m also a straight white male.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“I was sexually assaulted in this school a couple of weeks ago...and that really scared my parents because a lot of women in my family had gone through similar things...and they felt because I was alone with the group of boys when it happened...umm, the only reason that the administration knows because they caught it on camera, but that was kind of swept under the rug..”
	Somali	“You also got to speak up too. When people tell you that, you don’t just like...I’ve seen a lot of people like when they get call that, they just put their head down and walk away. Yeah, if someone calls you that...you got to like tell them you know, you got to tell them “wasup”. If you tell them ‘you got to stop’ and your like serious about it and show them that you care you know... You got to sometimes educate them.”
Kennedy High School	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“We just started Latino club, because someone was feeling left out” What do yaw do in the club “right now we are just volunteering” Do you think the school was supportive? “Yeah they have been supportive and helping us expands!”
	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	What sort of people are in honors, I know you said there is a lack of diversity in honors? “They should push more diversity people to choose to be in honor classes.” “I feel like some people think they won’t look cool with their in honors, they just want to slide through.”
	Second Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	Talking about AP Classes “Like from the beginning, when I walked in, I could see the demeaning stares like, are you in the right class, are you smart, do you belong here. Students as a whole, on top of it, the administration are good at making you feel like you are in the wrong place, not only because there aren’t many people there like you, but also because they don’t want you there.”

Figure 2.2.2 AMSIV—Student Comfort

The 5 items comprising AMSIV are related to how comfortable students feel voicing opinions and expressing behaviors in school. Those with higher scores perceive higher acceptance of students' identity and voice. The average Student score was 9.8 out of 16 (61% of max score), indicating that, on average, Students felt their identity and voice is somewhat to very accepted. Parents were not asked enough of these items for a scale score to be calculated.



In this figure, 0 represents the average AMSIV score of all Students. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical feeling of acceptance of all Students.

- A) For the most part, Students did not differ by race/ethnic group on how accepted they perceive student identities and voice to be. Native American Students and Students who did not report a race, however, reported lower feelings of acceptance of their voice and identity.
- B) Transgender, Female, and students on FRPL perceive slightly lower acceptance of student identities and voice than their Cisgender, Male, and non-FRPL peers.

Overall AMSIV Findings:

- A) The primary question that this equity area took up is as follows: do students feel comfortable, a sense of belonging, and that their voices and identities are welcomed, or even recognized, in school. Based on our qualitative and quantitative data, the all groups of students expressed a level of exclusiveness and marginalization.
- B) White students reported a level of marginalization that they experience, especially if they had a disability or self-identified as LGBTQ. Others expressed discomfort at how they witnessed their friends and peers being treated. And yet others expressed discomfort with students of color, and the conversations around equity work.
- C) While some White students reported that they did not feel a sense of inclusiveness and belonging, almost all minoritized students reported that they felt a lack of sense of belonging. Latino students overwhelmingly reported that they felt that both staff and students ridiculed them because of their identity and language.
- D) With the exception of students who did not report a race, Students did not differ by race/ethnic group on how accepted they perceive student identities and voice to be. Administrators, on average, perceive much lower acceptance of student identities and voice than students.

2.2. Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching, and Curriculum (CRSLTC)

Overview:

Overall, there is a lack of evidence of Culturally Relevant Schooling in Bloomington. From a qualitative perspective, complete results could only be achieved if teachers, leaders and parents in the district are interviewed. While student interview data alone does not offer a complete picture, we did share some qualitative data that suggests that culturally relevant schooling is largely missing from the district. As with the other equity areas in this audit, racial, and language identities were most likely to signal a lack of cultural responsive schooling.

Definitions:

Culturally relevant schooling has several components:

- Students perceive classroom content to be related to their own personal backgrounds and communities
- Minoritized students are given access to rigorous and high quality learning
- Leaders ensure that teachers receive adequate training on cultural competency
- Leaders promote and craft inclusive environments
- Teachers use students’ cultural referents
- Teachers accommodate and celebrate indigenous cultural backgrounds and behaviors of students
- Teachers and leaders use content in the curriculum that is relevant to students background and current lives outside of school
- Staff allow spaces in school for students’ cultural identities and languages to comfortably exist and thrive
- Staff is not exclusionary or disparaging toward student race, identity, culture, or language
- Leaders recognize oppression and power, and how they exist in your local school and district. They empower teachers, principals, staff, and students (and anyone else who occupies space in school) to recognize, confront, and resist any oppression—be it racial, linguistic, class, religious, or any other.

Figure 2.2.1. Qualitative Findings

School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Oak Grove Middle School	Latino	“There is a lot of people and sometimes like political views, there is a lot of people who lash out at you, just because of what you think about something.”

Valley View Middle School	Latino	“Sometimes, there is going to be a little of that (referring to discrimination), it’s going to hurt, but its going to make your stronger and prove them wrong about what they saying and believe about someone races.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“Black students get kicked out (of class) more; but white students just get “warnings.”
Kennedy High School	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“We just started Latino club, because someone was feeling left out” What do yaw do in the club “right now we are just volunteering” Do you think the school was supportive? “Yeah they have been supportive and helping us expands!”
	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	In your opinion, does the school try to get parent involve? “They really don’t push for parent to come.”
	Second Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“The majority of the teachers here at this school ... are white. When we focus on topics in class, like history, you focus more on white history.”
Olson Middle School	White	“I think some of it goes with...also if you’re a younger student being uneducated about race. Because to be honest, I was a pretty racist little kid.”
	White	Speaking about DA “Oh my god, it’s very white, there like maybe three Asians.” How about honor courses? “It gets a little more racially diverse as you go down to regular classes”
	Black (African Diaspora)	“In the class you have to act either like you or extra, like trying to be better because some teachers...already have a judgment on you, so you have to act different.”
Oak Grove Middle School	Latino	“There is a lot of people and sometimes like political views, there is a lot of people who lash out at you, just because of what you think about something.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	

School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Jefferson High School	Somali	“...that’s just like the stigma since because the school is primarily white people they [parents and students] think that the school is more ‘higher’ in like academics, but since Kennedy has like way more diverse students...they [parents and students] think that school is like trash basically.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“This one boy called us [me and my friend] “Dora and Diego” for a year in a half.”
Kennedy High School	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	Someone said earlier that there is mostly white kids in honor, what do you notice in the other class? “In support, it’s usually the most diverse, mostly just people who get here from another country, who are just starting out learn English, but there are other who has been there for a long time, who don’t do their work and teachers don’t push them.”
	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“it’s like the honor stuff, I feel like the white kids are mostly in there because their parents went to college and they mostly know what they were doing, but it’s like for everyone else your parents really can’t help you out, if they only have, or they drop out of high school.”

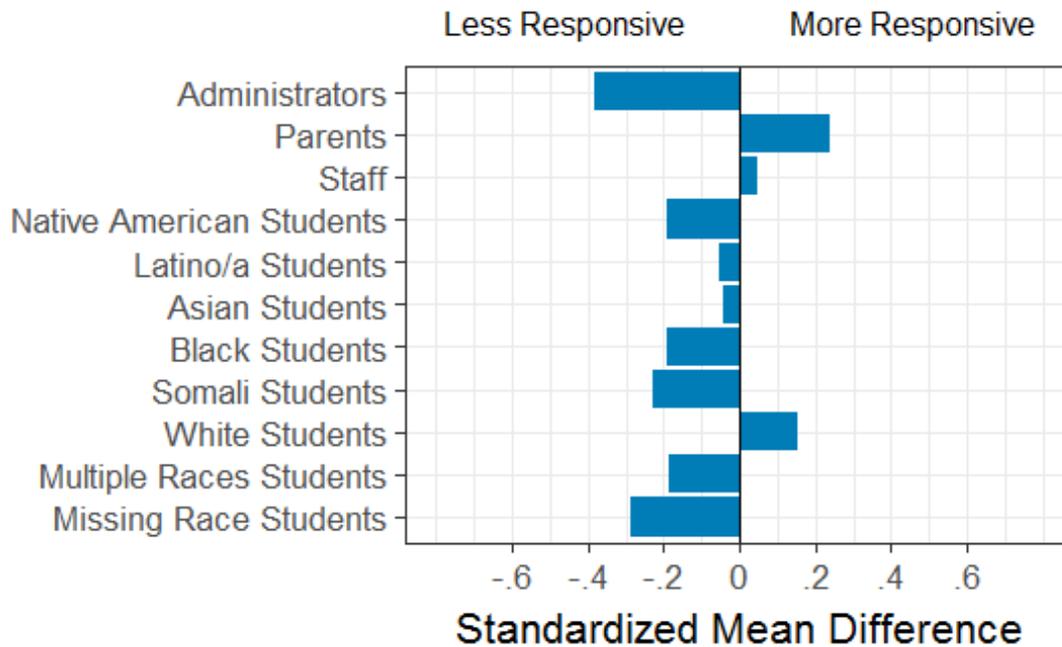
	White	Can someone give me examples of ways the school supports diversity? “We are having, coming up we are having diversity day. It’s a bunch of booths and stuff like that, and everyone get to show what kind of cultural they are from how they express.”
	White	Also touching on that (diversity day), they were worried that not enough, like, it was going as they planned and they tried to have a meeting with students to figured out how they could improve the plan.”
Olson Middle School	Black (African Diaspora)	Where can you go if you feel like you are being discriminated? “Sometimes If I tell the counselors they try to make it seem like the teachers aren’t discriminating, and I don’t like it because they don’t know how it feels to be black, because our counselors are white...but you don’t know how it feels to be black in a white school”
	Chican@/Latin@	When you go to the quiet room? “You usually see black and latino kids.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“Like sometimes in classes black people get called out more, like sometimes it funny, but sometimes it not.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“If you get good grades in the class teachers treat you differently”
	Black (African Diaspora)	“People make fun of Maxine, she is our white friend, they call her Ghetto and say she’s trying to act black, but they don’t say the same vice versa.
	White	What is it like being in the school? Describe the school. “Very comforting”
Valley View Middle School	Latino	“I get in trouble sometimes and they see me kind of often and they’re like we aren’t going to believe him, but there are sometimes where that is what actually happened, but they don’t believe me and believe straight, with what the teacher say.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“White students get a free pass the first one, and then the second one they [teachers] keep it calm. It’s like when I get into trouble it’s a straight call home the first time.”
Oak Grove Middle School	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“This wasn’t one of my experiences, but one of my friends. A lot of times they will stereotype people, especially like Black- African Americans, like other races ...they just naturally assume that because someone was Black and wanting to call someone- using their phone that they were going to steal it or something.” Who have you seen treating students like that other students? “Yeah.”
	White	Speaking about who starts drama “kid that like to start drama, kids that want a reaction out you. They usually go after race or the gender.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“pertaining to the quite room situation, the people that I see most often sent to the quite room are of two races, they are Hispanic and African American and it’s kind of disturbing how that is categorized and how people of the white race are not sent to the quite room.”

Main Findings:

- A) The qualitative data suggests that while there are some differences among students, minoritized students overwhelmingly felt schooling was not culturally responsive.
- B) Some White students seemed to confirmed that they contribute to a lack of culturally responsive learning environments.
- C) While parents perceived higher CRSLTC, respondents were largely White.

Figure 2.2.2. CRSLTC—Perceptions of Classroom Content

The 4 items comprising CRSLTC address perceptions of how well diverse backgrounds and experiences are incorporated in classroom content and responded to in classroom interactions. Higher scores on the scale indicate higher perceptions of cultural responsiveness. The average student score was 7.5 out of 13 (58% of max score), suggesting Students, on average, feel their school is somewhat to very responsive to diverse backgrounds and experiences.



In this figure, 0 represents the average CRSLTC score of all Students. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical perception of school's responsiveness for all Students.

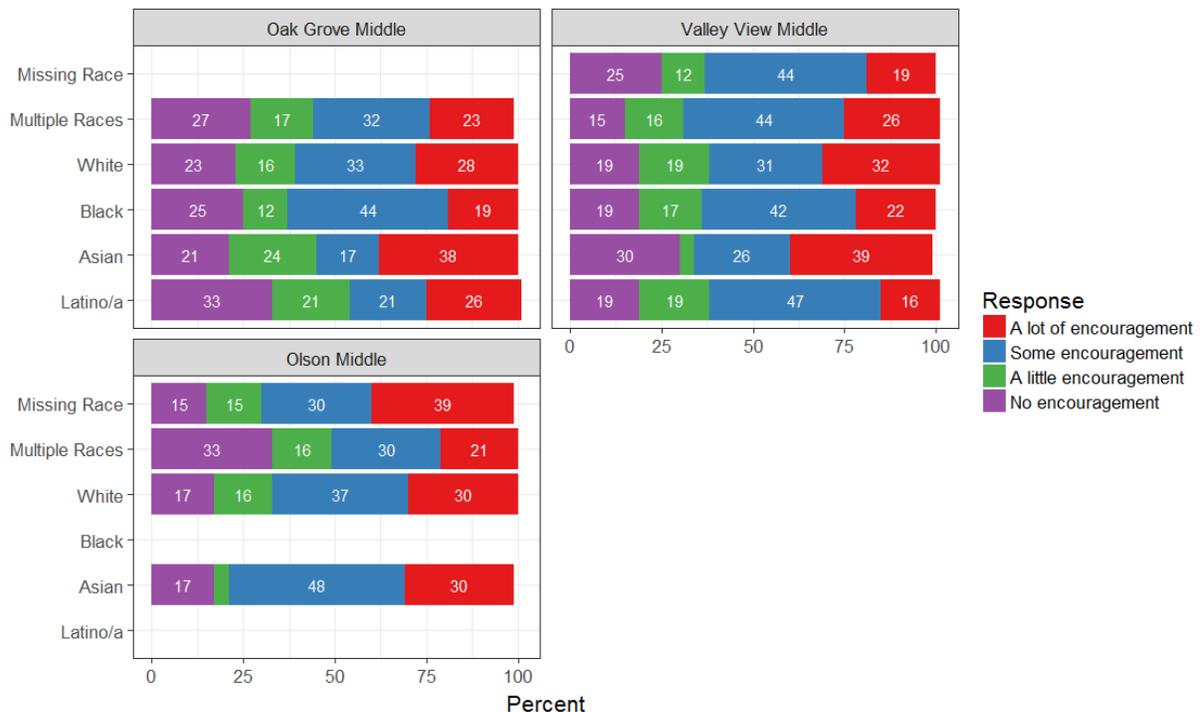
Main Findings:

- A) While Black students and students identifying with Multiple Races or Missing Race report slightly lower CRSLTC than Students on average, the difference from the perceptions report by White students is somewhat larger. Parents, on average, perceive slightly higher CRSLTC than Students while Administrators hold moderately lower perceptions. This indicates that Students are connecting with classroom content and interactions with staff on a cultural basis better than what is perceived by Administrators, but worse than what is perceived by Parents, keeping in mind that the Parent sample is fairly homogenous.
- B) With the exception of Transgender and Special Education Students, on average, Students who share a given characteristic in Figure B report slight to moderately lower perceptions of CRSLTC than their peers who do not share their particular characteristic.
- C) Native American, Black, and Somali Students, along with Students who identify with Multiple Races or Missing Race have lower perceptions of school responsiveness than Students as a whole and especially lower than White students.
- D) Parents, on average, perceive higher school cultural responsiveness than Students while Administrators hold moderately lower perceptions of cultural responsiveness. This indicates

that Students are connecting with classroom content and interactions with staff on a cultural basis better than what is perceived by Administrators, but worse than what is perceived by Parents. Keep in mind, however, that the Parent sample is predominately White and may not be representative of all parents.

Figure 2.2.3. CRSLTC—Perceptions of A.P. Encouragement

Students were asked "How much encouragement from school staff, if any, have you received to take advanced/honors courses?"



Main Findings:

- E) There is large variability in student response within school and within race/ethnic group. Thus, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions at the group level when the reporting of encouragement appears to vary greatly from individual to individual. On average, 19-25% of students feel they receive no encouragement while 25-28% of students feel they receive a lot of encouragement.
- F) The most noticeable race/ethnic differences occur in Olson Middle where 48% of Latino Students and 69% of Native American Students feel they receive little or no encouragement to take advanced/honors classes. In contrast only about 30-33% of White Students or Students who identify with Multiple Races feel this way.
- G) Minoritized middle and high school students reported that even when they were in advanced courses, they were often the only student there. Prior research studies have established that such school trends are not a sign of ability, but rather of low expectations that schools have for some students.

H) Interview data revealed that some of the minoritized students elected to leave the advanced courses they were in, because they did not feel comfortable in those classes.

2.3. Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices (DBR)

Overview

In many districts, teachers express difficulty in understanding or believing there are discriminatory practices that lead to achievement or discipline gaps for certain groups of students. Then, the typical response is to claim gaps are because of students or communities, and not themselves as educators. In Bloomington, minoritized students expressed that they are not treated equally within the school system, and at times students are labeled into categories they are unable to discard. Many White students reported that, in their view, teachers discriminated against minoritized students in their classes.

It was positive that students found comfort and affirmation in the afterschool and weekend programs were designed to develop a space for other (non-English) language minorities and other minoritized students. Also, it was positive that schools and the district translated materials for families who do not speak English. Unfortunately, however, students did report that they were often teased or disparaged for speaking their indigenous language (mother tongue). Finally, like other equity areas, it is difficult to know the full scope of this equity areas without having interviewed teachers, administrators, and parents.

Definitions:

Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices may include but are not limited to:

- Attitudes, beliefs or practices that show a particular preference toward a particular group or a dislike toward a particular group
- A reproduction of the status quo, and lack of behaviors that would offer change already existing discriminatory practices in a school or district
- Exclusionary practices toward a particular group
- Opinions that students have deficits based on a particular category or group affiliation
- Placing a different set of standards (educational, social, disciplinary, etc) on a group based race, ethnicity, language, SES, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, religion, or any other characteristic

Figure 2.3.1. Qualitative Findings

Discrimination

School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Jefferson High School	Somali	"...that's just like the stigma since because the school is primarily white people they [parents and students] think that the school is more 'higher' in like academics, but since Kennedy has like way more diverse students...they [parents and students] think that school is like trash basically."
	Multicultural (Non-White)	"This one boy called us [me and my friend] "Dora and Diego" for a year in a half."
Kennedy High School	First Multicultural (Latino and African	Someone said earlier that there is mostly white kids in honor, what do you notice in the other class?

	Diaspora)	“In support, it’s usually the most diverse, mostly just people who get here from another country, who are just starting out learn English, but there are other who has been there for a long time, who don’t do their work and teachers don’t push them.”
	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“it’s like the honor stuff, I feel like the white kids are mostly in there because their parents went to college and they mostly know what they were doing, but it’s like for everyone else your parents really can’t help you out, if they only have, or they drop out of high school.”
	White	Can someone give me examples of ways the school supports diversity? “We are having, coming up we are having diversity day. It’s a bunch of booths and stuff like that, and everyone get to show what kind of cultural they are from how they express.”
	White	Also touching on that (diversity day), they were worried that not enough, like, it was going as they planned and they tried to have a meeting with students to figured out how they could improve the plan.”

Reducing Racism/ Oppression

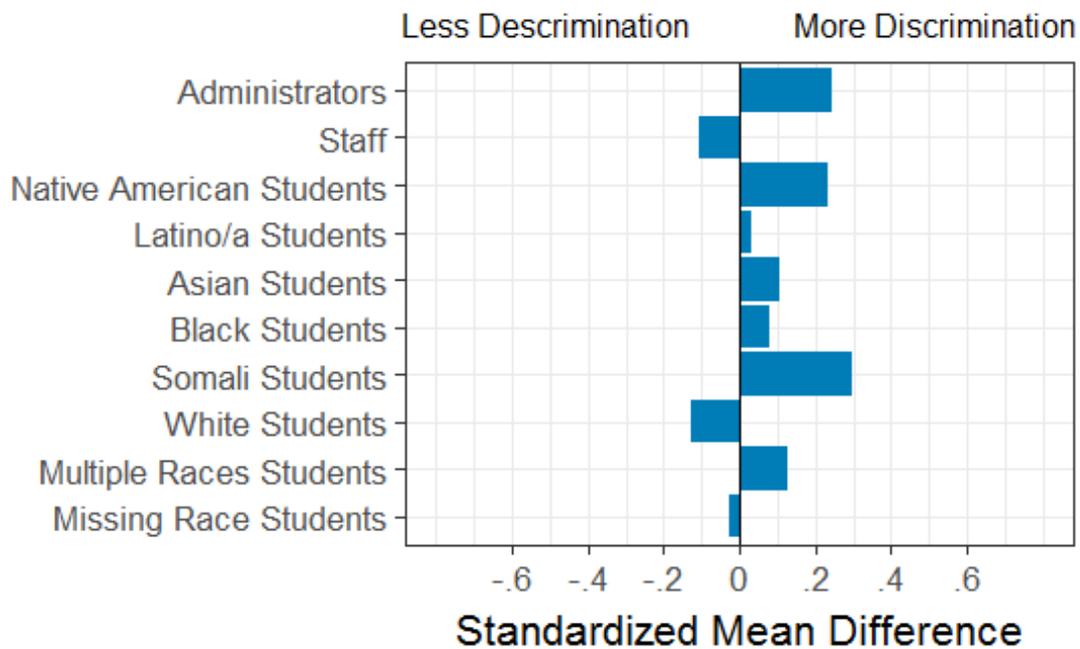
School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Olson Middle School	Black (African Diaspora)	Where can you go if you feel like you are being discriminated? “Sometimes If I tell the counselors they try to make it seem like the teachers aren’t discriminating, and I don’t like it because they don’t know how it feels to be black, because our counselors are white...but you don’t know how it feels to be black in a white school”
	Chican@/Latin@	When you go to the quiet room? “You usually see black and latino kids.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“Like sometimes in classes black people get called out more, like sometimes it funny, but sometimes it not.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“If you get good grades in the class teachers treat you differently”
	Black (African Diaspora)	“People make fun of Maxine, she is our white friend, they call her Ghetto and say she’s trying to act black, but they don’t say the same vice versa.
Valley View Middle School	Latino	“I get in trouble sometimes and they see me kind of often and they’re like we aren’t going to believe him, but there are sometimes where that is what actually happened, but they don’t believe me and believe straight, with what the teacher say.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	“White students get a free pass the first one, and then the second one they [teachers] keep it calm. It’s like when I get into trouble it’s a straight call home the first time.”
Oak Grove Middle School	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“This wasn’t one of my experiences, but one of my friends. A lot of times they will stereotype people, especially like Black- African Americans, like other races ...they just naturally assume that because someone was Black and wanting to call someone- using their phone that they were going to steal it or something.” Who have you seen treating students like that other students? “Yeah.”
	White	Speaking about who starts drama “kid that like to start drama, kids that want a reaction out you. They usually go after race or the gender.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“pertaining to the quite room situation, the people that I see most often sent to the quite room are of two races, they are Hispanic and African American and it’s kind of disturbing how that is categorized and how people of the white race are not sent to the quite room.”

Main Qualitative Findings

- A) Many White students (Cisgender, non-SPED, non-FRPL) reported being “very comfortable” in school, and that schools were “very comforting.”
- B) Minoritized students reported discriminatory practices were present in the classrooms and schools of their elder and younger siblings, indicating that this is a deep, systemic, inter-generational problem.
- C) Minoritized students expressed frustration with many of their schools for not doing enough to combat discrimination, and at times, even denying that specific incidents occurred—even when the students themselves were witnesses to incidents.
- D) As with the general scale, Native American and Somali Students report higher levels of discrimination than Students as a whole, but especially higher than White Students.
- E) Parents, on average, report lower discrimination than Students, indicating that Parents may not be aware of some of the discrimination that occurs.

Figure 2.2.3. CRSLTC—Perceptions of Discrimination

Using 10 items, the first version asks Administrators, Staff, and Students how often students are discriminated against because of certain characteristics and whether certain groups of students are treated better than others. Higher scores indicate higher perceived rates of discrimination. The average student score was 8.9 out of 28 (32% of max score) suggesting that Students, on average, think discrimination rarely occurs.



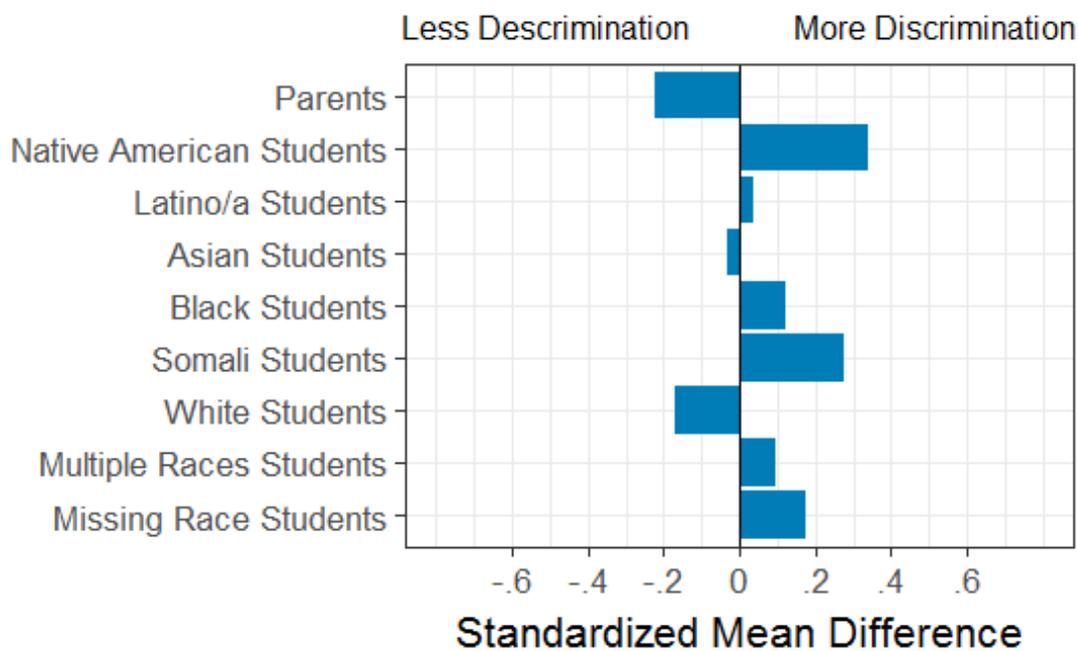
In this figure, 0 represents the average General DBP score of all Students. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical rate of discrimination as perceived by all Students.

Main Findings:

- A) Administrators, on average, perceive slightly higher levels of discrimination across the student population than Students did. There were no meaningful differences by Students' race/ethnic group when compared to the average Student score, but students identifying with Multiple Races had somewhat higher reports of discrimination than White students.
- B) Transgender, Special Education, FRPL, and students who are Disciplined weekly, on average, perceive slightly to moderately higher levels of discrimination across the student population than their counterparts. As noted below, these groups also report much higher levels of discrimination against them personally, which could make these students more likely to notice discrimination happening to others.
- C) Native American and Somali Students perceive higher rates of discrimination against the student population as a whole than is typical for most students. As noted in the next section, these groups also report much higher levels of discrimination against them personally which could make these students more likely to notice discrimination happening to others.

Figure 2.3.2. CRSLTC—Perceptions of Personal Discrimination

The second scale utilizes 16 items and asks Students and Parents how often they (or their child) personally experiences discrimination because of a certain characteristic or from a specific type of person in the school. Higher scores indicate that more personal experiences of discrimination. The average student score was 7.6 out of 52 (15% of max score), meaning Students report experiencing discrimination, on average, 1 or fewer times per year.



