Equity Audit Summary Report

District data reveals that children of color and children of low socioeconomic status achieve statistically below their white peers. Achievement gaps are present in the elementary grades and often widen as students enter secondary school. Students of color and low-income students are receiving disciplinary referrals at a disproportionate rate to their white peers. Furthermore, some of these same students are underrepresented in advanced/honors courses and dual enrollment and overrepresented in remedial and credit recovery programs in the district.

Assessment Purposes

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

Assessment Questions

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

General Methodology

Quantitative research methods were used to complete the audit. Data was conducted via survey administration, and online data analysis. See Table 1 for total number of sample participants in qualitative and quantitative data collection.

Audit Participation: Total Number of participants

Participant Group	Responses	Invites	% Complete
Parent Survey	1344	9560	14.1
Administrator Survey	37	52	71.20
Staff Survey	529	1403	37.7
Student Survey	2199	6105	36

Why the 8 Focus Areas?

After careful analysis and comprehensive review of scholarly research, findings were categorized according to 8 Equity Areas (EAs) related to students', staff, administrators', and parents' overall opinions of the school district and specific perceptions of factors contributing to achievement and discipline gaps for students:

1. Accepting/marginalizing student identity and voice (AMSIV)
2. Culturally relevant school leadership, teaching, and curriculum (CRSLTC)
3. Discriminatory behavior and practices (DBP)
4. School culture and climate (SCC)
5. School-community relations (SCR)
6. Thoughts on achievement gaps (TAG)
7. Thoughts on discipline gaps (TDG)
8. Teacher rating and expectations (TR)

Brief definitions of the Equity Areas are at the end of this report in **Appendix A** (p.28). What follows is an overview of the summary of findings/recommendations, and summaries of the Equity Area results.
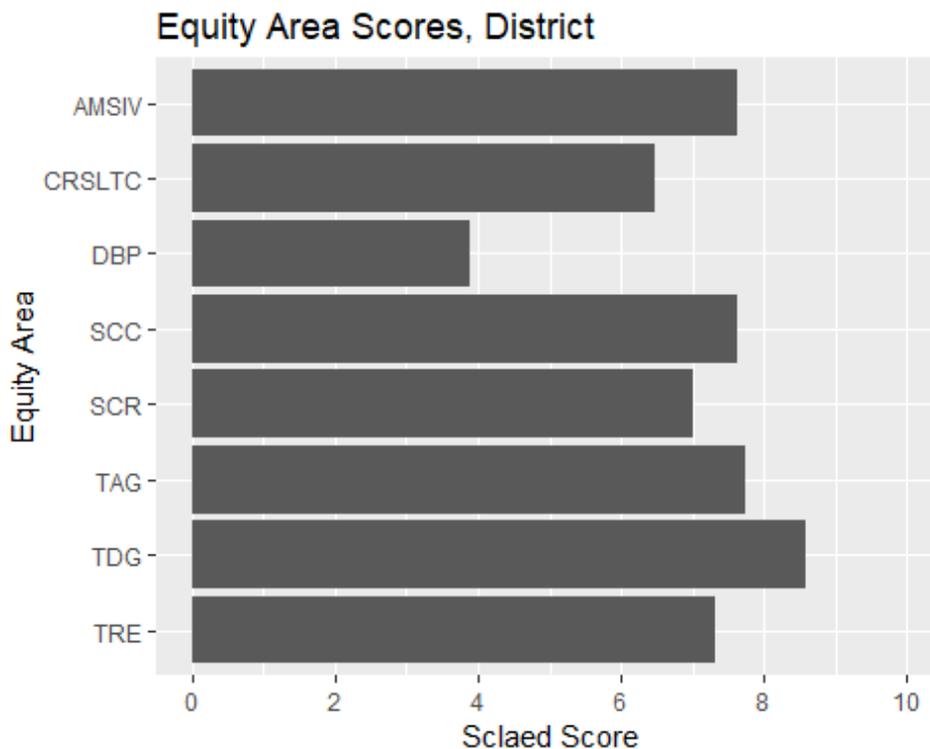
Audit Summary

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

Achievement disparities, opportunity gaps, attendance gaps, and discipline gaps persist in schools that have problems in these 8 core Equity Areas. Overall, the data suggests the district has significant concerns in most of the Equity Areas. The following chart below offers a visual representation of this:

Visual Presentation
This is how your district scored on each of the Equity Areas (EAs):

Equity Area Scores, District

Overall Summary and Recommendations

The Equity Audit conducted for your district revealed deeply institutionalized inequities between the educational experiences and well-being of students in the district. In addition to perceiving differences in access to academic opportunities, the audit also documented that some students felt unsafe and targeted for disciplinary actions in their schools and classrooms. The audit suggests that the problems in the district can be overcome by the staff, teachers, and administrators currently in the district. However, we do suggest an increased hiring of minoritized teachers and administrators.

