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Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

Dover-Sherborn Public Schools Equity Audit: Findings and Recommendations

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Center for Policy, Research and Evaluation
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Introduction

The Center for Policy, Research, and Evaluation at the NYU Metro Center is pleased to submit this report detailing findings and recommendations from the equity audit undertaken during the 2021-22 school year.

We appreciate the candor, vulnerability, thoughtfulness, and insights of the school and district leaders, school staff, students, and parents who took part in surveys and focus groups or reached out directly to share their experiences.

Our special thanks to the Dover-Sherborn Equity Audit Advisory Board, a group of 14 students, alumni, parents, educators, and community members with whom we have collaborated throughout the 2021-22 school year, to root our data collection and analysis in the local context. Their incisive questions, careful feedback, and moral leadership have been invaluable.

The work ahead will require introspection, deep listening, and difficult decisions. Building equitable school cultures will require changes to culture, traditions, and long-standing practices. This work will not be easy, but Dover-Sherborn Public Schools have already made meaningful changes and can draw on deep wells of professional capacity, commitment to growth, and love for children. We see evidence of shared vision for a district that supports all children to belong, grow, and thrive, and a willingness to grapple with the ways the district has fallen short of that vision.

This report is designed around six key findings. After each finding, we share a set of recommendations and suggested resources.

1. Not everyone is fully supported to grow and thrive in Dover-Sherborn schools. Investments in culturally responsive, equitable curriculum and instruction will help prepare students to navigate and thrive in a diverse, multicultural world.

2. Despite important signs of change, school cultures still center White, Christian, neurotypical, affluent, academically and athletically successful students.

3. Many students and families experience racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, religious bias, and other forms of exclusion, bias and harassment in the DSPS community.

4. Current approaches to discipline aren't serving goals of accountability, repair and growth.

5. Educators need time, resources, support and accountability to prepare students to navigate and thrive in a diverse, multicultural world.

6. Large majorities of DSPS community members agree this is a time for bold, consequential action for equity.

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Equity Audit Overview and Methodology

This report documents findings and recommendations from the equity audit undertaken by researchers from the Center for Policy, Research, and Evaluation at the NYU Metro Center on behalf of Dover-Sherborn Public Schools during the 2021-22 school year.

Our goals for this audit are to:

- Understand how a diverse range of students and families experience Dover-Sherborn Public Schools, with particular attention to the perspectives of students and families of color and otherwise marginalized students and families
- Understand a diverse range of teacher, staff and district leader perspectives on strengths, challenges, and support needed to advance culturally responsive and equitable practices
- Identify opportunity gaps and root causes of inequities related to race, language, sexuality, disability status, religion, etc.
- Collaborate to develop actionable, feasible, sustainable recommendations for improving access, support, engagement and inclusion for all students and families

Our Approach

Extensive research demonstrates that BELONGING is central to learning. When children and young people feel that they are truly a part of a learning community they are more prepared to learn and thrive. We know that to belong, students need to see that their schools and classrooms recognize and celebrate their experiences, their interests, their culture and their backgrounds. They need to see themselves and their families reflected in school. When they experience bullying or discrimination, they need to know that they'll be listened to and that adults will take real action to make sure they are safe.

We also know that equitable, inclusive schools are better for EVERYONE, including those students who are being well-served by the existing system. School is where young people learn to think critically, to take the perspectives of others, to work collaboratively across lines of difference, to appreciate the limits of their own experience, to learn how our present is connected to our history, to know and take pride in who they are, and to become engaged, competent citizens of a country and world where not everyone is just like them.

Our work is rooted in the premise that the people who are most impacted by a problem are the best positioned to describe that problem and bring their experiences to bear on devising solutions. In line with best practices for equity-centered research, we place heavy weight on the information shared during focus groups and in surveys by people of color, members of the LBGTQ+ community and their families, students with disabilities and their families, and members of religious minority groups.

Data Collection and Analysis

This brief draws mainly on data collected through surveys, focus groups, and interviews with members of the DSPS community.

Survey: We collected 1786 surveys from the DSPS community. Those who responded were elementary school students (263), middle school students (436), high school students (531), parents (420), and teachers/staff (136). The demographics of survey participants are similar to the demographics for the district reported by the state (see Appendix 1 for a detailed demographic breakdown).

The survey was designed to capture feedback from those who did not participate in focus groups. Questions were designed to parallel the feedback from the focus groups. Survey takers could answer each question with Yes, No, or I don't know responses. Survey respondents were also invited to respond in writing to each question to elaborate on their selected answer or to provide examples; most respondents included written responses to at least some questions. The survey also included questions adapted from a participation subscale from the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) which were developed by the National Center for Education Statistics.

In this report we included responses to questions relevant to our key findings, calculated as percentages. Next, we assessed if there were statistically significant differences in responses to these questions using Chi-Square analyses to review each demographic difference (for example, race or gender) separately. A statistically significant difference suggests that there is a systematic difference in the distribution of the responses between two groups. It is important to note that some racial/ethnic groups at Dover-Sherborn represent very small proportions of the population. Therefore, it is more difficult to detect statistical significance for these groups. In other words, just because we do not detect a statistically significant difference does not mean that a meaningful difference does not exist. In this report we share the demographic findings that are statistically significant to the key findings. In Appendix 2 we share a review of all the statistically significant findings of the demographic difference analyses.

Interviews and Focus Groups: During the 2021-22 school year, we conducted 22 focus groups with 58 students, 24 parents, 26 teachers and school staff, and 6 school leaders across the four schools. We also conducted interviews with six parents who had removed their children from Dover-Sherborn schools for a range of reasons. Our focus group sample included students with disabilities; parents of students with disabilities; LGBTQ+ students, parents and staff; religious minority students, parents, and staff; and was diverse by race, gender, and home language. We transcribed, systematically coded, and analyzed interview focus group data to capture themes, promising practices, and recommendations for improvement. We sorted, categorized and synthesized written comments from survey responses and integrated them with focus group and interview data. Through our analysis, we looked for consistent themes and points of agreement across different groups of respondents. We also sought to understand how community members who hold different positions and identities experience schools.

Analysis of Administrative Data: In order to add evidence to the findings from the focus group and interviews that particular groups of students have different experiences in terms of coursework and discipline, we reviewed administrative data provided by the district. We reviewed English and Math transcripts and conduct cases from students during the 2018-2022 school years. We connected these data to demographic data provided by the district about students' race, gender, IEP status, participation in the free and reduced lunch program, and participation in the METCO program.

We conducted Chi-Square analyses to review if there was a statistically significant difference in the demographic makeup of students in honors and advanced placement courses in English or Math and students with a conduct case. Where relevant to the key findings, we describe the nature of the difference in course participation or in conduct cases.

As with the survey analyses, it is important to note that the district has small proportions of students in these categories. Even when reviewing data over five years, the numbers of students from particular backgrounds are very small - in many cases, fewer than 10. In order to protect student privacy and in compliance with laws governing the use of student, we are not able to report specific numbers or percentages from these analyses. Rather, in the sections that follow we will report generally on patterns we reviewed in these analyses and the ways in which they relate to the qualitative data. Although it is difficult to make conclusive statements about the nature of disparities in discipline and academic coursework, we share a description of these quantitative findings which support the qualitative findings.

Findings and Recommendations

1. Not everyone is fully supported to grow and thrive in Dover-Sherborn schools. Investments in culturally responsive, equitable curriculum and instruction will help prepare students to navigate and thrive in a diverse, multicultural world.

Access to culturally responsive curriculum and instruction

Culturally responsive teaching prioritizes high expectations for all students, affirming students' own culture while supporting competent engagement with other cultures, appreciation for different communication styles, and fostering critical analysis skills to address real-world problems. A culturally responsive curriculum considers students' home culture, language, and lived experiences to be assets for academic learning and uses materials and resources that represent a broad range of experiences and perspectives. Well-designed and implemented culturally responsive approaches strengthen academic engagement and achievement and improve student belonging and student-teacher relationships.

Survey responses differ in terms of whether the curriculum is culturally responsive. Students at all grade levels reported relatively low affirmation of this question. A slight minority of parents and teachers/staff also reported that the curriculum was not culturally responsive, or that they did not know enough to say whether the curriculum was culturally responsive. Across focus groups and open-ended responses, parents and educators expressed concerns that the affluence and homogeneity of DS presents obstacles to preparing students for a multicultural world, and saw a diverse, culturally responsive curriculum as an important tool for broadening students' horizons and building flexible thinking and perspective-taking skills.

Is the curriculum culturally responsive, inclusive, and respectful?
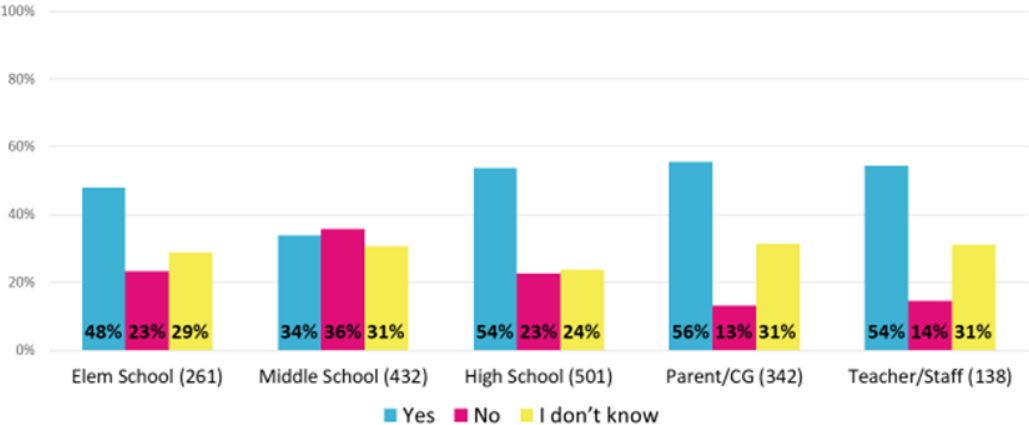
We heard a broad consensus that important work is underway to ensure that the curriculum offers connection points for all students while providing windows, mirrors, and doors into different cultures and experiences (Sims Bishop,1990). At the elementary level in particular, we heard appreciation from parents, teachers and school leaders for major investments in updated, diversified classroom and school libraries and the Pollyanna racial literacy curriculum that was piloted this year. At the middle and high school level, the consensus is that some individual teachers and some departments - in particular history, social studies, English, and world languages have embraced the work of reviewing and revamping their curriculum. In survey responses, most students across schools report that their teachers discuss race, culture, religion, ability, and other differences in the classroom, and most agree that their teachers handle these discussions well. In open-ended survey responses, some older students noted limited LGBTQIA, Asian and Asian Americans, and Latinx representation. Some older students, in survey responses and focus groups, also noted that their experiences with these topics in class have been mixed: some teachers welcome discussion and are skilled facilitators, while others avoid diversity-related topics or fail to challenge offensive statements.