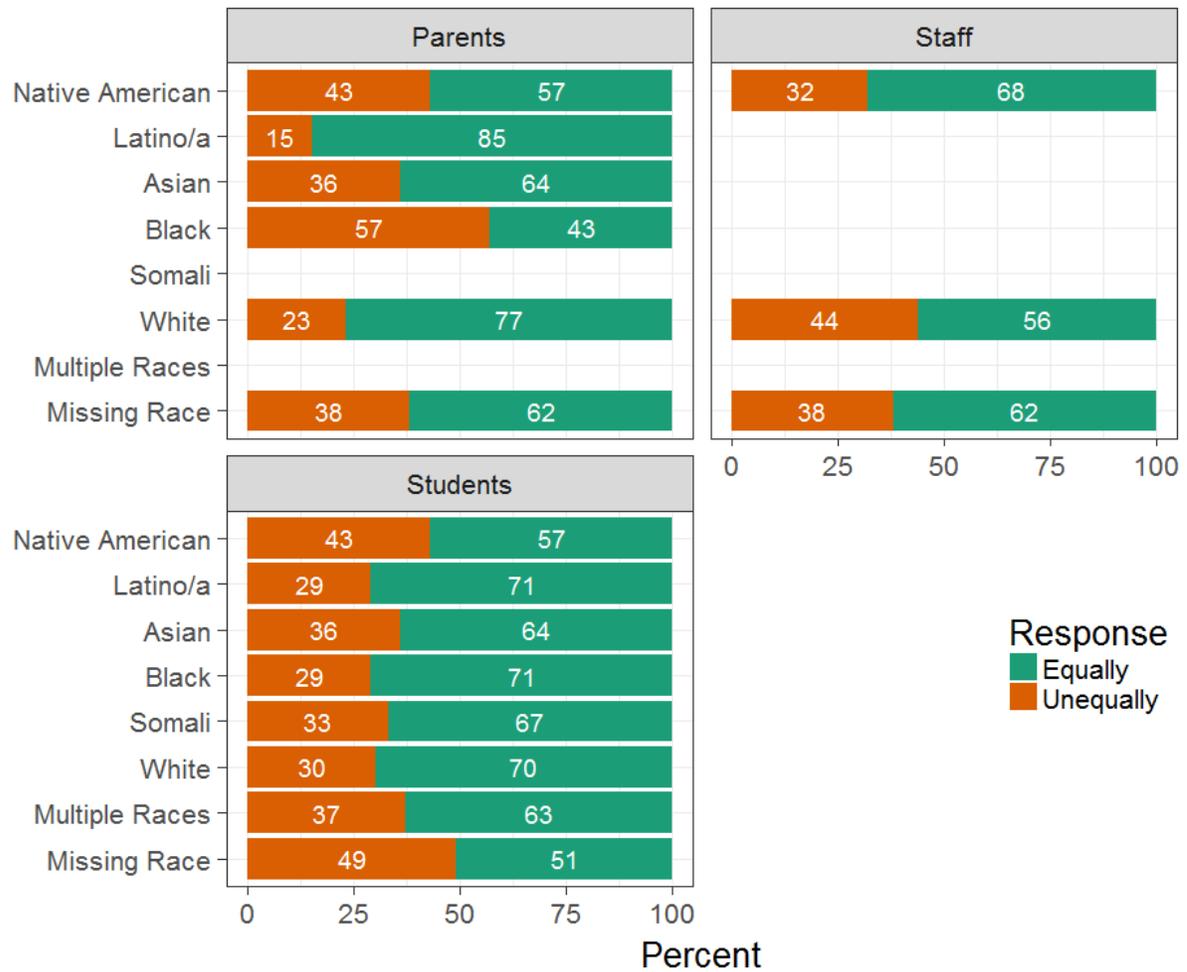
In this figure, 0 represents the average Personal DBP score of all Students. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical rate of discrimination as experienced by all Students.

Summary

- F) Parents, on average, report somewhat lower discrimination than students, which indicates that parents may not be aware of some of the discrimination that occurs. As with the general scale, there were no meaningful differences by Students' race/ethnic group when compared to the average Student score, but students identifying with Multiple Races had somewhat higher reports of discrimination than White students.
- G) Transgender, Special Education, and FRPL students report slight to moderately more discrimination against them personally than their Cisgender, non-SPED, non-FRPL peers. Students who are disciplined at least once per week report very large differences in discrimination against them personally than students who are disciplined less frequently.

Figure 2.3.3. CRSLTC—Perceptions of Teacher Treatment

Staff, Parents, and Students were asked the question, "Do teachers treat all students equally or unequally?"



Main Findings:

- a) Approximately two-thirds of Students and Staff believe that teachers treat all students equally with few notable differences between race/ethnic groups.
- b) Parents are more varied with 57% of Black Parents believing that teachers treat students unequally, but only 15% of Latino Parents share this sentiment. Keep in mind that the number of responses from some of the Parent groups is relatively small which could be the reason we see less consistency across race/ethnic groups.

2.4. School Culture Climate (SCC)

Overview

The National School Climate Center defines school climate as the quality and character of school life as it relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, and organizational processes and structures.¹ School climate sets the tone for all teaching and learning in the school environment. Positive school climate supports learning and positive youth development and is predictive of students' ability to learn and develop in healthy ways.

The National Center for Urban School Transformation states that high-performing urban schools have climates that nurture the commitment and engagement of teachers, parents, and students.² In these learning environments, students: a) are eager to attend school; b) perceive adults in the school care sincerely about them and their success; c) feel safe physically and emotionally; d) believe they are likely to succeed academically; and, e) feel a personal connection to the adults at school.

Positive school cultures and climates are those where teachers: a) believe they are part of a team that is making a powerful difference in the lives of students; b) believe their work has a purpose; c) believe administrators care sincerely about them and their success; d) see administrators as sources of support and leadership who are skillful enough and caring enough to help them achieve excellent learning results.²

The climate for parents in high-performing schools is one where parents: a) believe educators care about their child; b) feel welcome at school; c) feel that educators perceive them as strong, positive partners in the education of their child; and, d) feel that their concerns and insights are appreciated.²

Figure 2.4.1. Qualitative Data

School Climate and Culture

School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Jefferson High School	Black (African Diaspora)	"I always feel like the school is really divided, I don't feel like everyone talks to everyone... the school is predominately white, so like we already stand out because we are like the minorities in the school and I don't think the students or the teachers help...I think they only make it [being marginalized] worse."
	Black (African Diaspora)	"Because all of the staff is white I feel like if you come to them with racial problems they feel awkward...and pretend like they actually have an interest in your problems, but then they don't do anything about it—so then you're just left with this problem that you thought was going to be solved [or at least addressed]."

¹ National School Climate Center. <http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/faq.php>

² National Center for Urban School Transformation. <http://ncust.org/wp/best-practices/resources-improving-school-culture-and-climate/>

	Multicultural (Non-White)	"I've been called "devil worshiper" because my family [celebrates] the 'Day of the Dead' [i.e. a cultural holiday that honors their ancestors or those who came before them] ...I mean I've been dealing with this for 10 years...it's something that you really don't get use to but you just learn to kind of block it out and know that it's not you, but the ignorance they have for not really being surrounded by diversity."
	Multicultural (Non-White)	"After the election a lot of stuff—all of the stuff that we've been previously going through really ramped up...some kids chanted "build a wall" or saying "vote Trump", or just "go back to Mexico" ...so we started this club [S.T.A.R] to make a safe place because we didn't have that here."
	Somali	"The administration like is good at their job, but like they don't really care that much about the colored students [students of color] here...like they try to act like they care, but they really don't."
	Somali	"I feel like a lot of the students here are uneducated about other cultures and religions."
	White	"I think this administration has worked very hard in making this a safe learning environment where different viewpoints are respected from all students and staff."
	White	"There can be time periods of non-acceptance...there can definitely be periods of that. And there can be groups of people that can feed off that and continue and can just kind of not really discriminate, but they can just get nasty."
Valley View Middle School	Latino	"I feel like sometimes the teachers don't give us an opportunity to give our opinion on things. They just kind of go along with what they think is best, but they never take into account what we think"
	Multicultural (Non-white)	Is that a common experience, you see black student or Latino student getting picked on or in trouble more? "Yeah" "I feel like they can handle it, we are used to it I guess. There is something called a roast battle, its where like two people go ahead and flame each other, pick on it other, it happens frequently. So I guess black students and Latino students are used to getting picked on."
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	What are some new things the new principal is doing? "She creates bonds." How is she creating bonds? "Talks to every table, smiles a lot, she interacts with everyone." "The old principal would just stand in the corner and say I'm checking email."
	White	"I feel like one of my teachers are sexist, because some of the boys were talking one day I that class and she yelled at us and said if we talked again we would be sent to the deans offices and then some of the girls were talking the next day at the same volume as us and she just said, hey can you quite down."
Olson Middle School	Black (African Diaspora)	"Last year, a lot of people were saying racist things and stuff. I told a teacher, and they were like 'Ehh they are not being racist."
	Black (African Diaspora)	"I don't like some of the people here because they do make remarks that are like, even if they are not that bad, because you get used to them, but sometimes they're racist."
	Chican@/Latin@	What do you think about the adults? "They're nice, they never yell, they talk softly."
	Multicultural (Non-White)	"The teachers have their favorites, their dislikes (referring to students)
	White	"I would say welcome because there are like different cultures here and everyone is like, super nice to everyone."
	White	"I believe teachers want students to have the best absolute education

		that students have the right to and deserve, but you know the system isn't 110% perfect."
Oak Grove	Multicultural (Non-White)	"I feel like some of the administrators are not understanding and like there is a clear differences in, like how they treat other students"
	Multicultural (Non-White)	"The are some white students that really get on my nerves, sometimes when I walk the hall, they will shout 'Allahu Akba'"
	Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	They like split them [lunch tables] up by race I feel like...race and gender... I feel like it's all organized that way because everyone knows where everyone sits and you sit there every single day.
	Multicultural (Non-White)	Sometimes I see teachers treat differently the color people then the white." In what way? "Sometime they yell at the color people and the white people they just pretend they didn't see it."
	White	"I feel like the kids our age get judged because of the stereotype, that middle schoolers our age kinda have, like they are so immature, they don't know how to act, they misbehavior when in fact that's not all true and I kind of feel like that's like drilled into most of the adults heads."
	White	"I feel like they don't respect us, I feel minimized sometimes- oh you're just a middle schoolers you don't know what your doing."
	White	"for the most part everyone at this school is pretty nice, then there is a few kids that cause all the fights and drama"
	Somali	"I don't like how they bully other people." Another student "Because their different."
	Somali	Does bullying happen a lot at this school? "Yes" Who normally does the bullying? "The white, kids who think they are better than others, smarter than other stronger than other."
Kennedy High School	Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	"The bad teachers are kind of bias with students. In my previous class, my teacher was biased toward a certain race, in her teaching, she made that clear because it was world literature teacher and she focused a lot of time on that literature," What type of literature? "It was European, and it was these two kids she cared about them more, and it was not even fun for us to come to class."
	Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	"Last year in my class a fight broke out because of religious tensions, there was a conflict between religions... it was a muslim vs a Latina, and there was a comment that was said that wasn't polite."
	Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	"The majority of the teachers here at this school ... are white. When we focus on topics in class, like history, you focus more on white history."
	Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	"Bring a AP student and being of color, People don't take AP classes because they feel intimidated."
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	"I kind of like Kennedy, I feel like everyone get along, I feel like no one has enemies."
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	"The lack of diversity teacher is something that's very big... because it's easier to bond with a person of color than someone white."
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	"Like my parent are undocumented, and I can't talk to anyone about that except Rosa."
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	"I love the cultural diversity, you can look around in the lunchroom, and you can see every different kind of culture. It's not like an all-white table or black table; it's mixed."
	White	"I find the diversity here very refreshing and similar to what the real world is like...it's very important in your high school to have that

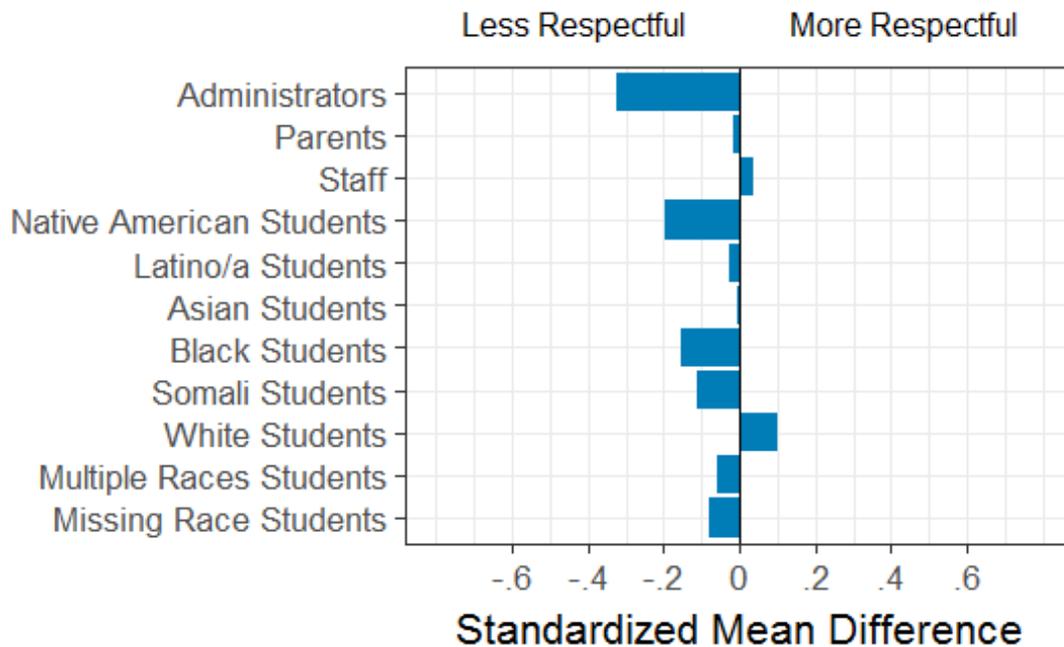
		diversity”
	White	“Teachers are the best part of Kennedy. I love my teachers”
	White	“Teachers will share things about their kids... that makes them seem friendlier and they will ask things like how was the hockey game, how’s cheerleading how was the choral concert.”

Main Findings:

- A) Interview data reveal that Students of color, immigrant, language minorities, and LGBTQ students all report a hostile learning and school environment.
- B) Some minoritized students report that schools are also quite hostile toward their parents and siblings who are also present in the district.
- C) Staff often denied racism, discrimination, and other hostile events were happening, or if they did happen, that the events were ‘racist.’
- D) Minoritized students reported the following events as hostile:
 - 1. Lack of non-White staff
 - 2. Push toward assimilation, and lack of acceptance of students identity
- E) Although Students overall feel their school's climate is respectful, the feeling is less so for Native American Students, though the difference is considered small.

Figure 2.4.2. SCC—Perceptions of Respectfulness

The SCC scale is comprised of 7 items that ask how respectful various adults in the school building are when speaking to students as well as the overall positivity of student experiences. Higher scores on the scale indicate higher feeling of respectfulness. The average student score was 20 out of 28 (71% of max score), suggesting Students, on average, feel their school's cultural climate is very respectful.



In this figure, 0 represents the average SCC score of all Students. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical respectfulness felt by all Students.

Main Findings:

- F) Although Students overall feel their school's climate is respectful, the feeling is less so for Native American Students, though the difference is considered small.
- G) Administrators, on average, feel school's respectfulness toward students is lower than Students perceive it to be. One possible explanation is Administrators have a higher standard for what constitutes respectfulness leading to the standard being met less often.
- H) Administrators, on average, feel school's respectfulness toward students is lower than Students perceive it to be. One possible explanation is Administrators have a higher standard for what constitutes respectfulness leading to the standard being met less often.
- I) While there are no meaningful differences between Students' race/ethnic group when compared to the average of all Students, Black students report slightly lower perceptions of respectfulness than White students.
- J) Transgender, Special Education, FRPL, and students who are Disciplined weekly, on average, report slight to moderately lower perceptions of respectfulness than their counterparts.

2.5. School-Community Relationship (SCR)

Overview

School and community relationships are crucial to the academic success of students, especially those of students who come from minoritized communities. Yet, most districts tend not to recognize the community-based assets of these very students. Much of the cultural knowledge, that could go a long way in helping minoritized students succeed in school, goes unrecognized by educators. This is true with the traditional minoritized families, such as Native Americans and African Americans. But the changing community demographics and growth of immigrant and refugee communities has made this problem even more acute.

In addition to more racial and ethnic diversity, the district now serves more working, lower-working class families. These social changes, as explained by the student interviewees, are pushing the district to redesign how they serve students. There is some indication that the community is divided, and this has consequently left schools more diverse and other schools more White. We have heard that some White families, and wealthier families, have pushed for these divisions. But because we only interviewed students, and not parents and staff, it is difficult for us to gain a full assessment of the factors in Bloomington.

In the interviews with students, the most significant problems they reported were racial and religious harassment, hostility from office staff or instructional staff, mocking, teasing, or shaming community-based behaviors, and over punishing community-based behaviors. According to interview data, minoritized parents were often in direct conflict with staff because of how they perceived their children were being treated. Below are a few of the defining factors of school-community relationships.

Defining factors of school community relationships:

- Parents have equitable access to schools that are not hostile
- Schools are affable, friendly, and welcoming places for all parents
- There is overlapping space that exists between school and community
- School officials show empathy toward community history and beliefs
- School materials are sensitive to indigenous languages and cultures
- Routes to and from school are safe for parents and students
- School staff advocate for issues important to the parents they serve
- Parents are allowed to partake in developing policies for school

Figure 2.5.1. Qualitative Data

School-Community Relations

School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Jefferson High School	Somali	“Earlier this year, I was walking to school and like a parent of a student here...he followed me with his car, and he basically tried to hand me a brochure for his religion. Like this has happened to me a lot of times, so I am use to it. So, this time I just wanted to say “no” because I never had that opportunity before...so I said “no” to this man, and he kept following me .”

Jefferson High School	Somali	“I don’t like how this school is like primarily white...people of color like when they are thinking about moving to schools...they think of Jefferson as the ‘white school’ and Kennedy like the ‘diverse school’...and like nobody wants to come here, everybody always goes to Kennedy because this school is not welcoming to like anybody that isn’t white basically.”
	Multicultural (non-White)	Do your parents like this school? “My parents have an issue with the safety of this school...after Trump’s election my dad didn’t want me to come to school he didn’t know what would happen...my dad is like you know, tough military guy—he doesn’t scare easy. But, umm...I was sexually assaulted in this school a couple of weeks ago...and that really scared my parents because a lot of women in my family had gone through similar things...and they felt because I was alone with the group of boys when it happened...umm, the only reason that the administration knows because they caught it on camera, but that was kind of swept under the rug...”
Kennedy High School	Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	Do you like this school? ““No, because every time they hear news about Kennedy its always bad. Like that fight last year and we had to go into a lock down... they never get to hear the good things about Kennedy they just hear the bad”
	White	“We always get label as diverse because we are sat against the backdrop of Jefferson... we get compared to them because that is like the standard of Bloomington”
	White	“Some people at Jefferson don’t be like Kennedy is diverse they will be like Kennedy is Ghetto.”
Olson Middle School	Black (African Diaspora)	Do your parents like the school? “My mom had to cuss out the principal, because in the past years the learning hasn’t been good for me and I could be doing better, so she made sure that he made sure the teachers were going to be ok.”
	Multicultural (Non-White)	Do Teachers ever call home? “Yeah, they call if you’re missing something or you’re in trouble.”
	White	Does the school try to get your parent involved? “Oh yes, calls home, emails home... obviously we have a PTA... its exclusive but you can get involved if you want to.”
Oak Grove Middle School	Multicultural (Non white)	“I feel like people assume, if you’re going to Jefferson, you going to have straight As and stuff and if you’re going to Kennedy you’re not doing as well.” “People usually paints kids that are going to Kennedy especially if they are not white that it’s like a really Ghetto school.”
Valley View Middle School	Latino	On Parental perceptions: <i>All students agree yes.</i> “Yes compared to the old school I was at... there was a lot of racism there, but here its claim you can be yourself and no one will say anything”

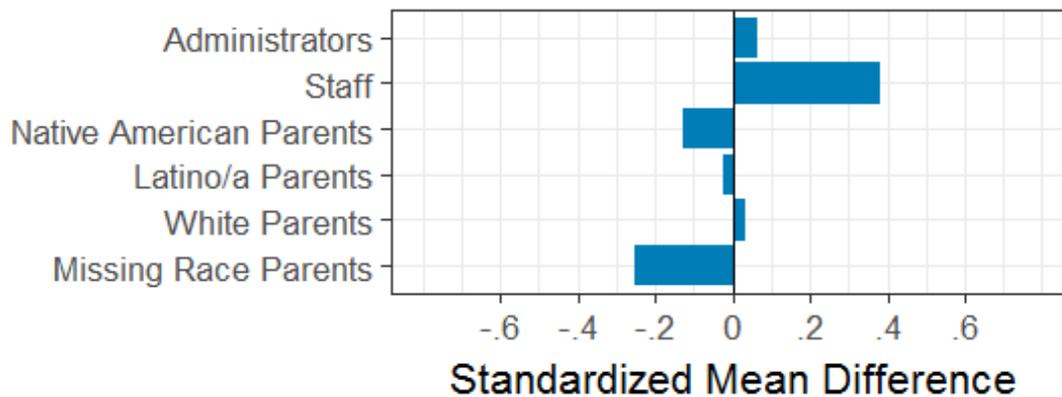
Main Findings:

- A) Many minoritized students felt that their parents did not have a good relationship with the staff.
- B) Some reported that their parents were not comfortable in the school.
- C) Schools/educators should maintain an active community presence.
- D) It is crucial to get the parent, teacher and administrator perspective to have a complete picture of school community relationships

Figure 2.5.2. SCC—Parental Comfort in School

Administrators, Staff, and Parents were asked 7 items pertaining to how comfortable parents feel attending school events, approaching school staff, and effectiveness of communication between parents and schools. Higher scores indicate a more positive relationship.

Students were not asked enough items for a scale score to be calculated. Therefore, while the figure below follows the interpretation of Figure with Scale Scores, average scale score for Parents is the reference rather than average scale score for Students. The average Parent score was 18 out of 27 (67% of max score), indicating Parents, on average, feel there is a very positive school-community relationship.



In this figure, 0 represents the average SCR score of all Parents. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical positivity of the relationship as perceived by all Parents.

Main Findings:

- E) The above figure: Staff, on average, perceives their relationship with Parents to be moderately more positive than what Parents, on average, report.
- F) Parents who identified with Multiple Races or did not report a race (Missing Race) perceive lower comfort attending events and effectiveness of communication with Staff with Staff than Parents as a whole and much lower than what is reported, on average, by Staff.

2.6. Thoughts on the Achievement Gap (TAG)

Overview

This section highlights the incongruence in expectations, perspective, and rationales for why Bloomington Public Schools do not have equitable achievement among all groups. How people understand the reasons of why the achievement gaps exist is directly related to their ability to close the achievement gaps. The interviews and survey data show differences among racial groups regarding the education of students at BPS and a common thread of economics as the reason why students do not perform well.

Students expressed mixed messages regarding academic achievement in their schools and the role social class plays in a child's opportunity to excel academically. For example, students in the white focus group at Kennedy High School felt that there was not a problem with achievement in the school, with one student stating, *"I feel like the honor classes isn't about race, its more on effort"*. This perception was contradicted by students in Kennedy's second Multicultural focus group that reported a hostile and unsupportive environment for students of color in A.P. classes, *"Like from the beginning, when I walked in, I could see the demeaning stares like, are you in the right class, are you smart, do you belong here. Students as a whole, on top of it, the administration are good at making you feel like you are in the wrong place, not only because there aren't many people there like you, but also because they don't want you there."* Students of color expressed feelings of isolation, anger and a sense of tokenism in their higher-level courses. These students found it difficult to be themselves in the higher-level courses, with one student reporting that, *"You have to be someone else, you have to adapt to their culture."* This difference in perceptions and experiences with academic achievement was found in each of the schools that participated in interviews.

