Equity Audit and Report

Prepared for Wilmington Public Schools by Dr. Meg Mayo-Brown on behalf of Commonwealth Consulting Agency, LLC. | JUNE 2022

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Executive Summary

The goal of the Wilmington Public Schools equity audit is to assess student access to high-quality programs, high-quality teaching, just discipline procedures, equitable resources, and root cause analysis of persistent opportunity gaps for students who have been historically marginalized. For purposes of the audit, equity is defined as reducing the predictability of who succeeds and who fails, interrupting inequitable practices that impact students, and cultivating the unique gifts, interests, and talents of every student.[1]

The National Equity Project reframes the work of districts, from approaching equity as closing achievement and opportunity gaps, to one of developing systems to increase capacity to bring about more equitable outcomes and experiences. The findings from this audit indicate Wilmington Public Schools is poised to engage in the deep and complex work to create and sustain inclusive, culturally responsive and affirming schools where all students thrive.

The district is demonstrating strengths in systems serving to advance equitable outcomes and experiences:

- strategic planning provides clear and coherent objectives and priorities
- social emotional learning within all school communities is expected and supported
- multi-tiered systems of support exist for academic and social emotional development
- funding systems are aligned with strategic priorities and the needs of students

The district will need to examine more closely the following systems to increase capacity for equitable outcomes and experiences:

- curriculum, instruction, and professional development that explicitly develops and supports culturally responsive teaching and culturally sustaining practices
- meaningful involvement of students and families to co-create and regularly revisit district objectives and priorities to ensure culturally sustaining approaches and equitable outcomes
- safe and supportive school environments for students identifying as LGBTQ+
- opportunities for listening to and engagement with students and families to identify issues of equity
- explicit support of student's diverse backgrounds and identities with communication that validates and affirms students who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color

Additionally, as the district's equity objectives and priorities become explicit to the WPS community, systems of ongoing monitoring of equitable outcomes and experiences will provide important and relevant information to all stakeholders.

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[1] National Equity Project, https://www.nationalequityproject.org/education-equity-definition

Purpose and Structure of the Audit

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC) offers the following purpose for an equity audit, "an equity audit specifically looks at policies, programs, and practice that directly or indirectly impact students or staff relative to their race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, color, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or other socio-culturally significant factors." Equity audits can be extensive in scope or narrow. Wilmington Public Schools has chosen to focus this equity audit on programmatic and resource equity.

> *The goal of the Wilmington Public Schools equity audit is to assess student access to high-quality programs, high-quality teaching, just discipline procedures, equitable resources, and root cause analysis of persistent opportunity gaps for students who have been historically marginalized.*

Key Questions

The following key questions frame the audit and provide an inquiry-based approach to understanding programmatic and resource equity for WPS students.

1. Does WPS have a specific policy, mission, and vision regarding educational equity?
2. Does each student have access to high-quality and culturally relevant curriculum and instructional materials?
3. Does each student have access to teaching practices that are engaging, culturally relevant, and standards-aligned?
4. Does the teacher and leadership workforce reflect student diversity?
5. Does the WPS funding system distribute adequate funding based on student needs and enable flexible use of funds in ways that are clearly understood?
6. Does each student who needs more high-quality instructional time receive it?
7. Does each student experience a safe school with transparent, culturally sensitive, and consistent expectations and discipline policies?
8. Does each student have access to effective social-emotional learning opportunities?
9. Does each student who needs targeted social-emotional support receive it?
10. Is each student enrolled in a school and attending classes that are racially/ ethnically and socioeconomically diverse?
11. Does each student attend a school that actively and meaningfully engages families?

Methodology

The process for the WPS equity audit involves an analysis of student data (e.g., performance, attendance, course enrollment, graduation/dropout data, attendance, discipline) to explore trends. Additionally, WPS documents are reviewed with a lens toward equity. These documents include policies, handbooks, curriculum, professional development offerings, and budgets. Student, family and staff

surveys are examined for patterns and trends with the aim of understanding perceptions and lived experiences of equitable outcomes for students. Survey data is complemented with focus group experiences with students.

Student Focus Groups – Student focus groups were held on June 9 and 13 at WHS and WMS. Students at WHS attended two focus groups, one for grades 9-10, and one for grade 11. Fifty-two students expressed interest in participating in the WHS groups, and approximately 45 attended. At WMS, twelve students participated at each grade level (6-8) focus group.

The invitation to WHS and WMS parents/guardians included the following language:

The focus group is an opportunity to bring together a diverse group of students to hear their perspectives and viewpoints. The focus group process is a listening session where students are invited to engage in a group conversation that focuses on three main questions:

1. *What does your school currently do to help you do well?*
2. *Is there anything that you need to do well at school that you are not getting?*
3. *What does a class that you learn a lot in look like, sound like, and feel like?*

Focus group questions were adapted from a process used by the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative of Massachusetts Advocates for Children and Harvard Law School ([https://students-speak.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Focus-Group-Report-July_2019-Final.pdf)](https://students-speak.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Focus-Group-Report-July_2019-Final.pdf).

Surveys – Two surveys are used for data purposes in the audit. First, the WPS [Institutional Self-Evaluation Report](#), administered and disaggregated by the district in Spring 2022, provides data on student and staff perceptions, in a number of areas related to equity. Students and staff were provided time during the school day to complete the survey, resulting in a significant response rate of 1,258 students, 304 faculty and staff, and 20 administrators. The second survey, the WPS Parent/Guardian survey (see Appendix A), provided opportunities to gain insight on parent perceptions of their children's experiences in school. The survey prompts were adopted and adapted instruments developed by Panorama Education, specifically the [Family-School Relationship Survey](#), and contained 21 questions and an open-ended question, inviting parents/guardians to share any additional information. The survey was open from June 3 – 15 and a total of 388 parents/guardians responded to the survey. The breakdown of respondents by school was as follows: 29% from WMS, 16% from WHS, 13% from Woburn, 12% from Shawsheen, 9% from North Intermediate, 9% from West Intermediate, 6% from Wildwood, and 4% from Boutwell.

Using the key questions, and a framework offered through the [Alliance for Resource Equity](#), the goal of the audit is to build a "data story" around equity. The structure of the audit report includes in each section an orientation to best practice, followed by WPS data and findings, and recommendations aligned with the next level of work for the district.
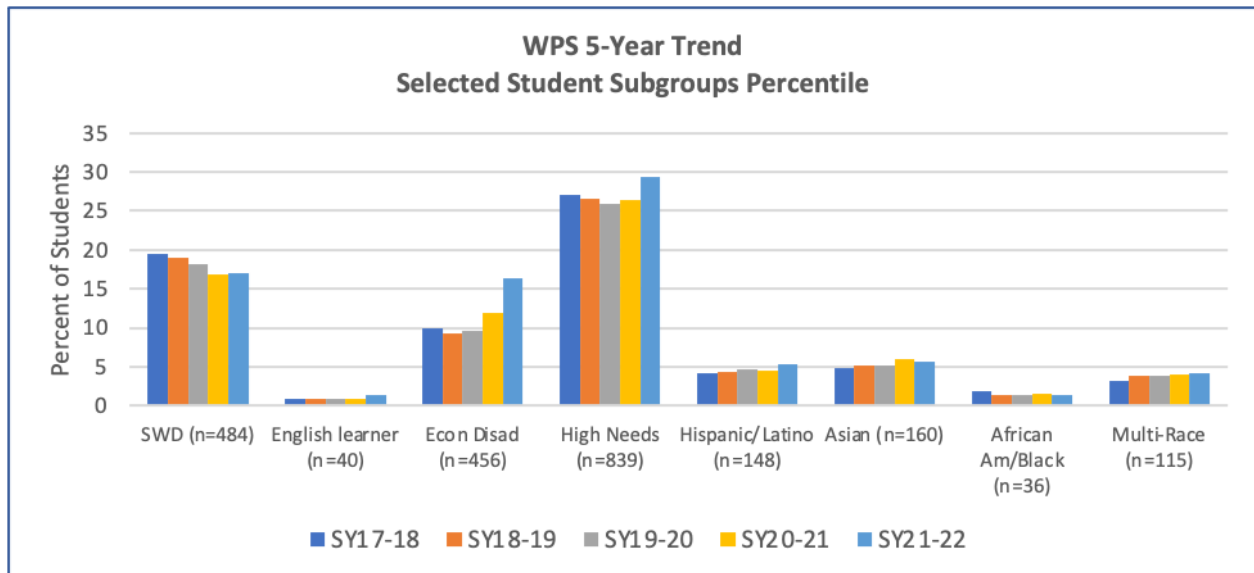
Wilmington Students

Wilmington Public Schools is a district of eight schools, grades preschool through 12. The 2021-2022 enrollment is detailed below.

	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SP	Total
Boutwell	36	92	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**128**
North Intermediate	0	0	0	0	0	137	113	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**250**
Shawsheen Elementary	0	0	123	99	106	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**328**
West Intermediate	0	0	0	0	0	119	94	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**213**
Wildwood	40	118	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**158**
Wilmington High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	129	172	190	203	1	**695**
Wilmington Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	238	189	256	0	0	0	0	0	**683**
Woburn Street	0	0	109	129	108	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**346**
District	**76**	**210**	**232**	**228**	**214**	**256**	**207**	**238**	**189**	**256**	**129**	**172**	**190**	**203**	**1**	**2,801**

In reviewing the district's trends for purposes of the audit, the percentages of students identified as students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged, high needs, African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Multi-Race are noted in the graph below. A five-year trend analysis indicates an increase in the percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged, as well as students identified as high needs. The high needs definition indicates a student is in one or more of the following categories: students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, and/or English learners.

English Learners - During the 2021-22 school year, Wilmington Public Schools had 40 students identified as English learners (EL) with the majority of learners at Woburn Street Elementary School, who represent the most diversity of languages within the district.

English Learners at WPS

	EL#	EL %	Most Common Language, % of English Learners	2nd Most Common Language, % of English Learners	# Languages
Wilmington PS	40	1.4%	Portuguese (25%)	Spanish (12.5%)	13
Boutwell	2	1.6%	Chinese (50%)	Portuguese (50%)	2
Wildwood	4	2.5%	Chinese (25%)	Greek (25%)	4
Woburn Street	18	5.2%	Spanish (22.2%)	Vietnamese (16.7%)	10
Shawsheen	4	1.2%	Gujarati (25%)	Haitian Creole (25%)	4
North Intermediate	3	1.2%	Arabic (33%)	Portuguese (33%)	3
West Intermediate	1	0.5%	Chinese (100%)		1
Wilmington Middle	2	0.3%	Gujarati (50%)	Portuguese (50%)	2
Wilmington High	6	0.9%	Portuguese (66.7%)	Arabic (16.7%)	3

| Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
EL Enrollment – All Race/Ethnicity	26	28	29	28	22	40
African American/Black	2	4	1	0	2	4
Asian	5	4	13	11	10	11
Hispanic/Latino	13	10	7	8	3	14
White	5	9	8	8	6	10
Multi-Race	1	1	0	1	1	1

Source: DESE DART Data (Wilmington Public Schools)

Students with IEPs - Annually, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) collects information on a number of indicators relative to special education programming. Additionally, the state establishes targets for educational environments for students aged 6-21 with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). The most current published data for indicators in this area is for the 2019-20 school year. As described in the table below, 538 students were enrolled in WPS with IEPs. The majority of students with IEPs were in a full inclusion model. However, WPS had more students placed in substantially separate and out of district programs than the state rate.

**Students with Disabilities at WPS**

	Enrollment	District Rate	State Rate	State Target
Enrolled students with IEPs	**538**	--	--	**NA**
Full Inclusion (inside the general education classroom 80% or more of the day)	358	66.5%	66.2%	61.5%
Partial Inclusion (inside the general education classroom 40%-79% of the day)	13	2.4%	13.9%	NA
Substantially Separate (inside the general education classroom less than 40% of the day)	117	21.7%	13.4%	14.3%
Separate Schools, Residential Facilities, or Homebound/Hospital placements (does not include parentally-placed private school students with disabilities)	49	9.1%	6.5%	5.4%

In addition to collecting data on placements for students with IEPs, DESE conducts an analysis to determine if there is a disproportionate over-representation of students from racial/ethnic groups in special education. WPS is not identified as a district with disproportionality.