The importance of teaching accurate history through multiple perspectives was a central theme in reflections on the curriculum. Elementary teachers noted the care they've taken to revisit how they teach about Columbus and to center Wampanoag history and perspectives in teaching about Thanksgiving. At the middle school and high school levels, social studies and history departments are also undertaking work to present multiple perspectives. While acknowledging important progress, many students, parents and some teachers noted that the curriculum still centers white perspectives, and that white authors and historical figures still predominate. Bright spots consistently highlighted include the high school English department, AP US History, and Facing History and Ourselves. Several parents also mentioned Facing History and Ourselves and a middle school ethics course as examples of places where students learn to think critically about challenging problems, analyze different arguments, and draw their own conclusions.

While many students offered that these conversations are handled in a way that embraces a range of opinions, some parents and students, as well as a few teachers, believe that not all teachers welcome conservative opinions.

The planned curriculum audit during the 2022-23 school year will offer important information about gaps and opportunities in promoting an equitable learning experience. Below, we highlight strengths and challenges along several dimensions of diversity of student experiences.

Socioeconomic Status
● Students described homework assignments and projects that require access to specific materials such as treadmills, woods outside of their homes, etc. The assumption is that all students in DSPS have access to these types of materials.
● Many parents, and some teachers, described Dover-Sherborn as a "bubble" of economic privilege and expressed a desire for the curriculum to address socioeconomic diversity more directly.

Religion and Culture
- We heard repeated references to assumptions of Christianity as the "norm" or "default."
- Teachers, students and parents offered examples of missed opportunities in classroom instruction about religion, such as lessons that equate Judaism with the Holocaust or assignments comparing major world religions that assume universal knowledge of Christian theology and traditions.

  Right now, we're talking about Islam. We're comparing Islam to the other major religions in the Middle East. The whole curriculum is delivered from the perspective that we all know about Christianity, we already understand that, and now we're learning about Islam for the first time, we're even learning about Judaism for the first time. There are some questions in the classwork like, "Blank is to Islam as Lent is to Roman Catholicism." There's no talk about Lent in the entire curriculum, there's no document that even mentions Lent.

- We heard widespread appreciation for recent efforts to acknowledge, teach about, and celebrate a wider range of cultural and religious holidays, and to accommodate student absences for important celebrations. Elementary students appreciated finding books about Diwali, Eid, and other holidays in classroom and school libraries.
- Parents frequently mentioned their appreciation of Chickering's International Night.
- Many students and parents appreciate invitations to share their traditions with their classes, while some felt singled out or othered when they were the only or one of a few students in their class of a given culture or religion.

  When it was close to Eid or Ramadan [my teacher] would put some slides up and everybody, the whole time, they would be staring at me. It was kind of embarrassing.

- Some teachers and parents expressed concern that efforts to make holiday celebrations more inclusive, especially at the elementary level, sometimes fall short by re-branding Halloween activities as "fall" or Christmas activities as "winter," for example, rather than carefully examining how inclusive they are.

Gender and Sexuality
- Many parents and teachers noted that classroom and school libraries and other materials increasingly include representations of LGBTQIA students and families. [A small minority of parents object to direct conversations about gender and sexuality at school, especially in younger grades.]
- Some teachers described occasional push-back or trepidation on the part of school leaders around classroom conversations and lessons that dealt with gender and sexuality or movements for LGBTQIA rights.
- High school students perceive that women authors are under-represented in the curriculum and some expressed interest in more opportunities to learn about women's rights and women's movements.

- High school and middle school students noted that gender and sexuality were rarely discussed outside of Wellness courses.

Disability and neurodivergence
- Teachers noted that disabilities and neurodivergence are often represented in the curriculum through books written by non-disabled and neurotypical authors.

Race and Ethnicity
- School leaders, staff, parents, and students acknowledge and deeply appreciate the work in recent years to dramatically increase diverse racial and ethnic representation visually and in materials, particularly at the elementary levels.
- School leaders, staff, students and parents appreciate efforts to talk explicitly about race and racism across the curriculum, including the racial literacy programs being piloted at the elementary levels. [A small minority of parents objected to explicit references to race and endorsed a color-blind approach.]
- Students, parents and staff report uneven levels of representation and cultural responsiveness across grade levels, departments, and courses, and very uneven levels of staff comfort and skill in facilitating conversations around race, ethnicity and racism.
    o Multiple Black students characterized DS's approach to Black history as "slavery, MLK and George Floyd," and noted that materials are often written or developed by white authors.
    o Many teachers and parents noted that Asian and Asian-American cultures and histories are underrepresented in the curriculum, and that it can be challenging to find appropriate classroom literature representing Asian and Asian-American cultures.
    o Several Asian/Pacific Islander students noted that the histories of their families' countries of origin, and non-Western countries generally, are covered only briefly and through the lens of colonialism and conquest.

    For example, we only talk about Central and South America and India in terms of colonization and exploration. The only things notable are who conquered it, who ruled, and how they took over. Like in the Central and South American civilizations we barely went into detail on how they lived, and focused on who conquered, why, and how. India is talked about in British imperialism and not really the culture behind it at all.

    o Parents, teachers and students noted that Native American history and perspectives are underrepresented in the curriculum.
    o Students and teachers noted that many books and resources dealing with race and culture are by white authors and sometimes perpetuate stereotypes and misconceptions.
    o Several students shared that some teachers allow or encourage students to read racial slurs out loud when they are included in literature or poetry being read in class.
    o Several students of color shared that the task of pointing out and explaining microaggressions and more overt racist statements during class discussions often falls to them.

● Parents of color, teachers, and school leaders noted a lingering reluctance to talk openly about race and racism during school events, partly in anticipation of parent backlash. Examples included reluctance to acknowledge that Dr. King was assassinated at MLK Day assemblies, cautions not to mention Juneteenth during an end-of-year assembly that coincided with the holiday, and the ongoing observance of Old Sherborn Day.

Next Steps and Recommendations

The curriculum review planned for the 2022-23 school year will be an important step in systematically documenting strengths and gaps in the curriculum.

➔ Multiple tools are available to guide culturally responsive curriculum audits. We recommend using an established tool as a guide to establish a shared language and clear framework.

➔ We would recommend a differentiated approach that leverages the experience and expertise of departments and staff are leading the way the way on rethinking curriculum.

➔ While grade-level or department-level analysis is an important first step, developing a process for examining strengths and opportunities at the school and district level will be crucial for ensuring that instruction builds on prior knowledge and that all students have equitable access to culturally responsive learning opportunities.
    ◆ A goal of the curriculum audit should be the collaborative development of flexible, district-wide expectations for culturally responsive curriculum design and an ongoing process for revising curricula.
    ◆ Another goal could be a plan to move beyond the "food, festivals, fun" approach to incorporating learning about diverse cultures and religions. Parents and students largely appreciate the work done so far to celebrate a broader range of holidays and highlight family traditions, but there's room to integrate diverse cultures into academic instruction more regularly and authentically.

➔ We recommend considering adoption of a schoolwide instructional model at the middle and/or high school level, such as Facing History and Ourselves' Schools Where We Belong, used widely in public and independent schools. A schoolwide model with ongoing professional development, direct feedback from coaches, shared language and expectations, and evidence-based instructional materials could help ensure that all staff build capacity and responsibility for preparing students to thrive in a multicultural world.

➔ Student and family input, whether as direct participants in the curriculum review or through less formal mechanisms, will be crucial. How lessons and materials are received sometimes differs from educators' intentions.

➔ Beyond the curriculum, we recommend prioritizing professional learning opportunities that support teachers in recognizing and affirming diverse cultural communication styles, valuing student voice, and facilitating difficult conversations.

➔ We recommend incorporating evidence of culturally responsive practice into educator evaluation systems. Massachusetts DESE is currently piloting culturally responsive administrator and teacher evaluation rubrics.

Resources

[ASCD: Which curriculum audit is best for your school?](#)

[NYU Metro Center EJ-ROC Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecards and guides](#)

[Facing History and Ourselves Schoolwide and Districtwide Programs](#)

[Massachusetts DESE Model Rubric Updates](#)

Access to Rigorous Learning Opportunities

Beginning in middle school, DSPS students are separated into two academic tracks for math instruction, based on standardized test scores and teacher recommendation. In high school, students are tracked into College Preparatory or Honors levels for most academic classes, with the opportunity to take Advanced Placement classes in upper grades. In high school, placement decisions vary by department and are based on grades and teacher recommendations. Policies on moving from College Preparatory to Honors, and on accessing AP courses, vary by department, with some departments offering more flexibility than others. Teachers and guidance staff raised concerns about variations in rigor across teachers and departments, noting that some sections of College Preparatory classes might have expectations akin to Honors classes.

While some research indicates that academic tracking has modest benefits for higher-tracked students, it holds no benefit for lower-tracked students and often impedes academic mobility and access to and preparation for college-level coursework (Adelman, 1999; Ochoa, 2013). Even in high-performing districts with high expectations of all students, students in lower tracks often spend less time on problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills (Oakes, 2005; Diamond, 2006).

