



WILMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS - EQUITY AUDIT

REPORT TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

AUGUST 24, 2022

The equity audit is a process, a beginning; not a destination. It is a way of thinking for the long haul.

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THE WPS EQUITY AUDIT

- WPS contracted with Commonwealth Consulting Agency to conduct the audit, with a focus on programmatic and resource equity.
- Open-sourced material from the [Alliance for Resource Equity](#) helped to establish an audit framework and 11 key questions.
- An inquiry-based approach built a "data story" to understand programmatic and resource equity for WPS students.
 - Informed by an analysis of student data for trends and patterns, a review of district documents, responses from the district's student and staff survey, data from the parent/guardian survey, and themes from student focus groups in grades 6-11.

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 the WPS audit indicate the district is poised to engage in the deep and complex work to create and sustain inclusive, culturally responsive and affirming schools where all students thrive.

AUDIT OVERVIEW

The structure of the audit report includes in each section an orientation to best practice, followed by WPS data and findings, and recommendations to support the next level of work for the district.

- Policy and Planning
- Teaching and Learning
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Safe and Supportive Schools
- Family Engagement
- Teacher and Principal Diversity
- School Funding



STRENGTHS

- 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



OPPORTUNITIES

- explicitly develop and support culturally responsive teaching and culturally sustaining practices
- invite students and families to co-create and regularly revisit district objectives and priorities to ensure culturally sustaining approaches and equitable outcomes
- prioritize safe and supportive school environments for students identifying as LGBTQ+
- listen to and engage with students and families to identify issues of equity
- support diverse backgrounds and identities with communication that validates and affirms students who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, and Students of Color



EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER

- **Establish an explicit vision and definition of equity.**
- *Ensure School Improvement Plans are articulating tiered support systems for students, as well as **explicit student learning goals that promote equity.***
- *Continue to provide opportunities for students and teachers to **develop strong relationships** grounded in academic and social emotional learning.*
- **Elevate student voice**, using a variety of techniques to **engage students and gather their feedback** through surveys, focus groups, forums, and/or townhalls.
- *Ensure School Improvement Plans offer goals and strategic initiatives to **engage families through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.***
- *Build a **diverse selection committee** representative of the educators the district hopes to hire.*
- *Continue to **monitor district demographics** that may warrant increased spending in particular schools.*

ELEVATING STUDENT VOICE – REFLECTIONS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

How would you describe your focus group experience today? (WHS)

- *Very positive, I felt like I was really able to share thoughts I have had for a while about our school that I haven't had a place to share in the past.*
- *I wish we could have had more time to discuss some ideas more in depth.*
- *I am unclear how our feedback will create change.*
- *I liked how judgement free it was.*
- *I enjoyed hearing the input of other students on topics that interested me.*
- *Very insightful, it showed me that I am not the only one having the experiences I have had.*
- *Productive, felt like my voice was heard, wish there was more time.*
- *We discussed things that weren't okay, this should happen more.*

NEXT STEPS TO CONSIDER

School Committee

Leadership Team

School Teams



How do we define educational equity?

How will we prioritize the most promising recommendations to fit our community's unique context?

What areas need further exploration and inquiry?

How do we include the many voices of our community?