Attendance – Massachusetts defines **Chronically Absent** as missing at least 10% of days enrolled (e.g., 18 days absent if enrolled for 180) regardless of whether the absences are considered excused, unexcused and/or for disciplinary reasons. Being chronically absent can have a significant impact on a student's ability to read at grade level, perform academically, and graduate on time. In March 2020 Covid-19 caused all schools to be closed for in-person learning; therefore, the data was reported only through March. During school year 2020-2021 schools were operating in both remote and hybrid formats. The five-year trend data below points to equity gaps in student subgroups, particularly in the areas of low income, high needs, and students with disabilities. Disaggregated for race and ethnicity, African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino students are more likely than their peers to be chronically absent, particularly during the pandemic years.
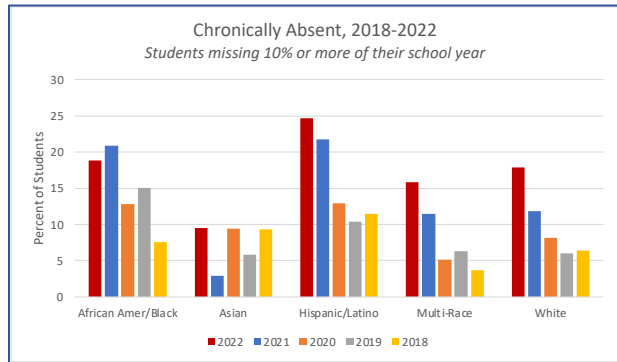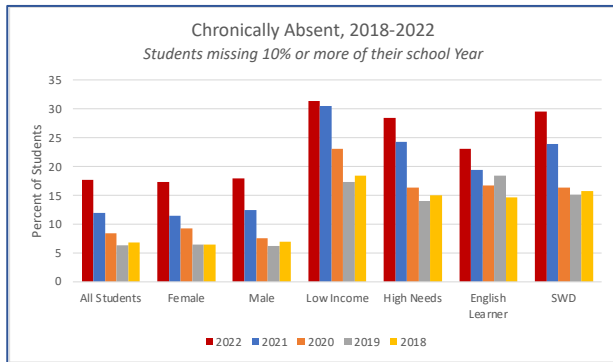
Graduation Rates – In the aggregate, WPS has a 4-year graduation rate (2021) of 95%. A trend analysis over the past four years shows some decline in the rates for students identifying as Hispanic/Latino, as well as students identified as low income. Additionally, female students are beginning to graduate at higher rates than their male peers.
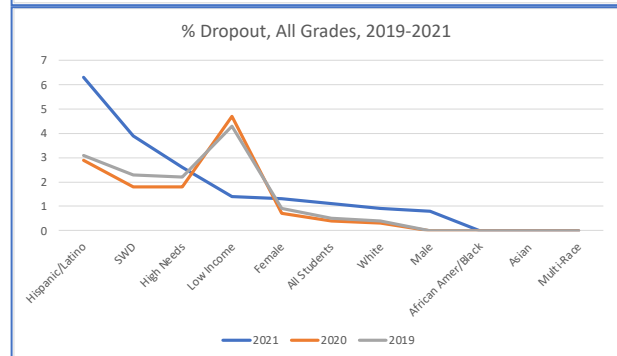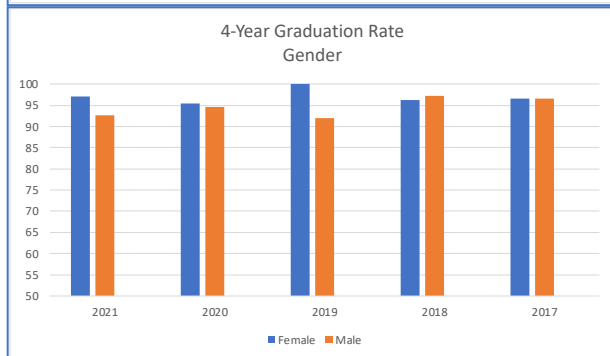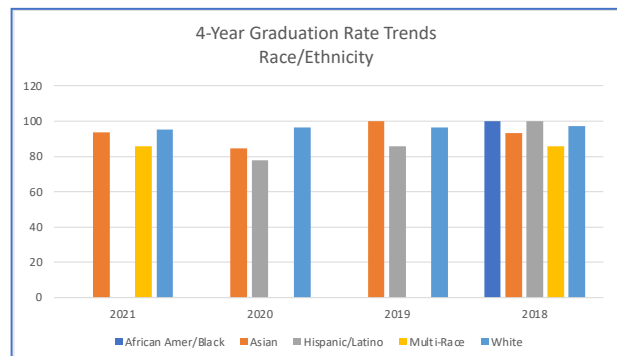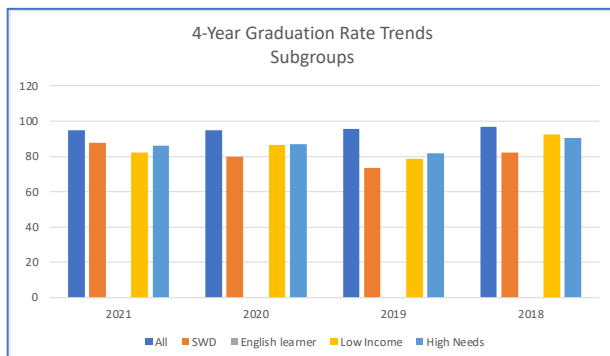
Dropout Rates – In 2020-2021 school year, the number of students identified as Hispanic/Latino in grades 9-12 was 32. Of the 32, two students dropped out, creating a 6.3% dropout rate for the subgroup. Similarly, 70 students were identified in the data as low income in 2020-21. Of the 70, one student dropped out creating a 1.4% dropout rate. However, in years 2020 and 2019, 69 and 64 students were identified as low income, and three students dropped out each year, resulting in a greater than 4% dropout rate for the group.

School Committee Policies and Planning

The National School Board Association (NSBA) encourages school committees to define equity in inclusive terms. Through its own journey, NSBA adopted the following definition of equity:

> *We affirm in our actions that each student can, will, and shall learn. We recognize that based on factors including but not limited to disability, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, students are often deprived of equitable educational opportunities. Educational equity is the intentional allocation of resources, instruction, and opportunities according to need, requiring that discriminatory practices, prejudices, and beliefs be identified and eradicated.[2]*

NSBA recognizes the critical role school committees have in accomplishing equitable outcomes for all students. School committees establish systemwide goals, adopt policy and budgets, as well as review and provide feedback on school improvement plans, school handbooks, and curriculum. Through each of these areas, school committees are uniquely positioned to reaffirm their commitment to equitable outcomes and to take specific actions to ensure each child thrives in the district's schools.

> *Key Question: Does WPS have a specific policy, mission, and vision regarding educational equity?*

WPS Education Equity Policy

The district has numerous policies that address educational equity. Updated in February 2022, the Student Policies Goals (JA) reads, in part: *To individualize the learning program in order to provide appropriately for each student according to his/her specific background, capabilities, learning styles, interests, and aspirations*. Policy JA-E, (updated February 2022) provides extensive language in the expectation of establishing equitable access for all students. For example:

1. *The School Committee of each school district shall establish policies, promote regulations and procedures, and implement monitoring and evaluation practices that support and promote affirmative action and stimulate necessary changes to ensure that all obstacles to equal access to school programs for all persons are removed, regardless of race, sex, gender*

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[2] https://www.nsba.org/Advocacy/Equity/DIRE

identify, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or limited English-speaking ability, no matter how subtle or unintended. Such policies shall include a requirement for an annual evaluation of all aspects of the K through 12 school program to insure that all students regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin are given an opportunity to develop skills, competence, and experience, and to receive appropriate guidance so that they may be able to participate in all programs offered by the school including athletics and other extracurricular activities. Special attention shall be given to schools and programs in which students of either sex or of racial or national origin groups present in the community are markedly under-represented.

2. *If participation in any school sponsored program or activity has previously been limited to students based on race, color, sex, gender identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion, then the School Committee shall make active efforts to insure that equal access to all school sponsored programs or activities be provided within the system.*

Policy JB, Equal Educational Opportunities (updated February 2022), states, in part: *In recognition of the diversified characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the School Committee will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or physical and intellectual differences.*

The district also has a policy AC for Non-Discrimination and Harassment (updated February 2022) stating, "[*the district*] *does not tolerate discrimination against students, parents, employees or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, homelessness, religion, age or immigration status. The District is also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, age or disability. In addition, the District provides equal access to all designated youth groups. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.*"

WPS Strategic Plan

The mission articulated in the Strategic Plan states, "*The mission of the Wilmington Public Schools is to educate and develop students academically, socially, and emotionally to be active, civic-minded contributors to our global society.*"

District Strategic Objective 3 (Culture of Inclusion) provides the following: *Promote an inclusive, collaborative school and community culture that embraces diversity including race, religion, socioeconomic status, ability, gender, sexual orientation and the physical, emotional and learning needs of all students to provide an equitable educational experience.* Action steps within the plan detail a focus on establishing an Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Committee, creating a "vision of an inclusive environment" and diversity and inclusionary professional development for staff. Action steps were set

to occur between Winter 2019 and Spring 2022. Additional action steps within Objective 3 focus on communication and collaboration, as well as family engagement and community partnerships.

Recommendations: Policy and Planning

- ***Establish an explicit vision and definition of equity***. The School Committee can establish its vision for equity by working with stakeholders to explicitly define the concept for Wilmington Public Schools.
    - There are a number of resources and definitions that may be used as a starting point for a community conversation.
        - https://www.nationalequityproject.org/education-equity-definition
        - https://www.nsba.org
        - https://www.educationresourceequity.org/
        - https://f.hubspotusercontent00.net/hubfs/3409306/Systemic-Implementation-of-Equity%20Toolkit.pdf
        - https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Aspen-Education-equity-statement_6.27.2018_Final.pdf
        - https://maec.org/our_work/educational-equity/
- ***Include the School Committee's vision for equity in the School Committee Policy Manual***. The School Committee may wish to add a specific policy (AD) within Section A: Foundations and Basic Commitments.
- ***Review MASC's recommended [Policy JBB Educational Equity](#)*** *(2019).* The policy may provide the School Committee with an explicit stated focus on educational equity, including inclusion of equity practices in the district's strategic plan.
- ***Review and update the WPS Strategic Plan***. The pandemic has caused disruptions in the implementation of district strategic plans. The WPS Strategic Plan should be reassessed in light of the impact of the pandemic on schools, as well as the results of this equity audit.

Teaching and Learning

In understanding whether students with higher needs and students of color are at least as likely as their peers to be held to high academic expectations and to experience instruction that is engaging, culturally relevant, and standards-aligned, a number of data sources are used.
- The WPS [Institutional Self-Evaluation Report](#), administered and disaggregated by the district in March 2022, provided data on student and staff perceptions.

- A trend analysis of subgroup data from Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)
- The WPS Tiered Focus Monitoring Report (9/23/21)
- Curriculum maps and guides for core subject areas
- High school course enrollment disaggregated by level (AP, Honors, CP) and subgroups
- Inventory of adopted curriculum in Tier 1 core subjects

> **Key Question**: Does each student have access to teaching practices that are engaging, culturally relevant, and standards-aligned?

Student and Staff Survey Data

The WPS Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, administered and disaggregated by the district in Spring 2022, provides data on student and staff perceptions, in a number of areas related to equity, through the lens of teaching practices. Students and staff were provided time during the school day to complete the survey, resulting in a response rate of 1,258 students, 304 faculty and staff, and 20 administrators. Students were asked an optional question: *How do you identify?* Not all students responded to the question, and some responded "did not know."

Number of students self-identified race/ethnicity reflected in survey results	
Grades 4 &5	Grades 6-12
African American/Black: 10 students	*African American/Black*: 10 students
Asian: 15 students	*Asian*: 40 students
Hispanic/Latinx: 14 students	*Hispanic/Latinx*: 20 students
Multi-Race/Other/Did not know: 44 students	*Multi-Race/Other/Did not know*: 83 students
White: 196 students	*White:* 529

Students in grades 4-12 were asked to respond to the following statement: *As a student, I feel that my teachers actively support different perspectives, cultural practices, and identities in our classroom.* The data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender for students in grades 4 and 5, as well as secondary students in grades 6-12.
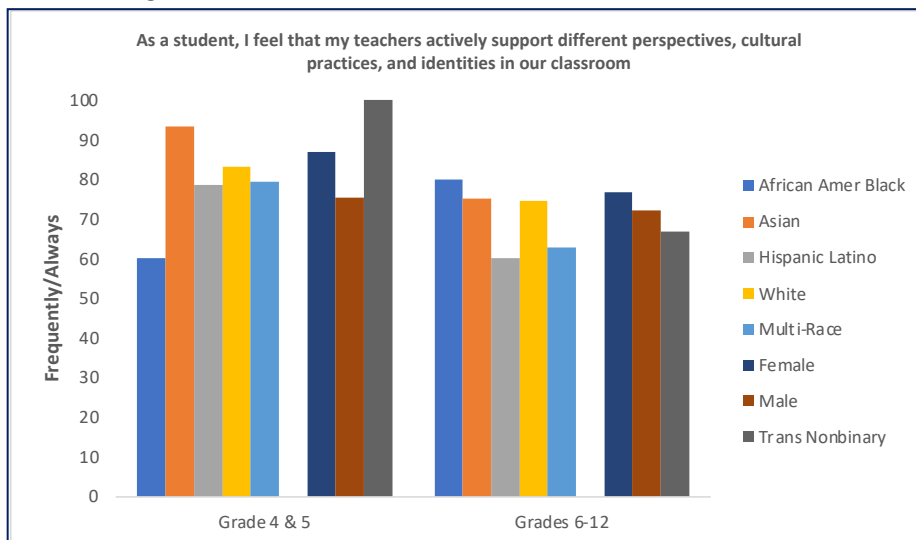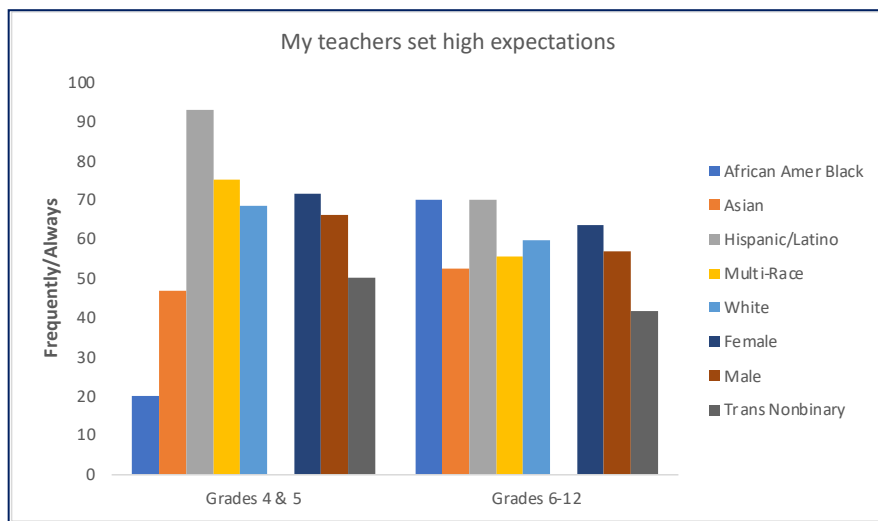

Faculty and staff were surveyed on the following statement:

I seek opportunities to learn about the cultural practices in our school community, including about/from staff, families, and students.

62% of respondents indicated "frequently" or "always"

Students were also asked about their perceptions of the degree to which their teachers set high expectations.

My teachers set high expectations

Faculty and staff were surveyed on the following statement:

I differentiate to meet the needs of students from varying backgrounds and have high expectations for all. I provide the support needed for students to reach high expectations.

94% of respondents indicated "frequently" or "always"

In both instances, perceptions of students and staff show some differences. In the case of high expectations, teachers report having higher expectations than students perceive. Variability of high expectations is noted among African American/Black students (n=10) and Asian students (n=15) in grades 4 and 5, as well as Asian students (n=40) and Multi-Race students (n=83)[3] in grades 6-12. In terms of gender, students identifying as female are reporting a sense of higher expectations as compared to students reporting as male, transgender, or nonbinary. Students in WHS focus groups shared their sense of different expectations for different students within the same class. When asked for an example, students cited opportunities for some students, but not all, to have additional time for assignments or the opportunity to revise work. In the area of supporting different perspectives, cultural practices, and identities in the classroom, many students indicate a sense of active support by their teachers. However, students identifying as Hispanic/Latino and Multi-Race, are less likely than their peers to report a sense of active support. Given 62% of faculty and staff report they frequently seek to learn about cultural practices in their school community, this is an area to consider for professional development to support culturally proficient practice for all students.