School leaders and staff acknowledge that there are relatively few Black and Latinx students, students with IEPs, or METCO participants in Honors and Advanced Placement classes, compared with their share of the student population. Our analysis of administrative data confirms these observations:

In Honors Math (Grade 7-12):
- Students with an IEP are underrepresented in these courses between Grades 7-11. In Grade 12 there is a similar representation to the overall population.
- Black, Hispanic/Latinx students, and those enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program were underrepresented in Grades 7-12.

In AP Math (Grade 12):
- Students with an IEP, enrolled in the FRLP program, enrolled in the METCO program, Black and Hispanic/Latinx students were underrepresented.

In Honors English (Grades 9-12):
- Students with an IEP are underrepresented in Grades 9 and 10, equally represented in Grade 11, and relatively overrepresented by Grade 12 compared with prior grades.

- Students in the free and reduced lunch program are underrepresented in 9th, 10th, and 12th Grades, and equally represented in 11th Grade.
- Students in the METCO program are underrepresented in all grades.
- Black students are underrepresented in 9th and 10th grades. In 11th Grade the proportions were relatively closer to the general population. In 12th grade Black students were underrepresented (but note that this group was too small to detect significant difference).
- Hispanic/Latinx students were underrepresented in Grade 9. In Grades 10, 11, and 12 students are also underrepresented overall (but this is not a statistically significant difference).

In AP English (Grades 11-12)
- Students with an IEP and enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program and METCO are underrepresented in both 11th and 12th Grades.
- Black students are underrepresented in 11th and 12th Grades.
- Hispanic/Latino students are not underrepresented in 11th and 12th grades (no descriptive or statistically significant finding).

These patterns mirror patterns of access to rigorous coursework nationally, particularly in high-performing suburban districts (Preis, 2020). DSPS school leaders, school staff, and parents described multiple factors contributing to these disparities, all of which are in line with research on the dynamics of academic tracking. Despite math being the only tracked subject in middle school, grouping students by perceived ability for one class impacts scheduling decisions across the curriculum, meaning that students experience de facto ability grouping in other subjects (Kelly & Price, 2011; Ochoa, 2013) and also tend to form social groups that are in line with their academic tracking. This de facto academic and social tracking can influence students' academic self-concept and goals (Legette, 2020). Teachers' perceptions of having more and less academically capable sections can lead them, even unconsciously, to employ different teaching strategies with different groups of students and reduce rigor with sections they perceive as academically weaker, with implications for how students are tracked once they reach high school (Preiss, 2020; Flores, 2007).

A broad range of DSPS community members perceive that families with high levels of social capital (including parents with advanced degrees, resources for out-of-school supports, and confidence in navigating school bureaucracies) have more access to teachers and school leaders and hold more sway in decisions about their students. Families with more social capital are more likely to challenge their students' placement and encourage their children to seek placement in Honors and AP classes (Kelly & Price, 2011). It's possible that policies intended to make placement decisions more flexible, such as the option to submit a portfolio of writing from in and out of school for English classes, may inadvertently privilege students who have more access to out-of-school academic programs and whose parents have more knowledge of the system and more direct access to teachers. School staff also highlighted that there's often more actual flexibility around placement decisions than what is reflected in written policies, which again may disproportionately benefit students whose parents have access to and influence with decision-makers.

For students of color, teacher stereotypes, including implicit racial bias, may also be affecting placement decisions (Reyna, 2008). To the extent that grades are assigned in part based on classroom behavior, either explicitly or implicitly, the same implicit assumptions that shape discipline disparities may lead to a pattern of lower classroom grades for students of color and students with IEPs, regardless of academic performance (Preiss, 2020). Several school leaders and teachers also alluded to an uncertainty on the part of teachers around how to best support a variety of student backgrounds and needs; for example, they noted that teachers sometimes inadvertently lower expectations to accommodate circumstances like METCO participants' long commutes, rather than working with students to help them meet rigorous standards.

School staff, parents, and students also pointed to a range of barriers for students with IEPs in accessing rigorous curriculum. Parents pointed to a history of contention around the evaluation and IEP development process; while they highlighted a notable shift towards cooperation and proactivity in the last few years, they believed some teachers still saw inclusion and accommodation as burdens. Students reported that receiving accommodations documented in their IEPs still sometimes requires significant self-advocacy. Both special education and general education staff argued that the very high academic standards of DS - higher than Massachusetts state standards, which themselves are among the most rigorous in the nation - leads to some students being identified as having learning disabilities who would have no trouble working at grade level in other districts. Staff raised concerns about both over-referral of students of color for evaluation AND, simultaneously, a reluctance to refer students of color to avoid the appearance of racial bias or to avoid exacerbating existing disparities.

Next Steps and Recommendations
Middle and high school leaders and school staff described a renewed push to broaden access to Honors and AP courses. High school leaders have encouraged teachers to take risks and allow students who fall just short of the requirements for Honors and AP classes to attempt them. They have also worked to discourage gatekeeping around AP courses, reiterating the message that a students' perceived ability to achieve a high score on AP exams should not be the deciding factor in access. So far, these efforts have been ad hoc rather than systematic.

> ➔ As part of the curriculum review, we recommend documenting differences in content, academic expectations for higher-level thinking and analysis, and course assignments between CP, Honors, and AP classes within each department.
> ➔ As a step towards making systematic changes to course placement policy, it would be helpful to track more granular data about the demographic and academic characteristics of students across tracks; how often students move from CP to Honors and AP courses and the characteristics of those students; and how often students or families successfully challenge placement decisions.
> ➔ More broadly, we would encourage work towards a stance of universal rigor that assumes all students are capable of tackling advanced academic content and provides differentiated supports to prepare students for rigorous coursework (Preiss, 2020).

◆ Investments in the Responsive Classroom approach at the elementary level, implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports district-wide, and work toward culturally responsive curricula provide a foundation for developing differentiated, flexible supports to prepare all students for intellectually rigorous coursework.

◆ Teachers should communicate proactively with students and families about placement criteria and available supports to prepare students for Honors and AP coursework.

◆ Building from Challenge Success and the Portrait of a Graduate, structured dialogue about the goals of academic tracking and who is and is not being served by those goals might point a way forward. Case studies of high-performing suburban districts that have reduced academic tracking (see, for example, Grossman & Ancess, 2004) offer a range of strategies.

Resources

[Narrowing the Gap in Affluent Schools (Grossman & Ancess, 2004)](#)

2. Despite important signs of change, school cultures still center White, Christian, neurotypical, affluent, academically and athletically successful students.

In many ways, Dover-Sherborn schools are welcoming, supportive communities. At each school, most students report that they have places where they belong, and most students and parents report that their families are respected and welcomed in the schools. Survey data suggests relatively high levels of belonging for students and teachers/staff.

Are there spaces you feel you belong within Dover Sherborn public schools?
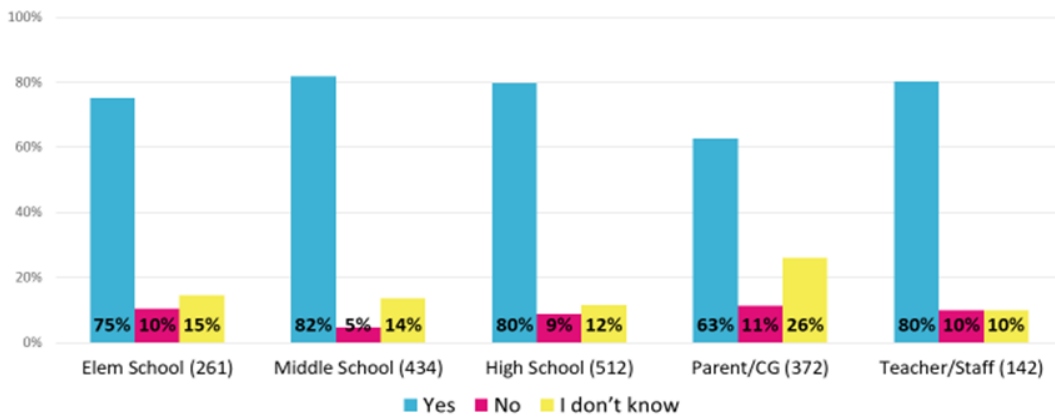
Survey analysis reveals some differences in belonging at the middle and high school levels:
*   Middle school students who identify as LGBTQIA+ were more likely than other students to report that they have a space where they belong.
*   Middle school students who participate in METCO were less likely than other students to report that they have a space where they belong.
*   At the high school level, white students were more likely than other students to report that they have a space where they belong. Black students and Latinx students were each less likely than other students to report that they have a place where they belong.
*   Black parents were also less likely to say that there was a space they felt they belonged.

On a survey measure of school climate developed by the U.S. Department of Education, students, teachers, and parents reported positive perceptions of school climate. On a 5-point scale, student average scores were 3.94, parents were 3.71, and teachers were also 3.71. Notably, in regression analyses testing for demographic differences, two groups of students rated lower school climate: members of the LGBTQIA community (B= -.31) and students who participated in the METCO program (B = -.43).

Extracurricular activities including sports, drama, music, and clubs - in particular the Genders and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) - are important sites of belonging for students. Many students also reported that they feel a sense of belonging in their classrooms, with teachers or guidance counselors, and in spaces like the IEP room, GRIT, Learning Center and Peer Connections, and the METCO lounge. For families, school events, sports, performances, parent organizations, and volunteer opportunities are important sites of belonging.