This Equity Audit suggests that the district must incorporate an institutionalized approach that involves continuous critical reflection of equity within the school district. This will help implement effective practices of measures of educational success, as well as identify areas of needed growth related to cultural responsiveness, equity, and inclusion. This should be examined within school policies, *School Improvement Plans*, and practices of leadership, instruction, and learning throughout the district.

Priority Equity Area

Based on the results, we recommend starting with AMSIV, CRSLT, SCR, SCC and TR. Our recommendations are based on a number of factors: the severity of how the EAs were rated in comparison to other Equity Areas, indication of positive growth, the ease and accessibility of addressing that particular EA, and the ECCS goals of achievement equity among all students served by ECCS. This does not mean that the remaining Equity Areas should not be addressed. Rather, that the following are prioritized over the next year, as plans are made to address the other EAs.

Equity Areas to be prioritized by ECC	Highlights of Relevance
Accepting/marginalizing student identity and voice (AMSIV)	• This is one of the areas in which ECCS already has positive success in comparison to other EAs. • This is one of the cross-cutting EAs that, if improved, will positively influence all other areas. • Through student-led research projects, affinity groups, and community engagement projects, improving AMSIV can be relatively inexpensive.
Culturally relevant school leadership, teaching, and curriculum (CRSLTC)	• Compared to other EAs, this EA needs most attention.

	• The data revealed that students and parents are much less likely than staff and administrators to feel that they have the proper resources to educate students.
	• We also feel that without attention to CRSLT, other EAs will not improve as rapidly.
School-community relations (SCR)	• The data suggests that this is one of the lowest-scored EAs.
	• Improving this EA would improve other EAs, as it would build trust and collaboration between the schools/districts and families. Like AMSIV and DBP, this is a cross-cutting EA.
	• The recent history in the ECCS district, as well as the strong views expressed by parents and students, and in addition, the district's desire to improve SCR, we suggest that this is a major priority area.
School culture and climate (SCC)	• The data here indicate that students' positive school experiences are low, and this suggests SCC should be a focus EA.
	• This is crucial for so many other EAs that are related to if students are comfortable and feel valued in school—such as AMSIV, SCR, DBP, and others.
	• The data suggests that school staff are not aware of this well-established research fact: if students feel "othered," discriminated against, or unwelcomed in school, they are most likely to disengage and unlikely to learn from the staff in that building.
Teacher rating and expectations (TR)	• While SCC is most important for student comfort in school, TR is connected to students' academic performance (and success).
	• The data indicate a higher than normal prevalence of blaming students for achievement and discipline gaps.
	• The data suggests that school staff are not aware of this well-established research fact: when teachers raise their expectations, student academic and behavioral output also increases to meet the expectations. But 'raising expectations' has to be done in culturally appropriate ways.

Recommendations by Equity Area

Recommendations are provided under each Equity Area. Additionally, we included recommendations for improvement that are cost-friendly or free strategies for improvement.

Accepting or Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice (AMSIV)

This audit revealed some evidence that Eastern Carver County Public Schools minoritized students and parents do not always feel their racial and ethnic identity or cultural heritage and language are represented within the schools. At times, these groups feel marginalized within the district where White culture is celebrated as the norm and reinforced with an overall color-blind approach by many teachers in the classroom. Both teachers and students value positive relationships and respect, but may have different opinions about how those are conveyed in the classroom. Students who expressed having positive relationships in their schools felt affirmed in their identity, and felt they had voice and ownership in their educational path. But many minoritized students who performed well, felt that they had to do so at the expense of their authentic identities. Below, we highlight some of the research-based best practices that would enhance AMSIV:

- Drafting an equity policy that has specific language around being inclusionary toward all student voice and identity
- Providing professional development around exclusionary and inclusionary practices in school
- Identifying student behaviors and voices that are typically marginalized in school
- Developing student safe spaces and making available staff with whom minoritized students are comfortable
- Identifying space and allocating resources for sustained cultural studies and programing
- Hiring representative minoritized community members as dialogue facilitators and mentors within schools
- Facilitate staff engagement with youth voice in community-based settings

Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum (CRSLTC)

Eastern Carver County Public Schools would benefit from adopting an approach that would institutionalize the practice of identifying and addressing issues of inequity. Dr. Khalifa, in his book Culturally Responsive School Leadership (2018), describes culturally responsive school leadership as being characterized by a core set of unique leadership behaviors, namely: (a) being critically self-reflective; (b) developing and sustaining culturally responsive teachers and curriculums; (c) promoting inclusive, anti-oppressive school contexts; and (d) engaging students' indigenous (or local neighborhood) community contexts. Culturally responsive teaching and curriculum must pull knowledge and pedagogy deep from authentic student contexts, and center this within classroom

instruction and learning. Below are a set of recommendations that enhance CRSLTC in schools:

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

Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices (DBP)

In many districts, teachers express difficulty in understanding or believing there are discriminatory practices that lead to achievement or discipline gaps for certain groups of students. Then, the typical response is to claim gaps are because of students or communities, and not themselves as educators. In your district, minoritized students expressed that they are not treated equally within the school system, and at times students are labeled into categories they are unable to discard. Many White students reported that, in their view, teachers discriminated against minoritized students in their classes. Some students reported that they were often teased or shamed for speaking their native language among their friends. This Equity Audit data strongly aligns with other district data that suggests the presence of discriminatory practices, such as academic and disciplinary disparities. Below are a set of recommendations that will address DBP:

- Prioritize student and community perceptions of discrimination in the schools
- Prioritize and center equity data (for ex., discipline gap data) in all equity discussions
- Begin using teacher-specific and program-specific equity data
- Provide equity training and professional development for teachers, including: recruitment, disciplinary referrals, gifted and talented programs, special education programs, and classroom management
- Include equity/culturally responsive interview questions for potential job candidates

- Use teacher observations and administrative walk-thru forms with explicit focus on race, gender, socio-economic status (SES), and other markers of difference

School Community Relationship (SCR)

Establishing good school and community relationships (SCR) is one of the most elusive tasks because there are so few resources that districts have to accomplish this goal. However, time and again, it has been done successfully within the confines of school budgets. Community-based knowledge must be sought and used to inform policy and practice in schools. But it must be done without "training" parents in ways that cause them to lose their authentic voice and community-based perspectives. Much of the healing and difficult conversations should happen with the help of a person who is viewed as impartial; we suggest that you hire a community-based person for that. Here are a few additional SCR recommendations that we have:

- Identify strategies for understanding how to best meet parents' needs for their child(ren)
- Offer PD that help your staff identify and use community knowledge and epistemology in their lessons.
- Identify strategies for increasing parent engagement in the schooling process
- Establish a larger, positive presence in the community
- Determine how to integrate community resources into the curriculum through partnerships, field trips, homework assignments, after-school programming, etc.
- Provide opportunities for parents to offer input and feedback as district/schools craft policies and procedures

Thoughts on Achievement Gap (TAG)

We examine all stakeholders Thoughts on the Achievement Gap (TAG) in the district as a way to understand their awareness of the issue. We are also hoping to get a better understanding of staff's capacity toward change. Often, educators will blame students and communities for the achievement gap despite the fact that the gap could be overcome with the proper teaching, curriculum, and reforms. Raising awareness and implementing culturally responsive teaching strategies are the primary ways to improve TAG outcomes. Raising awareness can happen through multiple ways, including having direct and consistent conversations about achievement disparities and TAG data. The link between TAG and discipline data should not be thought of as being disconnected from achievement data. Below are other strategies that should be included to address TAG concerns:

- Culturally responsive language, examples and artifacts should be included in the curriculum
- Sustained professional development focused on anti-racist, anti-oppressive pedagogy and practice
- Enact culturally responsive classroom teaching and practice
- Enact culturally responsive discipline and classroom management

- Anti-bias training at school level is needed
- Clear vision, policies, and activities for School Equity Teams; and more resources to free their time to engage the work
- Bring culturally-based or community-based mentoring programs for minoritized students, such as: https://newlensurbanmentoring.org/
- More positive community and parent outreach (i.e., inviting minoritized families into schools to help with building an environment of academic excellence)

Thoughts on Discipline Gap (TDG)

Multiple studies over the past 30 years have found that disciplinary disparities are not a result of differences in student behaviors. Despite popular belief, it is not true that lower-income or Black students "just don't have good home training" as a cause for why they are more likely to be suspended from school. Rather, studies show that teacher biases are the reason that some groups of students are more likely to be more punished in school. Therefore, a strong and consistent anti-bias program must be put into place. But this is not simply about drafting new policies. Rather, deep learning must happen for anti-bias training to be sustained. Here are other TDG suggestions:

- Disaggregate the discipline data by teacher and infraction. Find trends with the data and address those trends with individual teachers
- Identify clear discipline policies and procedures
- Identify alternative discipline programs that support cultural responsiveness in discipline
- Eliminate any Zero Tolerance Policies that prevent students from maximizing their time in the classroom
- Revisiting other disciplinary policies that target minoritized students
- Individual teachers that have discriminatory discipline practices must be identified and helped (mentored) out of such practices
- Repurpose support staff and School Equity Teams to address some of the issues that have been illuminated throughout the data
- Professional Learning communities (PLCs) and collective learning around the issue of disciplinary bias
- More anti-bias PD at every level: administration, teaching, support, students, and parents

Expectations and Teacher Ratings (TR)

There is much truth in the saying, "students will rise to the challenges set before them." High expectations must be held for all students. All student performance will benefit most when teachers have high academic expectations of them. Low expectations are a type of "soft bigotry" because they assume students are not capable of improving and academically succeeding at high levels. Lowering expectations is often supplanted with kindness or empathy for students, and it shouldn't be. Rather, the approach of being a "warm

demander" is preferred. Educators and school leaders should become smarter about what being 'warm' and being a 'demander' means in their specific communities. Here are other suggestions for TR below:

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

School Culture and Climate (SCC)

This audit suggests a strong need to improve the School Culture and Climate in the district and schools. The tone for school culture and climate is set by administrators in partnership with teachers, parents, and students. Therefore, it must have the input of all of these stakeholders (and possibly other voices). We recommend that schools and districts use tools to measure SCC that can be used regularly. The school must represent the community, and must accept not only a few trendy culture-related activities, but language, behaviors and epistemologies. Here are a few additional recommendations:

- Explore ways to critically assess school data in terms of equity, and the racial demographics of students
- Engage in critical dialogue to identify, apply, and critique the terminology and application of daily school operations (i.e. school policies, classroom practices, school meetings, and interactions with students, parental guardians, and faculty)
- Ensure that the voices and experiences of all students, especially those that have shared narratives of marginalization in this audit, are included in the policies that will identify and address areas of inequity
- Explore the impact of historical inequities and privileges, as well as colorblind ideology within the many dynamics of the school structure (i.e. curricula, school policies, and student discipline within the classroom)
- Make schools more community-accessible and community-based. This means findings creative ways to bring diverse parents (not the same actors) into conversations about how schooling happens and school/district policies are formed

- School and district leadership must be explicit and outwardly vocal about addressing issues of minoritization and marginalization

Additional Resources for Improving School Climate (Anti-Bullying):

- National Education Association; Teaching Students to Prevent Bullying
- National Education Association recommended series of short lessons, activities, and games will help students understand the serious problem of bullying
- Teaching Students to Prevent Bullying; Curriculum Resources Address Identifying, Confronting and Stopping Bullying: (http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/teaching-students-to-prevent-bullying.html)
- Teacher Workshop Preventing Bullying & Empowering Students: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfhu9Km9L5c)
- Bully Proof Your School Webinar Replay (Australian / New Zealand): "This webinar examines the difficult subject of bullying. The presenter draws on international research to deal with the following questions: What is bullying? How common is it? Why do bullies bully? Who are the victims? What are the effects of bullying? Does your school have a problem?"
- Bully Proof Your School Webinar: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwL-uYXNkTk)
- K-6 Anti-Bullying Resources Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center. (2006). Elementary School, Educational Lesson Plan. From Pacer.org: http://www.pacer.org/bullying/classroom/elementary/ele-lesson-plan.asp
- Pacer Center. (2017). Are You a Target? Videos. From Pacer's Center Kids Against Bullying: https://pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/are-you-a-target/are-you-a-target-videos/
- Middle School and High School Anti-Bullying Resources Stiller, B., Nese, R., Tomlanovich, A., Horner, R., & Ross, S. (2013). Bullying and Harassment Prevention in Positive Behavior Support: Expect Respect. From pbis.org/: http://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/pbisresources/2013_02_18_FINAL_COVR_MANUAL_123x.pdf
- Ethnic and religious group Anti-Bullying Resources Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services. (n.d.). Tool 4: Refugee and Immigrant Youth and Bullying; Frequently Asked Questions. From Refugee Children in US School; A toolkit for Teachers and School Personnel: (ING), I. C. (2014). ing.org. From Bullying Prevention Guide, for public and private schools (including Muslim fulltime and weekend schools): http://ing.org/downloads/ING_Bullying_Prevention_Guide.pdf
- Addressing Religious Liberties in School: https://maec.org/resource/webinar-religious-liberties/