The WPS Institutional Self-Evaluation Report offers additional data regarding a number of questions devoted to equitable practices and outcomes. The data above is selected as examples of information that inform this Final Report. In reviewing the district's survey in its totality, in many cases, students in subgroups report that teachers and staff care about them, treat them with respect, and that they are accepted as valued members of their school communities. The district's survey analysis has appropriately identified areas where steps are necessary to ensure equitable practices and outcomes

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[3] Students who responded to the identity question as "did not know" or "other" are included in the district's category of Multi-Race for purposes of analysis.

such as talking with a teacher if someone is treated unfairly, asking an adult for help, and creating a sense of belonging for all students.

MCAS Trend Analysis

MCAS is one tool that can help assess the degree to which students have access to standards-aligned teaching practices. A review of MCAS data (see Appendix B for all graphs) demonstrates that particular groups of students of color in grades 3-8 are performing below their academic peers, as measured by MCAS. For example, African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino students exceed/meet standards in mathematics at 32%, while White students have a rate of 45%. Similar discrepancies are noted in English language arts (ELA)where African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino students exceed/meet standards in ELA at 42% and 44% respectively, while White students have a rate of 55%. White students are selected as the comparison group given that 83.4% of the district's students are identified as such.
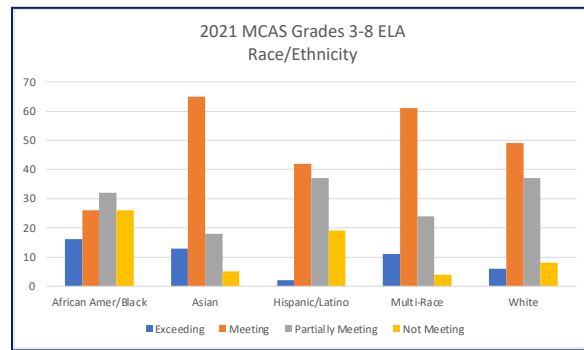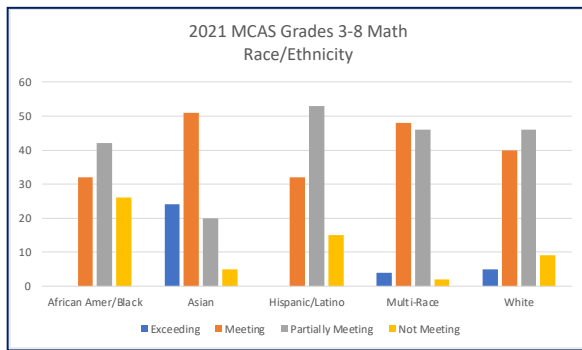
In the area of High Needs, defined as an unduplicated count of all students belonging to at least one of the following individual subgroups: students with disabilities, English learners (EL) and former EL students, or low income students, there is improvement over four testing years from 26% exceeds/meet standard to 31% in English language arts. In Mathematics, performance saw a slight decline from 27% exceeds/meets standard to 23%.
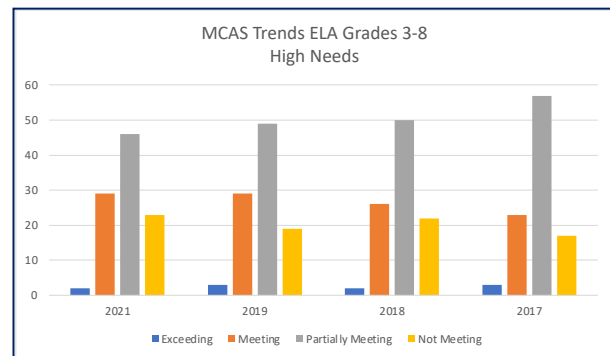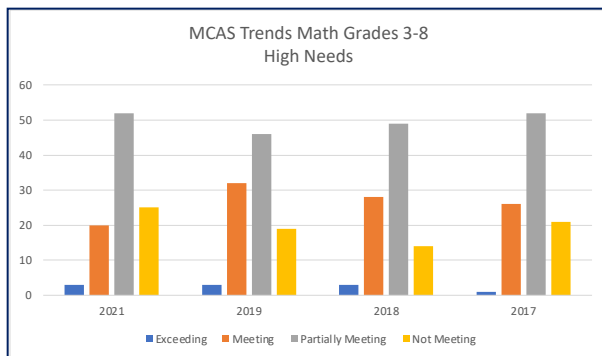
Grade 10 ELA MCAS, disaggregated by subgroups, shows performance percentiles that fall below the average for all students in the categories of students with disabilities, low income, and high needs.

Grade 10 ELA MCAS 2021
% at each level

Grade 10 Math MCAS 2021
% at each level
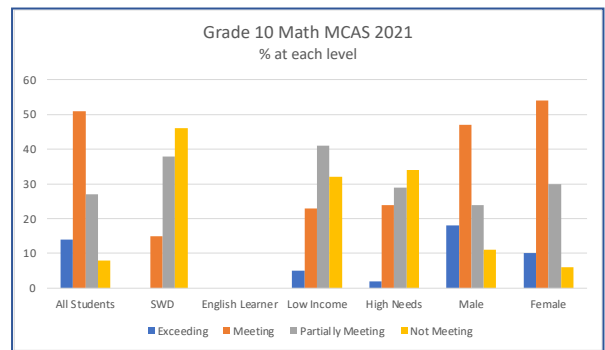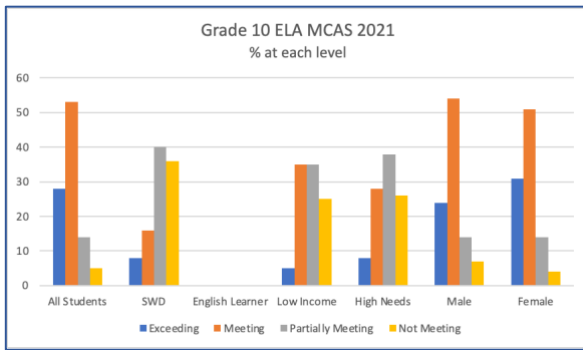
Grade 10 ELA and Math MCAS disaggregated by race and ethnicity provide limited information for comparison purposes, given the relative number of students in subgroups. Achievement level percentages are not calculated for groups with fewer than 10 students, therefore results are not available for a number of the categories. It is worth noting in the area of mathematics, students identified as Hispanic/Latino are exceeding/meeting standard at 20%, while their peers are exceeding/meeting standard at levels of 70-80%.

Grade 10 MCAS Math 2021
% at each level

Grade 10 MCAS ELA 2021
% at each level
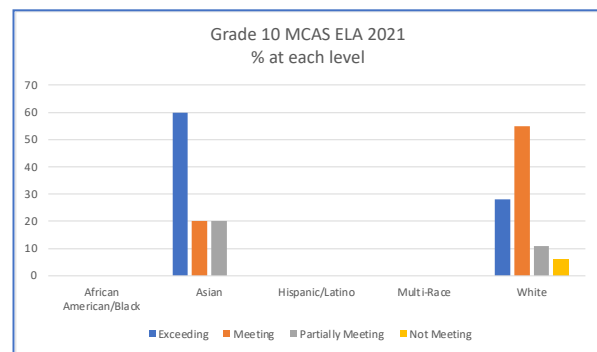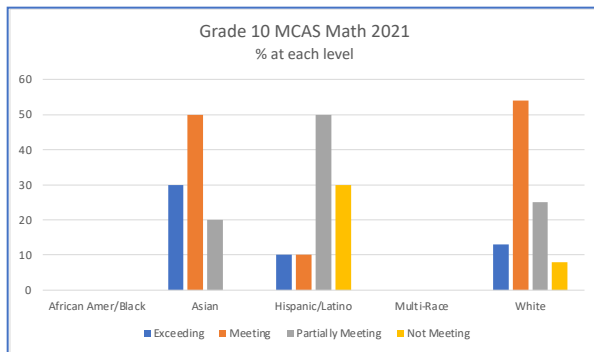
Achievement level percentages are not calculated for groups with fewer than 10 students.

High School Course Trends

The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) collects data from each district on the percentage of all students enrolled in 11th and 12th grade that complete at least one advanced course, including but not limited to Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Project Lead the Way (PLTW), dual enrollment for credit, Chapter 74-approved vocational/technical secondary cooperative education programs and articulation agreement courses, and other DESE-selected rigorous courses. The data below for WHS suggests there are equity gaps in participation across subgroups, particularly post pandemic.
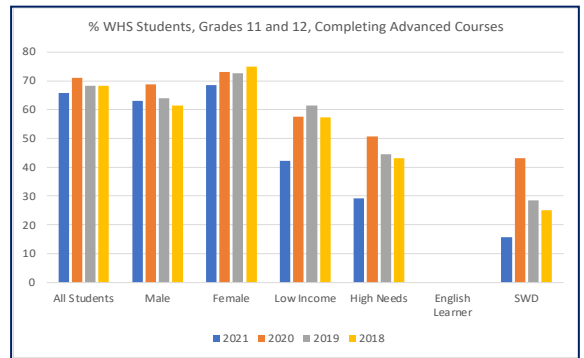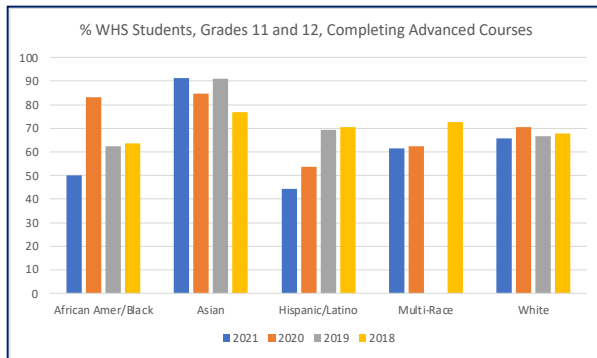
An analysis of WHS core courses that offer College A or Honors suggests Hispanic/Latino, African American, economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities are less likely to be in enrolled in honor level courses. An example of core English courses is provided below.

Crs No	Description	Credit	Level	Total Students	SWD	ED	EL	White	Asian	African American	Native American	Pacific Island	Hispanic Latino
1130	English 9	5	College A	89	16	23	2	83	2	6	0	0	5
1140	H English 9	5	Honors	45	0	8	0	35	12	2	2	0	3
1230	English 10	5	College A	85	13	15	0	79	8	1	1	0	5
1240	H English 10	5	Honors	62	0	8	0	55	10	1	0	0	1
1330	English 11	5	College A	88	11	18	1	82	5	4	0	0	5
1340	H English 11	5	Honors	53	0	4	0	52	3	0	0	0	0
1430	English 12	5	College A	91	22	21	1	87	3	2	2	0	6
1440	H English 12	5	Honors	57	0	8	0	55	3	1	0	0	3

Professional Development

The district publishes a comprehensive professional development plan, articulating the vision, beliefs and processes for professional learning. Within the plan, high quality professional development opportunities are described. The opportunities include curriculum improvement time (CIT), full day professional development programs, Wilmington University, study groups/book groups, technology workshops, action research and curriculum development projects. Importantly, the district's professional development plan includes a New Staff Induction Program, emphasizing the development of content and pedagogical knowledge in the context of the mentoring relationship.

The professional development calendar for 2021-22 includes five early release days, and one full day. The five early release days are primarily focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, known as CIT (Curriculum Improvement Time) days. The full day of professional development (August 31, 2022) provided an overview of the Panorama SEL platform, an introduction to the five core SEL competencies, and an overview of June 2021 survey results. A review of the professional development catalog (Summer 21 – Spring 22) reveals additional professional development opportunities related to curriculum development, instructional practices, trauma sensitive practices, and book studies. In particular, the book studies focused on diversity, equity and inclusion. Examples include How to be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi, Grading for Equity by Joe Feldman, and Obie is Man Enough by Schuyler Bailar.

As the district promotes equitable practices and culturally responsive educational environments, CIT days may provide opportunities for teachers to delve deeper into practices that support equity. In the WPS Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, 17% of faculty and staff report "rarely" or "never" to *I review curricula and assessments for historical accuracy, cultural relevance, multiple perspectives, and anti-bias*, and 24% responded "occasionally." And, 56% of faculty and staff indicate *culturally relevant lessons are embedded in my day-to-day teaching.* In the area of instructional strategies, 72% of faculty and staff responded "always" or "frequently" to "*I seek learning opportunities focused on equity to better meet my students' needs and improve my instructional strategies*. This self-reported data by faculty and staff provides the district with areas to further develop in the district's strategic plan and professional development plan.

Curriculum and Instructional Materials

This area of the audit examines whether students with higher needs and students of color are at least as likely as their peers to have access to curriculum and instructional materials that are high-quality, standards-aligned, and culturally relevant—including differentiated materials designed to meet students' distinct needs.

> **Key Question***: Does each student have access to high-quality and culturally relevant curriculum and instructional materials?*

The Resource Equity Diagnostic Tool offers guiding questions for this area. How do curricular materials—including scope and sequence guides, lesson plans and materials, and assessments—differ across schools in the district? Do all schools consistently use materials that are aligned with grade-level standards? In consideration of these questions, the district's Elementary Pacing Guides, 6-12 Curriculum Maps, and Tier 1 core curriculum are reviewed. The district has pacing guides, assessment calendars, and curriculum maps for all content areas and grades. This centralized approach creates the opportunity for all schools to have consistency with curriculum expectations. In the WPS Institutional Self-Evaluation Report , 83% of faculty and staff "frequently" or "always" *actively dispel racial and cultural stereotypes in my curricula, assessments, materials and classroom décor."*

EdReports is a non-profit organization that facilitates educator-led teams in conducting rigorous reviews of curriculum programs and their alignment to grade-level standards and evidence-based best practices. The WPS curriculum in ELA, math, and science are examined for alignment via EdReports. Enhancing the district's existing procedures for curriculum review, will help to identify gaps in instruction to ensure that students have access to learning experiences that are fully aligned to rigorous standards.

Cultural Responsiveness

It's important that students see themselves represented in curricula whatever the subject matter - the science of whole child development shows context and meaning-making are fundamental elements of teaching and learning (Cantor, et al. 2021). When young people see themselves, their histories and

culture represented in the curriculum, they're more engaged, they feel a sense of belonging, and they're more able to learn.[4]

The WPS Parent/Guardian survey and the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report provide data on access to culturally relevant curriculum and experiences. When asked, *given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is their school,* the majority of parents/guardians (71%) respond as "extremely good" or "quite good." Student responses provide data on their cultural experiences within school environments. Students responded to a series of prompts:

- *My teachers encourage me to learn about people from different cultures*
- *As a student I feel that my teachers actively support different perspectives, cultural practices, and identities in our classroom*
- *At school I am learning about the achievements of people who look like me*
- *I see pictures, artwork and books in school that represent people who look like me*
- *My school celebrates differences*
- *In my school, all the holidays that students celebrate are represented equally*

In general, the district's analysis of student responses disaggregated by race, ethnicity and gender revealed that the set of above prompts signal areas for work and growth in the district, across all races and ethnicities.