Students, families, and educators shared the perception that academic and athletic excellence are highly valued, making it harder for students who excel and thrive in other arenas to feel seen and affirmed. Many comments alluded to a narrow "box" of acceptable performance and characteristics. Many community members shared the perception that academically and athletically successful students are more often offered leadership roles and have more voice in school decisions. Expressing a sentiment shared by several parents in interviews, one parent reflected:

> *If you're a typical kid who gets along and listens and follows directions and is respectful, I think, you'd be so happy to be here. I think you'd be totally fine… but if you're not quite in that typical space, then, I think it can be tricky.*

Middle school parents and educators shared a desire for more deliberate community-building, particularly as students from Pine Hill and Chickering come together in sixth grade. Staff noted that their time with students is brief, and the middle school day is punctuated by frequent transitions, with little time for getting to know students as people. Several parents who had children in middle schools outside of the district noted that the other schools made more consistent use of all-school assemblies and non-instructional activities to build a shared sense of identity and inculcate community norms.

We heard widespread appreciation for Challenge Success and related efforts to recalibrate academic pressure and broaden notions of success, as well as for GRIT, BRIDGE, the Organization Station, and other interventions to support socio-emotional skills and mental health. Social emotional learning and inclusive classroom communities are clear priorities at the elementary schools, though staff and parents shared that the Covid-19 pandemic and distance learning had posed many new challenges to students' emotional health and skills for navigating interpersonal challenges. Elementary school staff noted that the SEL coach shared by Pine Hill and Chickering had greatly increased the schools' ability to respond to individual student needs and strengthen classroom-based social emotional learning. Staff and school leaders noted that the Responsive Classroom model, morning circles, "lunch bunch" groups for students dealing with specific concerns, and easy access to counselors and school psychologists were important strategies for meeting students' needs as they arise.

Educators and parents noted that they had observed significant progress in recent years in efforts to make school and district cultures more inclusive and welcoming. They particularly appreciated seeing more diversity in school library collections, classroom materials, music selections, and visual displays inside of schools, as well as more consistent recognition of a

range of cultural and religious holidays and invitations to students and families to share traditions with their classmates. Parents shared examples of increasing sensitivity on the part of school staff and faculty, for example in asking about family structures and important traditions at the beginning of the school year and having conversations about cultural appropriation in advance of Halloween, and efforts to teach historical events in more accurate ways that reflect multiple perspectives.

Amidst these positive perceptions of school climate there are points of difference that shape student experiences of school climate.

Class and Socioeconomic Status
● We heard a widespread sense that affluence or at least middle-class status is assumed to be nearly universal in DS.
● Parents and teachers described cost barriers to participation: sports banquets, dances, school directories, spirit gear, school lunch, etc.
● Parents described meetings and open houses at times and locations that aren't practical for working parents or parents who live in Boston. (Parents and teachers noted that the shift to remote and hybrid meetings had increased access.)
● Counselors report that a barrier to serving lower-income students is that they often don't know which students qualify for subsidized programs or for college financial aid.

Gender and Sexuality
● Elementary school staff and leaders noted important strides in supporting gender non-conforming students and supporting students through transitions.
● Students frequently point to rainbow flags and classroom posters as indicators of a welcoming school culture.
● The Gender and Sexualities Alliance is a crucially important source of belonging and safety for middle and high school students.
● Several LGBTQIA families noted that while schools made efforts to be welcoming, they did not feel welcomed or safe in the broader DS community.

Disability status and neurodivergence
● GRIT, the Bridge Project, and the IEP room are important sources of belonging for students with disabilities.

> *I'm not even in the GRIT program but sometimes during flex block, you've seen me, I'm going down there to talk about how my day was, and they let me come in. It's a very accepting place.*

● Students with disabilities reported challenges in social spaces and social situations at school, with limited acceptance from neurotypical and non-disabled peers.

Race and Ethnicity
● The METCO lounge, Black Student Union, and Asian Student Union are important sites of belonging for students of color.
● Students and parents of color expressed a desire for more adults of color who could provide validation, affirmation and practical support. Several parents of students of color who had left the district noted that their children were thriving in schools with more diverse staff and peers.
● Students of color reported feeling hyper-conscious of being the only student of color in certain extracurricular activities, such as sports teams and theater programs.
● Students of color noted frequent feelings of being singled out or "othered" during class discussions where there are no or few students who share their background.

> *Seeing as it is predominantly white school, it can be a little isolating, and they do make you feel different at times, because you're often in groups where you are one of the few, if not the only person of color. They can sometimes make statements that might feel pretty uncomfortable I'd say, or ask questions that could be a little weird, and put you in positions where you're not always wanting to say what you really want to say, because it's just you.*

Next Steps and Recommendations
Many of the building blocks for more inclusive, equitable school cultures are in place. As DS recovers from the pandemic, we recommend a focus on deepening and expanding widely popular initiatives that support social emotional learning, holistic belonging, and skills for navigating difference. Identifying developmentally appropriate strategies for expanding social-emotional learning in the middle and high school grades, capitalizing on the foundational work done in early grades, should be a priority.

➔ Invest in culturally responsive curriculum and instructional strategies (see finding 1, above).
➔ Prioritize diversity in hiring (see finding 5, below).
➔ Ensure that initiatives that students and families point to as sites of belonging and support (including GRIT, BRIDGE, Challenge Success, the METCO lounge, etc.) have sufficient resources and ongoing support.
➔ Ensure that affinity groups for students have ample support. Develop strategies for communication between affinity groups, teachers, and school leadership to elevate concerns and ideas and to broaden school leadership opportunities for marginalized students.
➔ Include sports coaches, drama and music teachers, and other staff who support extracurricular activities in professional development opportunities centered on social-emotional learning and creating inclusive climates.
➔ Create opportunities for intentional community-building at the classroom and school level, particularly in the middle school and high school.
➔ Find opportunities for engaging families around social-emotional learning and racial literacy curricula. We heard strong support for and interest in these programs from

families, and a desire to better understand the strategies and goals in order to reinforce lessons at home.

➔ Identify opportunities for upper-grade educators and school leaders to understand the work taking place in the early grades and develop strategies for extending strategies.

➔ Consider investing in a whole-school approach that incorporates social emotional learning and strategies for navigating differences (see finding 1, above).

3. Many students and families experience racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, and religious bias in the DSPS community.

A large cross-section of students, including students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQIA students, and students who identify as religious minorities, shared in their survey responses that they don't experience bias and that their peers are welcoming and inclusive. Another large cross-section distinguished between their *school* (educators and other adults in the building as well as materials and resources), which they felt to be inclusive and supportive, and their *peers,* from whom they often experienced bias and exclusion. Other students described microaggressions and bias from educators or felt that adults were inconsistent in their responses when students used biased speech in class or when adults witnessed bias incidents between students.

Despite ongoing work to build an inclusive school culture, many students and families are regularly experiencing exclusion, bias and harassment in Dover-Sherborn schools.
We heard many examples of students and educators regularly confusing students who share a racial or ethnic background, of students and educators misgendering students, and of adults mispronouncing names. We heard frequently about assumptions that all Black students and families in the district are from Boston and other unintentional but othering comments directed towards students of color, LGBTQIA students, students with disabilities, Jewish students, and students of different cultural backgrounds.

We heard from many older students that racist, sexist, anti-Semitic and ableist jokes are often tolerated among groups of students and that students minimize biased remarks as "just a joke." Students, families and school staff shared examples of students using hate speech and slurs directed at Black students, LGBTQIA students, and students with disabilities. It's impossible for us to quantify how often such hate speech is occurring, but it's clear that it's happening with some regularity and is a persistent and serious problem. Hate speech and biased jokes appear to be less prevalent, though not absent, in the elementary grades, but we note that younger students were aware of incidents between middle and high school students and brought them up in focus groups and surveys.

In the section below we highlight some specific examples of student experiences.

Religion and Culture
- Students shared examples of other students mocking or making jokes about cultural traditions that they don't share.
- We heard multiple examples of overt anti-Semitism, including slurs and Nazi references, and a sense that anti-Semitism is widely tolerated in the DS community.

> *My son felt vested enough [in the school], but never felt like he could tell anybody he was Jewish, and he kept it quiet. When he was in eighth grade, there were swastikas in the bathroom, and there's been "Heil Hitler" things that happened, so…*

Gender and Sexuality
- Students describe mixed experiences with school staff and leaders: some feel that teachers and school staff are largely supportive and proactive. Others note that individual teachers are important allies while other teachers routinely mis-gender them or tolerate homophobic and transphobic statements.
- Students, parents, and school staff describe frequent homophobic and transphobic jokes, comments, slurs, and social media harassment from other students.

Disability status and neurodivergence
- Students, parents, school staff and school leaders reported pervasive stigma about disabilities and a resulting reluctance on the part of students to identify publicly as using special education services.
- Students with disabilities and school staff reported frequent ableist language, jokes, and slurs.

    The neurotypical students will say, "Oh, you're in the SPED room. You're SPED. Here goes SPED again." From what I see, our students are respectful at least in front of adults but the language that they use in the halls, in the library, in the cafeteria, or when you're walking by in the gym is a whole different story.

    Every time I'm leaving Room 108, I always hear the r-slur. It's one of those things you have to come to live with at this point. But just the fact you have to come to live with it, it doesn't really reflect the school well.

Race and Ethnicity
- Many community members, including students of color, white students, parents, and school staff and leaders, reported that school staff regularly confuse students of color for one another and mispronounce names. Some staff highlighted concerns that not all teachers understand the impacts on students of color when this happens.

    I've probably been called every single East Asian girl's name at least once.

    My other friend, who's Indian, this teacher came up to her at the end of the year, and was like, 'Your name is super hard to pronounce. I wish you had a nickname.'

- Many community members report a widespread assumption that all Black people in DS are part of METCO and live in Boston.
- Students and families report a culture of tolerating or ignoring racially charged comments and racist jokes. Students of color explain that they often feel pressured to brush off jokes, comments and ignorant questions even from friends.

    Actually, I remember this. When I moved here, my first day here, I remember I was sitting next to this girl, and there's a kid who is Asian, and I guess he was talking. Then, she just made this joke, not to me, but I heard it, about him eating dogs. It's a racist

comment, it's not a joke. I remember I was just really shocked because it was my first day there. I was like, "What is she even saying?"