Here are common misconceptions about why the achievement gaps exist:

- Some communities or parents do not value education
- Students do not have the motivation to learn
- When minoritized students come to school, they were already lacking certain skills
- Academic achievement is not connected to how students feel, or are treated, in school

Here are common actual reasons that achievement gaps exist:

- The curriculum is not culturally responsive to students' lives
- Students choose to disengage because of several reasons: hostile school climates, not being academically challenged, schooling is not relevant to their lives
- Classroom management is not properly in place
- Student attendance
- Because of the discipline gap

Figure 2.6.1. Qualitative Data

Achievement Gap

School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Jefferson High School	Black (African Diaspora)	Are there achievement differences at this school? "I mean there are more white get into more honor classes and AP classes then people of color."
	Black (African Diaspora)	On achievement GAP "Ehh yeah it's higher than Kennedy." Why do you say it's higher than Kennedy? "We have better opportunities here I think, and I guess the white teachers, and at Kennedy, they have the different teachers, but here it's a little more focus."
	Multicultural (Non-White)	"We are like one of the few that is in AP. We are AP classes we are like the only ones."
	Multicultural (Non-White)	"Yeah you feel the pressure, you are like, am I representing everyone. If I screw up, then everyone after me is screwed."
	Somali	"Like in our honor classes it like me and her, who are like- the colored people." Another Student, "That is like with a lot of classes like there is a maximum of like five people in classes."
	Somali	So where would you find the most students of color, general ed or special education? "General Education"
	White	On the achievement Gap "I honestly have no clue. I believe I have the opportunity to try harder." So what do you mean by that? "So well I don't have to work a job during the school year, so I can go home and do my homework...I go home to a house where I am properly fed; I have parents who care about my education. it's that kind of things."
	White	"I feel like when I sit in a, like an AP class or Honor class it's completely different, like when I'm surrounded by people who are working very hard, working on their homework, getting all their stuff done, I feel like I'm pushed."
Kennedy High School	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	"They should expect more from students of color."
	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	"I agree with (student's name) the academics are lacking, I come to school, and it's a waste of time for me. Teachers don't help; they don't even know it themselves."
	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	"Support wise, like when you have a student, and you want to see that person succeed, and then you have the other student you don't really like because you know push him toward learning. You just assume that person is going to fail, so why waste my time on that person. To help him be something or go somewhere." Asked what is this based on? "This is based on race."
	Second Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	Talking about AP Classes "Like from the beginning, when I walked in, I could see the demeaning stares like, are you in the right class, are you smart, do you belong here. Students as a whole, on top of it, the administration are good at making you feel like you are in the wrong place, not only because there aren't many people there like you, but also

		because they don't want you there."
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	Somali student talking about Somali students. "It's like, as of right now, in the Somali community, it's just getting to it, that they are passing their classes, their normal classes, So I feel like, in the white community, it's like, take your AP classes."
	White Student Focus Group	"I don't think there is discrimination with race or nothing like that, I think, we separate ourselves like automatically into groups of our race because we just feel more comfortable that way."
	White Student Focus Group	"If you walk into double honor and ask all the black people to stand up, you will probably get half of a person."
Olson Middle School	Black (African Diaspora)	"In the class, you have to act either like you or extra, like trying to be better because some teachers...already have a judgment on you, so you have to act different."
	Black (African Diaspora)	"And then let's say you were doing bad... and then next time you really want to get up your grade. It feels like the teachers put you down like you can't get up there... then say you get a C on a test, but you really wanted an A, they are like really good job you got a C. They are not saying you could do better, they say you're good there, stay average."
	Black (African Diaspora)	"Because like, there are so many kids who could do better...but you just need the teachers to push toward it, but I don't see teachers pushing minority or black people to do better."
	Black (African Diaspora)	"I had this special ed... the teacher would laugh at him, not help him and if he doesn't understand something, she will just yell."
	Chican@/Latin@	"Students are treated equally."
	Chican@/Latin@	"I feel like in my AP classes and my regular classes, females are more favored."
	Multicultural (Non-White)	What about the school you don't like? "The only thing is just having a person, who just calling you weird and random names every day."
	Multicultural (Non-White)	"The teachers have their favorites, their dislikes (referring to students)
	White	"I know some people have been treated differently because they are in special ed...people make fun of them, its messed up."
White	Speaking about DA "Oh my god, it's very white, there like maybe three Asians." How about honor courses? "It gets a little more racially diverse as you go down to regular classes."	
Valley View Middle School	Multicultural (Non-white)	"When I had tech ED, this one student teacher came in. She came in for a few weeks, the only kids who would get in trouble was the Latino, Latino and African Americans...she would pick on us. Like if one of them turn in something late she would grade everything right away, if they would ask she would say take your time, so it would show up in the grade book right away.
	Multicultural (Non-white)	Speaking about why there is no black kids and few minorities in honor classes "So it may seem our teacher is only picking white kids, but we just happen to have a majority of white kids who just happen to get into that class."
	Multicultural (Non-white)	Who talks to you about entering honor classes? "usually the person who is teaching us."
	Latino	I am in honor classes and noble and yeah, im not trying to be racist but has lot of white kids" " That something you see in the eighth grade too, there is a lot of white people in noble"
	Latino	" Yeah I just want to agree with her, there is a lot of white kids in noble and the other classes I feel like are more divide into race, I heard of like two people, that I know who are in that noble class"

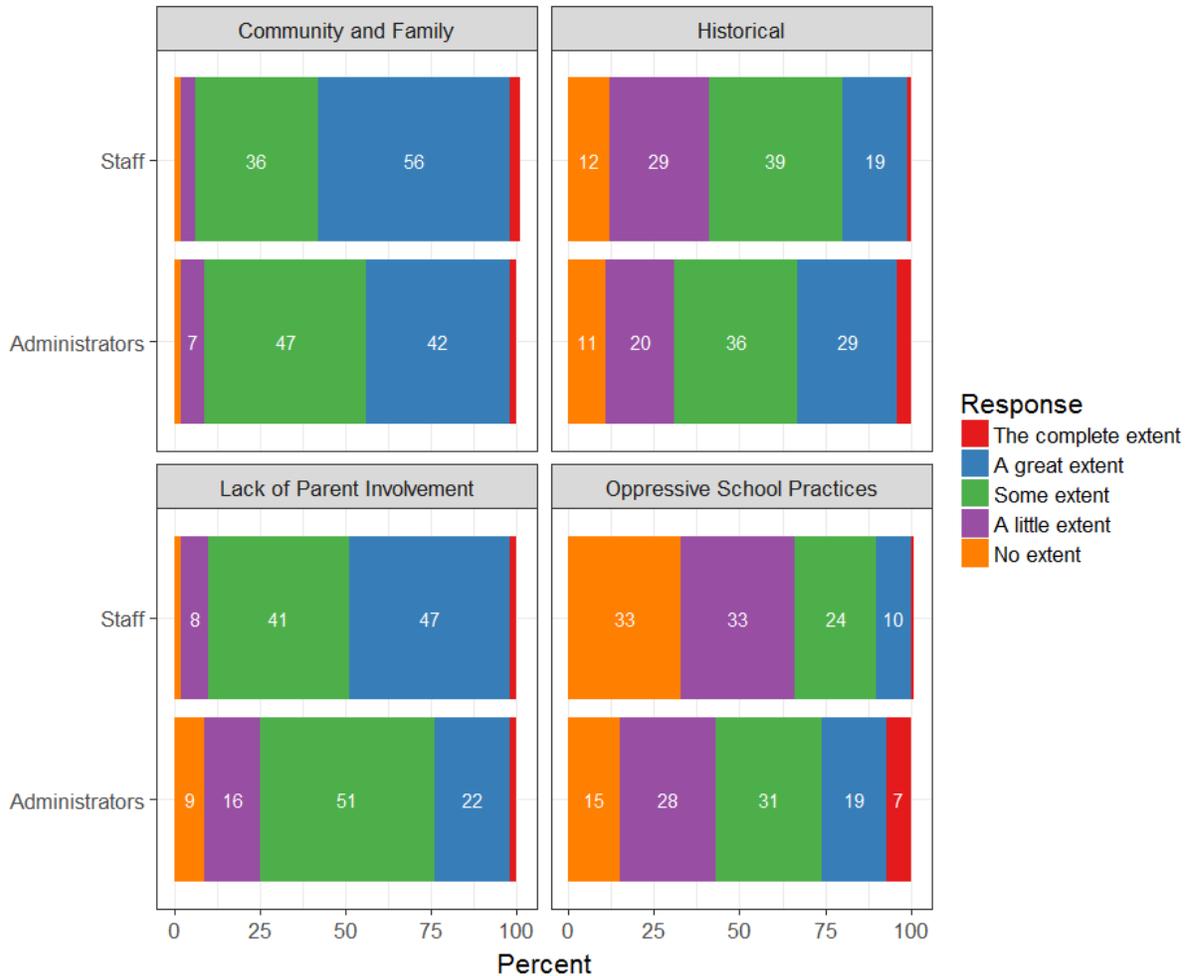
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	“No, because I am in honor classes and noble and yeah, im not trying to be racist but has lot of white kids” “ That something you see in the eighth grade too, there is a lot of white people in noble”
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	Do teachers encourage people to join Noble? “No, they pick people, It’s kind of like teachers don’t bring it up to other students” “It’s like a scout, they are just looking for who you think might fit into that class and it mostly white people.”
	White	Are students discriminated against in classrooms , “Yeah” “Like the teachers call student annoying, some of them, that’s a dumb question stuff like that.” Another student says “ I don’t think that’s discrimination, I think that’s just them being mean.”
	White	“ They don’t respect pronouns, or people.”
Oak Grove Middle School	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“sometimes if they are two people, that did something bad, but the teacher didn’t really see and one of them kind of gets in trouble a lot, but they didn’t do the bad, sometimes the teacher assume that they did it, but it could be the other person who did it, but they don’t get the other person in trouble.
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“Like one of my teachers, she will teach us for a few minute then she’ll go on her phone or her computer and be on Facebook or something.”
	Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	“I feel like people assume, if you’re going to Jefferson, you going to have straight As and stuff and if you’re going to Kennedy you’re not doing as well.” “People usually paints kids that are going to Kennedy especially if they are not white that it’s like a really Ghetto school.”
	Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	“I feel like DA, I don’t really know what they are, I feel like they are put hirer then like everyone else.”
	White	“Administrators and teachers crack down on the white kids more.”
	White	How did you learn about DA? “I learned about it in 5 th grade and applied in 6 th grade.” Another student “I learned about it in 2 nd grade and 3 rd grade is like elements and it moves on to DA.”
	Somali	Are there a lot of student of color? “It’s mostly white, there will be like one Asian or Hispanic.”
	Somali	What do you think there is some many whites in DA, “Because their trying in class” another student “ They don’t have friends who talk to, so they try their best on not talking and just listening.”

Main Findings:

- A) Staff and Administrators largely agree that achievement gaps in their school exist due to a variety of reasons. However, Staff more often reported that they believe that achievement gaps exist to no extent because of school oppressive practices than any of the other reasons.
- B) Some staff had a tendency to blame students, and hold deficit-oriented impressions of minoritized students and families.

Figure 2.6.2. TAG—Staff Understanding of Achievement Gap

The figure contains the proportion of responses by Administrators and Staff to the item, "To what extent, if any, do achievement gaps exist in your school due to these reasons?"



Main Findings:

- C) Staff and Administrators largely agree that achievement gaps in their school exist due to a variety of reasons. However, Staff more often reported that they believe that achievement gaps exist to no extent because of school oppressive practices than any of the other reasons.
- D) Some staff had a tendency to blame students, and hold deficit-oriented impressions of minoritized students and families.
- E) Some teachers did not have equity and high expectations of minoritized students.
- F) Not connecting achievement with discipline.
- G) Staff and Administrators largely agree that achievement gaps in their school exist due to a variety of reasons.
- H) While only 12% of Staff believe that achievement gaps exist a little or to no extent because of a lack of parent involvement, 66% of Staff believe that achievement gaps exist a little or to no extent because of oppressive school practices.

2.7. Thoughts on the Discipline Gap (TDG)

Overview:

There is agreement across all interviewed and surveyed constituents that there are discipline gaps in BPS. Students talked about students being labeled and judged. There were concerns that discipline was inconsistent. Developing student-teacher relationships was identified as an important aspect of the educational experience that would positively impact the discipline gap. Clear expectations and alternatives to traditional punishment approaches were also acknowledged as necessary. Staffing was mentioned as impacting discipline gaps in terms of individual teacher tolerance of different behaviors and student groups, degree of desire to form relationships, an effort to understand students and the lack of reflection of the student body’s ethnic and racial demographics. Perceptions of fairness and discipline issues also differed between elementary and secondary grade levels.

Definitions:

- **Discipline Gap:** The disproportionate rate of school disciplinary sanctions, from office disciplinary referrals to corporal punishment, suspension and expulsion of Black, Latino, and American Indian students (Gregory et al., 2010)
- Low income students experiencing low academic achievement, and who reside in high-crime/high-poverty neighborhoods may be at greater risk for exhibiting behaviors resulting in disciplinary actions
- Differential selection: picking out Black, Latino, or American Indian students for wrongdoing despite similar levels of infractions
- Differential processing: considerable flexibility in the type and length of sanctions applied to students for committing infractions

Figure 2.7a.1. Qualitative Data

Discipline

School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Valley View Middle School	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“White students get a free pass the first one, and then the second one they [teachers] keep it calm. It’s like when I get into trouble it’s a straight call home the first time.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“Black students get kicked out (of class) more; but white students just get “warnings.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	What do the student look like that they call out? “You mean like racially?” Sure “They don’t discriminate.”
	Latino	Do you think white students are disciplined differently in this school

		from Latino Students? “Yeah, a little bit. Well white students get a free pass the first one, and then the second one they keep it claim. It’s like when I get into trouble it’s a straight call home the first time.”
	Latino	About Mr. Tally “He was someone we could go to tell our story”, “ He fell into our group...He didn’t mind, he was open to everyone, he was open to all the different races”
	Latino	“Like for us Latino, I don’t really know how they see us, because for us they really don’t have enough patience with us. But they have high expectation for the both of us, but I feel the white students have more advantages.”
	Latino	“If happened to me to, I was talking because my friend started a conversation and I got yelled at and my friend, she is also white, she didn’t got told anything.”
	Latino	“Well like in gym, well you know if you forget your gym clothes, you have to call home. Well with some white kids, if they forget- they get a “Small Free Pass” a warning. (a pass to be excused from participation)
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	What did Mr. Tally do that you wish some of the other teachers would do? “Just understand, like if you do something and you think it’s a different way. He would listen.”
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	“Automatically she just looks at certain kids, let’s say, a Hispanic and the majority of the class is white and there is only a few Hispanic kids and one black kid, she will automatically separate those Hispanic kids...She will be like, Uhm, ha, I don’t think it’s a good idea for you three to be sitting together”
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	“Teachers don’t really give you a second chance in their classroom, so the beginning of the year is the most important time, if the teacher sees you do something they don’t like or they think is wrong, they just kind of stick to that perception in their mind?”
	Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)	So in your opinions are there differences in discipline, do you think one group is treated differently? “Oh heck yes, if you’re a Latino and you behavior bad you are going to be treated harsher, if you’re Africa, African American you’re going to be treated harsh. If you’re white you are going to get a mild treatment.”
	White Student Focus Group	“Reputation matters in terms of discipline.”
	White Student Focus Group	“I feel like one of my teachers are sexist, because some of the boys were talking one day I that class and she yelled at us and said if we talked again we would be sent to the deans offices and then some of the girls were talking the next day at the same volume as us and she just said, hey can you quite down.”
	White Student Focus Group	Talking about a teacher favorite students, “I don’t know. I think he likes people who don’t talk back to him, if you don’t question anything.”
Oak Grove Middle School	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“Black students who have gotten referrals or sent to [in school suspension] are quicker to get in trouble again. The “past” sticks with black students throughout; but other students get to start over.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	What do you like lease about the school? “The dress code, they don’t let you wear certain things its mostly for the girls, they have a freak one for the boys, but they never call anyone out. Like all the 6 th graders basically have their pants at their knee, but on one says anything.”
	Multicultural Student Focus	“The system of education rewards people who don’t want to learn. If you make noisy and you don’t want to learn you just get sent to the

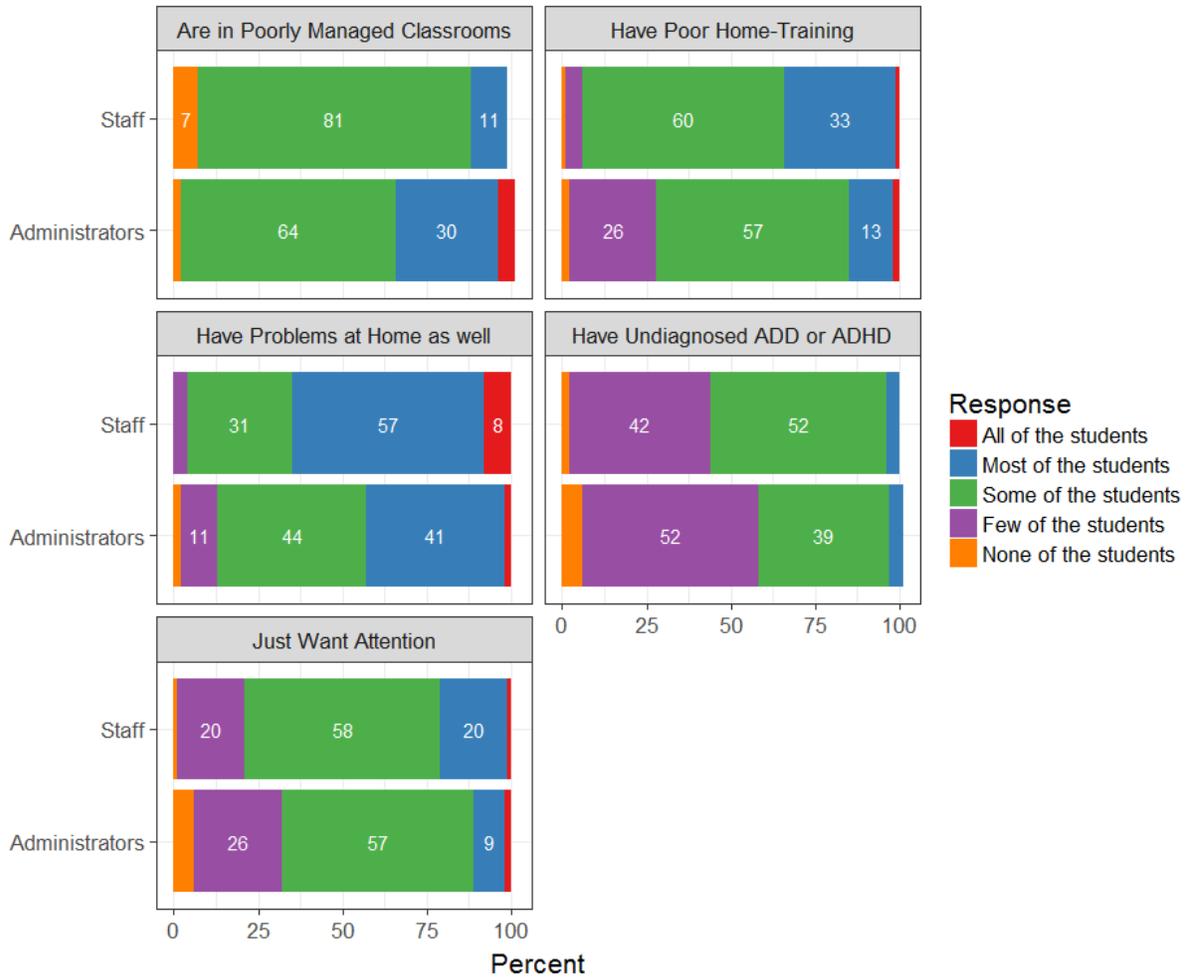
Group (Non-White)	quite room and you can do whatever you want.”
Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“There should be a fresh start every day for (all) students.”
Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“pertaining to the quite room situation, the people that I see most often sent to the quite room are of two races, they are Hispanic and African American and it’s kind of disturbing how that is categorized and how people of the white race are not sent to the quite room. Even though they did something as bad”
Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“I’ve seen once or twice, people are screaming and mostly like the colored people have to go to the quite room and the white people just like have a warning.”
Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	Sometimes I see teachers treat differently the color people then the white.” In what way? “ Sometime they yell at the color people and the white people they just pretend they didn’t see it.”
Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	“I agree with him, it’s so quick to judge people, I see it lot in colored people.”
Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	“Like the first week of school, if you make one mistake, they goanna think, like you’re a bad kid.”
Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	“I feel teachers either always send people to the quite room or never send people to the quite room.”
White Student Focus Group	“Administrators and teachers crack down on the white kids more.”
White Student Focus Group	Speaking about where to go for help in the school, “I usually don’t go to my counselor; I just talk to my friends. I feel like it happens so often, that going to a counselor, is like, I don’t know, It’s almost like there is nothing they can do about it. They’ll be like; it’s just something that happens.”
White Student Focus Group	“Even if you do go to the counselor, people say things at counselor, like Oh yeah-ill that! but they really don’t” So then what happens, how do things get solved, “I feel like it never get solved.”
Somali	Who do you normally see in the quite room, “Multiple races, basically every race in the school.”
Somali	“They will call you down, every time, a racial kid gets in trouble, it will always be the white kid that wins. It always be the white kid that gets the last laugh”
Somali	“when this one girl got her head scarf pulled off, these three white girls did, because she was giving another girl a hug. They ran and she told the teacher, the teacher told the dean of students, but I don’t think she got it.” (3 girls pulled a student headscarf and ran away with it.)
Somali	“They only check the cameras when some bad happens.”

	Somali	“Like they will escort the, like they don’t trust the colored kid, they will escort you down, but if it’s a white kid, they will.”
Kennedy High School	Second Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“I’ve never seen a white student get suspended for bullying a black kid, that never happens, but when it’s the other way around, when the black students are bullying the white students, Oh My God, they get so scared. Ah this person going to harm them, they’re in fear for their life”
	Second Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“I feel like I have to defend myself, I feel like if I don’t defend against you, I feel like you have some kind of control over me... They just think we are so dangerous and they treat us that way.”

There is agreement across all student focus groups conducted that there are issues with disciplinary practices in Bloomington School District. Students shared insights about themselves and other students being labeled and judged unfairly. There were concerns on the part of students that discipline was implemented inconsistently across racial/ethnic groups. Developing student-teacher relationships was identified as an important aspect of the educational experience that would positively impact the disciplinary gap. Clear expectations and alternatives to traditional punishment approaches were deemed necessary. Staffing was mentioned as impacting discipline gaps in terms of individual teacher tolerance of different behaviors and student groups, degree of desire to form relationships with students, efforts to understand students, and understanding of the student body’s ethnic and racial demographics. Perceptions on the causes of these issues also differed between the high schools and middle schools.

Figure 2.7a.2. TDG—Staff Understanding of Discipline Gap

The figure contains the proportion of responses by Administrators and Staff to the item, "How many of your students with discipline problems. . .?"



Main Findings:

- A. Staff and Administrators largely agree that discipline problems in their school exist due to a variety of reasons.
- B. Staff and Administrators believe the least common reason for discipline problems is undiagnosed ADD or ADHD whereas they are in agreement that the problems are not isolated to school, but are likely to occur at home as well.
- C. Ninety-two percent (92%) of Staff and 98% of Administrators believe some to all of their students with discipline problems are in poorly managed classrooms.

2.7.b Connecting Achievement and Discipline

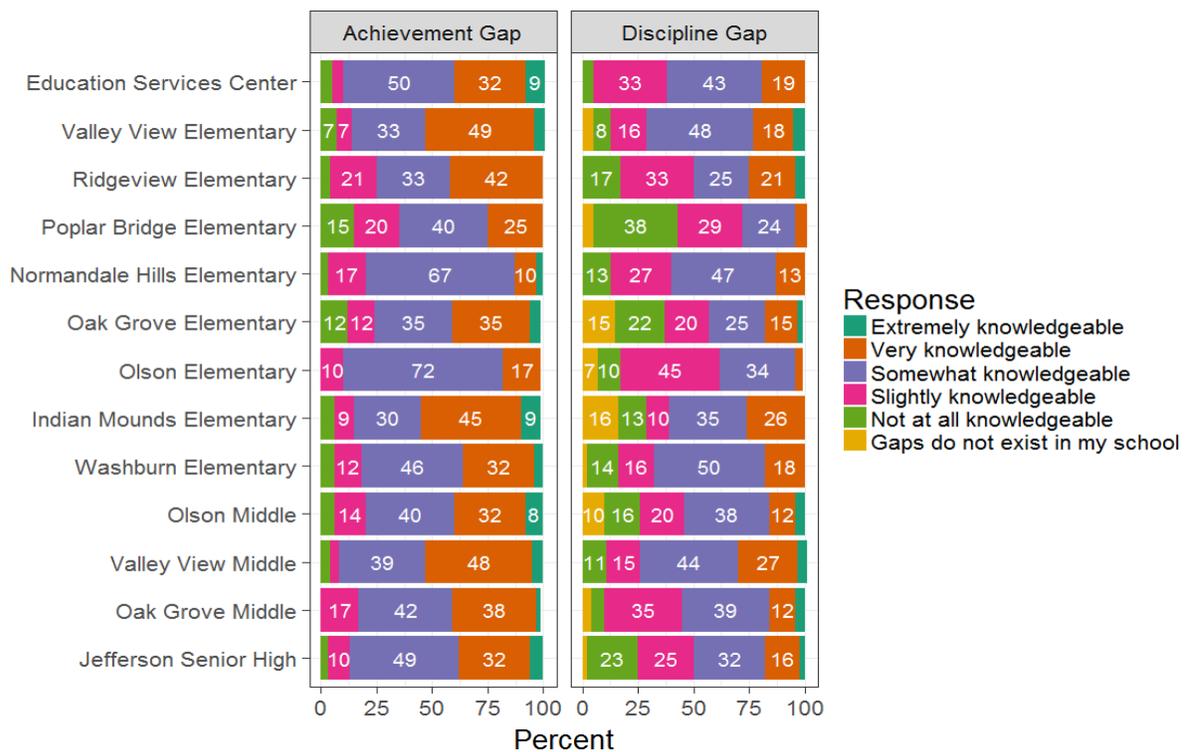
Overview:

The relationship between the Achievement Gap and Discipline Gaps has been well documented. Students who are targeted in school discipline, and who recognize that they are being targeted or treated differently, are more likely to perceive a hostile school climate. This can lead to student disengagement and eventually, many students will make the choice to disrupt or leave school. Discipline and Achievement Gaps can only be addressed when several conditions are present:

- A. Staff is willing to discuss the histories and their roles in shaping the gaps
- B. Achievement and Discipline Gaps are included throughout all of the work and discussions that Staff engages
- C. At the same time that equity is included throughout educational discussions, stand-alone days are also used to emphasize and synthesize all of the equity work in a school/district.
- D. Deficit understandings (i.e., blaming student, parents, or communities for the gaps) are not useful, and are not supported by research. So blaming students for achievement or discipline gaps should be resisted.

Figure 2.7b.1. Staff Understanding of Gaps

Staff were asked, "How knowledgeable are you, if at all, of why achievement (discipline) gaps exist in your school?"



Main Findings:

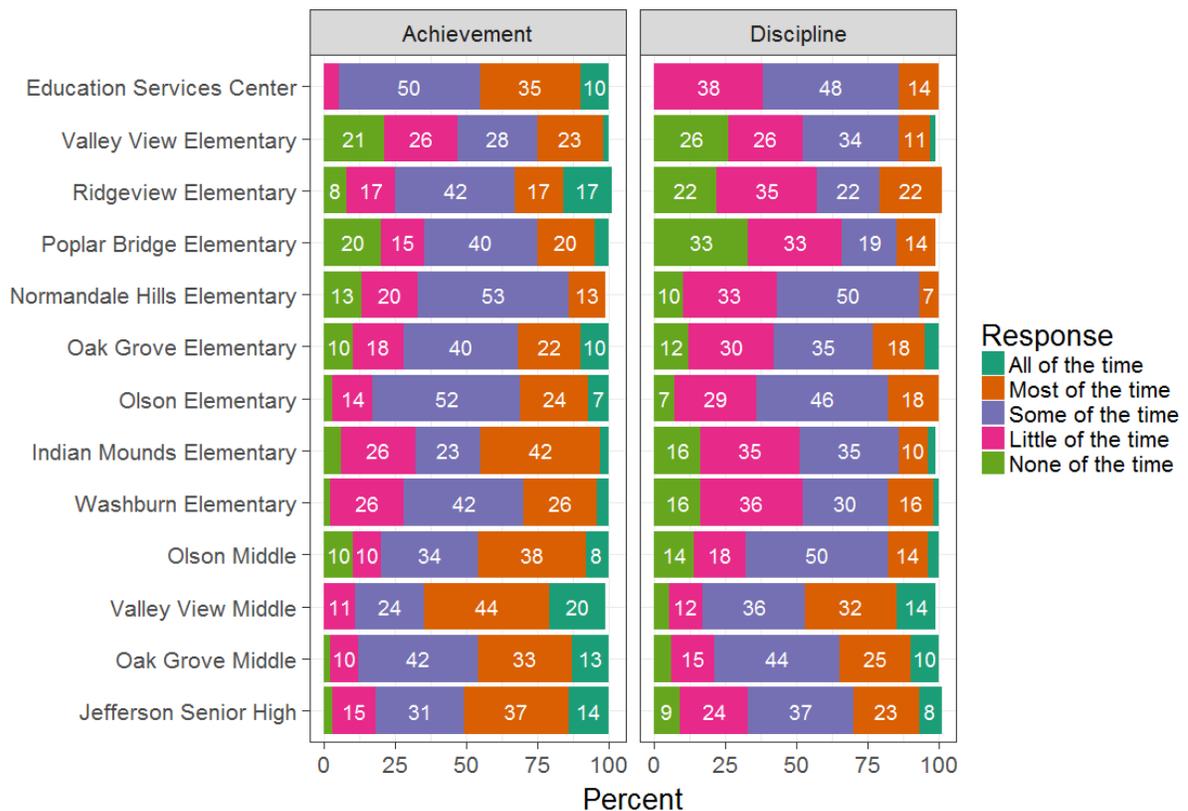
While all Staff agree that achievement gaps exist in their school, some staff report that discipline gaps do not exist in their school. Overall, knowledge of why gaps exist vary widely within each school, but consistently across schools Staff report higher levels of knowledge for achievement gaps than discipline gaps.