During focus groups, and in the context of culturally relevant opportunities, WHS students identified a desire to have curriculum (e.g., US History) expand beyond what is traditionally taught, citing opportunities to learn about different cultures and perspectives. Additionally, students expressed a desire to have the curriculum provide opportunities to address "modern problems" through discussion and sensemaking. One example included events at the Capitol on January 6 (one student expressed disappointment that only one teacher addressed the event when it occurred). Other students commented on missed opportunities to discuss topics related to social justice. It is also important to note, that during the WMS focus group, a student's written response stated, "We NEED diversity. I barely see people who are like me and no teachers like me."

Systems of Support for Student Learning

> **Key Question**: *Does each student who needs more high-quality instructional time receive it?*

The district implements a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) that provides students with opportunities for additional instruction. Examples of intervention materials include Heggerty, Geodes, Fundations, Just Words, Reading A-Z fluency passages, and enVision math intervention. Additionally, five tutor positions, funded through the district's recent ESSER allocation, have been added to provide direct

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[4] https://www.nationalequityproject.org/resources/tools/equity-messaging-guidance-school-districts

student support in mathematics for students in grades K-5. Tutors work with small groups of students identified as needing remediation in mathematics as a part of the district's Response to Intervention (RTI) program. The district's assessment calendar, noted below, is an example of the commitment to ensuring students who need additional instructional time are identified.

GRADES 1-3 UNIVERSAL SCREENING
THE MTSS PROCESS

| 9/7- 10/6	Week of 10/18 *more info to follow*	Following the Data Meetings-2/16	1/18-2/16	Week of 2/28 *more info to follow*	Following the Data Meetings-5/27	5/2-5/27	Week of 6/2 & 6/6 *more info to follow*
Universal Screening	Data Meetings	Intervention Cycles	Universal Screening	Data Meetings	Intervention Cycles	Universal Screening	Data Meetings
All students are assessed	Data meetings are held to analyze results and determine student tiers and intervention plans	Students needing support are provided with targeted intervention for two 7 week cycles Progress Monitoring Meetings held on 12/13, 12/14 and 12/15	All students are assessed	Data meetings are held to analyze results and determine student tiers and intervention plans	Students needing support are provided with targeted intervention for two 6-week cycles Progress Monitoring Meetings held on 4/12, 4/13, & 4/14	All students are assessed	Data meetings are held to analyze results, measure growth and inform planning for the following year

Students were asked in focus groups, and as part of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, if they receive the support they need in order to succeed in school. Students in focus groups reported relationships with teachers were among the biggest contributors to doing well in school. Many students commented they learn more, or better, when they have strong relationships with their teachers. Further explained, students feel the more their teacher knows them, the more their teachers understand how individual learning occurs and what additional supports are needed for success. As one student stated, "I learn more when my teacher is invested in me." Students in the WMS focus groups also commented on "Directed Study" as an important strategy for doing well in school. WHS students described building connections and bonds with teachers "who have open perspectives." Additional student focus group responses emphasized that students prefer to learn with and through each other. Students commented on the importance of working in collaborative groups – in class - where they were able engage in problem-solving, discussions, and various work products. This is in contrast to being assigned groups for projects outside of class where students voiced inequities about workload.

In the district's self-evaluation survey, students were asked to respond to the following statement: *I feel comfortable asking an adult at school for help when needed.* While it is unclear whether students were responding from an academic standpoint, the results are shared here. Parents and guardians (n=387) were asked a similar question on their survey, with 50% indicating their children were "extremely" or "quite" comfortable asking for help and 20% "not comfortable at all."

I feel comfortable asking an adult for help when needed
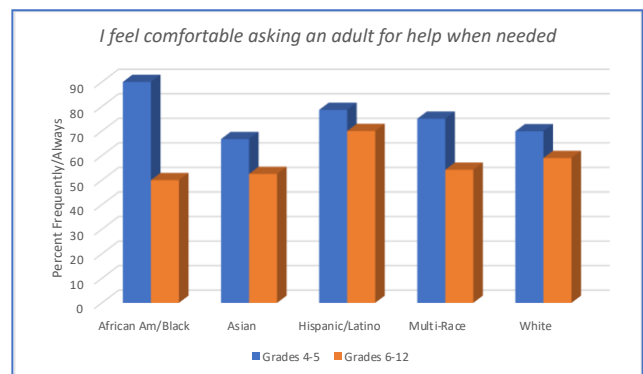
District strategic plans and accompanying school improvement plans are an opportunity to prioritize values, goals, needs, and resources for student learning. The WPS Strategic Plan is an example of purposeful planning, providing strategic objectives for all schools to align school improvement planning, The district's student learning objective promotes academic success for all learners. Within the objective, strategic Initiative 1.2 states, "Ensure that the district has a system of interventions that support all levels of student need." A through line from the district's plan to individual school improvement plans (SIPs) is evident. Below is an example from WMS school improvement plan demonstrating alignment with the district's plan.

District Strategic Objective 1: (STUDENT LEARNING) Deliver innovative, student-centered instruction to promote academic success for all learners.

School Goal 1: Ensure that the middle school has a system of tier 2 & 3 reading interventions that supports students who are reading below grade-level.

Connections between Strategic Initiatives from District Strategic Plan and School Improvement Goal 1 (Check all that apply)

☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7
Curriculum Alignment	**Tiered Support Systems**	**Assessment and Data**	**Professional Development**	**Technology Integration**	**Program Effectiveness**	**PK-12 Experience**
Align curriculum vertically and horizontally to relevant / adopted standards, allowing for the opportunity to build interdisciplinary connections	Ensure that the district has a system of interventions that support all levels of student need (academic, non-academic, etc.)	Develop a philosophy, expectations, and reflective practices around both student-centered instruction and assessment that values data to show student growth	Create a multi-year plan for meaningful and focused professional development that supports the district's strategic objectives	Ensure that our technology integration is strategically developed to support learning in the classroom	Conduct Student Services program revieew and implement an action plan to strengthen student learning	Review / revise the current PK-12 educational experience and estbalish district-wide expectations

In reviewing all SIPs for WPS, two of the district's eight schools (WMS and Woburn) have school goals for tiered support systems for students. This is an area that other schools may want to consider as new SIPs are developed, in order to ensure there is a strong and articulated system in place for students who need additional high-quality instruction. Moreover, as new SIPs are developed for the 2022-23 school year, there is an opportunity to acknowledge and create explicit student learning goals that promote equity (e.g., equity in and access to advanced coursework at the high school).

Recommendations: Teaching and Learning

- Provide professional development to curriculum teams to **screen instructional material for biased content using a review tool**, such as the Washington Model for Screening for Biased Content in Instructional Materials.
- Review curriculum, to include teacher and student feedback, to ensure it is fully representative of the diverse community. Articulate recommendations for supplementing with materials to **increase representation within the curriculum**.
- Consider resources such as Radical Math (https://www.radicalmath.org/) and Teaching for Change (https://www.teachingforchange.org/#) as vehicles to **teach and learn about racial and social justice.**
- Investigate DESE's resources for **Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading**. See Zaretta Hammond's Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain as an additional resource.

- Examine student placement and assignment practices at WHS to **determine root causes for disproportionality in advanced classes**.
- Ensure School Improvement Plans are articulating tiered support systems for students, as well as **explicit student learning goals that promote equity** (e.g., students identified as economically disadvantaged will demonstrate proficiency equal to their academic peers).
- Continue to provide opportunities for students and teachers to **develop strong relationships** grounded in academic and social emotional learning.
- Build **opportunities for listening to students and families** to identify issues of equity. (See Cambridge Public Schools profile of culturally responsive schools and classrooms as an example.)
- **Update the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan** to reflect the district's mission, vision, and current practices.

Social and Emotional Learning

According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, strengthening students' and adults' social-emotional competencies can provide an opportunity to acknowledge and buffer trauma experienced by multiple forms of oppression and systemic inequities; strengthen a sense of positive self-worth and social awareness in connection to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation; and contribute towards dismantling systemic racism and other forms of inequity. In addition to contributing to academic success, SEL programs can also support the development of students' sense of autonomy, agency, and social justice.[5]

CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) provides a lens for systemic implementation of social emotional learning (SEL): *The most effective way to promote SEL infuses social and emotional learning into every part of students' daily lives — across all of their classrooms, during all times of the school day, and when they are in their homes and communities. This requires a coordinated, systemic approach between district leaders, principals, teachers, families, community partners, and other stakeholders[6].*

When SEL is implemented with an explicit goal of promoting equity, CASEL offers the following areas for consideration:
- SEL is relevant for all students in all schools and affirms diverse cultures and backgrounds
- SEL is a strategy for systemic improvement, not just an intervention for at-risk students

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[5] SEL and Equity, SEL Definitions and Approaches, MA DESE, 2022.
[6] What is Social Emotional Learning?, CASEL, 2022

- SEL is a way to uplift student voice and promote agency and civic engagement
- SEL supports adults in strengthening practices that promote equity
- Districts engage students, families, and communities as authentic partners in social and emotional development

> **Key Question**: Does each student have access to effective social-emotional learning opportunities?

WPS has prioritized social emotional learning through its Strategic Plan. District Strategic Objective 2 states, (*Social and Emotional Learning) Foster the well-being of each child to achieve social, emotional and academic success*. Strategic initiatives include professional development for staff and a district-wide SEL approach. In reviewing the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) for each school, opportunities exist to align to the district's SEL objective (see example below). All eight schools provide alignment with SEL integration, and most highlighted opportunities for professional development, as well as structures for Positive Behavior Management Systems (PBIS).

District Strategic Objective 2: (SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING) Foster the well-being of each child to achieve social, emotional, and academic success.

School Goal 2: The North PBIS Team will develop a system of data collection for PAWs, cafeteria behavior, minor and major behaviors. The North PBIS team will collect data on the PBIS initiative and analyze that data to evaluate program consistency and efficacy. A survey developed by the team will be used to monitor and establish growth in the PAWS student recognition system along with parent, staff and student feedback.

Connections between Strategic Initiatives from District Strategic Plan and School Improvement Goal 2 (Check all that apply)					
☐	☑	☑	☑	☐	
2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	
Professional Development	**Social-Emotional Learning Integration**	**Student Engagement**	**Student Transitions**	**School Start Times**	
Offer professional development that provides staff resources to strengthen their ability to meet the social-emotional needs of students	Implement a district-wide social-emotional learning (SEL) approach, PK-12, that is incorporated into all areas of curriculum	Develop a systematic approach to engage students through enrichment and extra/co-curricular activities	Establish practices and protocols to ease transitions between grades and schools and ensure continued social, emotional, and academic success	Explore changing school start times as a means to support student health and well-being	

CASEL provides important clarity on integrating SEL with PBIS:

> *PBIS and SEL have many similar features but are not the same. Both schoolwide SEL and PBIS focus on creating safe and supportive environments, teaching students new skills, and using data to make informed decisions. Their explicit goals, however, differ in that PBIS seeks to ultimately increase positive behavior, while schoolwide SEL seeks to help students build competencies (e.g., understand themselves and others while forming strong relationships and building decision-making skills) that help students learn and navigate the world more effectively. The primary reason for this difference is that SEL and PBIS are grounded in different theoretical frameworks. Schools that are already deeply invested in PBIS can leverage their existing PBIS team to lead schoolwide SEL integration efforts.*

> **Key Question**: Does each student who needs targeted social-emotional support receive it?

WPS has a Coordinator of Behavioral, Social, and Emotional Health, and the district provides a number of resources for families through its website and events. With recent ESSER grant funds provided to school districts following the pandemic, WPS hired two Social Emotional Learning and Family

Engagement Specialists last spring to work closely with the Coordinator. SEL Tiered Supports are articulated for students, staff and families. Advisory occurs once a month at the high school with plans in place to review and revise the curriculum and lessons for the 2022-23 school year. Plans are also in place to launch Advisory at WMS, in partnership with the Association for Middle Level Education (ALME). The district administers the Panorama Student Survey three times a year as a universal screening tool. Faculty participated in professional development on August 31, 2021 as an introduction to the Panorama platform, with instruction on how to navigate the website, and training on the five core CASEL SEL competencies. Additionally, staff reviewed specific district data for trends, as well as their data for their own grade level and class.

Recommendations: Social Emotional Learning

- Use CASEL's rubric to **assess the current level of implementation of evidenced-based practices and programs**.
- Investigate the University of Delaware's online **module on SEL and Schoolwide PBIS integration**.
- **Elevate student voice** (focus groups confirmed this was important to WHS students). See CASEL SEL Trends Volume 2, July 2018: Empowering Youth Voice describing the value of promoting youth voice in schools and with examples from three school districts.

Safe and Supportive Schools

Massachusetts G.L. c. 69, § 1P, defines safe and supportive schools as *schools that foster safe, positive, healthy, and inclusive whole-school learning environments.* These environments recognize the connections between academic success and students feeling safe enough to make friends, form strong relationships with adults, and take risks in the classroom (e.g., speaking up) in order to succeed. Safe and supportive schools model and teach students to regulate their emotions, behaviors, and attention so that it is easier to focus and learn.[7]

> *Key Question:* Does each student experience a safe school with transparent, culturally sensitive, and consistent expectations and discipline policies?

Student Experiences
The WPS Parent/Guardian survey examines a number parent perceptions relative to their child's sense of belonging, acceptance as a valued member in the school community, the effectiveness of discipline,

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[7] Safe and Supportive Schools Commission –Seventh Annual Report, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2021.

and respect of different cultures and perspectives. The survey collected a total of 388 responses from parents/guardians in all eight schools.