Like, "Wow, I can't believe"-- we're still cool, but at the same time, it's like they don't understand that they are being a little racist. Remarks, certain comments, or whatever it is.

I've had a lot of situations where something's been said to me that was definitely-- it just made me uncomfortable, it definitely was not okay, but because it's a predominantly white school, and then those are your friends, you don't really want to start some type of argument or something over it, because you're the only person of color there. I'm honestly a very shy person, so I don't really have the confidence always to say something.

- Students, parents, school staff, and school leaders reported regular use of racial slurs, including the n-word, and other hate speech including references to slavery. Such hate speech occurs in person at school and at school events, on the bus and during extracurriculars, and over social media.

  Sometimes they'll be, 'Oh, I can't see you because you're too dark.'

  He had some weird interactions with some kids that he blew off, and we initially thought, 'Well, maybe just isolated events.' A kid called him the n-word. There were these snide remarks of 'You're just an athlete,' that kind of thing.

Many of the incidents that were described to us occur outside of the immediate supervision of adults - at lunch tables, on the bus, on sports fields, and of course on social media. Students, families, and educators shared that the culture in Dover-Sherborn schools is one where students feel social pressure to deal with interpersonal problems on their own, rather than seeking adult support. In particular, students of color and other marginalized students are reluctant to develop reputations as "sensitive," "angry," or "difficult," and often feel pressured to shrug off microaggressions and outright hate speech.

When they do reach out to adults for support, though - either on their own behalf or when they witness incidents involving peers - students often report feeling dismissed. In focus groups and surveys, educators shared that they don't always feel prepared to productively intervene when they witness or are informed of bias incidents between students. They reflected that they can interrupt or defuse the situation in the moment, but don't always have the language, capacity, or time to help students process and repair harm. Some shared that their willingness to intervene is shaped by concern about parents' responses when they make efforts to hold students accountable for bias incidents. Students and parents often shared this general sense that difficult conversations are avoided and that fear of parent backlash constrains action.

Many students of color perceive this as a lack of concern for their safety or an inability on the part of the largely white, middle-class staff to understand the corrosive harm of repeated microaggressions and hate speech. One student reflected that when students make racist remarks, *"Sometimes, the teachers don't care. But a lot of them are white. They don't really see that kind of issue. They don't understand it."* Students of color reported that when they experience bias or microaggressions, they often have to explain to adults why speech or actions are offensive. Another student shared,

> *I feel like it's on the METCO kids, whenever there's something racial going on, it's on us to educate and tell them how we feel and constantly having to explain ourselves. I feel like most of us here have been here since we were in kindergarten. We shouldn't still be talking about how things affect us because we've all been together since kindergarten. It's not really unknown.*

Next Steps and Recommendations

It's imperative that DSPS work urgently to create a climate where it is clear that hate speech and bias are not tolerated. Students must be able to trust that adults will reliably and effectively intervene every time they observe intentional or unintentional bias. Students must be able to trust that when they approach an adult for help, they'll be listened to and taken seriously. We observe an urgent need to set and reinforce expectations about how adults will respond and to develop shared vocabulary, scripts, and strategies for intervening in the moment and for debriefing with students after the fact. Students, also, need language and strategies for self-advocacy and bystander intervention. DSHS has established a World of Difference club through the Anti-Defamation League, and we understand DSMS is considering World of Difference and/or a related Anti-Defamation League program, No Place for Hate. These are research-backed, standards-based, customizable programs that offer tools for responding to specific incidents (including swastikas, use of the n-word, and misgendering) as well as longer-term skill-building for adults and students. We would strongly recommend adoption/expansion of these or similar programs as a key next step.

- ➔ Establish district-wide expectations for how adults should respond to bias incidents they directly observe, how they should respond when they themselves perpetuate bias (confusing students of the same background, misgendering, etc.), and how they should respond when students approach them for help with a bias incident or hate speech.
- ➔ Prioritize evidence-based professional development to ensure that all adults are prepared to effectively intervene in bias incidents.
- ➔ School leaders should ensure that educators have consistent support in handling parent communication after they have intervened in a bias incident or facilitated classroom discussions about bias and develop clear procedures for bringing school and district leaders into communication with parents.
- ➔ Encourage students to intervene when they witness bias incidents and hate speech and provide opportunities for them to build skills for intervening effectively, supporting harmed students, and knowing when to approach adults.
- ➔ Clarify disciplinary responses to bias incidents and hate speech (see finding 4, below).

Resources

Anti-Defamation League Guide for Responding to School-Based Bias Incidents

Learning for Justice: Responding to Hate and Bias at School

4. Current approaches to discipline aren't serving goals of accountability, repair and growth.

We observed a broadly shared perception among students and parents that disciplinary interventions for bias incidents and hate speech are insufficient and ineffective in stopping behavior before it escalates or deterring similar behavior among other students. We heard first-hand examples from students and parents of instances of racist and homophobic slurs being dismissed as students "trying out" words and of students circulating images or video of other students with racist and transphobic captions not being reported to parents. In open-ended survey responses, the vast majority of statements related to discipline were comments about students using racist and homophobic language with no or little consequence. One student's account of the responses from white adults in school to students using the n-word reflected a sentiment shared repeatedly in focus groups and surveys: *"They're like, 'Oh, it's just a word. He apologized. He won't do it again.' It doesn't matter."*

Some students perceive that the academic and athletic prospects of those who cause harm are treated with more sensitivity than the healing and safety of those who have been harmed. We heard examples of students being rebuffed when they raised concerns about bias they had witnessed or approached adults on behalf of other students who were experiencing bias. Parents, and some students, worried that the districts' approach reinforces to white students and privileged students that they can act with impunity - to the detriment of the students they target and to their own detriment, as they prepare to leave DSPS and navigate spaces where there may be serious repercussions for bias and hate speech. Other students and parents see an over-investment in the district's reputation for academic excellence and an unwillingness to grapple openly with issues that might tarnish that legacy.

Parents expressed frustration with the public communications from schools in the wake of high-profile bias incidents that are spread quickly through social networks and social media. They expressed a desire to understand more about such incidents so that they could discuss them at home and reinforce messages about not tolerating bias. Many parents perceive school communications about these incidents to prioritize moving on quickly and offer vague calls for unity rather than reckoning honestly with the causes and consequences of hate speech and bias. Several parents of color reflected that these responses have sometimes seemed to prioritize the comfort of white families over the needs of students and families of color. Parents appreciated the more forthright tone and swifter response to several incidents this school year. Similarly, a number of middle school and high school students pointed to school-wide assemblies on bias and hate speech as a band-aid solution and contrasted the messages of those assemblies with their perception that adults don't decisively intervene.

We recognize that community members are not privy to details of individual cases and that their perceptions of how specific incidents are handled often don't reflect the full extent of the response. School leaders and guidance staff are committed to protecting student privacy and face strict limits on the details they can share about specific incidents, even in service of correcting misinformation. Still, there is space - and an urgent need - for transparent,

community-wide conversations about values, goals, procedures and roles, and outcomes of disciplinary processes, and about how to protect the safety and belonging of marginalized students while offering growth opportunities for students responsible for harm. As one student reflected:

> *Really, what would make our school literally one of the best places would really be if someone asks you for help with something, or tells you about something, don't put it aside or assume that it's not actually happening. Nothing is going to go away if you just assume that it's not real and that it's not happening. At least go look into it and make an effort for all students, no matter if they have a good reputation or not. If they are bullying someone, then talk to them about it and don't put it aside… that's a lot of the reason why kids aren't comfortable.*

Effectively addressing bias incidents and harassment requires carefully balancing different priorities and needs. On the one hand, hate speech and bias incidents create ruptures in the school community that extend beyond the perpetrator and immediate recipient. If adults don't respond swiftly and forcefully, marginalized students feel dismissed and unsafe, and the lack of response (or perceived lack of response) can add new layers of harm and create a sense that future hate speech and harassment will be tolerated. On other hand, school leaders have a legal and ethical obligation to protect the privacy of minor students. Addressing bias incidents should also prioritize opportunities for learning, growth, and working towards repairing harm.

In service of these goals, school leaders and guidance staff at DSPS have begun the process of elaborating a restorative justice model for intervening in bias incidents and harassment. Restorative justice approaches emphasize relationships and community and respect over control, and include many routine practices for cultivating student voice, building relationships in and across classrooms, and practicing social-emotional skills. When harm occurs, restorative justice models engage students and other school community members in a facilitated process to acknowledge the harm, understand the needs of the harmed individual, and identify ways to make amends and avoid future harm. Restorative justice models, when well-designed and well-implemented, can reduce bullying, reduce disciplinary referrals and use of suspension, strengthen school climate, and improve student-teacher relationships (Augustine, et al., 2018; Anyon, et al., 2014; Gregory and Evans, 2020).

Effective restorative justice models can take years to develop, and require investment and commitment from staff, students, parents and the broader community. A recent review of research on restorative justice implementation found that schools and districts that adopted a slow approach, building on the buy-in of early adopters and taking time to address concerns, with sufficient resources and sustained, tailored professional development, were more likely to develop effective models. (Gregory and Evans, 2020). Effective restorative justice models use an explicit equity lens and are integrated into other school- and district-wide initiatives to improve school climate, deepen culturally relevant teaching practices, and teach social-emotional skills.

Disparities in Disciplinary Rates

Research and national data on school discipline indicate that Black, Latinx, and Native American children are more routinely disciplined than white children, despite committing infractions at similar rates, and receive harsher and longer punishments for the same infractions (U.S. Civil Rights Commission Briefing Report, 2019). Students of color are more likely to be cited for subjective categories of infractions such as "insubordination" or "disrespect," (U.S. Civil Rights Commission, 2019; Bradshaw, et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2014). Research also indicates that nationally, children with disabilities are subjected to disproportionate discipline in comparison to children without disabilities, with even higher rates for students of color with disabilities (National Center on Learning Disabilities, 2020).