Achievement Gaps - Indian Mounds Elementary, Valley View Elementary, and Valley View Middle have the highest percentage of Staff report they are Very or Extremely Knowledgeable (54%, 54%, and 53% respectively) of why achievement gaps exist in their school. Normandale Hills Elementary and Olson Elementary have the lowest percentage report they are Very or Extremely Knowledgeable (13% and 17% respectively).

Discipline Gaps - Valley View Middle and Indian Mounds Elementary have the highest percentage of Staff report they are Very or Extremely Knowledgeable (31% and 26% respectively) of why discipline gaps exist in their school. Olson Elementary and Poplar Bridge Elementary have the lowest percentage of Staff report they are Very or Extremely Knowledgeable (3% and 5% respectively).

Figure 2.7b.2. Staff Discussion of Gaps in Achievement

Staff were asked, "When discussing student achievement (discipline) with staff, how often, if at all, do you include racial equity data in your discussions?"



Main Findings

Overall, there is wide variation within each school as to how often racial equity data is included in discussions of achievement and discipline; however, across schools Staff consistently report that racial equity data is included more often during discussions of achievement than discussions of discipline.

Achievement - Valley View Middle and Jefferson Senior High have the highest percentage of Staff report racial equity data is included Most or All of the time (64% and 51% respectively) while Normandale Hills Elementary and Valley View Elementary have the lowest percentage of Staff report racial equity data is included Most or All of the time (13% and 25% respectively).

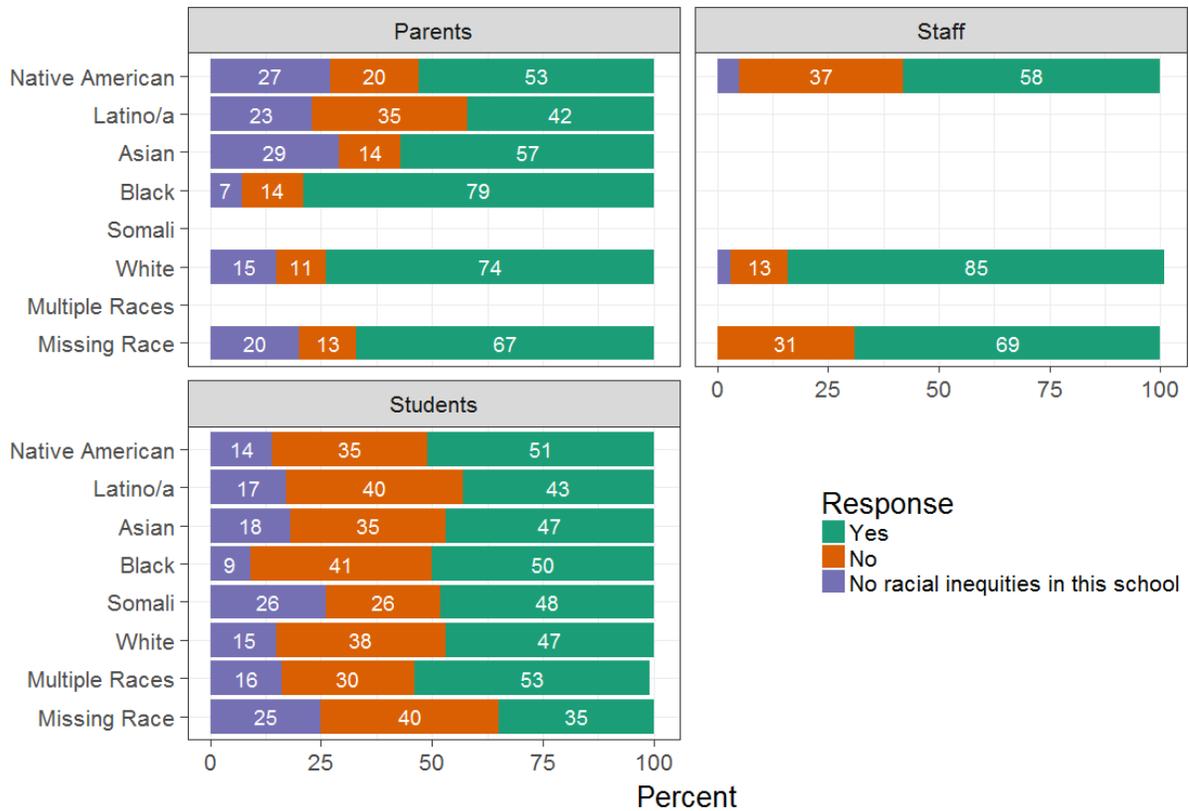
Discipline - Valley View Middle and Oak Grove Middle have the highest percentage of Staff report racial equity data is included Most or All of the time (46% and 35% respectively) while Normandale Hills Elementary, Valley View Elementary, and Indian Mounds Elementary have the lowest percentage of Staff report racial equity data is included Most or All of the time (7%, 13%, and 13% respectively).

Correlation

A correlation demonstrates strength of the relationship between two variables with the value ranging from -1 to 1 with 0 indicating that no relationship exists. The correlation between frequency of including racial equity data in discussions of achievement gaps and Staff's reported knowledge about achievement gaps is 0.41, which is considered a moderately strong relationship indicating the more frequently racial equity data is used in discussions the more knowledgeable Staff feels. With regards to discipline gaps the relationship is even stronger with a correlation of 0.62. Once again this suggests the more frequently racial equity data is used in discussions the more knowledgeable Staff feels.

Figure 2.7b.3. Staff Attribution of Gaps

Administrators, Parents, Staff, and Students were asked, "Do you believe that everyone shares some of the blame for racial inequities in your child's school, including teachers, parents, administrators, and students?" There were too few Administrators in the sample to break their responses down by race/ethnic group.

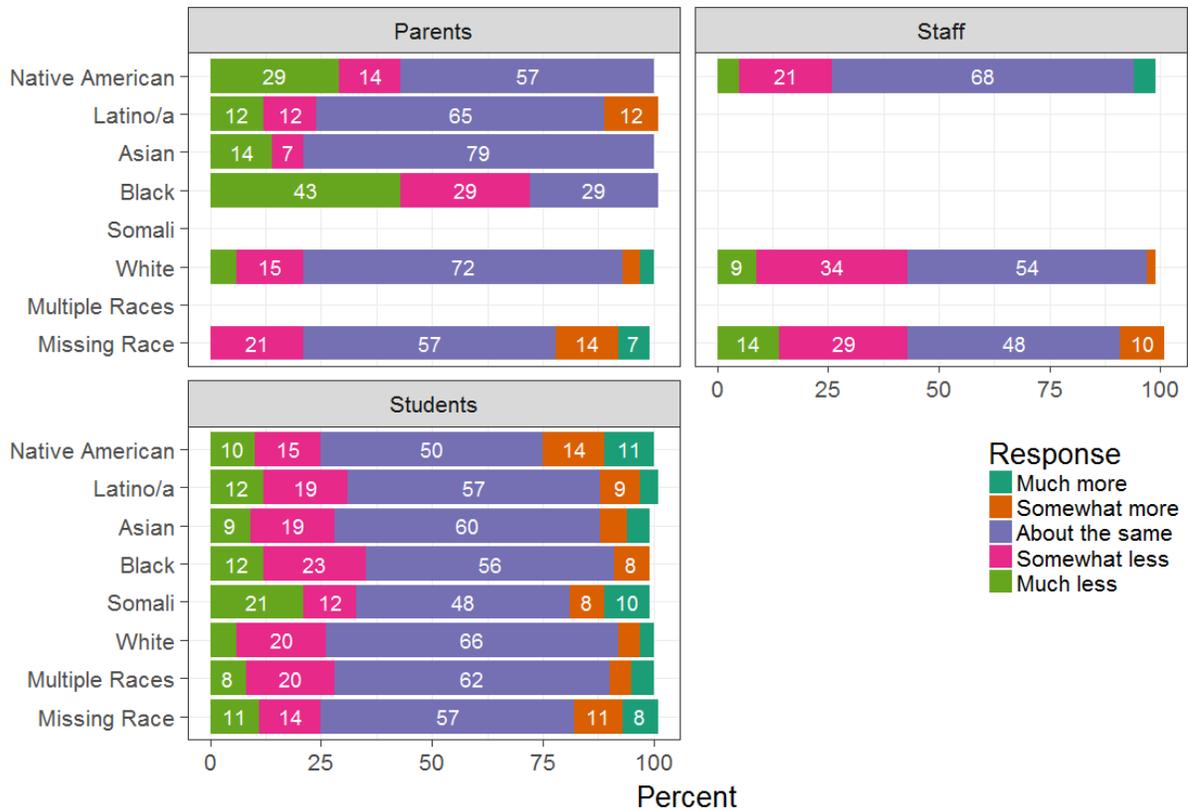


Main Findings:

- c) Responses were relatively consistent across Student race/ethnic groups with about 50% saying Yes.
- d) Staff and Parent responses tended to have higher rates of Yes overall, but also vary more between race/ethnic groups.

Figure 2.7b.4. Staff Understanding Discipline

Administrators, Parents, Staff, and Students were asked, "Are students from wealthy families disciplined more or less than students from poor families in your school?" There were too few Administrators in the sample to break their responses down by race/ethnic group.

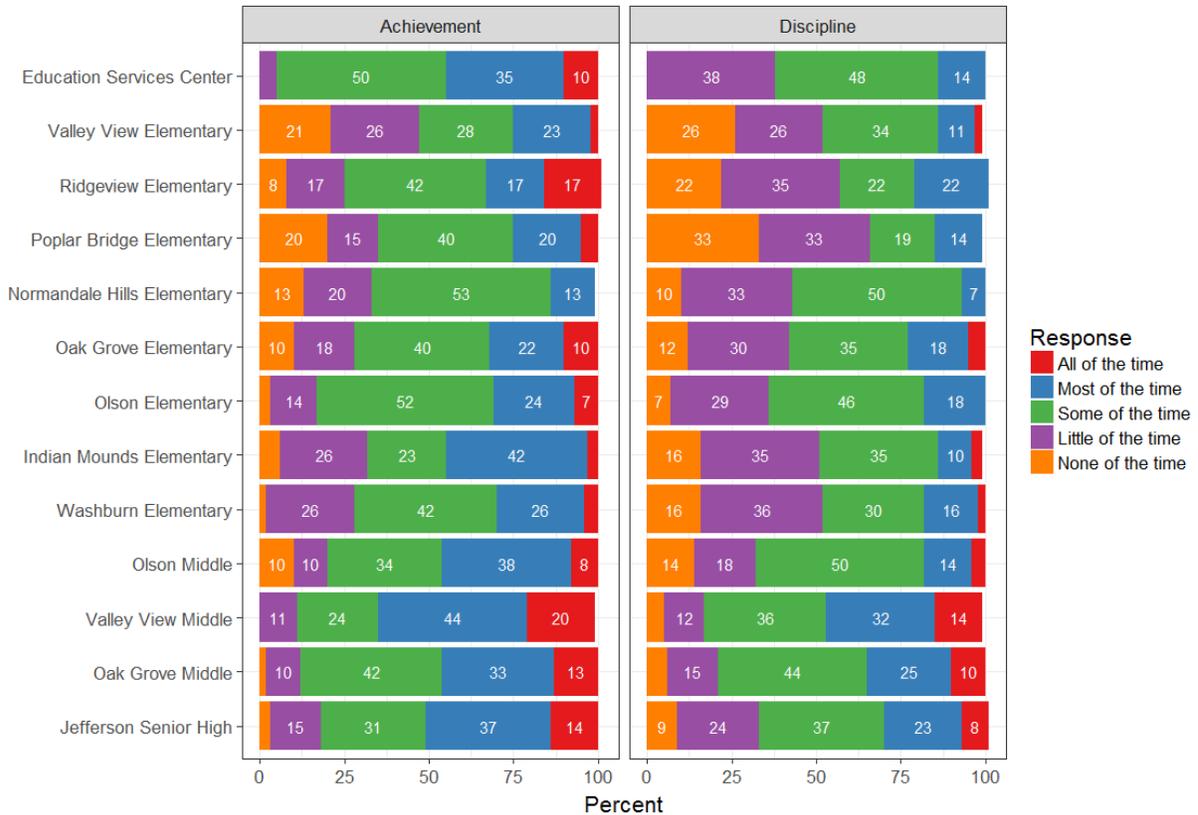


Main Findings:

- e) The plurality of Parents, Staff, and Students view the discipline rates as about the same. However, those who do think it is directional, more often indicated that Students from wealthy families were disciplined much or somewhat less. This is particularly true for Staff and Parents.
- f) Somali Students, Black Parents, and Native American Parents, had the highest proportion responding that Students from wealthy families are disciplined much less than Students from poor families.

Figure 2.7b.5. Staff Discussing Gaps

Staff were asked, "When discussing student achievement (discipline) with staff, how often, if at all, do you include racial equity data in your discussions?"



Main Findings

- I) Overall, there is wide variation within each school as to how often racial equity data is included in discussions of achievement and discipline; however, across schools Staff consistently report that racial equity data is included more often during discussions of achievement than discussions of discipline.
- J) *Achievement* - Valley View Middle and Jefferson Senior High have the highest percentage of Staff report racial equity data is included Most or All of the time (64% and 51% respectively) while Normandale Hills Elementary and Valley View Elementary have the lowest percentage of Staff report racial equity data is included Most or All of the time (13% and 25% respectively).
- K) *Discipline* - Valley View Middle and Oak Grove Middle have the highest percentage of Staff report racial equity data is included Most or All of the time (46% and 35% respectively) while Normandale Hills Elementary, Valley View Elementary, and Indian Mounds Elementary have the lowest percentage of Staff report racial equity data is included Most or All of the time (7%, 13%, and 13% respectively).

2.8. Expectations and Teacher Ratings (TR)

Overview

Interview and survey participants perceive different expectations for students based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and academic status. This difference in expectations, however, varies by school, with the non-traditional high school being named as a place with more equal expectations for diverse students. Expectations are connected to student labels and judgments of students. Furthermore, lack of faculty of color was noted by students as a possible reason for lower expectations of students of color. Research suggests that when high expectations are held, students will most likely reach those expectations.

Definitions:

- Teachers’ expectations for students impact how they treat their students.
- Teachers must maintain high expectations and adjust their instructional practices in order to support students to reach high levels of learning.
- Teacher expectations may be influenced by student appearance, socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, use of Standard English, and history of grade retention. The better teachers know their students, the more accurate their expectations are.
- Sometimes teachers assume students with different skills and life experiences from their own cannot or will not do rigorous work. Students, in reality, may not understand teacher vocabulary or unwritten rules of the school.

Figure 2.8.1. Qualitative Data

Discipline

School	Description of Focus Group	Student Quote:
Oak Grove Middle School	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“Black students who have gotten referrals or sent to [in school suspension] are quicker to get in trouble again. The “past” sticks with black students throughout; but other students get to start over.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	What do you like lease about the school? “The dress code, they don’t let you wear certain things its mostly for the girls, they have a freak one for the boys, but they never call anyone out. Like all the 6 th graders basically have their pants at their knee, but on one says anything.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“The system of education rewards people who don’t want to learn. If you make noisy and you don’t want to learn you just get sent to the quite room and you can do whatever you want.”
	Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	“There should be a fresh start every day for (all) students.”
	Multicultural Student Focus	“pertaining to the quite room situation, the people that I see most often sent to the quite room are of two races, they are Hispanic and

Group (Non-White)	African American and it's kind of disturbing how that is categorized and how people of the white race are not sent to the quite room. Even though they did something as bad"
Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	"I've seen once or twice, people are screaming and mostly like the colored people have to go to the quite room and the white people just like have a warning."
Multicultural Student Focus Group (Non-White)	Sometimes I see teachers treat differently the color people then the white." In what way? " Sometime they yell at the color people and the white people they just pretend they didn't see it."
Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	"I agree with him, it's so quick to judge people, I see it lot in colored people."
Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	"Like the first week of school, if you make one mistake, they goanna think, like you're a bad kid."
Multicultural (Mostly students of color and some White)	"I feel teachers either always send people to the quite room or never send people to the quite room."
White Student Focus Group	"Administrators and teachers crack down on the white kids more."
White Student Focus Group	Speaking about where to go for help in the school, "I usually don't go to my counselor; I just talk to my friends. I feel like it happens so often, that going to a counselor, is like, I don't know, It's almost like there is nothing they can do about it. They'll be like; it's just something that happens."
White Student Focus Group	"Even if you do go to the counselor, people say things at counselor, like Oh yeah-ill that! but they really don't" So then what happens, how do things get solved, "I feel like it never get solved."
Somali	Who do you normally see in the quiet room, "Multiple races, basically every race in the school."
Somali	"They will call you down, every time, a racial kid gets in trouble, it will always be the white kid that wins. It always be the white kid that gets the last laugh"
Somali	"When this one girl got her head scarf pulled off, these three white girls did it, because she was giving another girl a hug. They ran and she told the teacher, the teacher told the dean of students, but I don't think she got it back." (3 girls pulled a student headscarf and ran away with it.)
Somali	"They only check the cameras when some bad happens."
Somali	"Like they will escort the, like they don't trust the colored kids, they will escort you down, but if it's a white kid, they will." (Speaking about teachers trust in students)

School/Teacher Expectations

School	Description of	Student Quote:
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	Focus Group	
Jefferson High School	Black (African Diaspora)	“The teachers expect the worst from us [black students].”
	White	“I think this administration has worked very hard in making this a safe learning environment where different viewpoints are respected from all students and staff.”
Kennedy High School	First Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“We just started Latino club, because someone was feeling left out” What do yaw do in the club “right now we are just volunteering” Do you think the school was supportive? “Yeah they have been supportive and helping us expand!”
	Second Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	“The majority of the teachers here at this school ... are white. When we focus on topics in class, like history, you focus more on white history.”
Olson Middle School	Black (African Diaspora)	“Like for me being black, I don’t feel comfortable in this school, because teachers can assume things, and when I try to do my best, they just put me down all the time, So I just don’t try.”
	Chican@/Latin @	“Well when the police hit that black guy, in class my friend this black girl and a white girl got into an argument about it and the teacher took the white girl’s side.”

Figure 2.8.2. TR—Staff Perception of Student Background

Administrators and Staff were asked 8 items pertaining to their views on how committed and successful students from various backgrounds can be. Higher scores on the scale indicate more equitable expectations across all students. The figure below follows the interpretation of Figures with scale scores, but with average scale score for Staff as the reference. The average Staff score was 15.1 out of 27 (56% of max score), indicating Staff’s expectations, on average, are only somewhat equitable.



In this figure, 0 represents the average Expectations score of all Staff. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical equitability of expectations reported by all Staff.

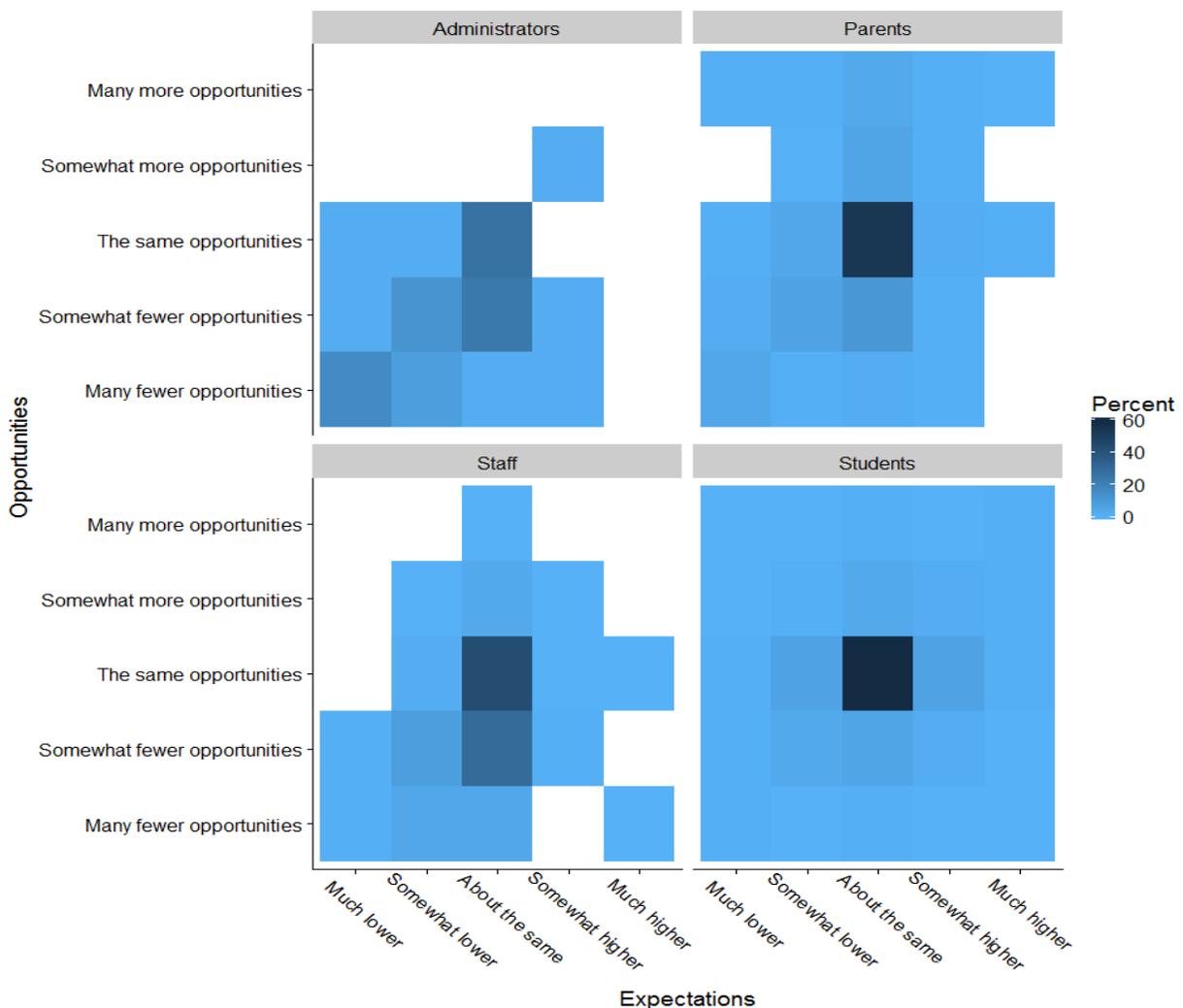
Main Findings

Main Findings

- The plurality of Students report that teachers have about the same expectations and about the same educational opportunities exist for students from poor families as those from wealthy families as indicated by the dark blue at the center of the Students' square; however, there is large variation in responses as demonstrated by the entire Students' square being filled with color.
- Conversely, Staff and Administrator responses are less varied and suggest that while expectations are about the same, students from poor families have fewer opportunities.

Figure 2.8.4. TR—Staff Equitable Expectations

The figure displays the percent of joint responses to the items "Are teachers' expectations for minority students higher or lower than their expectations for white students?" and "Do minority students have more or fewer educational opportunities than white students?" As the percent of responses increases, the shade of blue becomes darker whereas white areas indicate the percent of joint response is 0.

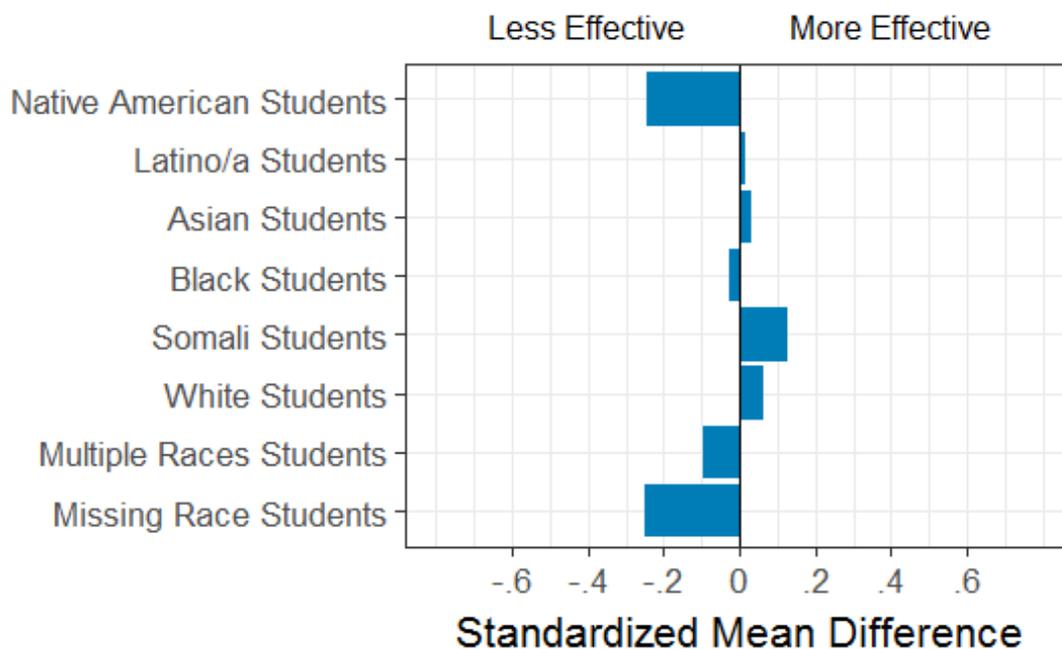


Main Findings

- The plurality of Students report that teachers have about the same expectations and about the same educational opportunities exist for minority students and white students as indicated by the dark blue at the center of the Students' square; however, there is large variation in responses as demonstrated by the entire Students' square being filled with color.
- Conversely, Staff and Administrator responses are less varied and suggest that while expectations are about the same, minority students have fewer opportunities.

Figure 2.8.5. TR—Student Ratings of Staff

Students were asked 7 items related to well teachers know and communicate lessons. Higher scores indicate more clear and effective lessons. The average Student score was 18.3 out of 28 (65% of max score), suggesting Students, on average, feel their teachers are somewhat to very effective.