- 61% of respondents indicated their child feels a "tremendous" or "quite a bit" of belonging at school, 23% responded "some belonging"
  - A disproportionate number of parents (25%) responded as "some belonging" for children receiving IEP services.
- 64% of respondents indicated the overall approach to discipline works "extremely well" or "quite well" for their child, 25% responded "somewhat well"
- 66% of respondents "strongly agree" or "agree" that staff at their child's school encourage students to respect each other's differences (e.g., gender, race, culture), 26% responded "neutral"
- 59% of respondents indicated their child is "always" accepted as a valued member of the school community, 33.5% responded "sometimes"

My child is accepted as a valued member of the school community
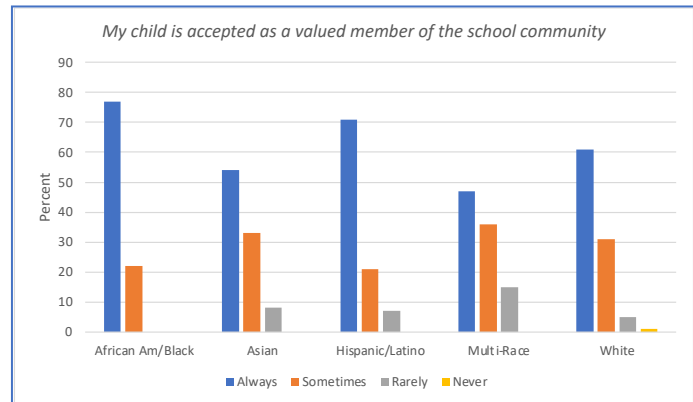
When disaggregating for race and ethnicity in the above categories, the majority of responses from parents of students of color are consistent with overall response rates noted above. It is important to note that where parent responses identified their child's gender as nonbinary or transgender, the majority reported in the categories of "sometimes" or "rarely" in terms of acceptance as a valued member, and "a little bit of belonging" or "no belonging at all" at school.

The WPS Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, (representing grades 4-12 and 1,261 students) asked students to respond to a number of statements that provide data regarding whether students are experiencing safe and supportive school environments. Students selected from the categories of never, rarely, neutral, frequently and always. Results are displayed as the percent of students indicating "always" or "frequently."

- *I am accepted as a valued member of my school community.* While the majority of students report a sense of acceptance, the data indicates a decreasing sense of acceptance in grades 6-12, as compared to grades 4-5, with the exception of students identifying as African American/Black. The data also indicates that students identifying as Multi-Race are more likely to report responses in the "never" or "rarely" categories, as compared to their peers.

I am accepted as a valued member of my school community
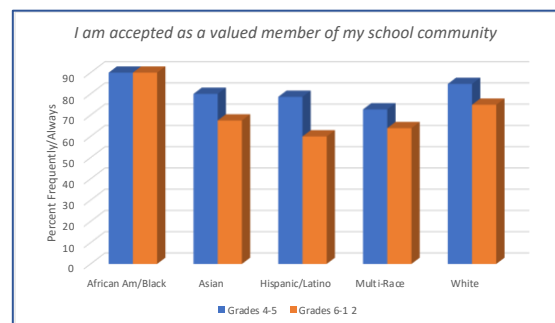
- *I feel emotionally safe at school.* As noted in the chart, students in grades 4-5 were more likely to feel emotionally safe at school, with the exception of students identifying as African American/Black. There are noted equity gaps as results are further disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Students who identify as Asian are less likely to feel emotionally safe in middle school environments. Students identifying

I feel emotionally safe at school

as Hispanic/Latino and Multi-Race were more likely to respond in the categories of "never/rarely" than their peers. During student focus groups, middle school students reported feeling less emotionally safe in unstructured settings, such as the cafeteria, hallways, bathrooms and physical education classes.
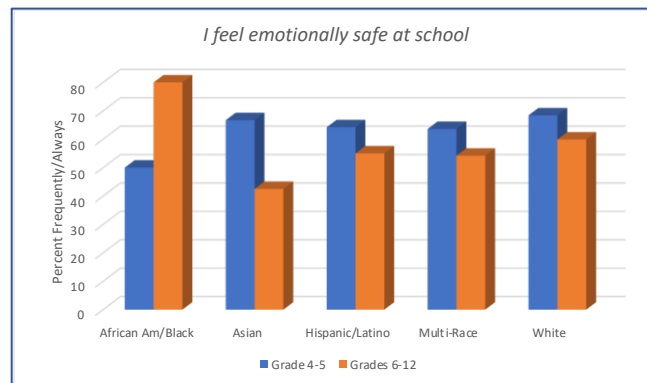
- *I feel comfortable talking with my teachers if someone is treating me unfairly*. Across all race/ethnic groups, significant numbers of students are not comfortable talking with their teachers if someone is treating them unfairly, responding in the categories of "occasionally" or "rarely/never." Additionally, 50% of students who identify as transgender on nonbinary report they "rarely/never" feel comfortable.

I feel comfortable talking with my teachers if someone is treating me unfairly
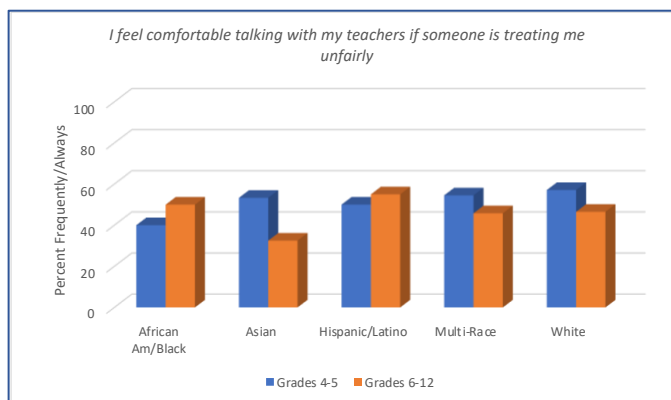
When faculty and staff responded to the statement, *Students and families feel comfortable when reporting inequitable practices or incidents, whether parties involved include me, students, or fellow colleagues,* more than 32% responded as "frequently/always" with 55% responding as "not applicable." During student focus groups, high school students expressed feeling their reports of being treated unfairly, or observing another student being treated unfairly, had the potential of being ignored, or they were unaware of outcomes of their reports. Students suggested an anonymous reporting system as a strategy to bring matters of concern forward.

WMS student focus groups provide additional information about student experiences through the lens of safe and supportive schools. In the context of "safe spaces" (i.e., where students feel emotionally and physically safe in school), students identified school and classroom environments where a sense of belonging is evident. ("I belong there. I am not an outsider. It's not judgy. ") Students once again emphasized the significance of a teacher-student relationship. ("Where the teacher has a connection with you.") In this context WMS students also described spaces where they didn't feel emotionally safe. These spaces included hallways, the cafeteria, bathrooms, and physical education classes. WMS

students did note that some hallways felt safer than others, attributing the sense of safety to teachers being present in the hallways. A number of WMS students discussed the presence of bullying in these spaces or during unstructured time. This was more prevalent among grade 6 students, who cited examples where bullying and teasing is based on that "you are different." When probing for clarity on the term "different" students cited race, disability and introversion as three areas. Students are confident that teachers intervene when these behaviors are observed.

During the WHS focus groups, students were clear about their desire to "hold people accountable." This call to action is grounded in examples that include disparate treatment for students who identify as LGBTQ. (WMS students also raised this concern citing an example that a Pride Day flag was torn down and stepped on by students.) The Wilmington Youth Risk Behavior Survey results indicate genderqueer students (n=40) were significantly less likely to agree or strongly agree that they feel close to people at their school. The WHS students' demand for accountability in instances that involve disparate treatment based on race, sexual orientation and gender are meant for their peers, as well as the adults in the building. As one student stated, "nothing is done about racial slurs and the homophobia that exist in the building."

WHS students also expressed a strong desire for transparency in understanding what happens when they report a concern. Students articulated their understanding for confidentiality, but need a sense that their areas of concern are being addressed. Additionally, students suggested that problems could be recognized earlier, with the school taking a proactive stance versus a reactive stance. Students requested opportunities for continued focus groups in the spirit of transparency, and a focus on "cultural kindness" within the school.

School Discipline

WPS school discipline policies and procedures are outlined in student handbooks. As mentioned in a previous section, many of the district's schools are implementing Positive Behavior Management Systems (PBIS). An excerpt from the Shawsheen Elementary handbook addresses the approach: *PBIS is our positive behavior system that we as a school have developed over the past 5 years. The PBIS team is made up of staff, a parent representative and administration. The students will be taught one lesson a day in order to teach the behaviors outlined in the behavior matrix.*

More recently, schools across the country have explored culturally responsiveness as a core component of PBIS in consideration of diversity, inclusion, and equity. The Center on PBIS explains, "for students who are not from the dominant culture, the school environment can expose them to unintentional slights, which devalue their backgrounds and diminish school connectedness. Thus, this environment can either engage students through validation and affirmation of their identity (including their cultures and individual learning histories) or disengage them through these unintentional slights." (p. 6) As WPS continues its development of PBIS across schools, there is an opportunity to elicit ownership, voice, and broad representation of school families and communities. In the WPS Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, 82% of faculty and staff reported in the categories of "frequently" and "always" to the following

statement: *My behavior expectation and policies have taken into account the varying cultural expectations and norms in my student population*. Given this mindset among staff, there is opportunity to create school wide PBIS matrices with cultural responsiveness as a core component.

The [Student Discipline Data Report](#) reports the discipline that public school students in Massachusetts received for the offenses committed, as reported by school districts in the School Safety Discipline Report (SSDR). Four years of WPS data were analyzed, which includes years impacted by the pandemic, resulting in remote instruction and hybrid instruction, with fewer students disciplined. An analysis of data within subgroups, indicates higher rates of suspension for students identified as students with disabilities, high needs, or

% Out of School Suspension, 2018-2021

economically disadvantaged. Male students have higher rates of suspension than female students. During pre-pandemic years (2018, 2019), Hispanic/Latino students were more than twice as likely to be suspended out of school than their peers. Given the disruptions of the pandemic, discipline data should continue to be monitored for patterns and trends.
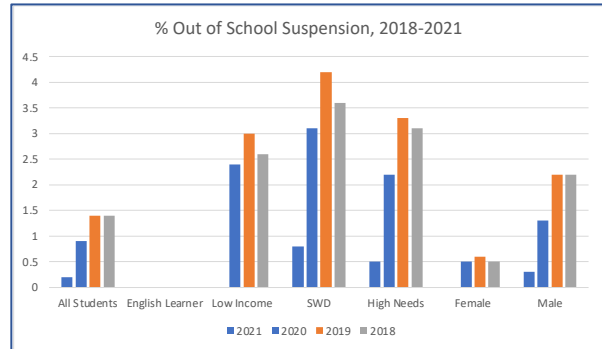
Recommendations: Safe and Supportive Schools

- Use the [PBIS Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide](#) to **assess and review culturally responsive practices** systemically to enhance equity in school discipline.
  - Identify any existing expectations or matrices and assess existing expectations based on fit with values and needs of students, families, and the community
- Continue to develop, launch, and monitor a **high-quality advisory programming** at WHS and WMS that focuses on relationship-building between adults, peer to peer relationships, and school connectedness.
- Ensure a culturally sustaining approach to school policies by meaningfully involving students and families throughout the process of **co-creating and regularly revisiting district objectives and priorities**, including those related to self-expression.
- Promote ongoing student engagement to foster a safe and supportive school climate. Use a wide variety of techniques to **engage students and gather their feedback** through surveys, focus groups, forums, and/or townhalls. Ensure that any concerns raised by students receive follow-up.
- Continue to support staff members to use the types of practices—including positive behavior reinforcement, logical consequences, restorative justice, trauma-informed approaches, and culturally sustaining pedagogies— that **grow students' social-emotional skills in a safe,**

supportive, and inclusive environment and that help students develop skills in the early grades to positively develop both identity and independence.

▪ Collect and regularly **review data on student relationships and sense of belonging**, to determine whether students of all backgrounds feel adequately connected to staff and their peers, and to assess which relationship-building practices are most effective to inform targeted and continuous improvements.

Family Engagement

The Massachusetts Family Engagement Coalition recently published Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts (2020). Within the definition of family engagement, the report offers the following statement on equity:

> *Family engagement must be equitable. Meaningful family and community engagement promotes a practice of cultural and linguistic competence. Equity, which is the elimination of privilege, oppression, disparities, and disadvantage, is one of the core values of family engagement. Equitable family engagement embraces diversity among children, youth, and families. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, different racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, family structures, and abilities, or special needs.* (p. 4)

Moreover, quality family engagement can have a lasting effect on a child's social-emotional and physical health, school readiness, academic achievement, and later success in life (e.g. Smith, Robbins, Stagman, & Mahur, 2013; Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013; Henderson, & Mapp, 2003).

> **Key Question***:* Does each student attend a school that actively and meaningfully engages families?

The WPS Parent/Guardian survey asks the degree to which respondents feel welcome at their child's school. The graph below indicates that the majority of parents feel welcome at their child's school. When disaggregating survey data by race and ethnicity, trends aligned with survey results in the aggregate, with the vast majority of all parents responding as strongly agree/agree.

I feel welcome at my child's school
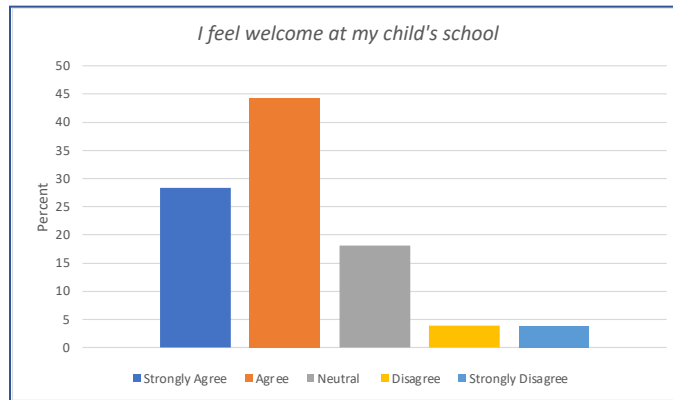
The WPS Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, provides additional data in response to family relationships. Students in grades 4-12 were asked to respond the following: *My teachers have created positive relationships with my family.* Student responses (n=1261) have been disaggregated by race and ethnicity and are displayed in the graph.