Consistent with these national trends, we heard concerns from staff, parents and students that students of color - in particular Black boys - are disciplined more frequently and more harshly than other students engaged in similar behavior, are sometimes perceived to be misbehaving on the basis of cultural difference in conversational style and norms, and are more closely surveilled by school staff. We also heard some concerns from special education staff that some students with IEPs and 504 plans are disciplined at higher rates than their peers and are disciplined for behaviors connected to diagnosed learning disabilities. Less frequently, students and parents suggested that boys are routinely disciplined by some staff for developmentally appropriate behaviors.

Analysis of disciplinary records bears out that there are some disparities in rates of discipline in Dover-Sherborn. We noted that students enrolled in the Free and Reduced Lunch program, in the METCO program, students with IEPs, and Black students all appear to be overrepresented in documented conduct cases when compared with their proportion of the student body. The audit team did not have access to information about the nature of the infractions reflected in this data, or to data on lower-level, routine disciplinary interactions (phone calls home, referral to principal's office, classroom detention) that don't reach the threshold for formal reporting. It's unclear whether the same patterns hold true for more routine classroom and school disciplinary interactions.

Research-supported strategies for reducing discipline disparities include strategies that Dover-Sherborn schools have already begun implementing and strategies recommended elsewhere in this audit report: multi-tiered systems of support, culturally responsive teaching, restorative justice practices, and efforts to develop a diverse and culturally competent staff. Careful and regular monitoring of disciplinary referrals, actions taken and consequences imposed, and outcomes, disaggregated by race, gender, disability status and other characteristics of interest, is also key.

Discipline Policy / Code of Conduct

Each school's family or student handbook is the main resource for documenting and communicating the disciplinary code, including the bullying and harassment policies. A code of conduct offers an opportunity to articulate a proactive vision for school community and climate

and guiding principles for school discipline, and to ensure that policies and procedures are working in service of the vision and principles.

As currently written, the handbooks are somewhat opaque and difficult to navigate as references. Taken as a whole, the discipline policy sections of the handbooks don't offer much guidance as to the values or principles guiding the discipline policy or the key expectations for students. Notably, the elementary family handbooks are somewhat easier to navigate and more firmly oriented around positive behavioral expectations. The handbooks don't consistently and systematically reference non-punitive, positive supports for behaviors, such as the Multi-Tiered System of Supports the district has implemented.

The middle school and high school handbooks include lists of infractions and potential consequences and interventions, organized alphabetically. However, hate speech, harassment and bias incidents are not consistently reflected in these lists, despite their apparent prevalence. These lists also omit potential positive behavioral supports to address challenging behavior before escalating to consequences. While it may not be feasible or appropriate to lay out a concrete menu of interventions and consequences for bias incidents - especially in the context of an evolving restorative justice model - it would be possible to document procedures for addressing different types of infractions and to lay out considerations for determining appropriate interventions.

A gradual adoption of restorative justice approaches will necessitate major revisions to the code of conduct. In the interim, there are opportunities to revisit the student and family handbooks to better clarify the positive expectations for student conduct; more clearly articulate principles around learning, safety, belonging, and repairing harm; clarify expectations around student privacy and reporting on disciplinary incidents; and make it clear that school staff take bias, hate speech and harassment seriously. Handbooks could also describe strategies the district is using to monitor and remedy disparities in disciplinary referral rates.

Bullying
Parent interviews revealed similar dynamics with concerns about the district's response to bullying. Some families feel that school leaders have been slow to respond to complaints about bullying and that their responses have been insufficient to protect student safety. There are gaps between the way school and district leaders define and intervene in bullying (bound by state law and policy) and the way families and students understand bullying to encompass a broader range of targeted physical and verbal aggression. School leaders might identify ways to clarify, and seek feedback on, steps for communicating with families who report bullying (whether or not bullying claims are substantiated) and how families can stay in contact with educators, counselors, and school leaders to ensure their students are receiving appropriate supports and that interventions are succeeding in stopping behaviors.

Next Steps and Recommendations:
➔ Identify a cohort of restorative justice "early adopters," ideally including a mix of guidance staff, teachers, and non-instructional staff drawn from all four schools, to

pursue ongoing professional development and integrate restorative approaches into their own practice.

➔ Develop systems to document the use of restorative approaches, actions taken to educate about harm, actions taken to repair harm, and any follow up, to identify successful strategies and refine them over time.

➔ Inventory existing or planned initiatives, including SEL initiatives, to identify building blocks for integrating restorative approaches across the school day for all students, including middle and high school students.

➔ Develop a multi-year restorative justice implementation plan, including sustained professional development and coaching for guidance staff, teachers and educational assistants, and non-instructional staff and structured opportunities for parent and student input; consider partnering with an intermediary organization that can provide ongoing coaching, professional development, and evaluation support.

➔ Include a diverse group of teachers, guidance staff, non-instructional staff, parents, and students in the process of revising discipline codes and solicit broad feedback whenever possible.

➔ Reorganize and revise student handbooks to clearly articulate the districts' and schools' values and goals for student conduct as individuals and as members of the school community (the Pine Hill family handbook offers a starting point for how to do this).

➔ Consider organizing the code of conduct around major categories such as academic integrity (including cheating, plagiarism, cutting class); safety (drugs, alcohol, weapons, fighting, driving); and interpersonal conduct (insubordination, bias, harassment, etc.).

➔ Integrate positive behavioral supports and non-punitive interventions, including MTSS, into lists of potential responses.

➔ Clarify the set of interventions and consequences employed for bias incidents and harassment, or the procedures and criteria for selecting interventions and consequences.

➔ Where possible, simplify language and/or provide clear examples of common scenarios and steps taken to address them. Consider adding plain-language examples of behavior that falls under the bullying policy and behavior that does not and explain the procedures for addressing both.

➔ Where possible, use consistent language, formatting, and explanations across schools.

➔ Include a description of how schools will monitor discipline data to track and reduce disparities.

➔ Establish a regular process to update handbooks and incorporate restorative practices as they are adopted.

Resources

NYU Metro Center's Center for Strategic Solutions offers a Restorative Justice and Racial Justice professional learning series

Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership School-wide Restorative Practices: Step-by-Step guide

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments Addressing the Root Causes of Disparities in School Discipline Planning Guide

Advancement Project Model Codes of Conduct and Tips

Dignity in Schools Model Code for Education and Dignity

Dignity in Schools Model Code Comparison Tool

5. **Educators need time, resources, support and accountability to prepare students to navigate and thrive in a diverse, multicultural world.**

Survey, interview, and focus group data all point to a clear consensus that educators need more resources, support, and time to ensure that students can thrive in a diverse, multicultural world, implement culturally responsive curriculum, and facilitate equity-centered discussions. The overall responses to the survey question of whether Dover-Sherborn is preparing students to live in a diverse and multicultural world indicate room for growth. Notably, less than half of high school students and teachers feel that students are being prepared for a multicultural world, and in all groups a substantial minority are uncertain about students' preparation.

Are Dover Sherborn schools preparing students to live in a diverse, multicultural world?
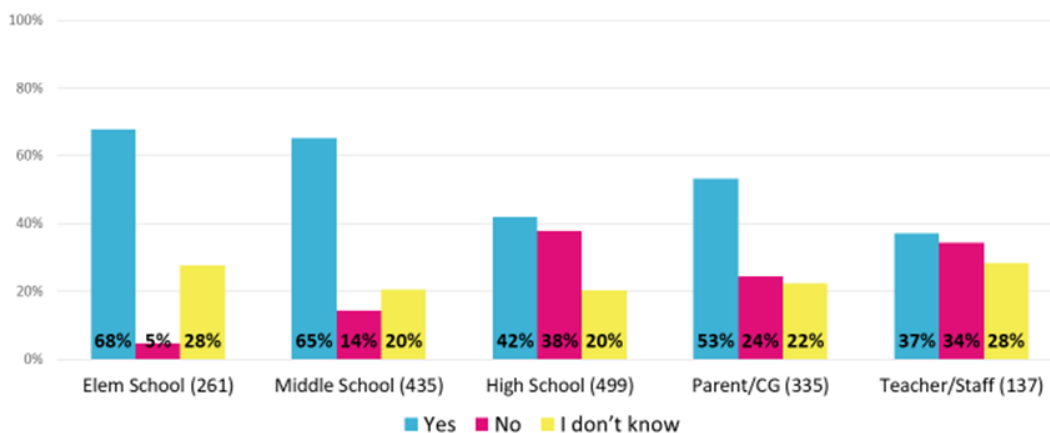
In focus groups and surveys, students, parents and educators frequently described teachers' capacity to navigate and facilitate equity-related conversations as highly varied across individuals and across departments. Teachers and school staff were notably critical of their own capacity, with only 32% reporting on the survey that educators are equipped to handle equity-related discussions and 42% reporting that they are not.

We also heard from students, parents and educators that some teachers are more confident in their ability to navigate challenging conversations that arise naturally in the classroom and hallways, and to support students to think critically about how differences along lines of race, gender, sexuality, religion, income, etc. show up in the world. Teachers shared concerns about saying the wrong thing when they are not well-versed in particular topics. Again, some were unsure about how thoroughly school leaders would support them in the face of parent complaints. Other teachers, and school leaders, worried that their peers' discomfort created missed opportunities to show care and to push students' thinking, and that responsibility for

facilitating these conversations falls too heavily on guidance staff and on the English, History, Social Studies, and other humanities departments.

Effective professional development is sustained over time, incorporates opportunities for active learning, offers feedback and coaching, and facilitates collaboration with peers (Darling-Hammond, et al. 2017). Ideally, professional learning engages educators in cycles of inquiry in which they implement a strategy, collect data on its implementation, and revise their approach. Many teachers shared that while they've participated in high-quality professional development (in particular, the Initiatives for Developing Equity and Achievement for Students (IDEAS) course), opportunities for ongoing learning were limited. They described a 'one-and-done' approach to professional development. Teachers noted that they have little time to observe each other's teaching, plan collaboratively, or engage in the kind of sustained, collaborative professional learning that would allow them to thoroughly incorporate new culturally responsive strategies into their practice. Educators frequently expressed a desire for opportunities to role-play scenarios and receive feedback. Some staff also noted that professional development courses are often geared towards the needs of classroom teachers, rather than guidance staff, special educators, education assistants, and non-instructional staff.