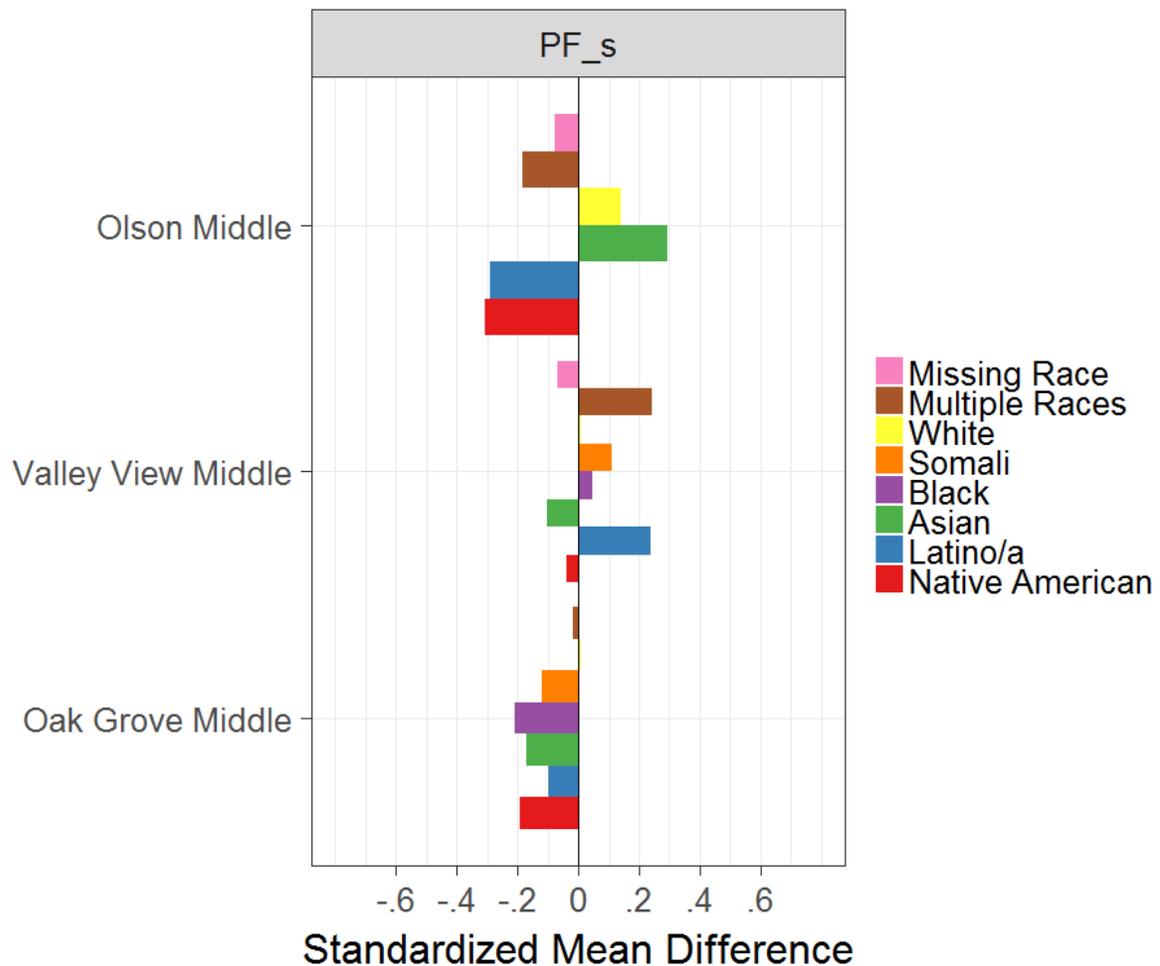
Main Findings

- Native American Students, on average, report lower ratings of teachers' ability to convey clear and effective lessons than students as a whole.

Preparation for the Future

Figure 2.8.6. TR—Student Perception of School Effectiveness

Students were asked 5 items regarding how well their school was preparing them for college, getting a good job, being a good citizen, interacting with people from different cultures, and working well with others. Higher scores indicate higher reported preparation. The average Student score was 12.1 out of 20 (60% of max score), suggesting Students, on average, feel somewhat prepared for the future.



In this figure, 0 represents the average preparation score of all Students. Thus, all of the groups are being compared to the typical preparedness for the future felt by all Students.

Main Findings

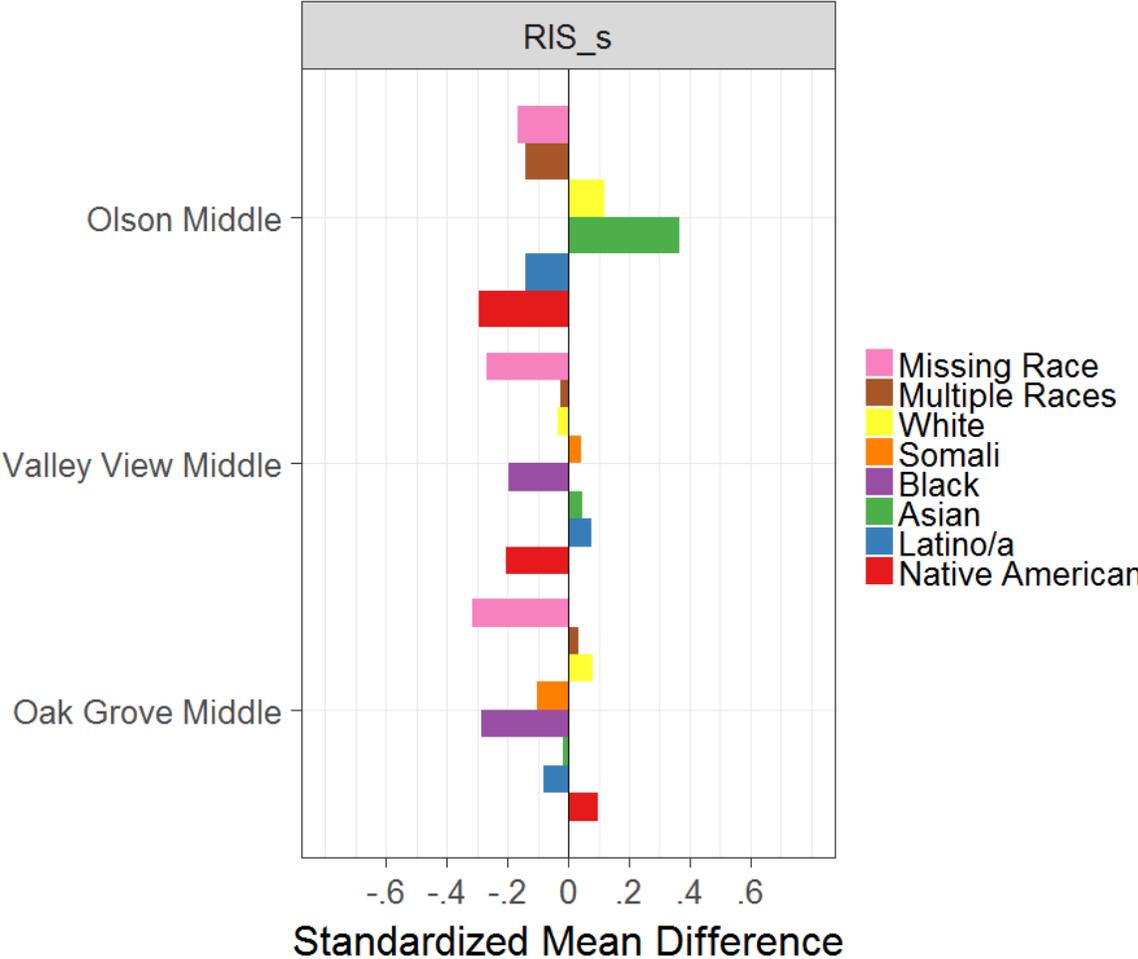
Olson Middle - While Asian and White Students at Olson Middle report some of the highest perceptions of preparation, Latino/a and Native American Students report some of the lowest perceptions of preparation.

Valley View Middle - Most students are close to the overall average with Latino/a Students and Students who identify with Multiple Races being noticeably higher.

Oak Grove Middle - Students from all race/ethnic groups at Oak Grove Middle are either at the average for all students or report lower perceptions of how well the school is preparing them for the future.

Figure 2.8.7. TR—Student Perception of Their Relationships in School

Students responded to 5 items asking if they had friends and adults in the school they felt they could talk to if they had a problem and who knew them on a personal level. Higher scores indicate more relationships to people in the school. The average student score was 5 out of 7 (71% of max score), suggesting that most Students have multiple people in the school they can confide in.



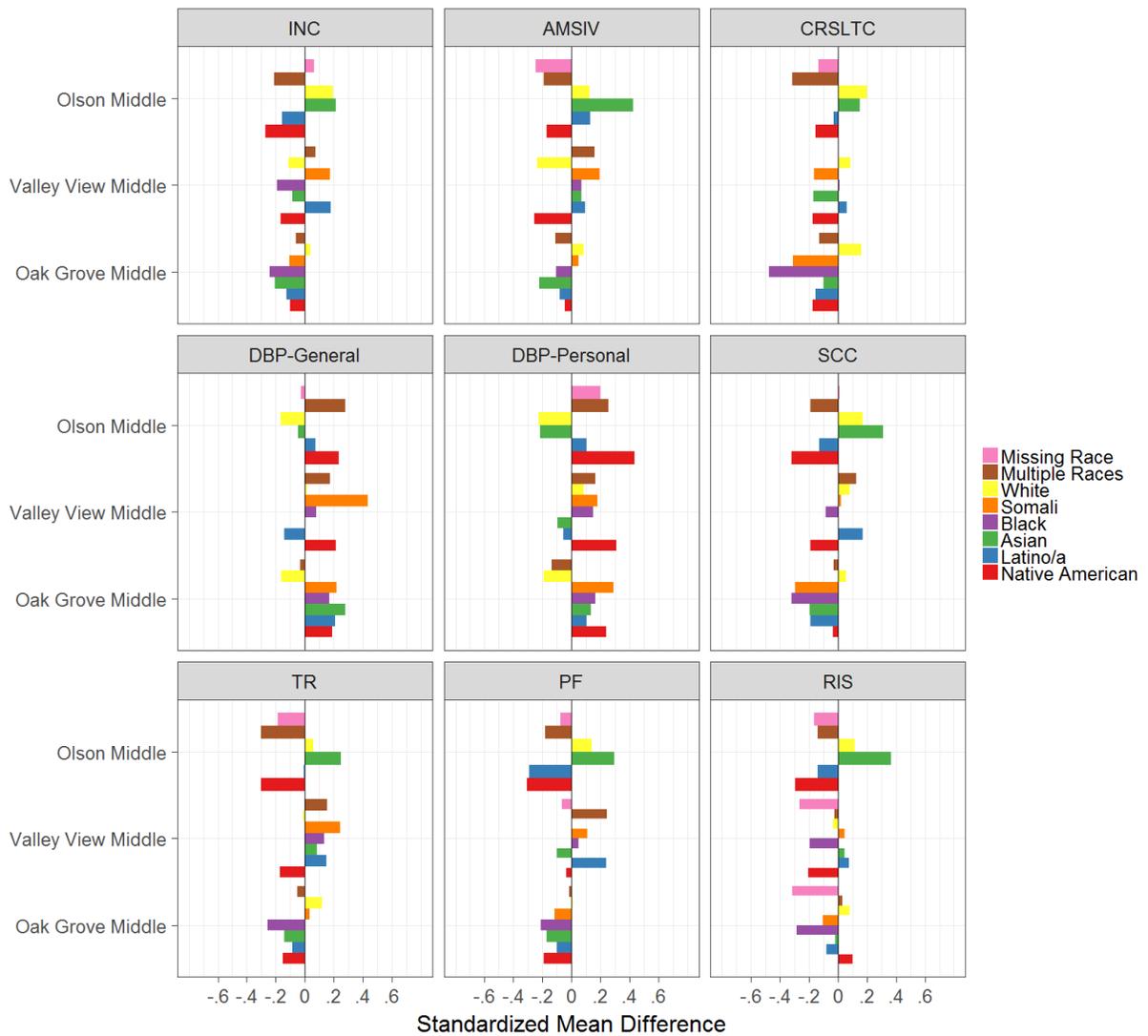
Main Findings

Olson Middle - While Asian Students report a high number of relationships with people in their school, Native American Students, and to some extent Latino/a Students, report far fewer.

Valley View Middle - Most students are close to the overall average, but Black and Native American Students report notably fewer relationships.

Oak Grove Middle - As with the other schools, Black Students report fewer relationships while most other students are close to the average.

Figure 2.8.8. TR—Differences on all Scales by School



For all scales, 0 represents the average score for all Students on that scale.

Main Findings

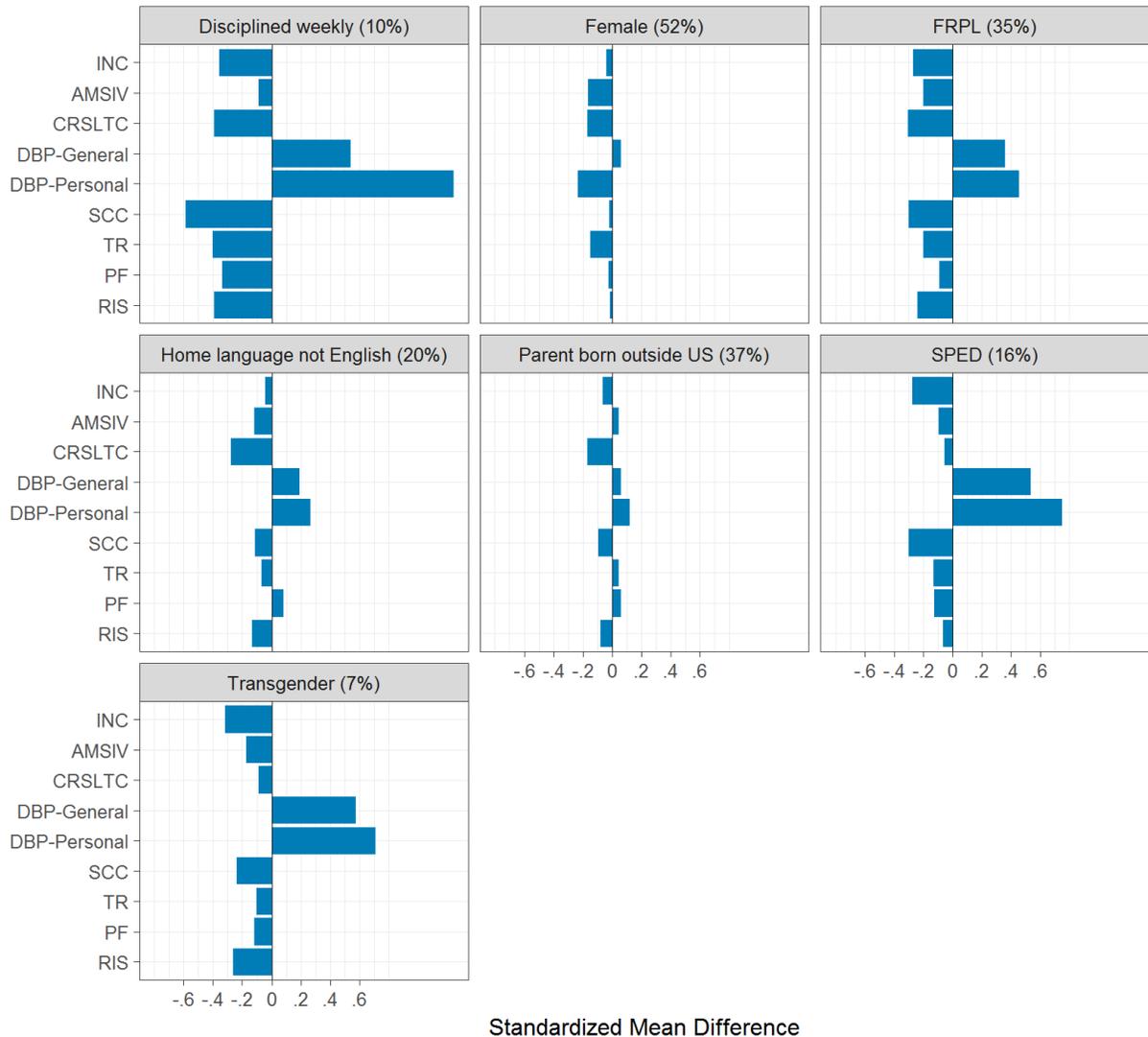
Olson Middle - Across all scales there is approximately .4 standard deviations difference (small-to-medium difference) between scale scores of Native American Students, Students who identify with Multiple Races, and to a lesser extent Latino/a Students, and scale scores for White or Asian students. White and Asian students feel more included, feel their voice and identity are more accepted, experience more respect, and report less discrimination than the overall student average. The opposite, however, largely holds for Native American, Latino/a, and Students who identify with Multiple Races.

Valley View Middle - There are few consistencies across race/ethnic group and the scales. This is in part because most of the differences between race/ethnic groups and the overall student average for any given scale is < .2 standard deviations, indicating that most of the differences are not meaningful. However, White Students report lower acceptance of their identity and voice than the overall student average, Somali Students report higher rates of observed discrimination, and Latino/a Students report higher levels of inclusiveness, especially when compared to the below average reports from students from other race/ethnic groups.

Oak Grove Middle - Non-White Students consistently report lower responses than the overall student average with the exception of the two discrimination scales where they report higher than average responses. White students typically respond similarly to the overall student average.

Figure 2.8.9. TR—All Scales by Student Characteristics

In this figure the reference is not the average scale score for all Students, but rather the average scale score for Students who do not share the characteristic listed in the title. For instance, across all scales under the Female heading, the reference is the average scale score for Males. Thus, 0 is the average scale score for Males while the bar represents that standardized mean difference between Males and Females. Similarly, the reference for Students who are Disciplined Weekly are students who are disciplined less frequently than once per week. The percentage (%) listed in the header is the proportion of all students who share the characteristic. For instance, 10% of all Students are disciplined at least once per week (Disciplined Weekly) whereas 37% of all Students have at least one parent born outside the United States.



Main Findings

- Across all scales, Females, Students who primarily speak a language other than English and home, and Students with at least one parent born outside the US do not differ meaningfully from their Male, English as their home language, and two native born parent counterparts.
- With the exception of feeling like their voice and identity are accepted, Students who are Disciplined Weekly, and to a lesser extent Students who receive FRPL, feel less included, respected, and prepared, but observe and experience more discrimination than those who are disciplined less frequently (or not receiving FRPL).
- Minoritized students reported that their teachers have low expectations of them, and almost never invite them to advanced classes.
- In addition to Students who are Disciplined Weekly, Transgender, FRPL, and SPED Students observe and experience more discrimination than their counterparts.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1: Conclusion

Indeed, there are some positive equity activities in Bloomington. Some minoritized students reported having good relationships with their teachers and other staff. Others reported that they felt comfortable in school. But overall, the findings suggest that problems exist in all eight focus areas that were explored in this equity audit—*School Culture and Climate, Discriminatory Behavior and Practices, Achievement Gaps, Discipline Gaps, Student Identity and Voice, Culturally Relevant Schooling, and Rating and Expectations*. When looking at all areas collectively, we see a source of the achievement and discipline disparities as related to the following: *an enduring historical oppression of marginalized groups, shifting demographics in the district, lack of cultural training and practice, and lack of culturally sensitive community outreach*.

It is positive that most of the Staff recognize—**and want to address!**—the equity-oriented challenges that children in the district are facing. There is tremendous interest among staff, and almost all of the leadership we have met. People want positive change at every level, and this includes people of all races, religions, ages, and statuses in the community and district. But not only is there a willingness to change, but the people that are already in Bloomington are capable of that change. Surely, more teachers and administrators of color are needed. But that is not an excuse for inaction, and it is true that the current employees of BPS are capable of this change. Below are a few of the major findings and recommendations.

Historical and Continued Oppression of Marginalized Groups

This is perhaps the most salient finding across all areas of this audit. Latino, Black, ELL, Immigrant/Refugee and lower SES groups are facing discrimination in Bloomington. This discrimination is a form of continuous oppression. To varying degrees, the students are being denied a fundamental right to an education. To make matters worse, there is a very strong undercurrent of denial amongst educators at every level. Data suggests that many staff deny that oppression was happening, and if they did admit it, they did so in ways that were most comfortable for them (i.e., blaming students or making it about SES and not race, among other examples). Another form of denial was the pervasiveness of deficit descriptions of students—this is where educators painted very problematic and usually problem-filled narratives of their students, which were all detrimental to students and their education. This is a problem for two reasons: one, educators will never admit their own contribution to the problem, and thus will not be able to effectively address issues. And two, educators can never become culturally responsive because they are not able to notice the *positive* cultural referents that students actually have, and this is necessary to incorporate into the students' learning. One example is the cultural wealth that Native and African Americans have, that is currently not included in the curriculum. Another example is the family life of Latino and Somali students. Latinos and Somalis are committed to family, and find great pride in their family's culture and network. This, as well as the Black and Native/Indigenous knowledge, could be a tremendous boost to any curriculum or schooling experience, but will never become that if it is constantly described as a negative among educators.

Shifting Demographics

The heightened enrollment of Latino, Southeast Asian, and Somali families seemed to be one of the primary difficulties. This has not been adequately addressed by the district; many have complained about segregation with higher-SES and White students attending some schools, and lower-SES and minoritized students attending other schools. Rather than seeing the increased diversity as a positive benefit that will bring value and new discourses and traditions to a historically ‘White’ Bloomington, diversity is viewed, primarily, as a threat. Yet, culturally responsive training at every level—from administrators to clerical, support, and even transportation staff—is surely needed to address the educational needs of shifting populations.

Lack of Cultural Training and Practice

Everyone also agreed that more training is needed for effectively educating culturally diverse youth in Bloomington. This was echoed at every level—teachers need more training on how to be anti-racist and how to implement culturally responsive curriculum, classroom management, and teaching. Without this, the gaps will certainly persist. But central district and buildings administrators, as well as other staff need training as well. Many well-meaning teachers simply have not been given the tools to address these issues, even though they desperately want to do so.

Culturally Responsive Community Partnerships

It has been recognized by all stakeholders that culturally responsive communication and outreach is needed to build and repair relationships with parents and communities. Surprisingly, even students recognized this. They shared that their parents felt estranged from the school and their teachers. Data suggests that the district and teachers have a negative image in some *communities*. This is problematic and can impact the community’s willingness to work with the district. It would be counterproductive to blame this completely on the community. These new culturally responsive community-based approaches need to be based on trust and need to be deep (not superficial) and constant. In addition to strengthening partnerships with families, it was clear from the adults in the district that there are few strategic and sustained attempts at utilizing community knowledge in teaching and learning (e.g., children’s cultural practices and interests).

Positive Willingness to Change

Despite the resistance and denial that was recorded among some educators, the data also revealed a general willingness to address racism and marginalization in the district. This is to be commended! We suggest the district build upon and systematize these attitudes and practices. There are two ways that this can happen. One, conduct a fact-finding of best practices already in the district, and institutionalize the practices. Two, the district can build mentoring groups that are led by people in the district who already are exemplars of social justice and culturally responsive leadership and practice. This will allow familiar colleagues to be used as a way to initiate and maintain positive change in the district.

Additionally, while students identified some adults whom they perceive as not very supportive of their learning and overall school success, many minoritized students also spoke positively about their relationships with some teachers. School leaders should consider how to integrate students’ voices to inform their decision-making (and policy-making) about matters that affect students’ learning. Students are eager to be heard and oftentimes have good solutions for how to best meet their learning needs.

3.1: Recommendations

The Equity Audit conducted for Bloomington Schools revealed a deeply institutionalized inequity between the educational experiences and well-being of students of color and white students in the district. In addition to perceiving differences in access to rigorous educational opportunities, the audit also documented that students of color systematically felt unsafe and targeted for disciplinary actions in their schools and classrooms. These experiences portrayed a school culture and climate that was in stark contrast to that shared by white students in the district. Bloomington Public Schools will be better equipped to identify discrepancies between what equity-centered school improvement policies and plans should do, and what is being practiced in reality. The good news is this: we firmly believe that the problems in the district can be overcome by the staff, teachers, and administrators currently in the District. But more

Based on the data from the equity audit, we recommend the following for consideration. These recommendations are not meant to be specific or exhaustive; rather, we hope they spark positive conversation across the district that leads to specific action items and implementation steps for remedying the districts most pressing problems related to academic and discipline gaps.

One of the key findings drawn from the focus groups is that describing different forms of oppression as only “nasty” or “awful” behavior helps maintain the status quo. It also prevents the predominantly white teaching and administrative staff from recognizing and addressing deep structural and systemic issues that create the school culture and climate throughout Bloomington Public Schools. The uneasiness/tension in candidly discussing inequities was showcased by white students— which they were able to acknowledge the unfair treatment of some groups of students at their school, but were unwilling (or unable) to appropriately “name” the form of oppression inflicted upon those groups of students. The impact of only calling these acts of oppression “nasty” or “awful”, significantly downplays the structural/systemic analysis made by students of color, American Indian students, and other marginalized students at Bloomington Public Schools.

Therefore, to address the inequities identified throughout Bloomington Public Schools, the district must incorporate an institutionalized approach that involves continuous critical reflection of equity within the school district. This will help implement effective practices of measures of educational success, as well as identify areas of needed growth related to cultural responsiveness, equity, and inclusion. This should be examined within school policies, SIPs, and practices of leadership, instruction, and learning throughout the district.

Bloomington Public Schools would benefit from adopting an approach that would institutionalize the practice of identifying and addressing issues of inequity. One model, the “Equity-Centered Capacity Building” (ECCB) approach, seeks to address systemic and structural schooling inequities. Petty (2015) describes ECCB as an approach that “provides a lens, set of skills, and specific strategies that support school systems and communities as they move along the continuum of transformative and sustainable improvement” (p. 64). Conversations among all stakeholders in the system are designed to be equity-centered, requiring continuous critical examinations and reflections about policies, practices, and attitudes.

Adopting the ECCB model can help Bloomington Public Schools establish a school culture and climate that inherently creates an environment for openly discussing and identifying areas of inequity, as well as implementing strategies that are truly effective and advocate for the well-being of all students in the district. The following recommendations can be used to guide future policies and practices at Bloomington Public Schools.

Creating Responsive and Reflective Policies and Practices

- Explore and help develop critical action plans that correspond to sustaining a more equitable, socially just, and inclusive school improvement agenda;
- Evaluate the development and implementation process of the aforementioned critical action plans. The values that guide these evaluations will align with the equity-centered system-wide approach;
- Establish a common language on how the intersectionality of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other socially constructed identifications operate and interact to shape individual and group dynamics within schooling environments within Bloomington Public Schools.
- Actively participate in on-going critical self-reflections and anti-racism work;
- Create action plans to develop continual critical analysis skills, particularly with issues of equity, racial/ethnicity responsiveness, and inclusion within individual and schooling practices;
- Collaborate with stakeholders within and beyond the school grounds (i.e. students, families, teachers, administrators, community organizations & businesses, etc.) to implement change to achieve equity.
- Seek external assistance (from experts in equity practices) when district or school resources are not able to meet the needs of students, staff and administrators.

For Achievement Gaps:

- Culturally responsive language, examples and artifacts should be included in the curriculum;
- Sustained professional development focused on anti-racist, anti-oppressive pedagogy and practice;
- Enact culturally responsive classroom teaching and practice;
- Enact culturally responsive discipline and classroom management;
- Anti-bias training at school level is needed;
- Clear vision, policies, and activities for School Equity Teams; and more resources to free their time to engage the work;
- Culturally-based mentoring programs, for example:
<https://newlensurbanmentoring.org/>
- More positive community and parent outreach (i.e., inviting minoritized families into schools to help with building an environment of academic excellence)

For Discipline Gaps:

- Disaggregate the discipline data by teacher and infraction. Find trends with the data and address those trends
- Identify clear discipline policies and procedures
- Identify alternative discipline programs that support cultural responsiveness in discipline

- Eliminate any Zero Tolerance Policies that prevent students from maximizing their time in the classroom
- Revisiting other disciplinary policies that target minoritized students
- Individual teachers that have discriminatory discipline practices must be identified and helped (mentored) out of such practices.
- Repurpose support staff and School Equity Teams to address some of the issues that have been illuminated throughout the data
- PLCs and collective learning around the issue of disciplinary bias
- More anti-bias PDs at every level—administration, teaching, support, students, and parents

For School-Community Disconnect:

- Identify strategies for understanding how to best meet parents’ needs for their child(ren)
- Identify strategies for increasing parent engagement in the schooling process
- Establish a larger, positive presence in the community
- Determine how to integrate community resources into the curriculum through partnerships, field trips, homework assignments, after-school programming, etc.
- Ask parents, including non-engaged minoritized parents, to participate directly in policy-making at the school or district level. Policies without their voice should be sent back per community approval.