My teachers have created positive relationships with my family
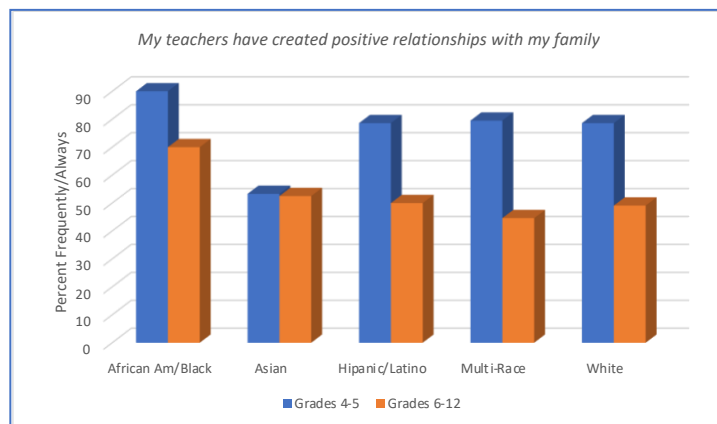
While the majority of students in grades 4-5 report positive relationships between their teachers and families, student response data indicates the sense of positive relationships decreases in secondary grade levels. Notably, students identifying as Asian report the lowest sense of positive family engagement in grades 4-12. The faculty and staff portion of the survey asks a similar question: *I create positive relationships with families so that we can work as teams to best meet their children's needs.* More than 90% of staff respondents (n=304) answer "frequently" or "always."

Given the foundation of a welcoming culture at schools, based on survey results, there are opportunities for WPS to build upon current practices to intentionally promote equitable and meaningful family engagement. The State Support Network offers five major types of evidence-based strategies for promoting equitable family engagement:

- Making a commitment to equitable family engagement
- Making equitable family engagement "business as usual"
- Building relationships between staff and families
- Meaningfully involving and engaging families and trusted community advocates
- Engaging outside of the school building

The WPS Strategic Plan sets forth the expectation that schools will focus on equitable family engagement through District Strategic Objective 3: *Promote an inclusive, collaborative school and*

community culture that embraces diversity including race, religion, socioeconomic status, ability, gender, sexual orientation and the physical, emotional and learning needs of all students to provide an equitable educational experience. Strategic Initiative 3.3 states, *Engage families in multiple and meaningful ways to bridge home and school partnerships*. A review of the WPS school improvement plans indicates that schools have aligned with the overall Strategic Objective, however school goals and initiatives are absent specific goals that articulate intentionality on engaging families through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. There are opportunities as new SIPs are developed to include strategic initiatives explicitly focused on equitable family engagement.

Recommendations: Family Engagement

- Use the Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment Version 2.0 to **identify specific areas to enhance family engagement**.
- Participate in DESE's Family Engagement Networking & Professional Development Series. Past topics have included *Supporting a Deeper Understanding of Culture and its Role in Family Engagement Work, Anti-Racist Family Engagement, and Supporting Students Mental Health with Family Engagement in Mind.*
- Ensure School Improvement Plans offer goals and strategic initiatives to **engage families through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion**.
- Review Strategies for Equitable Family Engagement as a resource for district and school strategic planning. Evidenced-based strategies include:
    - Clearly articulate a vision for equitable family engagement
    - Offer intentional structures to practice listening to families over time
    - Welcome families in consistently appropriate and culturally competent ways

Teacher and Principal Diversity

Research shows that students of color and students from linguistically diverse backgrounds benefit from being taught by a teacher of the same race or ethnicity[8]. Approximately 16% of WPS students identify as students of color. Thus, this equity audit examines the extent to which the district employs a diverse teaching staff that reflects student diversity, including in schools that serve greater proportions of

---

[8]Blazar, David. (2021). Teachers of Color, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Student Outcomes: Experimental Evidence from the Random Assignment of Teachers to Classes. (EdWorkingPaper: 21-501). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: https://doi.org/10.26300/jym0-wz02

students of color and students from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the racial and ethnic diversity of the school leader workforce is compared to the racial and ethnic diversity of student and staff populations across all schools.

> **Key Question**: *Does the teacher and leadership workforce reflect student diversity?*

Staff data is collected by MA DESE on an annual basis from each district. Data is publicly reported on each district's profile page. The Staffing Data by Race, Ethnicity, Gender by Full-time Equivalents (2021-22) for WPS is detailed below.

Race, Ethnicity, Gender by Full-time Equivalents	FTEs
African American	1.0
Asian	4.0
Hispanic	7.0
White	462.8
Native American	1.0
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	2.0
Males	75.4
Females	402.4
FTE Count	477.8

When further disaggregating data by role, race and ethnicity to examine the teacher, paraprofessional and leadership workforce, it is noted that there are few staff who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity within the district's schools.[9] Paraprofessionals represent the greatest diversity among staff in these categories. Staff are reported below by full time equivalent (FTE).

	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White	Native American	Multi-Race
Teachers	0	0.6	2.6	236.2	0	1
Paraprofessionals	1	2	3	62.6	1	0
Principals	0	0	0	8	0	0

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[9] https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/teacherbyracegender.aspx

Recommendations: Teacher and Principal Diversity

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education offers a [Guidebook](#) for Promising Recruitment, Selection, and Retention Strategies for a Diverse Massachusetts Teacher Workforce. The following recommendations are referenced in the Guidebook.

- **Define why** a more racially and ethnically diverse teacher workforce is important for WPS students.
- **Design a value proposition** for candidates of color to come to WPS.
- Implement pipeline strategies that target and cultivate racially and ethnically diverse candidates.
    - Intentionally partner for and coordinate student teaching candidates to secure diverse candidate placements
- Build a **diverse selection committee** representative of the teachers the district hopes to hire. As much as possible, the staff on the committee should represent a variety of races, ethnicities, genders, ages, and other identities. A diverse selection committee helps to prevent bias in the selection bias.
- Help selection committees **articulate and align on the type of teacher candidate** they are looking for and how to identify those characteristics (e.g., cultural competencies, growth mindsets, and who have experience delivering targeted social-emotional, physical and mental health, and/or family supports.
- **Differentiate retention strategies**.
    - Create affinity spaces for teachers of color. These groups provide an important social and professional network for staff of color to engage with each other and share experiences, workshop challenges and explore innovations.
    - Hold stay conversations - talk to teachers of color about continuing to teach and lead.
- **Monitor retention rates with as much detail as possible**. Track or obtain teacher retention and attrition by race and ethnicity, gender, subject area, grade level, certification status, years of experience, and compensation. Then, analyze data to determine who is leaving and staying.

> *The* Teacher Value Proposition *is a set of attributes that candidates and employees perceive as the value they gain through employment in an organization. These include both tangibles (such as benefits, compensation, career pathways) and intangibles (such as culture, support system, and mission*).

School Funding

The Alliance for Resource Equity establishes a vision for equitable school funding:

> *Each student—including students with higher needs and students of color— attends school in a district that distributes funding based on the needs of its students, by way of flexible and transparent funding systems, so all students can reach high standards and thrive.*

Additionally, the framework describes three common causes of inequity[10]

- **Insufficient District Revenue:** When overall funding levels are insufficient, it can limit a district's ability to different spending based on students' needs.
- **Limited Differentiation:** A district's funding formula may not meaningfully differentiate between schools to meet the unique needs of all students and all schools.
- **Insufficient Transparency:** Because a district's funding formula may not be shared broadly in accessible ways, school leaders and the community may not understand which resources each school receives and why.

For purposes of the audit, the vision for equitable funding and the three common causes of inequity are applied.

WPS Context for Budgeting

The WPS budget process makes visible, in fiscal planning and the allocation of resources, the district's strategic direction, mission, and vision. Resource use is aligned with the district's vision and strategy.

> The mission of the Wilmington Public Schools is to educate and develop students academically, socially and emotionally to be active, civic-minded contributors to our global society.
>
> The Wildcat Circle of Values: Community – Inclusivity – Respect – Collaboration – Learning – Engagement
>
>
>
> The Wilmington Public Schools, in conjunction with the community, provides an inclusive, respectful and collaborative learning environment where all stakeholders are engaged in the development of the whole child.

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[10] https://www.educationresourceequity.org/dimensions/funding

As an example, during the FY23 budget process the Superintendent highlighted a priority for fund use to support Objective 3: Culture of Inclusion

> *Promote and inclusive, collaborative school and community culture that embraces diversity including race, religion, socioeconomic status, ability, gender, sexual orientation and the physical, emotional and learning needs of all students to provide an equitable educational experience.*

District Revenue – According to the most [recent public data](#) available through the MA DESE website, WPS receives revenue from the federal and state sources as identified in the chart. The remainder of revenue is generated from the local appropriation.
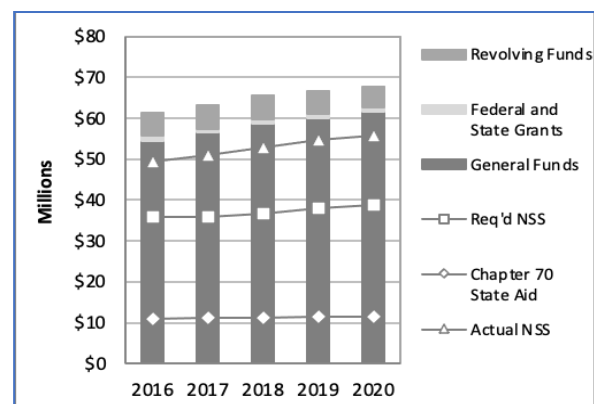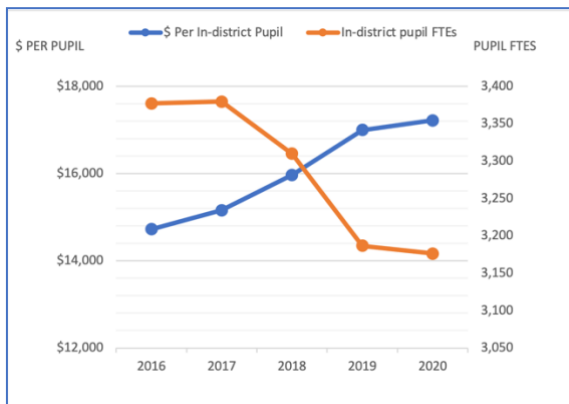
WPS invests in education well beyond minimum requirements set by the State. Specifically, in the most recent public data available through MA DESE, WPS spent $16.6m above Net School Spending (NSS). This places WPS among the highest per pupil expenditures among [DESE-identified comparable districts](#) by wealth and [demographics](#).

Does not include local levy tax funds appropriated in municipal district budgets	Wilmington		
	2018	2019	2020*
Assessments Rec'd by Regional Schools	--	--	--
E&D Fund Appropriation (Reg'l Only)	--	--	--
Tuition from Individuals	--	--	--
Tuition from Other MA Districts	--	--	--
Tuition from Other States	--	--	--
Carry Forward	--	--	--
Transportation Fees	--	--	--
Earnings on Investments	--	--	--
Rental of School Facilities	--	--	--
Other Revenue	2,648	--	--
Medical Care and Assistance	174,866	179,518	119,612
Non-Revenue Receipts	--	--	--
General funds total	**177,514**	**179,518**	**119,612**
Chapter 70 School Aid	11,270,330	11,371,910	11,469,170
Charter School Reimbursements		18,737	2,249
Charter School Facilities Aid	2,974	4,465	3,742
Pupil Transportation - Chapter 71, 74	27,443	31,140	9,250
Foundation Reserve	--	--	--
MSBA Annual Contract Revenues	--	--	--
MSBA One-time Revenues	--	--	--
Circuit Breaker	2,113,809	2,535,744	2,498,142
State aid total	**13,414,556**	**13,961,997**	**13,982,553**
Federal Grants - DOE	964,031	989,148	982,134
Federal Grants - Other	29,618	--	
Federal grants total	**993,649**	**989,148**	**982,134**
State Grants - DOE	3,360	7,500	6,500
State Grants - Other	77,900	77,900	75,000
State grants total	**81,260**	**85,400**	**81,500**
School Lunch Receipts	1,344,090	1,399,314	1,177,536
Athletic Receipts	223,708	233,616	149,098
Tuition Receipts - School Choice	--	--	--
Tuition Receipts - Other	1,576,962	1,646,661	1,025,327
Other Local Receipts	564,527	496,931	387,977
Private Grants	--	--	--
Revolving funds total	**3,709,287**	**3,776,522**	**2,739,938**
Total Revenues	**18,376,266**	**18,992,585**	**17,905,737**

Year	In-District Expenditures	Total In-district FTEs	In-District Expenditures per Pupil	Total Expenditures	Total Pupil FTEs	Total Expenditures per Pupil
2020	$54,689,315.00	3,176.4	$17,217.39	$61,784,533.00	3,246.4	$19,031.71
2019	$54,164,567.00	3,186.7	$16,997.07	$61,192,272.00	3,277.0	$18,673.26

Year	Required NSS	Actual NSS	Amount Over or Under Required	Actual NSS as % of Required	Foundation Budget	Actual NSS as % OF Foundation
2019	$37,922,292.00	$54,586,651.00	$16,664,359.00	144	$34,794,527.00	157

As indicated by the charts below, WPS continues to steadily invest in education. The five-year trend indicates the investment of largely local resources to support the needs of WPS schools.[11]

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[11] DESE Dart Tool, https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/analysis/finance.aspx?orgcode=03420000&orgtypecode=5&

Differentiation – The FY23 adopted budget is examined to determine if differentiation exists in order to meet unique student needs across schools. A number of examples are evident that demonstrate differentiation across schools.

- A special education teacher at WMS
- A school counselor at Woburn Street School
- Increased ESL staffing, ESL materials, and translations/interpreter services

Additionally, ESSR I, II, and III funds support 2 SEL and Family Engagement Specialists, 1 School Counselor to implement SEL at both Early Childhood Centers, 5 General Education Tutors to support math in grades K-5, and 6 Special Education Assistants to support ABA programs Prek-8.
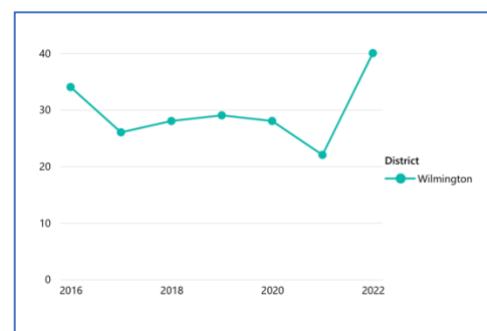
Transparency – The district's budget process is highly transparent, including the following public materials available on the district's website:

- A public packet for the Superintendent's Preliminary Budget outlining five years of expenditures with proposed changes by schools and departments
- A December 15, 2021 Preliminary Budget Presentation to the School Committee, outlining process, priorities, and budget assumptions
- A January 19, 2022 Superintendent's Recommended Budget Presentation to the School Committee, connecting the budget to the district's mission, vision, and strategic priorities.
- A February 16, 2022 Budget Hearing with available line item budgets organized by schools and departments, including five years of expenditures.