Of course, two and a half years of teaching during Covid have greatly exacerbated the pressures on educators' time, attention and emotional reserves and scuttled plans for sustained professional learning. Educators are doing their best to address academic and mental health needs created or heightened by the pandemic and fill in gaps in students' social skills, all while continuing to meet high academic standards. Teachers and schools are near (or perhaps, in some cases, beyond) their breaking point. We recognize that many of our recommendations include new demands on teachers - professional learning, or collaboration with colleagues, or integrating new mindsets or practices. Rather than piling on new demands, DSPS will need to carefully inventory, sequence, and differentiate professional learning expectations, prioritizing educators' well-being and own goals for professional growth.

Hiring and Diversity

We heard a clear consensus around the urgency of recruiting and retaining more diverse staff and leaders, in particular staff of color. Again and again, students and parents point to the few staff of color in the district as crucial sources of support, affirmation, understanding, and advocacy. One parent of a METCO participant reflected,

> *I think that they should try to have somebody available to [students of color] that they're comfortable with so that they can have that person to go to with whatever they're dealing with at that moment. I think a lot of things get built up, and the bad instances happen when there's no one for a child to talk to. Not being able to say, 'This is what's bothering me, and this is what's happened to me.'*

A high school student shared,

> *The person I always go to for something, if I think discrimination or something offensive has happened, is Ms. Monique. She's our METCO counselor at the school. She's one of the only Black faculty members within the whole Dover-Sherborn, only one of two.*

Recruiting, retaining, and promoting diverse staff is key to creating more inclusive environments for students who struggle to see themselves reflected in school. A more diverse staff will also bring a broader range of lived experiences that will benefit all students' understanding of the world and appreciation for multiple perspectives.

Parents, staff and school leaders are largely in agreement about the obstacles to diversity in hiring: norms of hiring through word of mouth; implicit preferences for hiring educators with ties to the Dover or Sherborn communities or who are a good "cultural fit;" lack of affordable housing and transportation; and the current homogeneity of the district and communities. District leaders and department heads have taken steps to recruit more diverse candidate pools through new outreach strategies and partnerships with recruiting organizations that prioritize diversity.

Next Steps and Recommendations

Moving towards equity will require thoughtful planning and difficult decisions about priorities. Educator beliefs and biases, school climate, classroom climate, culturally responsive curriculum, social emotional learning, family engagement, and restorative justice are all overlapping pieces of the puzzle. Goal setting and mapping at a district level, to identify and sequence priorities for professional learning, is imperative. For example, many of the social-emotional and relational practices that are being piloted or implemented at the elementary level, including the Responsive Classroom model, are key building blocks for interrupting bias incidents and for developing restorative justice approaches. It might make sense to prioritize exploring developmentally appropriate ways to extend those practices to middle and high school grades.

This mapping process should include strategies for cross-grade communication and for building on students' skills and capacities sequentially. As one school leader noted, upper-grade educators may be more willing to broach conversations about race or gender if they know that students have been practicing these conversations since early elementary school. Similarly, parents noted that students who've been taught intervene in unkind behavior in elementary school find it jarring when staff dismiss their advocacy in older grades.

➔ Collaborate with staff to develop a core set of expectations around classroom climate and inclusion, culturally responsive curriculum, and proactively and effectively handling conversations about race, culture, class, religion, language, gender and sexuality, and disability.
➔ Map existing professional development investments across grade levels and departments, and include staff feedback on the effectiveness and relevance, in order to identify:
- ◆ Important gaps in skills and training
- ◆ Patterns in access to and participation in professional development

- ◆ Key capacities that can support multiple goals (for example, social-emotional learning practices that provide a foundation for restorative justice)
- ➔ Identify a core set of professional development experiences that are required of all staff (e.g., the IDEAS course) as well as a menu of differentiated professional learning opportunities to deepen knowledge and practice.
- ➔ Work toward an approach to professional learning that facilitates educator leadership, inquiry, and collaboration across departments and schools.
- ➔ Wherever possible, reconsider allocations of staff time, schedules, in-service days, policies for release time, etc. to maximize opportunities for collaboration, including classroom inter-visitations and observations.
- ➔ Explore opportunities to recognize individuals or small teams who have been informal leaders or early adopters and build structured opportunities for peer coaching. This could include additional compensation or release time for staff who are willing to take on substantial responsibility for peer learning.
- ➔ Continue to develop partnerships with professional organizations and colleges to recruit more diverse candidates and to develop strategies for making DSPS welcoming and attractive.
- ➔ Access professional development or support on implementing best practices for hiring, including rubrics and a core set of questions asked of all candidates.
- ➔ Include students and parents from diverse backgrounds in hiring committees.
- ➔ Prioritize hiring new staff with experience supporting racial literacy, social-emotional learning, and culturally responsive teaching.
- ➔ Develop strategies for supporting and retaining new hires, for example through regular check-ins, affinity groups, and mentorship.
- ➔ Ensure that new hires are respected and valued for their lived experiences and perspectives but not expected to take on outsize roles in responding to bias incidents, handling challenging conversations, and supporting students; reiterate the expectation that this work belongs to all adults in the district.

Resources

Massachusetts DESE Model Rubric Updates

6. Large majorities of DSPS community members agree this is a time for bold, consequential action for equity.

There's a strong appetite for more urgent action among most DSPS community members. The most frequent themes in open-ended responses on the survey could be paraphrased as, *"We're trying, but we have a long way to go"* and *"We're not nearly there yet, but we're trying."* Students and parents frequently offered critiques of ways they believe the schools fall short of serving all students well, even if they didn't have specific concerns about their own family's experiences.

As reflected above, there is strong support across schools and towns for the work that has already begun to increase equity and support all students to thrive. The vast majority of community members who participated in this audit want a school system where all students are seen and valued, develop a strong sense of belonging that allows them to thrive and grow, learn to respect and collaborate with peers across lines of difference, and learn to think critically about their world. Most parents, students, school leaders and teachers offer strikingly similar analyses of what the strengths, challenges, and opportunities are.

Approximately 7% of parent survey respondents, and six of 30 parents who took part in focus groups or interviews, expressed reservations about or opposition to the work that Dover-Sherborn schools have undertaken to center equity and diversity. Their concerns include discomfort with classroom conversations about race, gender, and social inequality; unfounded complaints about the teaching of critical race theory; and concerns that attending to equity will detract from academic rigor. Several of these parents expressed concerns that young children don't notice race or other differences outside of adult intervention, and that direct conversations about race and racism, gender identity, different family configurations, and discrimination are inappropriate for young children. It's worth noting that this "color-blind" approach is directly contradicted by research on child development and contradicts the Massachusetts learning standards (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2021; Sullivan, et al., 2020). Some parents also shared concerns that working towards equity would dilute academic rigor. The third common concern we heard was that politically conservative and conservative Christian opinions and values are disrespected by teachers and students, though we heard few specific examples.

Despite their apparently small numbers, families that are resistant to this work have been vocal in public, private, and online forums and occupy an outsize role in deliberations about how to move forward. Many, many comments in parent and teacher focus groups and surveys expressed sentiments such as "staff are trying but they're beholden to families who don't want diversity" and "the school tries, but the broader community has a hard time with difference." Many school community members see the district, or the Dover and Sherborn communities - or both - as reluctant to engage in hard or uncomfortable conversations. They perceive that investment in the district's reputation for academic excellence makes self-critique challenging. One teacher shared,

Yes, we have a habit in this community... when we get together to talk about some things as a whole school, what we often do first is say how good we are, how great we are. I think that takes away from getting at what we're supposed to be working on or towards. Then it becomes this list of 'Look at all we've done that's correct.' We know what we've done, and we know we need to get to that bottom line.

DS students, families and staff are ready to grapple together with what it means to prioritize equity, inclusion, and thriving. There's a shared recognition that schools can't do this work alone and that family and community beliefs, values and attitudes shape students' engagement in school. Many participants in the audit suggested that these conversations should go beyond schools to deal with larger questions of affordable housing, residential segregation, and relationships between Dover, Sherborn and Boston families. Respondents recognized that these will be hard conversations that will require patience, empathy, and multiple entry points. One parent offered,

I think it's going to be so key to have more conversations with community members where we sit and we have an open dialogue of, 'I hear your concerns. I hear your confusion. I hear whatever. Here's my personal experience that I'm going to put out to you.' Because without that dialogue, I think there's always going to be pushback and there's always going to be the bully. It's unfortunate that we don't have more respectful conversations out in the open. We wait for a forum to go put it online and be heard that way… Maybe there's a group of mindful parents that say, 'You don't have to put yourself on stage to speak your truth, we can all do it together and we can figure out ways to approach this.'

Next steps and Recommendations

Building the collective muscle for challenging conversations will be crucial for advancing equity in Dover Sherborn. Without broad community engagement, it will be impossible to make meaningful changes to discipline strategies or school climate. There are hard decisions to be made about policies, practices, and resources, and hard reckoning to be had about the condition and culture that allow exclusion and bias to persist. Building equitable school cultures will mean letting go of long-standing practices that have benefited some groups at the expense of others. Trusting, positive relationships between families and schools are a key resource for ensuring that schools can meet the needs of all students. Even strong supporters of this work will need to engage in introspection about the ways they participate in cultures that maintain inequality. We see three priority areas for community conversation: proactive, transparent communication from district and school leaders; stronger school-family relationships; and authentic community conversations about values and goals.

➔ Identify venues for proactive, transparent communication and expectation-setting with families around key policies and initiatives.
   ◆ Many families would appreciate more details about educators' approaches to culturally responsive curriculum and discussions of difference, in order to extend

conversations at home or to better understand how these approaches align to best practices and child development research.