For Improving Cultural Responsiveness and Teacher Expectations:

- Establish subject-level and grade-level committees, that involve community-based or parental input, and include cultural knowledge throughout the curriculum;
- Anti-bias training that embrace both ‘equity’ and ‘excellence’; teachers hold high expectations of all learners as ‘warm demanders’;
- Establish a teacher mentoring and modeling program that addresses concerns of equity;
- Identify teachers who exhibit trends of underperformance for minoritized students, and provide mentoring and modeling;
- Have quarterly (or monthly) review of individual teacher’s academic and discipline equity data;
- Include cultural aesthetic throughout the school, that is indigenous for minoritized students (such as hip hop);
- Provide ongoing training and PD for school leaders to foster school-wide culturally responsive buildings.

Creating a More Inclusive School Culture

- Explore ways to critically assess school data in terms of equity, and the racial demographics of students;
- Engage in critical dialogue to identify, apply, and critique the terminology and application of daily school operations (i.e. school policies, classroom practices, school meetings, and interactions with students, parental guardians, and faculty);

- Ensure that the voices and experiences of all students, especially those that have shared narratives of marginalization in this audit, are included in the policies that will identify and address areas of inequity;
- Explore the impact of historical inequities and privileges, as well as colorblind ideology within the many dynamics of the school structure (i.e. curricula, school policies, and student discipline within the classroom);
- Make schools more community-accessible and community-based. This means findings creative ways to bring diverse parents (not the same actors) into conversations about how schooling happens and school/district policies are formed.
- School and district leadership must be more explicit about resisting oppression of minoritized students—both in words and action.

Additional Resources for Improving School Climate (Anti-Bullying)

- National Education Association; Teaching Students to Prevent Bullying
National Education Association recommended series of short lessons, activities, and games will help students understand the serious problem of bullying.
- [Teaching Students to Prevent Bullying; Curriculum Resources Address Identifying, Confronting and Stopping Bullying \(http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/teaching-students-to-prevent-bullying.html\)](http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/teaching-students-to-prevent-bullying.html)
- Violence Prevention Initiative:
“Hosted by the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, this webinar focuses on a topic imperative for schools to address—bullying. The webinar aims to provide information and actionable tips/resources on addressing bullying in a positive way. The target audience is teachers, school counselors, and administrators in elementary and middle school grades.”
[Teacher Workshop Preventing Bullying & Empowering Students: \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfhu9Km9L5c\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfhu9Km9L5c)
- Bully Proof Your School Webinar Replay (Australian / New Zealand)
“This webinar examines the difficult subject of bullying. The presenter draws on international research to deal with the following questions: What is bullying? How common is it? Why do bullies bully? Who are the victims? What are the effects of bullying? Does your school have a problem?”
[Bully Proof Your School Webinar: \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwL-uYXNkTk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwL-uYXNkTk)

K-6 Anti-Bullying Resources

- Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center. (2006). *Elementary School, Educational Lesson Plan*. From Pacer.org: <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/classroom/elementary/elementary-lesson-plan.asp>
- Pacer Center. (2017). *Are You a Target – Videos*. From Pacer's Center Kids Against Bullying: <https://pacerkidsagainstabullying.org/are-you-a-target/are-you-a-target-videos/>

Middle School and High School Anti-Bullying Resources

- Stiller, B., Nese, R., Tomlanovich, A., Horner, R., & Ross, S. (2013). *Bullying and Harassment Prevention in Positive Behavior Support: Expect Respect*. From pbis.org/: http://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/pbisresources/2013_02_18_FINAL_COVR_MANUAL_123x.pdf

Ethnic and religious group Anti-Bullying Resources

- Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services. (n.d.). *Tool 4: Refugee and Immigrant Youth and Bullying; Frequently Asked Questions*. From Refugee Children in US School; A toolkit for Teachers and School Personnel: (ING), I. C. (2014). ing.org. From Bullying Prevention Guide, for public and private schools (including Muslim fulltime and weekend schools): http://ing.org/downloads/ING_Bullying_Prevention_Guide.pdf
- Addressing Religious Liberties in School: <https://maec.org/resource/webinar-religious-liberties/>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Defining Core Equity Areas and Terms

Equity Areas:	Equity Area Descriptions:
Accepting or Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice (AMSIV)	Addresses how comfortable students feel voicing opinions and expressing behaviors in school? Here are some of the core interests in this equity area: a.) All student identity and voice is recognized equally in school b.) Minority student identity is welcomed in school c.) Student identity and voice is celebrated in school d.) Student identity or voice is discouraged or punished in school e.) Student voice impacts policymaking in school/ district
Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum (CRSLTC)	Address perceptions of how well diverse backgrounds and experiences are incorporated in classroom content and responded to in classroom interactions. Here are some of the questions addressed in this equity area: a.) School environments accept/celebrate students' cultural behaviors/language; b.) Student can culturally relate to teachers and curriculum; c.) Student is able to express cultural selves in school;
Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices (DBP)	Addresses perceptions about discrimination that some students experience. (i.e., certain student characteristics or groups are treated better than others). Here are some of the interests in this particular equity area: a.) Racism is reproduced in the school or district; b.) School is actively trying to reduce racism c.) Minority students have been consistently marginalized in the same ways for more than 3 consecutive years
School Culture and Climate (SCC)	Addresses how respectful adults (and students) in the school building are when speaking to students as well as the overall positivity of student experiences. The National School Climate Center defines school climate as the quality and character of school life as it relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, as well as organizational processes and structures. School climate sets the tone for all teaching and learning in the school environment. Positive school climate supports learning and positive youth development and

	<p>is predictive of students’ ability to learn and develop in healthy ways.</p> <p>The National Center for Urban School Transformation states that high-performing urban schools have climates that nurture the commitment and engagement of teachers, parents, and students. In these learning environments, students: a) are eager to attend school; b) perceive that adults in the school sincerely care about them and their success; c) feel safe both physically and emotionally; d) believe they are likely to succeed academically; and, e) feel a personal connection to the adults at their school.</p> <p>Positive school cultures and climates are considered to be those where teachers: a) believe they are part of a team that is making a powerful difference in the lives of students; b) believe their work has a purpose; c) believe administrators care sincerely about them and their success; d) view administrators as sources of support and leadership who are skillful and caring enough to help them achieve excellent learning results.</p> <p>The climate for parents in high-performing schools is one in which parents: a) believe educators care about their child; b) feel welcome at school; c) feel that educators perceive them as strong, positive partners in the education of their child; and, d) feel that their concerns and insights are appreciated.</p>
<p>School Community Relationship (SCR)</p>	<p>Addresses how comfortable parents feel attending school events, approaching school staff, and effectiveness of communication between parents and schools. Some of the interests taken up in this equity area are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.) There exist overlapping space between school and community b.) Parent voice is welcomed in the school c.) Parent voice shapes policy in the school d.) Educators have a presence in the communities they serve e.) Community behaviors are allowed/celebrated in school
<p>Thoughts on Achievement Gap (TAG)</p>	<p>Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in achievement (i.e., achievement gaps) exist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) are eager to attend school; b) perceive adults in the school care sincerely about them and their success; c) feel safe physically and emotionally; d) believe they are likely to succeed academically; and, e) feel a personal connection to the adults at school. f) believe they are part of a team that is making a powerful difference in the lives of students; g) believe their work has a purpose; h) believe administrators care sincerely about them and their success; i) see administrators as sources of support and leadership who are skillful

	enough and caring enough to help them achieve excellent learning results
Thoughts on Discipline Gap (TDG)	Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in discipline (i.e., discipline or suspension gaps) exist. a) minoritized parents and students believe educators care about their child; b) minoritized parents and students feel welcome at school; c) minoritized parents feel that educators perceive them as strong, positive partners in the education of their child; and, d) parents and students feel that their concerns and insights are appreciated
Expectations and Teacher Ratings (TR)	Addresses perceptions on how committed and successful students from various backgrounds can be, and the expectations that are held of various student groups. Here are some of the core components of interest in this equity area area: a.) Teachers have high or low expectations of minoritized students b.) Teachers encourage students to attend college c.) Minority students are allowed to disengage from working hard d.) Minority students are allowed to demonstrate poor behavior e.) Teachers assign challenging homework and tests f.) Minority students are encouraged to take advanced classes g.) Minority students are placed in remedial classes h.) Minority student are referred to/placed in special education courses
Definition of Core Terms	
Equity Audit/Assessment	A research-based way of identifying the causes of inequities in education, and based on the data, identifying appropriate reforms that will remedy causes of inequities.
Educational Equity	Providing educational services and fostering educational contexts in a way that gives all children the same level of opportunity to become academically successful. Most schools in the U.S are designed in a way that gives White, middle-class students greater access and opportunity.
Educational Inequity	Educational services and contexts that are marginalizing for some students and give greater access to other students to be academically successful
Minoritized	Students who have been historically marginalized, and thus do not have the same opportunity at being academically successful. This has happened in the U.S. for a number of reasons, which include but are not limited to reasons of: race, income, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, behavior, national origin, and legal status.
Oppression (in school)	Systemic (or personal) ways of blocking the well-being or learning opportunities of children; unjust or distressing educational environments for children; lack of addressing unjust educational opportunities or contexts. Examples in the U.S. are disproportionate school failure, drop out rate, or disciplinary measures. Cultural or racial shaming, punishing cultural behaviors, not hiring minority teachers, and favoring White students are all established type of oppression.

Culturally Responsiveness	When instruction and curriculum, classroom and school climate, interactions, treatment, persons in schools represent the knowledge and culture of all students in buildings. Currently, U.S. schools only reflect White histories/knowledges/cultures, yet claim that it is simply “American.” This approach hides or invisibilizes White privilege, and thereby default allows White students to be more successful. But when cultural referents, language, behaviors, and knowledge from minoritized students are used—and they are honored and protected—their chances of academic success drastically increase.
Achievement Gap	When demographic groups of students systematically, academically outperform another group of students. In the U.S. context, educators are most comfortable blaming this problem on students or communities. But many significant research studies indicate that it is neither the students nor community’s fault, or because of a unintelligence or lack of student motivation, but rather, it is that either the learning environments are not conducive for minoritized students, or the academic content is not culturally responsive.
Discipline Gap	This is the systematic practice of disciplining (referrals, suspensions, expulsions, court citations, shaming, ridiculing, etc.) some students more harshly than other students because of their demographic background, such as race or gender. In the U.S., teachers and administrators love to believe that they are treating all students fairly, and above all, the same. But the research does not bear this out. For example, nationally, Black males are suspended about 4 times more than White males, even when they commit the exact same offense. In this State, the rate is even higher. Multiple studies have shown that differences in student behaviors is not an adequate explanation for the discipline gap; in other words, Black males do not ‘simply have worse behavior than White males.’ Rather it is that teachers have biases that they have not been able to either adequately recognize, or overcome.

Appendix 2: School Level Qualitative Data (additional content)

This qualitative and quantitative data in Bloomington middle schools was fuller and more complete than high school data collected. But from the data collected, it seems as though equity issues at the middle school level were starker than at the high schools in Bloomington. We strongly recommend more interview and qualitative data collection among teachers, administrators, and most certainly parents, to get a more complete picture of how to make the district better for all students. In this section, we share additional data at the school level, and we connect to the one of the 8 equity areas.

Black (African Diaspora) and Chican@/Latin@ students in middle schools reported confusion about the process for enrolling in higher-level courses, with many students reporting that their parents were unaware of honor courses and the process for entering these classes. Students of color reported that their parents had not been contacted by school officials about opportunities to enter honor courses or to test into programs like Dimensions Academy (D.A.). According to the students, this lack of communication with parents has prevented some of the students from enrolling in these higher-level classes at their school. The perception of race and achievement amongst the white students interviewed was mixed. For example, one white female student at Oak Grove acknowledged that there was a problem with race and achievement, noting that she saw her teachers treat African American students differently and that honor classes and the DA program were overwhelmingly white, which she said she “*can’t figure out.*” White students at other schools in the district also acknowledged that high-level courses were mostly white, but felt this was due more as a result of differences in effort that students made, rather than systemic issues relating to race. One student in Kennedy High School’s multicultural focus group spoke about why he believe students drop higher level courses, voicing his opinion that “*Some people are just lazy. Some people just try it and then they see lot of work, they like ‘umm I don’t know if I’m committed to this.’*”

Diverse Teaching Staff

One of the major themes that arose from the focus groups was the lack of a diverse teaching staff. This topic was raised by each focus group. Some of the students noted that the demographics of the district’s teaching staff did not match the students’ demographics, and felt this had an effect on school climate and academic achievement. Students of color saw the lack of diversity as a major problem and barrier to student success, and expressed feelings of not being able to “*really know their teachers*” and that teachers failed to connect with them on a personal level. Students of color also felt that teachers were too quick to give up on students of color, and failed to adequately motivate them to succeed. This was illustrated when a student shared that, “*Support wise, like when you have a student and you want to see that person succeed and then you have the other student you don’t really like, because you know push him toward learning. You just assume that person is going to fail, so why waste my time on that person. To help him be something or go somewhere...This is based on race.*” They also felt that teachers failed to recognize and address racial hostilities in the school, particularly the students’ sense of belonging in honor courses. The lack of proactive equity policies surrounding honor courses has led to a perception problem for students of color. White students view honor courses and teachers as a positive force, while students of color find higher level courses hostile, mentally taxing and are

faced with the pressure of having to prove they belong there, as one student stated, *“I feel like in an AP class you have to prove yourself.”*

School Culture and Climate

Students from different backgrounds (race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion) shared notably varied perceptions about their school culture, character, and classroom learning environments. For instance, students at Kennedy made comparisons between their school environment and that of Jefferson, and felt there were positive and negative aspects to both schools. When questioned about their own impressions of the schools, a student in Kennedy’s white focus group stated, *“I think a lot of that comes from just the recognition in the media, I am always happy when Kennedy is recognized in the media, but you just see Jefferson a lot more”*. Another student noted that it was just a typical cross-city rivalry found in most cities, but believed students at Kennedy did not take pride in going to their school because differences in the reputation and sports programs of the schools created a sense of inferiority.

When discussing classroom learning environments, students frequently brought up the topic of higher level courses, such as: gifted programs, Honors Level and Advance Placement (AP) courses. Students of color found these classes to be overwhelmingly white, hostile and mentally taxing. Almost all students who participated in focus groups acknowledged that Bloomington’s higher level courses are comprised of mostly white students. Furthermore, students believe, *“It gets a little more racially diverse as you go down to regular classes”*. Although, most students acknowledged the lack of diversity in higher level courses, their opinions differed on why students of color were not participating in honor classes in proportional numbers. White students believed that effort was the primary determinant of enrollment in higher level courses, with one student stating, *“I feel like the honor classes isn’t about race, it is more on effort.”* In contrast, students of color identified race, environment, and teacher encouragement as the primary reasons for the racial discrepancies in enrollment.

Students shared mixed reviews of teachers, reporting that some teachers have “favorites” and teachers tend to over-police the behavior of students of color, and stated that, *“They look at people of color with a disciplinary lens.”* During the interviews with multicultural students, there was an obvious theme of a lack of understanding from teachers, and a desire to see more teachers of color employed in the school district. Student of color felt that the lack of diversity hindered their ability to connect with teachers and other adults in the school, stating, *“Like for me being black, I don’t feel comfortable in this school, because teachers can assume things.”* During an interview at Olson Middle School, a student expressed apprehension with reaching out to teachers and administrators because he felt that these adults did not share a similar cultural background to him in terms of socioeconomics and race.

The majority of students who participated in the focus group interviews expressed concerns for racial splinting, although students said they enjoy friendships with students from all races; each focus group identified lunchroom cliques and a lack of racial understanding as a major driver of student conflict. In one focus group a student shared: *“I mean they sit with each other at lunch and stuff, black people sit by black people, white people-like girls, sit by each other.”* Students identified the unstructured nature of lunch as a major source of student conflict and how lunchroom seating is divided into racial groups. Students at Valley View Middle and Oak Grove Middle noted that they liked when administrators interacted with students at lunchroom tables. They also appreciated administrators who appeared to be able to bridge

students racial, economic, and hierarchical groups. They pointed out that lunch time presented an excellent opportunity for administrators to demonstrate their commitment to bridging gaps in the school.

Throughout the focus groups, students recounted several incidents of discrimination based on gender, racial and sexual orientation, both at their school and at other Bloomington Schools. For example, students in the Black (African Diaspora) focus groups at Olson Middle School commented on what they termed the “Build the wall incident” that occurred at Jefferson High School, where *“A group of white students were putting their hands up, after Trump won the election, they were like all the Mexican and Black kids can’t come to the classroom because we are building a wall.”* When the “Build the wall” incident was raised within the Chican@/Latin@ focus group in Olson, a female student who acknowledged the incident said someone she knew was involved and unfairly suspended because he was Latino. During a focus group at Jefferson High, students also reported hearing about a build a wall incident, stating, *“What I heard from a teacher, the freshman...I don’t know if this is true or not, had apparently ‘built a wall’ with bodies and were not letting people go to class. So they were standing side-by-side and locked arms in the hallways and they were only letting certain people go through.”* The “build the wall” incident reported is an example of a troubled school culture that permits racism, homophobia and sexist behavior to go unchecked. In another instance, students recounted frequently hearing derogatory and xenophobic remarks from their classmates: as one student shared, *“But then there is always the kid, who be like go back to Africa; I don’t like black people; go back to Somalia, take off this (referring to a hijab).”* Throughout all of the focus groups conducted, students reported witnessing and at times participating in behaviors that seem would be deemed problematic. Students have also indicated that these behaviors were reported to teachers or administrators, but ultimately authority figures responsible for addressing these incidents minimized their feelings of being discriminated against. This was particularly evident when one student recounted, *“Last year, a lot of people were saying racist things and stuff. I told a teacher and they were like ‘Ehh they are not being racist’.”* This trend was reported across schools and focus groups. At one point in the Multicultural focus group at Valley View Middle one students said this lack of support was one reason why minority students feel they have to option but to fight to solve problems, concluding *“That’s why people resort to laying hands [refers to fighting].”*

Thoughts on Discipline Gap

Students reported witnessing school officials being hyper vigilant with male students, and quick to escalate minor rule infractions to larger, more serious punishment, particularly for Black males. As one student recounted an incident at school, *“this white student had his hat on and the teacher was like, ‘Take your hat off.’ But then there was this [student of color] in class who had his hat on. Not only did they take the hat from him, but he got pulse for it the next day, and he couldn’t come to school.”* For white students, this inequity appears to cross racial and economic lines, but for minority students, disciplinary inequities are essentially directed towards minority students, noting that they have *“seen more black, minority kids in the quiet room than white kids.”* Moreover, this discrepancy appears to play a role in diminishing students’ confidence, as well as harming their relationships with teachers and administrators. This perception is contributing to the comfortability minority students have forming healthy relationships with teachers and administration, and finding safe spaces for self-expression and seeking assistance.

This was particularly evident when one student stated, *“Like for me being black, I don’t feel comfortable in this school, because teachers can assume things, and when I try to do my best, they just put me down all the time, So I just don’t try.”*

Across focus groups, students identified that there were discrepancies in the disciplinary practices used in Bloomington Public Schools. Students who participated in the Black (African Diaspora and Chican@/Latin@ focus groups identified Black and Latino students as being targeted for more frequent and harsher punishments by school administrators. One student in the Somali focus group at Jefferson High stated, *“Students of color get disciplined the most, in terms of suspension and referrals.”* In contrast, white students’ responses ranged from agreement with the views of their minority peers, to strong disagreement, or even the view that white students get disciplined more. The divergent opinions of white students was evident in the focus group interviews, as one student stated *“Administrators and teachers crack down on the white kids more—there’s usually a difference in how each color /race gets treated/ disciplined.”* Another student in the focus groups for white students shared, *“I think [principal’s name] do a really good job; everything is pretty much thought out from what I’ve seen, and they think about what they are disciplining about and what the circumstance was. And it’s not like the students don’t get to tell their side of the story or don’t get a say.”*

Students raised the issue of gender as a factor in inequities in the discipline practices used throughout Bloomington School District. Students at Jefferson High School reported gender distinctions in disciplinary practices by pointing out that *“Girls with dress code infractions get disciplined more.”* Across focus groups, students identified male students as being *“in trouble more”* overall compared to female students, indicating that boys were being targeted for exclusionary disciplinary practices at higher rates.

Appendix 2.1: Jefferson High School

School Culture and Climate

The focus groups at Jefferson High School revealed that students continue to experience inequities based on race, gender and sexual orientation that has implications for the school’s culture and climate. One of the key themes that emerged from the focus groups, was that contentious student interactions with each other and school staff are often cited as primary examples of how inequities are developed and maintained. Within the same focus group, there were occasions where contradictions were revealed as students shared their thoughts on school culture and climate. For instance, in the white student focus group, the majority of students agreed with their peer who made the statement, *“I think this administration has worked very hard in making this a safe learning environment where different viewpoints are respected from all students and staff.”* However, thoughts and opinions overwhelmingly changed when students were asked to specifically reflect upon some of the issues at the school that concern sexual orientation, race, and gender. It was revealed then by several students that they can comfortably be themselves while attending Jefferson High School because, *“I’m white, heterosexual, and privileged.”* This admission was further capitalized by a white female student stating, *“There can be time periods of non-acceptance...there can definitely be periods of that. And there can be groups of people that can feed off that and continue and can just kind of not really discriminate, but they can just get nasty.”* The most recent incidents that students shared in the focus group

occurred during the 2016 presidential election. All students in the white focus group agreed that during the “*election it was awful...the hallways were just awful.*” While students in the white focus group described racial tensions with more vague references such as “nasty” and “awful”, students of color were more direct in identifying the racial issues at Jefferson High School during their interviews. During the Multicultural (non-white) focus group, students were candid in talking about how racism became more overt at the school, as one student shared, “Around the presidential election overt racism and bigotry ramped up.”

Discriminatory Behavior and Practice; Accepting/Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice

This difference between the narratives of white students and students of color at Jefferson High School was also evident when they were asked to share their opinions of teachers and administrators at the school, as well as how they perceived students and staff relating to each other. As a student from the focus group with black students shared, “*I always feel like the school is really divided, I don’t feel like everyone talks to everyone... the school is predominantly white, so like we already stand out because we are like the minorities in the school and I don’t think the students or the teachers help...I think they only make it [being marginalized] worse.*” A similar sentiment was shared in the focus group with Somali students, when one student stated that, “*Administrators don’t really care about students of color.*” The white students who participated in the study shared a contrasting viewpoint of staff at the school which portrayed a much more positive school climate. This perception was conveyed by a student in the white focus group, who stated, “*I think this administration has worked very hard in making this a safe learning environment where different viewpoints are respected from all students and staff.*”

Students shared that they felt their white peers were treated differently, and that “*Because all of the staff is white I feel like if you come to them with racial problems they feel awkward...and pretend like they actually have an interest in your problems, but then they don’t do anything about it—so then you’re just left with this problem that you thought was going to be solved [or at least addressed].*” Furthermore, students of color feel the “*pressure in having to represent for everyone [specifically those of the same race/culture and among other students of color]*” in their classrooms—especially in AP/Honor classes with insufficient support from staff.

School Community Relationships

Students were also asked about their parents’ perceptions of the school, as well as parents’ engagement with the school. Across the board, students in all of the focus groups described their parents as not being very involved with the school. This finding was particularly pronounced in the responses shared by students of color, who also pointed out that the school did not make a concerted effort to engage their parents compared to their white counterparts. As a black student recounted, “*And even like when we talked to our principal about the incident with “the wall”, he was just like focused on pleasing the white parents... because the white parents are the majority, so they focus on them...and they can’t get the students of color parents involved because they would be like [perceived] as too militant I guess—and they should be angry.*” Multiple focus groups with students of color noted that their parents had assumed that, as a majority white school, Jefferson High School would be safer and more academically rigorous for their children. However, students of color shared multiple incidents in which they felt unsafe at the school, and their ability to access academic resources and opportunities was inhibited by staff.

The lack of racial diversity amongst the teaching staff was cited as an issue by both students of color and white students at Jefferson High School, with one student stating that there were “no teachers of color, and no racially diverse counselors.” Furthermore, the language barrier between teachers and some parents was cited as an issue for a lack of engagement of parents with the school, and these parents were therefore less able to advocate for the needs of their children. Students in the Somali focus group, shared *“language is a barrier between the school and parents--and therefore are uneducated about opportunities or how to navigate [their children’s education].”* White students shared in their focus group that they attributed academic success to family support, as well as support they received from their teachers. One student also acknowledged that privilege plays a role in academic achievement, by candidly stating that *“privilege helps”*.

Thoughts on Discipline Gap

When students at Jefferson High School were asked about disciplinary practices at their school, as well as their perception of discrepancies of how disciplinary policies were enacted, they cited inequitable treatment along the lines of race and gender.

In the Somali focus group, a student observed that *“Students of color get disciplined the most—in terms of suspension and referrals.”* Students in the Black focus group noted that specifically, *“black boys get disciplined more”* and *“black girls get disciplined the most for dress code violations.”* Students of color also shared the sentiment that *“Popular kids can do anything— [referring to white males].”*

Perceptions of disciplinary practices at Jefferson High School amongst students in the white focus group were significantly different. Most agreed that they, *“Haven’t noticed discrepancies between race and discipline.”* This belief on the part of white students, that inequities are not evident at Jefferson High School, parallels the conclusion drawn about the perception of white students in the previous section on school culture and climate.