Recommendations: School Funding

- To further the already evident transparency in the budget process, consider **publishing comparisons of spending** by developing spending reports that include: contextual information about each school (such as levels and types of student need); the total per-pupil spending level of each school for the past several years; a breakdown of the source, destination, and location (school-level or central office) of spending. This may be of particular importance as the district's population of students who are identified as English learners and economically disadvantaged appear to be increasing.
- Continue to **monitor district demographics** that may warrant increased spending in particular schools. For example, the graph illustrating the increase of English learners points to the need for ongoing monitoring so that the district can proactively prepare and resource impacted schools.

Document Review

| Document	Available
2019-22 Wilmington Public Schools Strategic Plan	https://www.wpsk12.com/our_district/strategic_plan
School Committee Policies	https://www.wpsk12.com/cms/one.aspx?pageId=26933083
School Handbooks	https://www.wpsk12.com/families_and_counity/handbooks
The Successful Middle School Assessment Report, Jan/Feb 2022	https://www.wpsk12.com/our_district/middle_school_program_review/reports_and_presentations
Annual State and Federal Mandated Review/Training Information	https://www.wpsk12.com/staff_resources/civil_rights
School and District Report Cards	https://www.wpsk12.com/our_schools/school_and_district_report_cards
DESE Profiles	https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/general/general.aspx?topNavID=1&leftNavId=100&orgcode=03420000&orgtypecode=5
WPS Tiered Focus Monitoring Report (9/23/21)	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WQXXZnf2hr87kUMooqmvwL4CQksNkwRM/edit
2021 Wilmington YRBS Report	https://www.wpsk12.com/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=48028103
WPS SOA Plan	https://p19cdn4static.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_26809189/File/News/2020/SOA%20Draft%20for%20Web%204.9.2020.pdf
WPS Annual Report, 2020-2021	https://www.wpsk12.com/news/what_s_new/2020-2021_w_p_s_annual_report
District Curriculum Accommodation Plan	https://p19cdn4static.sharpschool.com/Useles/Servers/Server_26809189/File/Families0and%20Community/Family%20Info/WPS_AP_Plan_2016-2017.pdf

SEEM Education Collaborative joint position: Coordinator of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	https://www.wpsk12.com/news/what_s_new/seem_collaborative_edi_joint_position_announcement
FY23 WPS Recommended Budget Information	https://www.wpsk12.com/our_district/administration_and_finance/budget
Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)	https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/default.html
Professional development plan/calendar or a menu of professional development provided in the district in 2021-22	• PD Plan/Handbook • Opening 10 Days of PD 20-21 school year - the links to workshops are embedded throughout the plan. • December 2020 ER PD Day Schedule • January 2021 ER Day PD Schedule • PD Catalog activities for summer 21 through current (we did not have this PD tracking system prior)
Results from any external audits/assessments completed in the past two years	CR25 CIMP Institutional Self Evaluation Report
Employee handbook	Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook
Curriculum maps and guides for core subject areas	Elementary Pacing Guides 6-12 Curriculum Maps
Inventory of adopted curriculum in Tier 1 core subjects	• Heggerty • Phonemic Awareness • Fundations K-3 (4/5 pilot of Language Word Study) • Units of Study Readers and Writers Workshop K-5 • Envision Math K-8 • Elevate Science K-5/ Investigations Science 6-8 • McGraw Hill SS 6-11 (Elem SS in pilot process)
High school course enrollment disaggregated by level (AP, Honors, CP) and subgroup (SWD, ED, EL, race)	HS Course Data
Inventory of tiered support available (Including SEL curricula) with each school in the district	K-5 Reading and Math Intervention provided through MTSS model (materials used, Heggerty, Geodes). Fundations, Just Words, Reading A-Z fluency passages, Envision Math Intervention materials) • SEL Tiered Supports for Students • SEL Tiered Supports for Staff • SEL Tiered Supports for Families

Appendix A
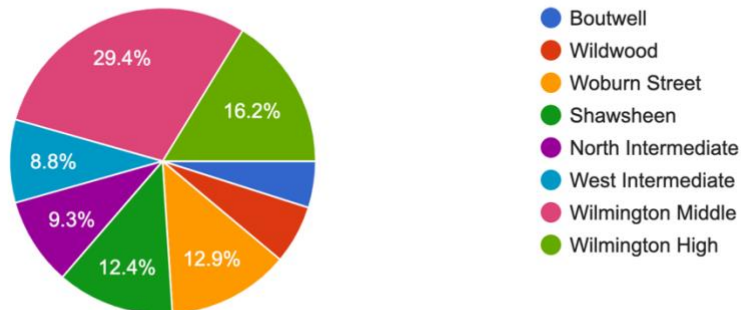
Results from WPS Parent/Guardian Survey

Please tell us the current grade level of your child.
388 responses
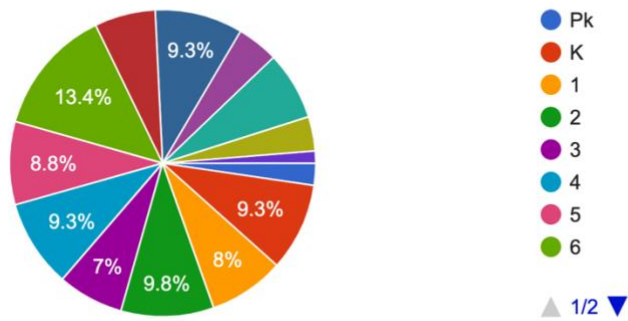
Please tell us which school your child attends.
388 responses

Is your child receiving any services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan?

387 responses

- Yes
- No

71.8%

28.2%
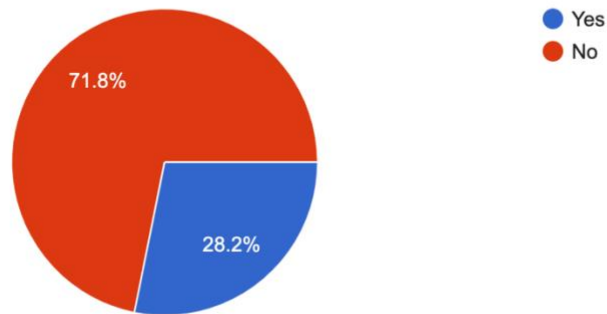
Your child's gender?

382 responses
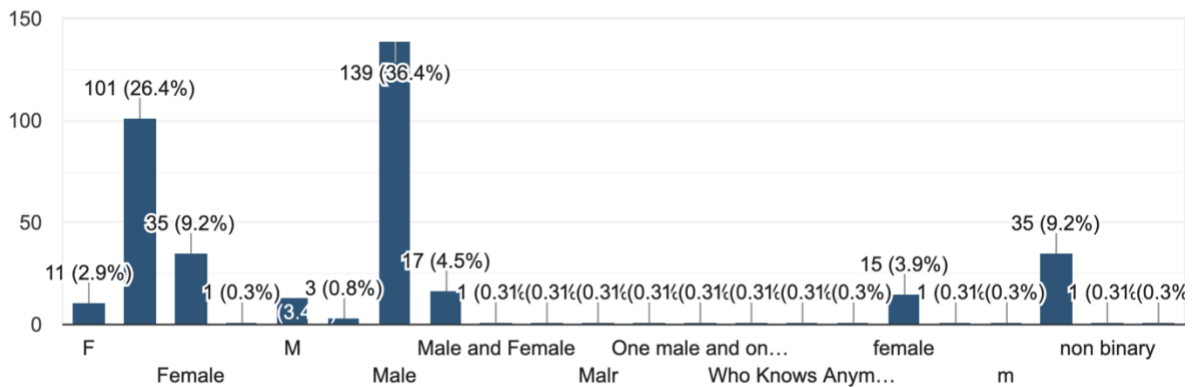
How would you describe your child's race or ethnicity?
382 responses

Category	Count
American Indian or Alaska Native	0 (0%)
Asian	29 (7.6%)
Black or African American	12 (3.1%)
Hispanic/Latino	15 (3.9%)
Multi-Racial	20 (5.2%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacifi…	0 (0%)
White	327 (85.6%)
American	2 (0.5%)
White and Hispanic	1 (0.3%)
Not important	1 (0.3%)
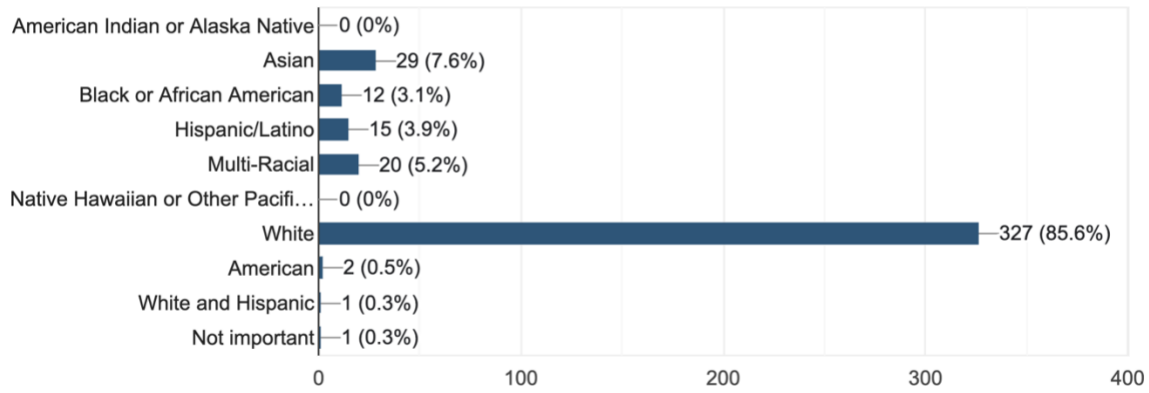
Is your child considered an English language learner?
382 responses

- Yes — 32.2%
- No — 67.8%
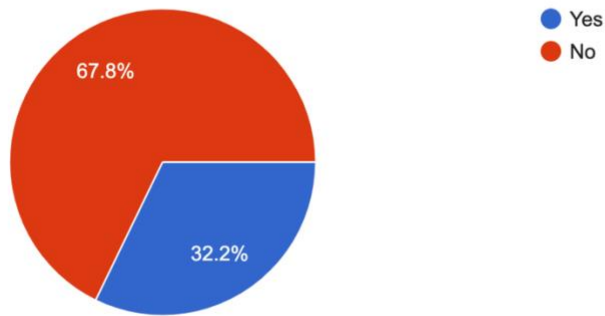
How well do you feel your child's school is preparing them for the next academic year?
387 responses

- Extremely well — 16.5%
- Quite well — 43.4%
- Somewhat well — 27.9%
- Slightly well — 9%
- Not well at all
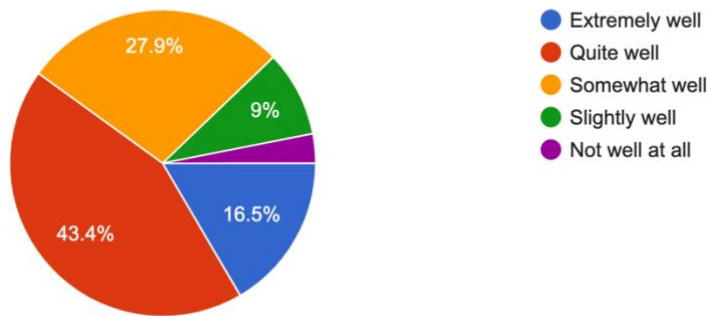
Does your child receive the necessary academic, social and emotional support in order to thrive in school?
385 responses

- ● Always
- ● Sometimes
- ● Rarely
- ● Never
- ● Needs more support and was refused
- ● This is my first year in middle school.d…
- ● Acedemically she does but not sociall…
- ● My child would greatly benefit from a…

△ 1/4 ▼

47.3%

35.6%

How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at their school?
385 responses

- ● Tremendous belonging
- ● Quite a bit of belonging
- ● Some belonging
- ● A little bit of belonging
- ● No belonging at all

23.1%

11.4%

46%

15.3%
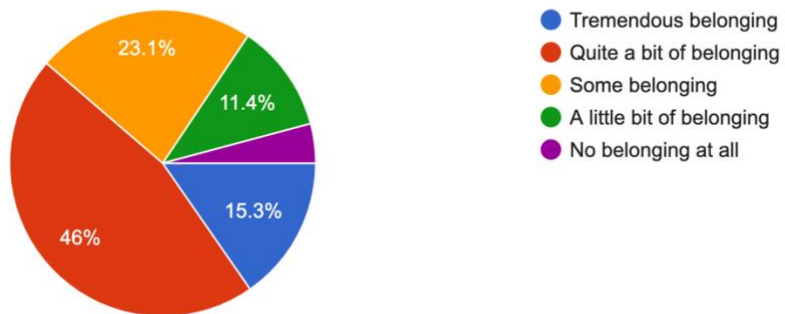
Teachers set high expectations for my child.
386 responses

- ● Strongly disagree
- ● Disagree
- ● Neutral
- ● Agree
- ● Strongly agree

42.5%

10.1%

8%

35.2%
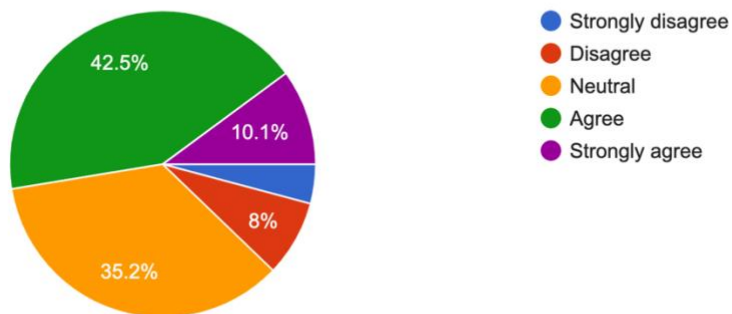
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?

380 responses

- Extremely well
- Quite well
- Somewhat well
- Slightly well
- Not well at all
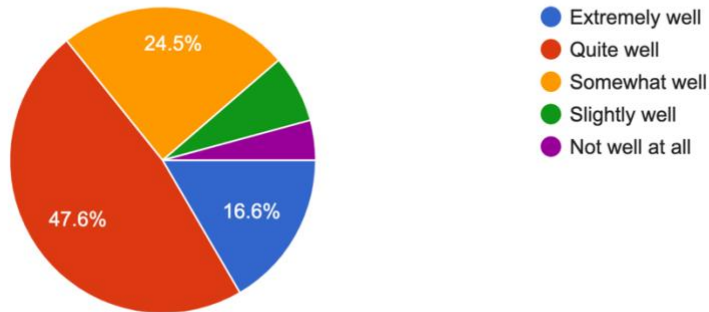
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match their interests?