◆ Without discussing specific disciplinary incidents, school leaders and staff could explain the school's values and strategies and set expectations around private and public communication proactively, before incidents occur.

➔ Develop a range of strategies for soliciting family feedback and engagement in revising policies and implementing new initiatives, to ensure broad and diverse participation.

➔ Support educators in building relationships with racially, culturally and linguistically diverse families.

◆ Work with existing family organizations, the METCO director, special education staff, and English Language Learner staff to develop strategies for engaging families who have had less access to school leaders and staff.

◆ Support educators and school leaders in developing skills to hear, appreciate, and act on feedback from families who raise concerns about inclusion and bias.

➔ For community conversations, we recommend drawing on past successful experiences with community conversations and using existing structures and networks, such as DS AIDE, school-based parent organizations, and other existing parent groups.

◆ Consider working with an outside facilitator with substantial experience planning and facilitating equity-based community conversations, and/or using tested protocols such as Courageous Conversations or Everyday Democracy's Dialogue to Change.

◆ Community conversations should center the voices of students and families who've been least well served in DS, while respecting individual decisions about how and whether to engage.

Resources

[Everyday Democracy Dialogue to Change](#)

[Courageous Conversations About Race](#)

Appendix 1. Dover-Sherborn Equity Audit Survey Demographics

	Elementary Student (263)		Middle Student (436)		High Student (531)		Parents/ Caregivers (420)		Teachers & Staff (136)		Survey Totals (1786)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female	126	48%	194	44%	239	45%	229	55%	106	78%	894	50%
Male	123	47%	220	50%	238	45%	73	17%	27	20%	681	38%
Non-Binary	4	2%	15	3%	10	2%	2	0%	1	1%	32	2%
Another Gender	3	1%	10	2%	8	2%	2	0%	0	0%	23	1%
No Response (Gender)	9	3%	7	2%	46	9%	115	27%	2	1%	179	10%
Black/African-American	15	6%	26	6%	21	4%	17	4%	1	1%	80	4%
Hispanic/Latino/a/x	7	3%	36	8%	32	6%	23	5%	5	4%	103	6%
Asian/Pacific islander	45	17%	61	14%	77	15%	37	9%	1	1%	221	12%
Native American	6	2%	4	1%	4	1%	5	1%	2	1%	21	1%
White	167	63%	304	70%	379	71%	221	53%	126	93%	1197	67%
Biracial/Mixed race	27	10%	36	8%	38	7%	25	6%	0	0%	126	7%
Another Race/Ethnicity	49	19%	41	9%	23	4%	12	3%	2	1%	127	7%
No Response (Race)	13	5%	9	2%	51	10%	116	28%	3	2%	192	11%
LGBTQ	16	6%	60	14%	82	15%	7	2%	8	6%	173	10%
Disability	10	4%	23	5%	37	7%	9	2%	3	2%	82	5%
METCO	5	2%	7	2%	5	1%	15	4%	0	0%	32	2%
MultiLingual (not EL)	63	24%	112	26%	100	19%	58	14%	7	5%	340	19%

Appendix 2: Survey Demographic Differences

Analysis Overview:

We conducted Chi-Square Analyses to compare the distribution of Yes, No, and I don't know responses to the survey questions. The list of all statistically significant findings is below. Please note that many of these demographic groups have a number of members too small to report on while also protecting the privacy of community members.

These findings are intended to complement the qualitative analyses. Many factors go into detecting statistically significant effects, including how varied the responses are to a particular question elicits, and how many people from a particular demographic group respond to each question. For example, if an effect is not listed below, that does not necessarily mean there are no differences in experiences for a particular demographic group. It may be the case that we have too few people spread across the three options to be able to detect a meaningful difference with a quantitative analytic approach. In these cases, it is important to turn to the voices of DS community members represented in the qualitative interview and focus group findings.

We tested the following demographic differences for students:

- ❖ Female students compared to male students
- ❖ Male students compared to female students
- ❖ Black/African American students compared to all other race and ethnic groups
- ❖ Hispanic/Latinx students compared to all other race and ethnic groups
- ❖ Asian/Pacific Islander students compared to all other race and ethnic groups
- ❖ Multiracial Students compared with all other race and ethnic groups
- ❖ [Please note that we did not have a sufficient number of students who identified as Native American to run these analyses]
- ❖ LGBTQIA students compared to students who did not self-identify
- ❖ Students with disabilities compared to students who did not self-identify
- ❖ Students who participate in the METCO program compared with students who did not self-identify

<u>Differences in Elementary School Student Responses:</u>

- LGBTQIA students and students with disabilities were less likely to report that all students were seen, affirmed and celebrated.
- Mixed race students were less likely to report that the curriculum is culturally responsive, inclusive and respectful.
- Students with disabilities were less likely to report that all students have an equal voice in the school.

<u>Differences in Middle School Student Responses:</u>

- LGBTQIA students were less likely to say that all students were seen, affirmed, and celebrated.
- LGBTQIA students were more likely to say that there were spaces they belong in DSPS.
- METCO students were less likely to say that there were spaces they belong in DSPS.
- Male students were more likely to say that educators were equipped to manage discussions about issues of inequality.
- White students were more likely to say that educators were equipped to manage discussions about issues of inequality.
- Students with disabilities were less likely to say that educators were equipped to manage discussions about issues of inequality.
- White students were more likely to say that they did not know if the curriculum was culturally responsive, inclusive, and respectful.
- LGBTQIA students were less likely to report that all students have an equal voice in the school.
- Students with disabilities were less likely to report that their family was respected, encouraged, and welcomed in the schools.
- LGBTQIA students were less likely to report that all families were respected, encouraged and welcomed in the schools.
- Students with disabilities were less likely to report that all families were respected, encouraged and welcomed in the schools.
- Black students were less likely to report that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.
- Asian were more likely to report that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.
- White students were more likely to say they did not know if DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.
- METCO students were less likely to report that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.

<u>Differences in High School Student Responses</u>

- Female/Women students were less likely to say that DSPS ensures equity for students and families.

- Male students were more likely to say that DSPS sees, affirms and celebrates students for who they are.
- White students were more likely to say that DSPS sees, affirms and celebrates students for who they are.
- LGBTQIA students were less likely to say that DSPS sees, affirms and celebrates students for who they are.
- METCO students were less likely to say that DSPS sees, affirms and celebrates students for who they are.
- Black/African American students were less likely to say that there were spaces they belong in DSPS.
- Hispanic/Latinx students were less likely to say that there were spaces they belong in DSPS.
- White students were more likely to say that there were spaces they belong in DSPS.
- Female/Women students were less likely to say that educators were equipped to manage discussions about issues of inequality.
- Female/Women students were less likely to say that the curriculum was culturally responsive, inclusive, and respectful.
- Asian American/Pacific Islander students were less likely to say that the curriculum was culturally responsive, inclusive, and respectful.
- White students were more likely to say that the curriculum was culturally responsive, inclusive, and respectful.
- Female/Women students were less likely to say that all students have an equal voice in the schools.
- LGBTQIA students were less likely to say that all students have an equal voice in the schools.
- Female/Women students were less likely to say that their family was respected, encouraged, and welcomed in the schools.
- Black students were less likely to say that their family was respected, encouraged, and welcomed in the schools.
- Female/Women students were less likely to say that all families were respected, encouraged, and welcomed in the schools.
- LGBTQIA students were less likely to say that all families were respected, encouraged, and welcomed in the schools.
- Female/Women students were less likely to say that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.
- LGBTQIA students were less likely to say that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.
- Students with disabilities were less likely to report that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.

We tested the following demographic differences for parents:

- ❖ Female parents compared to male parents
- ❖ Male parents compared to female parents

- ❖ Black/African American parents compared to compared to all other race and ethnic groups
- ❖ Hispanic/Latinx parents compared to all other race and ethnic groups
- ❖ Asian/Pacific Islander parents compared to all other race and ethnic groups
- ❖ Multiracial Parents compared to all other race and ethnic groups
- ❖ LGBTQIA parents compared to parents who did not self-identify

- ❖ Parents who have disabilities compared to parents who did not self-identify
- ❖ Parents who participate in the METCO program compared with parents who did not self-identify
- ❖ Parents who were caregivers of students with disabilities compared with parents who did not self-identify
- ❖ Parents who were caregivers of LGBTQIA students compared with parents who did not self-identify

Differences in Parent Responses

- Caregivers of LGBTQIA students were less likely to report that DSPS ensures equity for students and families.
- Caregivers of students with disabilities were less likely to report that DSPS ensures equity for students and families.
- Female/Women caregivers were more likely to say yes (and no, less likely to say IDK) DSPS ensures equity for students and families. [REMOVE? CONFUSING.]
- Black/African American parents were less likely to report that DSPS ensures equity for students and families.
- Hispanic/Latinx parents were less likely to report that DSPS ensures equity for students and families.
- White parents were slightly more likely to report that DSPS ensures equity for students and families.
- Black/African American parents were less likely to report that there were spaces they belong in DSPS.
- Hispanic/Latinx parents were more likely to report that educators were not equipped to manage discussions about issues of inequality.
- Black/African American parents were more likely to report that educators were not equipped to manage discussions about issues of inequality.
- White parents were more likely to report that they did not know if educators were equipped to manage discussions about issues of inequality.
- Mixed race parents were more likely to say that educators were equipped to manage discussions about issues of inequality.
- White parents were less likely to report that all students have an equal voice in the school.
- Caregivers of students with disabilities were less likely to report that all students have an equal voice in the school.
- Caregivers of LGBTQIA students were less likely to report that all families were respected, encouraged and welcomed in the schools.

- Caregivers of students with disabilities were less likely to report that all families were respected, encouraged and welcomed in the schools.
- Female/Women parents were less likely to report that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.
- Asian American/Pacific Islander parents were more likely to report that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.
- White parents were less likely to report that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.
- Caregivers of students with disabilities were less likely to report that DSPS was preparing students for a diverse and multicultural world.

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