Teacher Rating and Expectations

At Jefferson High School, students documented inequities in academic achievement, especially when it came to tracking into particular courses. Students identified several factors that contributed to the inequities that they identified, including teachers treatment of students. Many of the students of color stated that they felt white students were given greater support in accessing higher level courses. Teachers were perceived to treat students differently, and were described as not giving black (African Diaspora) students the same type of support as other students at the school. This observation was shared by a black student who stated, *“Teachers don’t push African American students to get involved in certain opportunities.”*

Additional Oak Grove Middle School Quotes Additional Jefferson High School Quotes	
Black (African Diaspora)	“I always feel like the school is really divided, I don’t feel like everyone talks to everyone... the school is predominately white, so like we already stand out because we are like the minorities in the school and I don’t think the students or the teachers help...I think

	<p>they only make it [being marginalized] worse.”</p> <p>“Every single teacher in this school is white, we have no teachers of color...ZERO! We don’t even have any [racially] diverse counselors.”</p> <p>“I feel like our students [referring to black students] are not united, and like a lot of those students are just like our principal—they will assimilate. Kind of like the “Black Wall” black people and then it’s like the others who assimilate, and they don’t know [speaking about seeing acts of oppression]—and even if you bring it to their attention they don’t want to hear about it or don’t want to get pulled out of their social group...It’s hard being an African American student in a majority white school.”</p> <p>“Because all of the staff is white I feel like if you come to them with racial problems they feel awkward...and pretend like they actually have an interest in your problems, but then they don’t do anything about it—so then you’re just left with this problem that you thought was going to be solved [or at least addressed].”</p> <p>“And even like when we talked to our principal about the incident with “the wall”, he was just like focused on pleasing the white parents... because the white parents are the majority, so they focus on them...and they can’t get the students of color parents involved because they would be like [perceived] as too militant I guess—and they should be angry.”</p>
<p>Multicultural (Non-White)</p>	<p>“I’ve had issues with substitute teachers and other teachers, one of my Social Studies class during my freshman year the teacher asked if anybody was ‘illegal’, and he looked at me...and so that prompted other students to ask if I was an ‘illegal immigrant’ as well.”</p> <p>"That is something I've noticed, in my AP and honor classes, I've noticed I am the only ethnic person in the class, like in my Cal class it's me... and a bunch of Asian people.</p> <p>“I’ve been called “devil worshiper” because my family [celebrates] the ‘Day of the Dead’ [i.e. a cultural holiday that honors their ancestors or those who came before them] ...I mean I’ve been dealing with this for 10 years...it’s something that you really don’t get use to but you just learn to kind of block it out and know that it’s not you, but the ignorance they have for not really being surrounded by diversity.”</p> <p>“I think something cool that a lot of schools have is like African</p>

	<p>American Studies, Hispanic Studies—classes like cultural studies...I think that’s something I would love to see in this school.”</p> <p>Do your parents like this school? “My parents have an issue with the safety of this school...after Trump’s election my dad didn’t want me to come to school he didn’t know what would happen...my dad is like you know, tough military guy—he doesn’t scare easy. But, umm...I was sexually assaulted in this school a couple of weeks ago...and that really scared my parents because a lot of women in my family had gone through similar things...and they felt because I was alone with the group of boys when it happened...umm, the only reason that the administration knows because they caught it on camera, but that was kind of swept under the rug...”</p> <p>“After the election a lot of stuff—all of the stuff that we’ve been previously going through really ramped up...some kids chanted “build a wall” or saying “vote Trump”, or just “go back to Mexico” ...so we started this club [S.T.A.R] to make a safe place because we didn’t have that here.”</p>
<p>Somali</p>	<p>“The administration like is good at their job, but like they don’t really care that much about the colored students [students of color] here...like they try to act like they care, but they really don’t.”</p> <p>Commenting on school support staff- “I like the hall monitors...I get to know the hall monitors, and they get to know you...[all students agreed that there is very little to no teachers of color at the school, but there is an increase of hall monitors of color]...all of the hall monitors are of color...all of the ones I know are.”</p> <p>“Also in my honor classes, I think are like two African Americans." Another student “Yeah, Yeah, like last year I was the only person of color."</p> <p>“I feel like a lot of the students here are uneducated about other cultures and religions.”</p> <p>“I don’t like how this school is like primarily white...people of color like when they are thinking about moving to schools...they think of Jefferson as the ‘white school’ and Kennedy like the ‘diverse school’ ...and like nobody wants to come here, everybody always goes to Kennedy because this school is not welcoming to like anybody that isn’t white basically.”</p> <p>"I feel like Black people feel like they don’t have a motive to do well</p>

	<p>in school, like for instance, for most Somali parent they don't have a lot of ways to contact or have contact with teachers or stuff like that. Or don't understand the language or don't understand the type of opportunity.. and they dont really know what they can do for their children."</p> <p>"Just because Trump is president doesn't mean like you can say whatever you want to say or like whatever you want to feel...so like people would say "What are you hiding under your scarf...a bomb?"</p>
<p>White</p>	<p>"I think this administration has worked very hard in making this a safe learning environment where different viewpoints are respected from all students and staff."</p> <p>"I like Jefferson—I think it's a very open environment where not everybody are friends I would say, but there's no real hostility...everyone is mutual, you know cool with each another and it's very open. Most of time throughout high school you see people who have whatever they got going on, but there is nothing where there is like really negative—from what I've seen. I mean there are little things...I mean it will happen, but it's just high school—it's kind of how things just work out."</p> <p>"There can be time periods of non-acceptance...there can definitely be periods of that. And there can be groups of people that can feed off that and continue and can just kind of not really discriminate, but they can just get nasty."</p> <p>How would you describe your classroom environment? "Hacked crowded."</p> <p>"What I heard from a teacher, the freshman...I don't know if this is true or not, had apparently built a 'wall' with bodies and were not letting people go to class. So they were standing side-by-side and locked arms in the hallways and they were only letting certain people go through."</p> <p>"Personally, I don't go to the bathroom at all at Jefferson because I don't feel safe at all...because there isn't really any gender-neutral bathrooms."</p> <p>"I feel like I can be myself, but it's like a harsh reality that I'm also a straight white male."</p> <p>"I did all Honors [courses] in my sophomore year, and it was maybe a total of four people of color in all of my classes. I did four Honors</p>

	classes and they were very white...and also upper middle class.”
Jefferson High School	
Black (African Diaspora)	<p>Black boys get disciplined more (the most)</p> <p>Black girls get disciplined the most for dress code</p> <p>If administrators fail to protect us, then they shouldn't be in charge to tell us what to wear</p>
Multicultural (Non-White)	Admin pretends like things don't happen
Somali	<p>(Admin) don't know to discipline—racial issues don't get addressed.</p> <p>Popular kids (white kids) can do anything— (specifically made reference to white males).</p> <p>Students of color get disciplined the most—in terms of suspension and referrals</p>
White	<p>Dress code—difference between male & female students. Girls with dress code infractions get discipline more.</p> <p>Haven't noticed discrepancies between race and discipline</p>

Appendix 2.2: Kennedy High School

Thoughts on Achievement Gap

Students in the minority focus groups reported experiencing a negative culture and climate in Kennedy's higher-level courses. Minority students expressed feelings of being unsupported and unwelcome in classes such as AP, *"Like from the beginning, when I walked in, I could see the demeaning stares like, are you in the right class."* The students recounted occasions of being bullied and harassed by white students in AP courses; during these times students have reported being; asked if they were in the *"right place"* which led some students to drop or fail honor courses because they *"could not deal with the negative environment"* This resulted in feelings amongst students of color of having to prove that they belong in the higher level courses and led some to rationalized why other minority students are not in or successful in AP courses, with one Latino student stating, *"The black, I don't want to say, they haven't come around to it, applying themselves to doing well and stuff."* Which also was described as adding another negative layer of mental health to their day-to-day navigation of school. The experiences of minority students were contrasted with that of the students who participated in the white focus groups. These students believed success in AP classes was based on effort rather than race, with one students stating, *"I feel like the honor classes isn't about race, it is more on effort."* Although white students do acknowledge that the AP/honor courses were constituted of mostly white students, *"if you walk into double honor and ask all the black people to stand up, you will probably get half of a person."* Students differ on the reason why students of color are not in AP classes in proportional numbers. In the Multicultural (Mostly students of color and white) group, one white student joked that, *"Usually everyone ends up dropping AP classes anyways; after first tri, everyone's there first tri, then half the class leaves."* When asked why they thought this happened, the student replied, *"Some people are just lazy. Some people just try it and then they see it's a lot of work, they like 'umm I don't know if I'm committed to this."* Based on the focus groups, it appears that students of color are experiencing a different academic experience and environment than their white peers; mainly brought about by their perceived hostility from students and teachers. For example, white students reported having wonderful teachers, that are *"Relatable, make it really easy to go after school and get help"* while students of color reported contradictory experiences, such as difficulty forming healthy relationships with teachers; seeing or meeting with teachers after school; and a lack of expectation for academic success for students of color, arguing *"They should expect more from students of color."*

Culturally Relevant Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum

Students at Kennedy High School reported liking their school and agreed that the most enjoyable part of school was seeing their friends. Across student focus groups there was an expressed desire for more Black and Latino teachers, with one student in the multiracial focus groups stating, *"The majority of the teachers here at this school ... are white."* Another student in the Black focus group stated, *"The majority of the teachers here at this school ... are white. When we focus on topics in class, like history, you focus more on white history."* The lack of diversity in the teaching staff has led to some students of colors feeling isolated and uncomfortable in reaching out to white teachers and guidance counselors, because of the feeling

that white teachers do not understand them culturally. This sentiment was evident when one student shared that, “*The lack of diversity with teachers is something that’s very big... because it’s easier to bond with a person of color than someone white.*” Although most students acknowledged Kennedy High School’s lack of teacher diversity, there were differing opinions of how students view their relationships with teachers. The students in the white focus group believed teachers were available and were positive forces in their lives with a student stating, “*Teachers will share things about their kids... that makes them seem more friendly and they will ask things like how was the hockey game, how’s cheerleading how was the choral concert?*” Students of color perceived some of their teachers as biased and at times prejudiced toward students of color: “*Whenever teachers like come to school and they have like a goal, which is to teach, because that’s their job, but I think some teachers should connect with us more.*” The differing perceptions of teachers and administrator was also evident in how students viewed their classroom environment, particularly high level courses, such as AP classes.

There were also mixed views regarding the implications of student diversity at Kennedy. White students generally commented on how diverse the school was and how the school supported the idea of diversity, with one student stating, “*I find the diversity here very refreshing and similar to what is in the real world.*” This positive view of diversity was in contrast to the varying views that students of color held. During the first focus group, one student spoke about the founding of a Latino club, and how the school supported the idea of a club targeted to Latino students. In contrast, other students of color expressed concern about profiling and a feeling of aloneness in some of their higher-level courses. Students of color also expressed a frustration about how they are perceived at Kennedy, commenting that the school administration viewed students of color through a “*disciplinary lens*” which they believe leads to over- policing and a hostile school environment for students of color.

Teacher Rating and Expectation

While discussing classroom environment, students of color expressed feelings of not belonging and the need to prove that they are capable of taking AP courses, stating “*For my four years I had to prove myself that I was smart.*” Students reported a culture in AP classes that challenged their legitimacy as capable students, which formed a hostile environment that deterred some students from enrolling and succeeding in the AP courses. As one student recounted, “*Like from the beginning, when I walked in, I could see the demeaning stares like, ‘Are you in the right class, are you smart, do you belong here?’ ...On top of it, the administration are good at making you feel like you are in the wrong place. Not only because there aren’t many people there like you, but also because they don’t want you there.*” Students reported knowing students who have dropped or failed AP courses due to “*Not being able to handle the hostile environment,*” and the pressure to take on a different identity to fit into the culture of AP courses.

The lack of expectations for minority students was a major theme for students of color throughout the focus groups, suggesting that adults at Kennedy High School did not expect academic greatness from all students of color. Rather, they described a practice of nurturing a select group of students to receive support, and who were held to higher expectations of academic success. One student described this discrepancy in their focus group by sharing “*I feel like I am on a college campus, were they pick out their students, you know the token black students, the one they put on billboards..I wish they would put the same amount of faith and belief that they have given us, in all students of color.*” The lack of “*faith and belief*” described

has left the majority of students of color behind with little expectation of success from teachers according to students. When students did succeed, they felt the school used them as a kind of token of Kennedy's successful minority students, but failed to truly engage with them on a fundamental level, *"The whole year last year was rough, never once did the administration come up to me, but it's crazy to see how quick they are ready to claim me when I'm successful."* Students in the white focus group were adamant that there was no discrimination based on race in Kennedy. When questioned about what they thought explained the lack of minority students in higher level courses, students suggested effort was a key factor, stating *"I feel like the honor classes isn't about race, it is more on effort."* One student in the white focus group did raise the issue of racial splintering among students at Kennedy, but like the rest of the students in the focus group, maintained that Kennedy was a safe place for students of color, *"I don't think there is discrimination against race or nothing like that, I think, we separate ourselves like automatically into groups of our race, because we just feel more comfortable that way."* Students in the multicultural focus group also acknowledged racial splintering among students, but described this practice as a kind of support group for students, particularly for students in Kennedy's high-level courses.

School Culture and Climate; Discriminatory Behavior and Practice

Across focus groups, students identified punishments as being different for Latino and Black students than for white students in Kennedy High School, with one student in the white focus group stating, *"If you're a Latino and you behave bad you are going to be treated harsher, if you're African, African American you're going to be treated harsh. If you're white you are going to get a mild treatment."* African American and Latino students describe a school that tends to over-police Black and Latino students; students described witnessing teachers and administrators escalating minor rule violations, such as wearing hats, gathering in the hallway and talking in class, into major conflicts. As one focus group participant revealed, *"Just the simplest issue... So I'm in class and this white student had his hat on and the teacher was like take your hat off, but then there was this color student in class who had his hat on, not only did they take the hat from him, but he got pulse for it the next day, he could come to school"*. These minor rule violation and escalations were also witnessed and reported by white students, with students generally agreeing that teachers focused on black and Latino students for disciplinary actions in class. This dynamic was captured in one focus group when a student shared, *"Automatically she just looks at certain kids, let's say, a Hispanic and the majority of the class is white and there is only a few Hispanic kids and one black kid, she will automatically separate those Hispanic kids"* students also expressed concern that minority students were sent to Pulse (out of school suspension) more often than their white peers. When asked to elaborate on who they normally see in Pulse, one student responded, *"All black kids, I've never seen a white kid in pulse."*

Throughout the focus groups with students of color, the theme of teacher's opinions or attitudes were also raised while speaking about discipline in Kennedy High School. Black and Latino's students described a school in which, *"They look at people of color with a disciplinary lens."* White students described teachers targeting male students for official disciplinary actions, such as referrals and classroom exclusionary practices, stating that *"I feel like referrals are more*

generated for boys, that is all I see them give it to.” In each focus group, the students attributed differences in discipline to the way teachers and administrators viewed students. One student in the minority focus group described, having to defend herself from what she viewed as oppressive practices and opinions of teachers in the school. She stated, “*I feel like I have to defend myself, I feel like if I don’t defend against you, I feel like you have some kind of control over me...They just think we are so dangerous and they treat us that way.*” A student in the white focus group described teacher perceptions and different punishments for male students and students of color, by giving an example of his teachers separating Hispanic students because she believed that they would get in trouble if they were seated near each other. During another focus group with students of color, participants voiced concern and irritation with teachers and administrators being hyper vigilant with disciplinary practices targeting students of color. Students describe situations where students of colors were gathered or seated in a large group, only to have teachers “*shoo them along*” or asked them to stop doing things which the teachers deemed as disturbing to others.

The discipline dynamic at Kennedy is evident to students. Students are aware that teachers seem to favor white female students - from the narratives shared in the focus groups, there don’t appear to be any comparable repercussions for white female students for misbehavior. The only repercussion seems to be the students’ relationships with teachers and administrators. There was also a complaint that black personnel in the school were often given the responsibility of disciplining black students, as one student pointed out “*It seems all the black people in the school are used for discipline*” This has left students feeling that there isn’t a trusted advocate in the school to form a relationship with. Students in the College Possible program suggested that a parallel program could be created to support students of color in navigating high school and preparing for college.

Additional Kennedy High School Quotes	
Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)	<p>“Whenever teachers like come to school and they have like a goal, which is to teach, because that’s their job, but I think some teachers should connect with us.”</p> <p>“The bad teachers are kind of biased with students. In my previous class, my teacher was biased towards a certain race, in her teaching she made that clear because it was world literature teacher and she focused a lot of time on that literature” What type of literature? “It was European, and it was these two kids she cared about them more and it was not even fun for us to come to class.”</p> <p>“Last year in my class a fight broke out because of religious tensions, there was a conflict between religions... it was a muslim vs a Latina and there was a comment that was said that wasn’t polite.”</p> <p>“We just started Latino club, because someone was feeling left out” What do you do in the club? “right now we are just volunteering”</p>

	<p>Do you think the school was supportive? “Yeah, they have been supportive and helping us expand!”</p> <p>“There needs to be more diversity in the teachers to be honest, because there all like white teachers and they don’t really understand where we are coming from.”</p>
<p>Multicultural Group (Latino, Asian, African Diaspora)</p>	<p>“The majority of the teachers here at this school ... are white. When we focus on topics in class, like history, you focus more on white history.”</p> <p>“Being a AP student and being of color, people don’t take AP classes because they feel intimidated”</p> <p>“We should expect more from people of color... automatically when they see a person a color they like, ahh right they are just going to take a regular class, they are just going to goof around in school.”</p> <p>“For my four years I had to prove myself, that I was smart.”</p> <p>“We need more mentors.”</p> <p>“The majority of them were AP or inter-dis (interdiscipline) students and the amount of bullying and teasing and hate that I’ve seen in that class, made me wonder what is going on with our school. What is Kennedy doing and why are our students always have hate to say about some people?”</p> <p>Are there Achievement differences in the school? “Yeah, like in my AP class I’ll be like, the only black kid in there, but like if I go to one of my general classes, then it’s all diverse like normal... Yeah, it's defiantly differences.”</p> <p>Why do you think mostly white kids are in AP? “The Black, I don’t want to say, they haven’t come around to it, applying themselves to doing well and stuff.”</p> <p>Explaining how students of color perceive AP classes. “For my four years, I had to prove myself, that I was smart.”</p> <p>“I feel like in a AP class you have to prove yourself.”</p>
<p>Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)</p>	<p>“I kind of like Kennedy, I feel like everyone get along, I feel like no one has enemies”</p> <p>“A lot of teachers pick favorites, and they just focus in on those.”</p>

	<p>About being a teacher’s favorite “Just being outgoing and knowing them on a personal level”</p> <p>“Usually girls are the teachers’ favorite”</p> <p>“I love the cultural diversity, you can look around in the lunchroom and you can see every different kind of culture. It’s not like an all-white table or black table; it’s mixed.”</p> <p>“The lack of diverse teachers is something that’s very big... because it’s easier to bond with a person of color than someone white.”</p> <p>“Like my parent are undocumented and I can’t talk to anyone about that except [student’s name]”</p>
<p>White Student Focus Group:</p>	<p>“I like the school because it’s never boring, you are always learning something even if it’s not in the curriculum.”</p> <p>What about the teachers you like? “Relatable, make it really easy to go after school and get help.”</p> <p>“I find the diversity here very refreshing and similar to what the real world is like...it’s very important in your high school to have that diversity”</p> <p>“Teachers are the best part of Kennedy. I love my teachers”</p> <p>“Teachers will share things about their kids... that makes them seem friendlier and they will ask things like how was the hockey game, how’s cheerleading, how was the choral concert?”</p>
<p>Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)</p>	<p>“They should expect more from students of color”</p> <p>“I agree with [student’s name], the academics are lacking. I come to school, and it’s a waste of time for me. Teachers don’t help; they don’t even know it themselves.”</p> <p>“Support wise, like when you have a student and you want to see that person succeed and then you have the other student you don’t really like. You just assume that person is going to fail, so why waste my time on that person, to help him be something or go somewhere.”</p> <p>Asked: what is this based on? “This is based on race.”</p>
<p>Multicultural Group (Latino,</p>	<p>Talking about AP Classes “Like from the beginning, when I walked in, I could see the demeaning stares like, ‘are you in the right</p>

<p>Asian, African Diaspora)</p>	<p>class, are you smart, do you belong here?' ...on top of it, the administration are good at making you feel like you are in the wrong place, not only because there aren't many people there like you, but also because they don't want you there. So for my four years, I've had to prove myself and my goals that I am that smart or else when I walk in that's not the assumption."</p> <p>"Like I've been in a AP classes and had white students walk up to me and be like," another student interrupts "Are you in the wrong place?" "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I've like had that happen before and I'm like 'excuse me, you can see your way out this conversation.' I had another person come up to me and say, 'You're in a AP class?! I would have thought you would be in a regular class'"</p> <p>"You have to be someone else, you have to adapt to their culture."</p> <p>"The black—I don't want to say—haven't come around to it, applying themselves to doing well and stuff."</p> <p>"I feel like I am on a college campus, where they pick out their students, you know the token black students, the one they put on billboards...I wish they would put the same amount of faith and belief that they have given us, in all students of color."</p> <p>"The whole year, last year was rough, never once did the administration come up to me, but it's crazy to see how quick they are ready to claim me when I'm successful."</p> <p>Explaining how students of color perceive AP classes: "I feel like in a AP class you have to prove yourself."</p> <p>"Like if I came after school to a teacher and was like, 'Hey I messed up on this test, can I take it now?' they'd be like 'Nope I got to go be with my family.' Like I can understand you have a family, but I would also like to see that you care for your students too."</p>
<p>Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)</p>	<p>Are there achievement differences in the school? "Yeah, like in my AP class I'll be like, the only black kid in there, but like if I go to one of my general classes, then it's all diverse like normal... Yeah, there's definitely differences."</p> <p>Somali students talking about Somali students: "It's like, as of right now, in the Somali community, it's just getting to it, that they</p>

	<p>are passing their classes, their normal classes, So I feel like in the white community, it's like, take your AP classes”</p> <p>Latino student talking about Latino parents: “But for our community, it's like, they haven't registered that yet...I don't even think some parent even know, that there is such a thing as AP classes.”</p> <p>“I guess that for white people, they have a support system at home, because their parents know English. My parent can't help me with homework.”</p> <p>“Usually everyone end up dropping AP classes anyways; during first tri, everyone's there, after first tri half the class leaves.” Why do you think kids drop it? “Some people are just lazy. Some people just try it and then they see lot of work, they like ‘umm I don't know if I'm committed to this.”</p>
<p>White Student Focus Group:</p>	<p>“I think a lot of that comes from just the recognition in the media, I am always happy when Kennedy is recognized in the media, but you just see Jefferson a lot more.”</p> <p>What do you like about the teachers? “Relatable, make it really easy to go after school and get help”</p> <p>“I don't think there is discrimination with race or nothing like that, I think, we separate ourselves like automatically into groups of our race, because we just feel more comfortable that way.”</p> <p>“I feel like the honor classes isn't about race, it is more on effort.”</p> <p>“If you walk into double honor and ask all the black people to stand up, you will probably get half of a person.”</p>
<p>Kennedy High School</p>	
<p>Multicultural (Latino and African Diaspora)</p>	<p>“When I was walking here near the media center and there was this kid who is known for being late to class, but [Teacher's name] called him out, and there was like five others kids, and he was like I know your first and second trimester attendance.”</p> <p>“Yeah I feel like people get reputations based on what they did in the beginning of the year.”</p>
<p>Multicultural Group (Latino,</p>	<p>“I've noticed that anytime a black kid or any kid of color does anything, it's like ‘OMG go stop them, they are going to do</p>

<p>Asian, African Diaspora)</p>	<p>something”</p> <p>“They look at people of color with a disciplinary lens”</p> <p>“I feel like in my AP classes and my regular classes, females are more favored.”</p> <p>“I’ve never seen a white student get suspended for bullying a black kid, that never happens. But when it’s the other way around, when the black students are bullying the white students, oh my god, they get so scared. Ah this person going to harm them, they’re in fear for their life”</p> <p>“I feel like I have to defend myself, I feel like if I don’t defend [myself] against you, I feel like you have some kind of control over me...They just think we are so dangerous and they treat us that way.”</p> <p>When you’ve gone to Pulse [out of school suspension], who do you normally see? “All black kids, I’ve never seen a white kid in pulse.”</p> <p>“When a white student gets angry...it’s like, well you know, they had a little debacle then they settle things, and they go on about their day. But like, if it’s a student of color, they get angry. They are like, ‘Whoo, who you’re getting angry at, what’s this attitude?’”</p> <p>“Just the simplest issue... a student this year...he actually moved out of Kennedy because it was such a simple matter he got pulse for...So I’m in class and this white student had his hat on and the teacher was like, ‘Take your hat off.’ But then there was this [student of color] in class who had his hat on. Not only did they take the hat from him, but he got pulse for it the next day, and he couldn’t come to school.”</p> <p>“It seems like all the black people in the school are used for discipline”</p>
<p>Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)</p>	<p>“I think they are good with keeping it equal.”</p> <p>“I feel like referrals are more generated for boys, that is all I see them give it to.”</p> <p>“I think a really big problem we have is respecting adults and what they have to say.”</p>
<p>White Student</p>	<p>“Automatically she just looks at certain kids, let’s say, a Hispanic,</p>

Focus Group:

and the majority of the class is white, and there is only a few Hispanic kids and one black kid. She will automatically separate those Hispanic kids...She will be like, 'Uhm, ha, I don't think it's a good idea for you three to be sitting together.'"

"Teachers don't really give you a second chance in their classroom, so the beginning of the year is the most important time. If the teacher sees you do something they don't like or they think is wrong, they just kind of stick to that perception in their mind."

So in your opinion are there differences in discipline, do you think one group is treated differently? "Oh heck yes, if you're a Latino and you behave bad, you are going to be treated harsher. If you're African, African American, you're going to be treated harsh. If you're white, you are going to get a mild treatment."

Appendix 2.3: Oak Grove Middle School

Discriminatory Behavior and Practice

At Oak Grove Middle School, one of the key themes that emerged from the focus groups was that culture was often a contributing factor to how students were treated by their peers and staff at the school. In a Multicultural focus group, students narrated common responses from teachers when other languages such as Spanish or Somali were spoken by the students, with a student sharing that, “If you’re talking any other language they will mostly assume you are swearing...*they tell students to “stop” speaking another language—or “just English” being said by teachers when they hear students speaking another language.*” In another interview, this sentiment was shared by a second student, who felt that the response of teachers saying “*you can’t talk Somali here*” was unfair—especially when “*other students may speak Spanish but they don’t say anything to them.*”

School Culture and Climate

Furthermore, students of color felt that the school culture and climate at Oak Grove Middle School was impacted by staff making assumptions about students’ behavior and academic abilities because of their race. In the Multicultural focus group, a student pointed out that, “there is a clear difference in like how they [administrators] treat other students—let’s say like me [an African American female] versus another white student.” This perception was also confirmed by a white student, who shared that, “with DA (Dimension Academy) they [teachers] have a higher respect and they assume students in DA are more mature”. Similarly, in the white focus group students confirmed that, “*There are instances when students of color are targeted quicker than white students.*” Students also pointed out that these racial tensions had spread to other spaces such as students segregating themselves in the lunchroom, and racist comments being made on social media.

Discipline

At Oak Grove Middle School, students contested how disciplinary policies were enacted. In particular, they disputed the frequency of disciplinary sanctions, and the severity of punishments that were given.

Students of color felt that they were disciplined more frequently, and that their punishments were harsher in comparison to their white peers. This was further exacerbated by the fact that their disciplinary records were seen as cumulative, and they often struggled to amend the perceptions that teachers and administrators held of them. This was illustrated by a student of color who stated that “*Black students who have gotten referrals or sent to [in school suspension] are quicker to get in trouble again. The “past” sticks with black students throughout; but other students get to start over.*” This sentiment was further acknowledged in a Multicultural focus group, where students believed that “*There should be a fresh start every day for (all) students.*” The discrepancy in disciplinary practices for white students and students of color was noted in four out of the five focus groups conducted at Oak Grove Middle School.

In contrast, students in the white focus groups felt that they often received the brunt of disciplinary actions, and that “*administrators and teachers crack down on the white kids more.*” While the students did not indicate why they believed this to be the case, it is possible that this

impression is created due to the fact that the classes they tend to be in are constituted of mostly white students.

Thoughts on Achievement Gap; Teacher Rating and Expectations

When students at Oak Grove Middle School were questioned about their perceptions of academic achievement, they noted that the tracking of students into different level courses was influenced by non-academic factors. In particular, much of the discussion was centered on the school’s Dimensions Academy (DA) program which is perceived to be a prestigious program that offers higher level courses and other opportunities. In the focus groups it was revealed that most of the students enrolled in DA are white, and do not tend to interact with students in non-DA courses. They also described the propensity of, teachers to make positive assumptions about DA students compared to students in other courses. One student shared that, “I think they might treat the smarter people better than those who don’t know as much,” and perceived to be more mature. Furthermore, the students shared that other courses at Oak Grove Middle School, which predominantly enroll students of color, are described as a “troublesome class or bad class” by teachers.