386 responses

- Extremely well
- Quite well
- Somewhat well
- Slightly well
- Not well at all
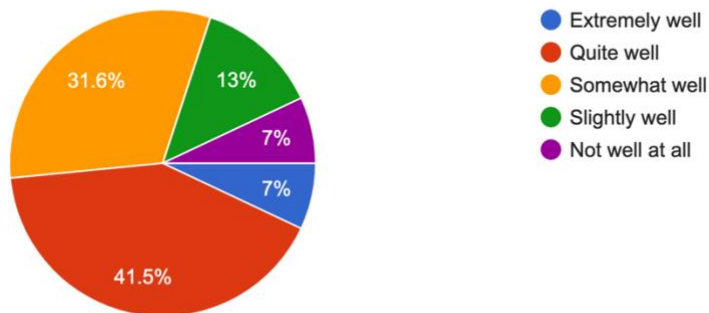
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is their school?

386 responses

- Extremely good
- Quite good
- Somewhat good
- Slightly good
- Not good at all
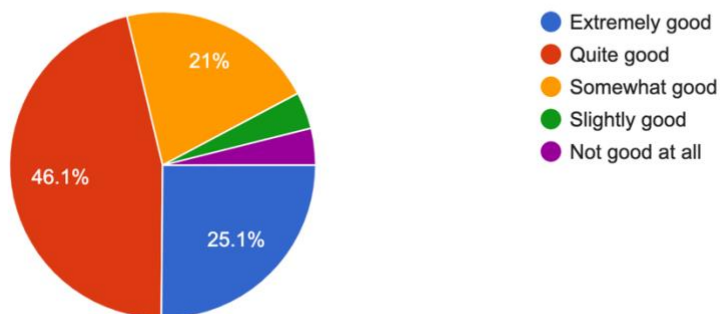
To what extent do you know how your child is doing socially at school?

385 responses

- ● A tremendous amount
- ● Quite a bit
- ● Somewhat
- ● A little bit
- ● Not at all

30.9%
11.9%
15.1%
38.7%
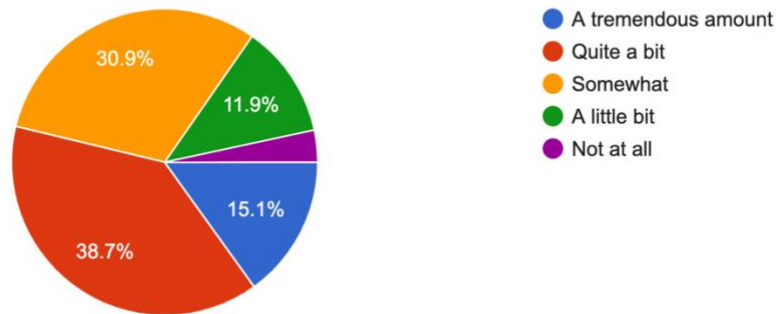
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?

387 responses

- ● Extremely comfortable
- ● Quite comfortable
- ● Somewhat comfortable
- ● Slightly comfortable
- ● Not comfortable at all

27.6%
16%
15.2%
34.6%
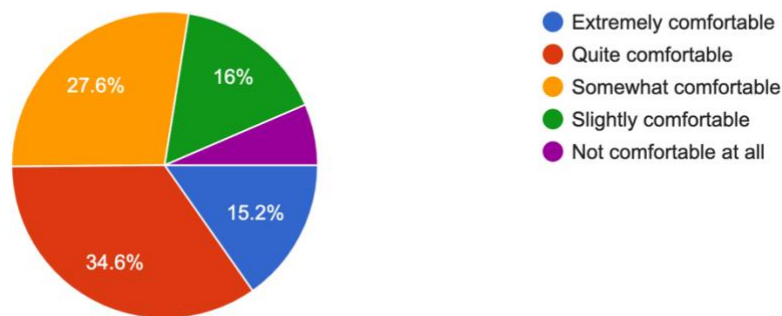
How often does your child learn at school about people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures.

371 responses

31 (8.4%)
54 (14.6%)
138 (37.2%)
91 (24.5%)
57 (15.4%)
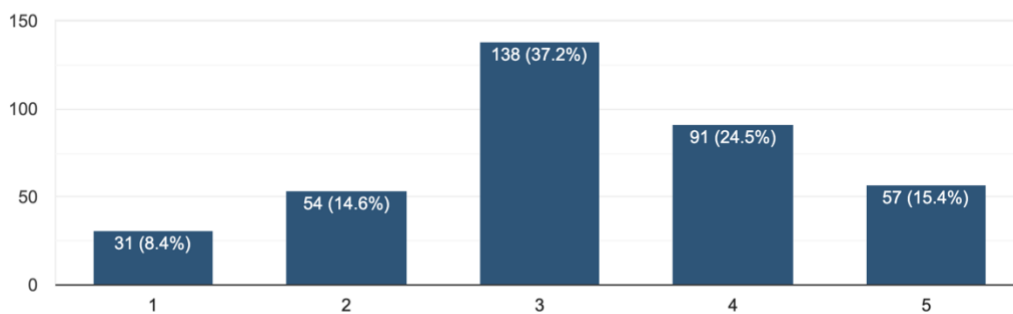
1 = Not often, 5 = Very often

Staff at my child's school encourage students to respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, etc.).

383 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

23%
43.1%
26.1%
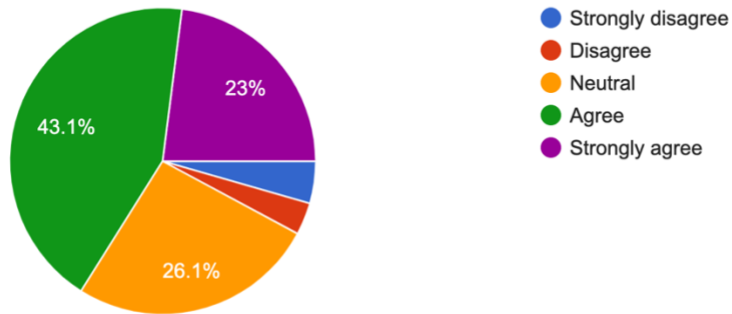
My child's school provides me information in a language (e.g., Portuguese, Spanish) I understand.

385 responses

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

65.7%
30.6%
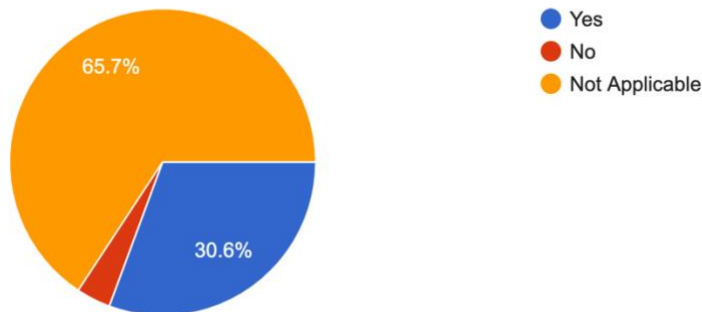
My child is accepted as a valued member of the school community.

385 responses

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

33.5%
6%
59.2%
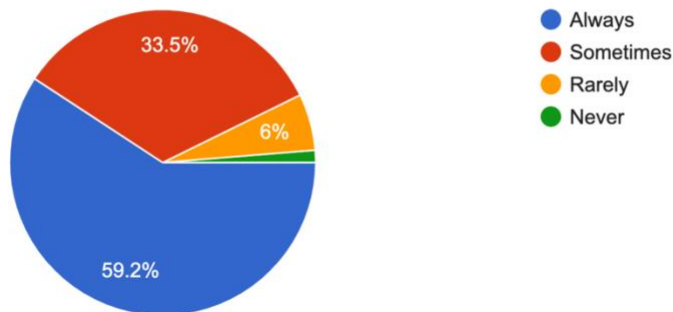
I feel welcome at my child's school.

387 responses

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

28.4%
44.4%
18.1%

Appendix B

MCAS Results

MCAS Trends ELA Grades 3-8
Students with Disabilities

MCAS Trends Math Grades 3-8
Students with Disabilities

MCAS Trends Math Grades 3-8
English Learners

MCAS Trends ELA Grades 3-8
English Learners

MCAS Trends ELA Grades 3-8
Economically Disadvantaged

Legend: Exceeding, Meeting, Partially Meeting, Not Meeting

MCAS Trends Math Grades 3-8
Economically Disadvantaged

Legend: Exceeding, Meeting, Partially Meeting, Not Meeting

MCAS Trends ELA Grades 3-8
High Needs

MCAS Trends Math Grades 3-8
High Needs

2021 MCAS Grades 3-8 ELA Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Exceeding	Meeting	Partially Meeting	Not Meeting
African Amer/Black	16	26	32	26
Asian	13	65	18	5
Hispanic/Latino	2	42	37	19
Multi-Race	11	61	24	4
White	6	49	37	8

2021 MCAS Grades 3-8 Math Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Exceeding	Meeting	Partially Meeting	Not Meeting
African Amer/Black		32	42	26
Asian	24	51	20	5
Hispanic/Latino		32	53	15
Multi-Race	4	48	46	2
White	5	40	46	9

Grade 10 Math MCAS 2021
% at each level

	All Students	SWD	English Learner	Low Income	High Needs	Male	Female
Exceeding	14			5	2	18	10
Meeting	51	15		23	24	47	54
Partially Meeting	27	38		41	29	24	30
Not Meeting	8	46		32	34	11	6

Grade 10 MCAS Math 2021
% at each level

	African Amer/Black	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Multi-Race	White
Exceeding		30	10		13
Meeting		50	10		54
Partially Meeting		20	50		25
Not Meeting			30		8

Grade 10 ELA MCAS 2021
% at each level

Bar chart showing % at each level for: All Students, SWD, English Learner, Low Income, High Needs, Male, Female.

Legend: ■ Exceeding ■ Meeting ■ Partially Meeting ■ Not Meeting

Grade 10 MCAS ELA 2021
% at each level

Bar chart showing % at each level for: African Amer/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Multi-Race, White.

Legend: ■ Exceeding ■ Meeting ■ Partially Meeting ■ Not Meeting

Appendix C

Cultural Responsiveness Continuum

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS CONTINUUM

Believing and behaving in ways that assert the superiority of a culture and disrespect/devalue others' culture(s).

"Asian students come to this country to succeed. Why wouldn't other students do so as well?"

A male student must take a female student to the prom; no same sex couples are allowed at prom.

Recognizing the limiations of one's skills or practices to meet the needs of others.

A tenured teacher saying, "I don't want the 'low' kids, I don't know how to teach them."

MLK Day and Cinco De Mayo, etc. are celebrated at an assembly, but no attempt is made to teach their significance.

Drawing on diverse backgrounds, strengths and challenges to deepen learning.

"As an Educator, I not only teach content, but am also advocating for each child and their family."

Adapting your instruction to incorporate strategies that appeal to each student (e.g., allowing students to pitch ideas for a project instead of telling them what they must do. This allows students to showcase their strengths.)

Cultural Destructiveness

Cultural Incapacity

Cultural Blindness

Cultural Pre-Competence

Cultural Proficiency

Cultural Responsiveness

Culturally Sustaining

Eliminating aspects of other's culture(s).

"In this school, we only speak English."

Getting rid of staff who actively advocate for underserved students and communities.
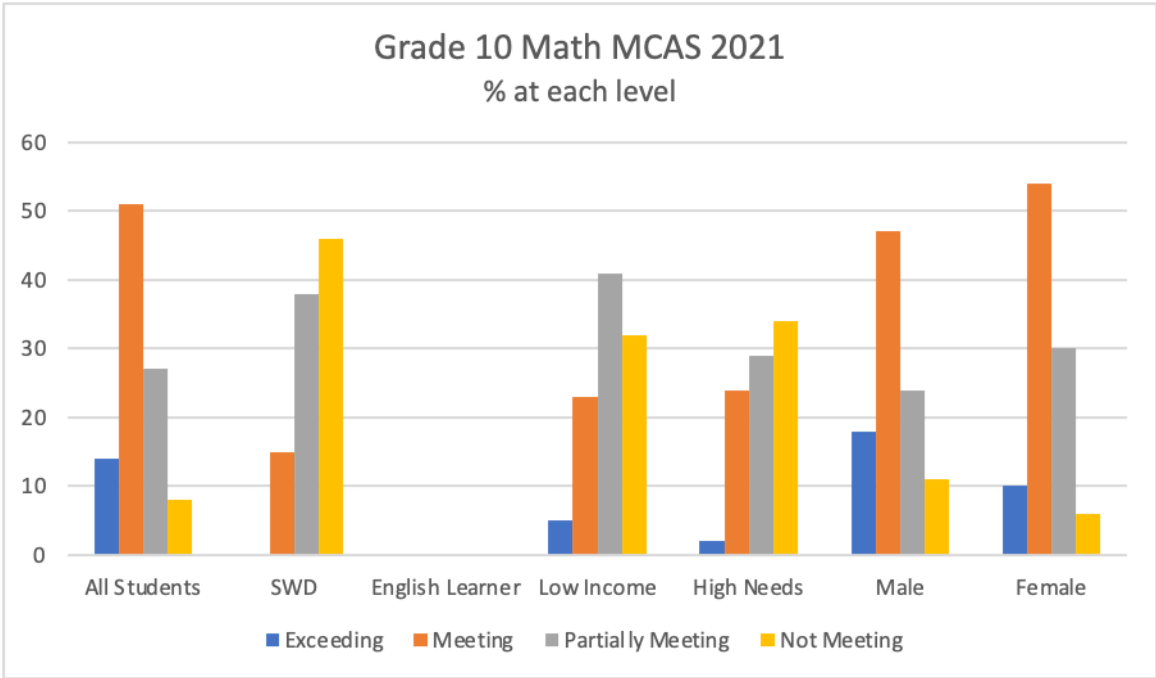
Believing/acting as if cultural differences do not matter.

"Every child can learn the same way."

Not allowing students to wear culturally relevant garments.

Behaving in ways and enacting policies that lead to bias-free environments that are respectful of diverse backgrounds, strengths and challenges.

Students calling each other out on derogatory comments they hear.

When overhearing derogatory language or slurs (e.g., "That's gay", the n-word) and using such occsasions as teachable moments.

Asking students about their background and culture, explaining your own, meanwhile affirming all information shared.

Seeking to foster and explicitly support students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths and challenges.

Connecting present learning to histories of racial, ethnic, and linguistic communities and to the histories of neighborhoods and cities they are a part of.

Source: MA DESE