Admission to DA appeared to be a point of contention, with one student sharing that information was not made available to them when they first enrolled at Oak Grove Middle School. It was emphasized that the principal, counselors and teachers should do more to fulfill their responsibility of ensuring that all students are fully informed about the admissions process for the DA program. Furthermore, some students alluded to the practice of basing admission to special education on “*social behavior [rather] than intellect.*” Students of color believed that the admissions process was different for them compared to their white students. While white students were able to use their reputations or social networks to enter the DA program, students of color felt that they were disproportionately required to pass an exam in order to obtain admission.

Additional Oak Grove Middle School Quotes	
Multicultural (Non-White)	<p>Speaking about teachers and administrators “This isn’t like to blame anyone, but its, they don’t really understand as much, like the, the different races, like, almost as if they put a little too much...there kind of just quick too, make assumptions and stereotypes a little bit.”</p> <p>“I am associated with having, like black hair naturally smart, just because I’m Asian”</p> <p>“I don’t think I have never seen a black person in DA.” Another student reply “I have there is someone in my class, but its not super common.”</p> <p>Speaking about special ed. “I think its diversity”</p>
Multicultural (with	It seems like they [teachers]...will obviously they treat

<p>White Students)</p>	<p>different students differently because that's what they do, but sometimes it seems like they might stereotype a little bit...I feel like sometimes they're quick to judge like let's say the first week of school, and if you have a bad impression they kind of keep that impression the entire year...and they don't give a lot of second chances</p> <p>“There should be a fresh start every day for (all) students.”</p> <p>“I feel like, teachers assume, or like based on your grades, they assume like, you're either smart or you're not smart. Like what if you do bad on just one project and it lowers your grade that much or you do really well. They just assume a B or A you don't need help.”</p>
<p>Somali</p>	<p>About special education “like when they are walking down the hall to gym, so they can have fun, it's like every ethnicity.”</p> <p>Do some kids perform better academically in this school, “Kids in DA” “DA” “they set up a system where smart people have all honor classes”</p>
<p>White</p>	<p>If I were a new student just entering how would I learn about DA. “You usually hear from the students and then that student would go to a consular and asks.</p> <p>Speaking about DA, “And Ill say its not very inclusive, its actually really hard to get into, and there is a lot of students who should be in it, but they aren't because they say we can only have 28 kids, but I think they should be it more open, like an honor class.”</p>

Appendix 2.4: Olson Middle School

Culturally Responsiveness; School Culture and Climate

Students at Olson Middle School reported liking some of their teachers and other adults that worked in their school. Students who participated in the Mix, Chicano/Latino and White focus groups expressed greater satisfaction with staff than students in the Black (African Diaspora) focus group, with one student in the white focus group stating, *“I believe teachers want students to have the best absolute education that students have the right to and deserve, but you know, the system isn’t 110% perfect.”* In contrast, a student in the black focus group described a school climate where teachers had assumptions and prejudices toward students of color: *“Like for me being black, I don’t feel comfortable in this school, because teachers can assume things, and when I try to do my best, they just put me down all the time, so I just don’t try.”* Black and Latino students expressed concern that there were not very many people of color in the building, and indicated that it was difficult to connect with individuals who did not share a similar background as them. One student shared their frustration by stating that *“They don’t know how it feels to be black, because our counselors are white..but you don’t know how it feels to be black in a white school.”* Students in all focus groups reported incidents of racial and sexual orientation-based discrimination occurring in the school. According to students, some of these events were reported to administrators and teachers but were not handled in a satisfactory way. A student who had attempted to report an incident recounted that, *“A lot of people were saying racist things and stuff. I told a teacher and they were like ‘Ehh they are not being racist.’”* One Asian student reported an ongoing bullying situation, which was reported to the school administration, but has continued. Black students have been told to *“go back to Africa,”* and students report that homophobic language is routinely used amongst students at Olson Middle School.

Accepting/Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice

The subject of harassment and bullying toward LGBTQ students was reported unprompted in every focus group, with one student in the black focus group stating, *“And not just about race, sometimes people treat other kids differently because of their sexuality,”* while another student in the white focus group stated, *“I had a friend who was Bi and lots of people just made fun of her, because her girlfriend was a lesbian.”* One student shared that a transgender student is now home schooled because of experiences with bullying. Students indicated that there is a lack of seriousness and concern at times from school administrators regarding bullying around issues of racism and sexual orientation. Black students in the focus groups shared that when they reported incidents of racism in the school, administrators tried to minimize their feelings. This has led to students feeling they do not have anyone to go to for help at Olson. This was strongly emphasized by one student, who shared that, *“Sometimes if I tell the counselors they try to make it seem like the teachers aren’t discriminating, and I don’t like it because they don’t know how it feels to be black, because our counselors are white.”* This has led to feelings of isolation for some students of color and a lack of options to go to for help. This is also compounded by the fact that there are a small number of teachers and administrators of color, who the students perceive to be better equipped to handle their cultural problems.

Discipline; Discriminatory Behaviors and Practice

Across focus groups, the students indicated that there were differences in the implementation of disciplinary practices at Olson Middle School. The students in the Multicultural, Black (African Diaspora) and Chicano/Latino focus groups reported that there were differences in the way students of color were disciplined in the school compared to their white peers, with one student in the Multiracial focus group stating, *“Like sometimes in classes black people get called out more, like sometimes it funny, but sometimes it not.”* Students in these focus groups’ described teachers targeting minority students, viewing minority students; culture as negative, and actively discouraging white students from adopting elements of their culture. One student described an incident in which a teacher was talking to a white student, and said, *“you’re not supposed to be acting this way, this is not how you act’ and then she pointed over to [names two black students]”* The student who recounted this story also reported that she told her counselor about this incident and *“nothing happened.”* In contrast to the focus groups with students of color, Olson Middle School’s white student participants identified gender and student reputation as the most common sources of disciplinary differences. When prompted about race, white students generally reported that there were no differences in disciplinary practices, and that the teachers were fair. Students in the multicultural, white and Black focus groups reported students generally believed teachers developed opinions about students very early in the school year, and that it is difficult to change a teacher’s opinion once it was formed: *“If you’re bad in class one time, it will give you a reputation; they won’t really trust you.”* In the view of African American and Latino students, this made it difficult for students to correct their own behavior and develop a positive relationship with their teachers.

Teacher Rating and Expectation

Minority students interviewed at Olson Middle School identified honor classes as being mostly constituted of white students. Amongst the students, there appeared to be confusion about how to enter the DA program and honor courses. Black (African Diaspora) and Latino focus group participants were particularly unsure about this. When asked, “How do you enter the DA program?” students listed numerous answers such as, *“you take a test”*; *“teachers select you”*; *“you enter in elementary school”*; *“I don’t know”*; and *“you enroll yourself”*. Students also reported, that they would have to take the initiative to enroll or show interest in honor courses if they wanted to join. When questioned about teachers or school academic outreach to parents about opportunities to enroll in higher-level courses the students reported, *“Teachers do not reach out to parents about good things, only bad.”* The students also indicated that any information they receive about honor courses would be given to them through word of mouth, and it would be up to them to take that information home to parents. There seemed to be a difference in opinion between racial groups of the higher level academic programs in Olson. White students were aware of the lack of diversity in higher-level courses and the DA program, but struggled to explain why so few minority students were there. At one point a student said, *“I think teachers are a little racist. At least in my grade, all the students are white and I think it’s a little racist.”* Other white students in the multicultural and white focus group maintained that teachers wanted the best for all students, *“I believe teachers want students to have the best absolute education that students have the right to and deserve, but you know, the system isn’t 110% perfect.”*

In the Black (African Diaspora) focus group, the students raised the issue of diversity among teachers, stating that teachers fail to motivate students of color and that they find it difficult to connect with white teachers. Students felt the lack of motivation from teachers encouraged minority students to have an *“Average outlook”* on their education, *“And then let’s say you were doing bad... and then next time you really want to get up your grade. It feels like the teachers put you down, like you can’t get up there... then say you get a C on a test, but you really wanted an A, they are like, really good job, you got a C. They are not saying you could do better, they say you’re good there, stay average”* Across focus groups, students reported a belief that teachers judged them unfairly because of their gender or race. For white students, there was a belief that teachers favored girls, and among Black and Latino students they felt differences were based on race and intellectual (dis)ability, *“I had this special ed student in my class... the teacher would laugh at him, not help him and if he doesn’t understand something, she will just yell.”* A troubling element from the Black (African Diaspora) focus group was that some students reported telling adults in Olson about racist incidents, only to have teachers or school staff downplay or diminish their feelings. One focus group participant shared that, *“Sometimes if I tell the counselors they try to make it seem like the teachers aren’t discriminating, and I don’t like it because they don’t know how it feels to be black, because our counselors are white...but you don’t know how it feels to be black in a white school”* When asked, *“Who do you go to in the school for help if a racist incident occur?”*, the students seemed unsure and named a list of different teachers and counselors at Olson.

Additional Olson Middle School Quotes	
Black (African Diaspora)	<p>“Last year, a lot of people were saying racist things and stuff. I told a teacher and they were like ‘Ehh they are not being racist.’”</p> <p>“Like for me being black, I don’t feel comfortable in this school, because teachers can assume things, and when I try to do my best, they just put me down all the time, So I just don’t try.</p> <p>“I don’t like some of the people here, because they do make remarks that are like, even if they are not that bad, because you get used to them, but sometimes they’re racist.”</p> <p>“And not just about race, sometimes people treat other kids differently because of their sexuality.”</p> <p>Where can you go if you feel like you are being discriminated against? “Sometimes if I tell the counselors they try to make it seem like the teachers aren’t discriminating, and I don’t like it because they don’t know how it feels to be black, because our counselors are white...but you don’t know how it feels to be black in a white school”</p> <p>“But then there is always the kid, who be like go back to Africa; I don’t like black people; go back to Somalia, take off this (referring</p>

	<p>to a hijab).”</p> <p>“Something I don’t like about this school is like ...there are few my color.”</p> <p>“What I see is, they don’t push you to do better”</p>
<p>Chican@/Latin@</p>	<p>What do you think about the adults in the school? “They’re nice, they never yell, they talk softly.”</p> <p>Referring to the time before the US Presidential election: “My sister and some of her friends were treated differently during that time. They were teased and stuff, not because we were supporting Donald Trump, but because of her race.”</p> <p>“Well when the police hit that black guy, in class my friend this black girl and a white girl got into an argument about it and the teacher took the white girl’s side.”</p> <p>“Well I had this friend from Africa, and people were like staying away, because they thought they could catch Ebola.”</p> <p>What is all this drama, between students, teachers? “Between students.” What happens when there is too much drama between students what do you guys do? “It distracts from class, because teachers have to stop class to deal with it.”</p> <p>What staff do you think is better and what staff do you think is ok? “Like the dean office staff is good, Like Mrs._____ like the people who have offices are ok.” What are sometimes about the dean’s office staff that is good? “ They talk to you more instead of, like, less yelling”</p> <p>What is all this drama, between students, teachers? “Between students.” What happens when there is too much drama between students what do you guys do? “It distracts from class, because teachers have to stop class to deal with it.”</p> <p>Have you experienced in the classroom teachers treating students differently because of things like race? “I haven’t” These classroom seems peaceful, everyone likes each other. “No one ever talk to each other.”</p>
<p>Multicultural (Non-White)</p>	<p>What do you like most about the school? “Seeing my friends every day.”</p>

	<p>What don't you like about the school? "The only thing is just having a person, who just calling you weird and random names everyday"</p> <p>Do you get along with your teachers? "All the time."</p> <p>"If you get good grades in that class, they are going to treat you different."</p> <p>Referring to students: "The teachers have their favorites, their dislikes (referring to students)"</p> <p>What is your opinion of the other adults in the school? "I think they are nice, they don't try to get you in trouble if you do something wrong."</p> <p>Do you think a lot of problems start at lunch? "I feel like it kind of does, but if something like start, like drama, it does like start in the lunchroom at lot, that's when like a lot of people start getting in trouble a lot."</p>
<p>White</p>	<p>"I would say welcome because there are like different cultures here and everyone is like, super nice to everyone."</p> <p>"I believe teachers want students to have the absolute best education that students have the right to and deserve, but you know, the system isn't 110% perfect."</p> <p>Referring to racism in the school: "I think some of it goes with age... if you're a younger student being uneducated about race. Because to be honest, I was a pretty racist little kid."</p> <p>"I had a friend who was Bi and lots of people just made fun of her, because her girlfriend was a lesbian."</p> <p>Speaking about a Latino teacher's accent: "Difficult being bossed around by someone, who you can't really understand"</p> <p>"All the kids in DA are super nice." Another student agreed, "All the DA kids are like on one team and one class."</p> <p>Referring to racism in the school. "I think some of it goes with... if you're a younger student being uneducated about race. Because to be honest, I was a pretty racist little kid."</p>
<p>Black (African</p>	<p>How do you enter the DA program? Several students answered:</p>

<p>Diaspora)</p>	<p>“You take a test,” “Teachers select you,” “You enter in elementary school,” “I don’t know” and “You enroll yourself.”</p> <p>“Teachers do not reach out to parents about good things, only bad.”</p> <p>“Sometimes if I tell the counselors they try to make it seem like the teachers aren’t discriminating, and I don’t like it because they don’t know how it feels to be black, because our counselors are white...but you don’t know how it feels to be black in a white school”</p> <p>“In the class you have to act either like you or extra, like trying to be better because some teachers...already have a judgment on you, so you have to act different.”</p> <p>“And then let’s say you were doing bad... and then next time you really want to get up your grade. It feels like the teachers put you down, like you can’t get up there... then say you get a C on a test, but you really wanted an A, they are like, really good job you got a C. They are not saying you could do better, they say you’re good there, stay average.”</p> <p>“For me personally, they don’t push you to do better and that just bugs me.”</p> <p>“Because like, there are so many kids who could do better...but you just need the teachers to push toward it, but I don’t see teachers pushing minority or black people to do better.”</p> <p>“There was a special ed. student... the teacher would laugh at him, not help him and if he doesn’t understand something, she will just yell.”</p>
<p>Chican@/Latin@</p>	<p>“Students are treated equally”</p> <p>Have you experienced teachers treating students differently, because of things like race, in the classroom? “I haven’t” These classrooms seems peaceful, everyone likes each other. “No one ever talks to each other.”</p>
<p>Multicultural (Non-White)</p>	<p>“There is a lot of white kids in DA...in our DA class there is only white kids...there is only a few black kids in AP.”</p> <p>How do you get into DA? “I don’t know”</p>
<p>White</p>	<p>“I know some people have been treated differently because they are</p>

	<p>in special ed...people make fun of them, its messed up.”</p> <p>“All the kids in DA are super nice.” Another students agreed “All the DA kids are like on one team and one class”</p> <p>Speaking about DA “Oh my god, it’s very white, there are like maybe three Asians.” How about honor courses? “It gets a little more racially diverse as you go down to regular classes”</p> <p>Why do you think there so many white kids in DA? “I think teachers are a little. At least in my grade, all the students are white and I think it’s a little racist.”</p> <p>“I believe teachers want students to have the absolute best education that students have the right to and deserve, but you know, the system isn’t 110% perfect.”</p>
<p>Black (African Diaspora)</p>	<p>“Like a couple of kids might be doing the same thing, like being loud or obnoxious and they will send a kid that hasn’t been doing so well out, when really he’s not doing anything.”</p> <p>Are there differences in discipline? “White people get warnings, Black people get sent down to Teddy” [referring to the quiet room].</p> <p>“There are some white boys, they try to act ghetto, so they also get in trouble, just because of the way they are acting... [referring to a teacher by name] said something to one of the boys, ‘you’re not supposed to be acting this way, this is not how you act’ and then she pointed over to [names two black students withheld] ... and I told one of the counselors and she didn’t do anything about it”</p> <p>“I’ve seen more black, minority kids, in the quiet room than white kids.”</p> <p>Speaking about the quiet room “Sometimes I go there to avoid certain teachers.”</p>
<p>Chican@/Latin@</p>	<p>Why do you think they punished your brother? “Because I think they were all white and he was Mexican.”</p> <p>Who do you usually see when you go to the quiet room? “You usually see black and Latino kids.”</p> <p>Have you ever seen someone purposely go to the quiet room? “I have, it was me, and I just didn’t like what we were doing?”</p>

<p>Multicultural (Non-White)</p>	<p>“Like sometimes in classes, black people get called out more, like sometimes it funny, but sometimes it not.”</p> <p>“The teacher we talked about earlier always tends to yell at black kids.”</p> <p>“There tends to be more black kids in the quiet room, getting sent out and stuff.”</p> <p>“I walked into Spanish one day and two black kids were behind me and the teacher said they were late. And I said, ‘Want me to go get a pass?’ She was like, No, you’re fine.”</p>
<p>White</p>	<p>“If you’re bad in class one time, it will give you a reputation; they won’t really trust you.”</p> <p>How can discipline be biased? “It can be biased... [student’s name], I’ve never seen you been in trouble ever...if you were to throw a pencil across the room, you’re probably being sent down to the quiet room... If I did that [Teacher’s name] is probably giving me a warning.”</p> <p>“One time I made a really bad joke, I didn’t get in trouble. But I know other kids who get in trouble a little more often, who have a bad reputation, will definitely get sent down.”</p> <p>We identified gender as an issue for discipline. What do you think could solve that issue? “Send more girls to the quiet room.”</p> <p>“It’s not a gender issue, it’s just, all and all, boys are kind of like that and girls don’t get into much trouble.”</p>

Appendix 2.5: Valley View Middle School

Discriminatory Behavior/ Practice; AMSIV

At Valley View Middle School, one of the most evident findings to emerge from the focus groups was that students felt classrooms and other areas of the school, such as the lunchroom, had become segregated spaces. In particular, students described the ways in which school climate and culture separated students of color from their white peers. When describing the dynamics of the lunchroom, one student shared that, “*at lunch tables some people will either accept or deny others to sit with them... some tables are labeled by race or by what your interests are.*” They also noted that when fights took place, they often occurred in the lunchroom.

Students also shared that classrooms had become segregated spaces in the school, with one student describing the creation of a ‘*school within a school*’ with the establishment of the Nobel Creative Arts program. This program was seen as a catalyst for institutionally separating white students and students of color, as most of the students enrolled in the program were white. The same dynamic was observed in the honors classes, where students noted that most of those enrolled in these classes were white. The segregation described in the honors courses was exacerbated by the fact that honors students received preferential treatment from teachers. One student recounted that Latino and African American students were seen singled out by teachers and “*graded unfairly.*”

Discipline and School Culture/Climate

At Valley View Middle School, students identified differences in disciplinary actions taken against students of color and their white peers. In particular, students of color recounted that they received harsher punishments, and were less likely to be given warnings, compared to white students. As one student shared, “*white students get a free pass the first one, and then the second one they [teachers] keep it calm. It’s like when I get into trouble it’s a straight call home the first time.*” This perception was also shared by a student in the Multicultural focus group who stated that “*Black students get kicked out (of class) more; but white students just get “warnings.”*”

Students in several focus groups noted the importance of creating a good impression with teachers to combat assumptions that were made about their behavior due to their race, and to avoid disproportional disciplinary actions. As a student shared in the Multicultural focus group, “*Teachers don’t really give you a second chance in their classroom, so the beginning of the year is the most important time, if the teacher sees you do something they don’t like or they think is wrong, they just kind of stick to that perception in their mind?*” This point also appeared in the white focus group, when a student stated that, “*Reputation matters in terms of discipline.*” In multiple focus groups students referred to an incident in which a white student violated school policy. When the student attempted to take responsibility for the action, the staff at Valley View did not believe him and disciplined a student of color instead. Several students expressed frustration and disbelief at the blatant inequity being portrayed in this instance.

Another theme that arose from the focus groups was an unconscious bias of teachers and the discretion that teachers have to impose disciplinary practices arbitrarily. Students across ethnic groups and schools communicated the troubling nature of these problems in their schools concerning discipline. For example, African American students at Olson Middle School reported that for the same infractions, white students receive warnings, while black students are sent to the “*Quiet Room.*” When students were asked if they felt there were differences in how

disciplinary actions were distributed, one student responded by stating that “*White people get warnings; Black people get sent down to Teddy (referring to the quiet room).*” This theme was also documented at Kennedy High School during the Multicultural student focus group, which reported again that white students appeared to be given second chances after misbehavior, while students of color were quickly disciplined, “*When a white student get angry..it’s like, well you know, they had a little debacle then they will settle things, and they go on about their day. But like, if it’s a student of color they get angry, they are like ‘Whoo, who you’re getting angry at, what’s this attitude?’*” Additionally, this theme arose again at Valley View Middle school when a student in the Multicultural focus group stated, “*Black students get kicked out [of class] more, but white students just get warnings.*”

At every school, the themes of bias and disciplinary discretion arose in some form. Minority students saw bias as a tool for teachers to harm students of color, proclaiming that “*There shouldn’t be ‘white exceptions’ to the rules, students should get the same punishment for the same behaviors.*” Each focus group felt in some way that Bloomington’s teachers’ disciplinary discretion was being actively being used to harm students, and the “*Administration pretends like things don’t happen.*”

Additionally, students at Kennedy did not like the policy of suspending all students around or near fights or conflicts. They felt this policy prevented students from getting involved or de-escalating conflicts because they would put themselves at risk of being suspended or punished.

Academic Achievement

When students at Valley View Middle School were asked to discuss academic achievement dynamics at their school, their discussion centered around issues related to higher level courses offered to students.

Students identified two routes to being able to enroll in higher level courses: through teacher recommendation or by passing a standardized test. Students of color described honors classes as being mostly constituted of white students. They also noted that while many white students were able to enroll in higher level courses through teacher recommendations, students of color often had to resort to taking standardized tests in order to be able to enroll.

Teacher Ratings and expectations

In fact, students in the white focus group were unaware that some of their peers were being required to take a test in order to be able to enroll. Students of color in the Multicultural focus group shared an experience from one upper level course, in which they were made to feel uncomfortable by the teacher who constantly reminded them that they were required to maintain at least a C+ grade in the course in order to remain enrolled. They noted that they felt singled out in front of the class, and that their white peers were not given the same treatment.

When questioned about student academic achievement gaps, one student of color narrated that, “*I don’t think there is discrimination with race or nothing like that, I think, we separate ourselves like automatically into groups of our race, because we just feel more comfortable that way.*” This perhaps illustrates that while students of color are aware that inequities in student achievement are influenced by teachers’ preferences, they may still blame themselves for the lack of opportunities.

Additional Valley View Middle School Quotes

<p>Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)</p>	<p>“If we had more black teachers everyone would probably have more fun in school, because almost all the teacher we have are white, so when you have a whole bunch of kids that are, like, when you have a little bit of kids that are black and you have the white kids and then there’s a white teacher, it’s like favoritism to the other side.”</p> <p>“I feel like the teachers are nice, but sometimes they don’t have patience sometimes.”</p> <p>What is your opinion of the other adults in the school, “I think they are nice, they don’t try to get you in trouble if you do something wrong.”</p> <p>Do you think a lot of problems start at lunch? “ I feel like it kind of does, but if something like start, like drama, it does like start in the lunchroom at lot, that’s when like a lot of people start getting in trouble a lot.”</p> <p>“I don’t want to be bias or nothing like that, just saying, all the teachers I talk to, most of those teachers grow up having money, parents had a good job, stuff like that, but a lot of black people they don’t have that and I think, if we had black teachers they would understand what we are going through more than the white teachers.” (another black student interjects) “Not trying to be racist”</p>
<p>Chican@/Latin@</p>	<p>Do you think white students are disciplined differently in this school from Latino Students? “Yeah, a little bit. Well white students get a free pass the first one, and then the second one they keep it calm. It’s like when I get into trouble it’s a straight call home the first time.”</p> <p>“Like for us Latino, I don’t really know how they see us, because for us they really don’t have enough patience with us. But they have high expectation for the both of us, but I feel the white students have more advantages.”</p> <p>“They have more patience with the white people... they have less patience with me” “Like if I get in trouble they call home. If it someone else (white student) get in trouble they don’t call home”</p> <p>If I was a new student “They wouldn’t tell you that there is this program, they would just see your grades, I guess. You have to have over a 3.5 GPA and then you’re in noble” “ I don’t know if that</p>

	<p>grade thing is true, because I have a friend in my support reading and we have about the same grades and he's in noble. I don't think there grades are super high... I've seen my friend's grades, they are about average, and he's in Noble. So I guess it's just a teacher decision"</p> <p>What people do you interact with? students' adults? "Different races"; "I like that we can speak, my first language, because at my old school the teachers would get mad, we couldn't be saying anything else because they would get made, it wouldn't be correct. So here, they give us a little more freedom to do our first language. Something more than English I guess" When do they let you speak it, in class, the hallway? "Whenever, whenever it's the proper time to speak it, just speak in general, we can just talk" I classes and they don't trip? "Well yeah, they don't say nothing about it...but when it's time to talk or interact somehow they don't mind."</p> <p>What staff do you think is better and what staff do you think is ok? "Like the dean office staff is good, Like Mrs._____ like the people who have offices are ok." What are sometimes about the dean's office staff that is good? " They talk to you more instead of, like, less yelling"</p> <p>What is all this drama, between students, teachers? "Between students." What happens when there is too much drama between students what do you guys do? "It distracts from class, because teachers have to stop class to deal with it."</p> <p>"My sister and some of her friends were treated differently during that time. They were teased and stuff, not because we supporting Donald Trump, but because of her race."</p>
<p>Multicultural (Non-White)</p>	<p>More students of color get suspended and referrals more than white students</p> <p>Black students get kicked out (of class) more; but white students just get "warnings"</p> <p>A white student caused trouble and confessed to a teacher about it, but the Dean still didn't believe him.</p> <p>"Quiet room"—Latinos get sent more to the quiet room.</p> <p>" In my honor classes, there isn't just one race. There is all."</p> <p>"Like in my honor class, most of the people there are white, so then there barely 3 Latinos in my class." "Yeah but there is like zero</p>

<p>Multicultural (Mostly Students of Color and some White)</p>	<p>blacks in there.”</p> <p>“Automatically she just looks at certain kids, let’s say, a Hispanic and the majority of the class is white and there is only a few Hispanic kids and one black kid, she will automatically separate those Hispanic kids.” “She will be like, Uhm, ha, “I don’t think it’s a god idea for you three to be sitting together.” And then there will be these three white kids who’ll be loud as heck”</p> <p>“Teachers don’t really give you a second chance in their classroom, so the beginning of the year is the most important time, if the teacher sees you do something they don’t like or they think is wrong, they just kind of stick to that perception in their mind?”</p> <p>“Oh heck yes, if you’re a Latino and you behavior bad you are going to be treated harsher, if you’re African/African American you’re going to be treated harsh. If you’re white you are going to get a mild treatment.”</p> <p>Conversation about colorism, black male students says, “light skins get all the girls” “Some people make jokes like hey bro save me some bro, come on.”</p> <p>We be having classes with 30 something people in it, and they are expecting us to be quite. It’s like if one person whispers everyone is going to whisper. It’s going to be hard”</p>
<p>White</p>	<p>Female students get “warnings”, but boys get sent to the Deans office without any warnings given first.</p> <p>Mostly Black and Latino students get sent there more than white students.</p> <p>“There is a class that I been having trouble with said teacher, basically I think his problem is lack of communication sometimes,. Out past art teacher tried to talk to him, but he would talk to her, and if he can’t communicate with her then nothing can change. I know a student who said that he sent him emails and he didn’t answer them, and they said we need to get together and he said he was busy.”</p>