Results of Equity Areas

8 Equity Areas

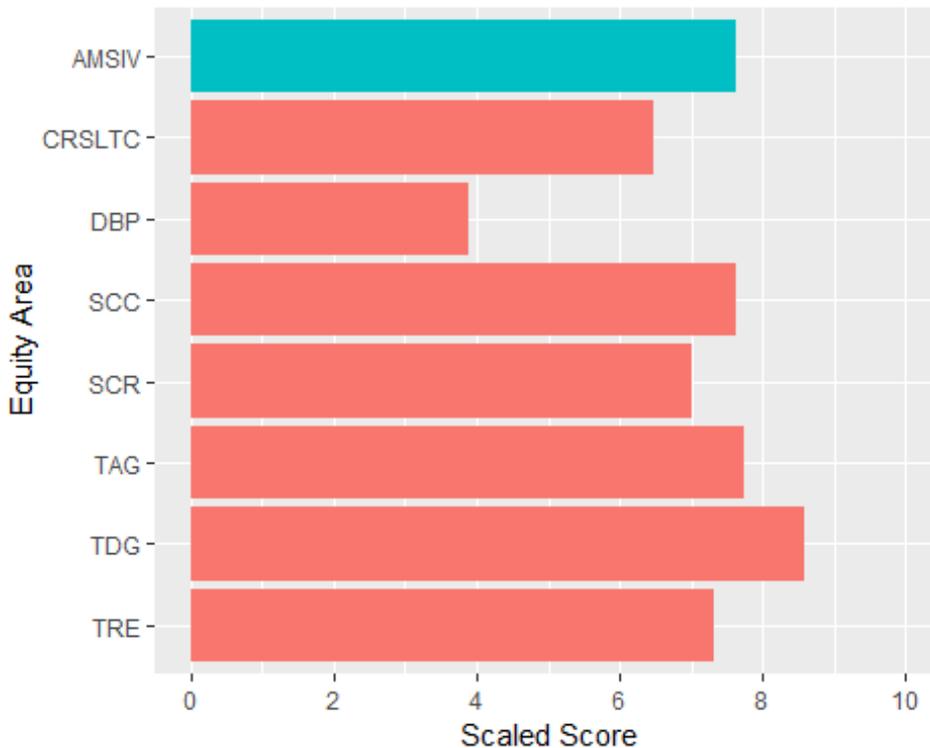1. **Accepting or Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice (AMSIV)**
    a. **Summary of Equity Area**
        Addresses how comfortable students feel voicing opinions and expressing behaviors in school. Here are some of the core interests in this Equity Area:
        1. All student identity and voice is recognized equally in school
        2. Minority student identity is welcomed in school
        3. Student identity and voice is celebrated in school
        4. Student identity or voice is discouraged or punished in school
        5. Student voice impacts policymaking in school/ district
    b. **Visual Presentation**
        This is how your district scored on the AMSIV Equity Area relative to the other EAs. The graph indicates that when compared to the other Equity Areas, AMSIV is one of the areas in which ECCS scored best. This is a positive sign, which indicates that support of student identity and voice is more present:

Overall Summary:

The summary of this Equity Area:

- Student identity and voice is generally one of the more positive aspects in this district.
- Many of the students feel that their identity and voice are accepted and confirmed in school.
- Native American students, and to a lesser extent Black and White students (when compared to the average of all students) had non-favorable perceptions of their identity and voice being accepted in school.

Overall Recommendations:

Here is a brief summary of our recommendations for this Equity Area:

- Emphasis and high attention should be given to this Equity Area.
- AMSIV can really improve with cost-effective, or even cost-free-recommendations.
- Develop and implement both school and district-level student-led research and civic engagement activities (such activities significantly enhance student identity and voice, especially for minoritized students, and it improves so many of the other Equity Areas).
- Implement practices that allow student voice/engagement to influence curriculum and pedagogy, district and school policy, and community engagement practice, as well as other aspects of schooling.
- Develop affinity spaces for minoritized students.
- Develop a system of rapid responsiveness to complaints of minoritized and underrepresented students' perceptions of their treatment and experiences in school.

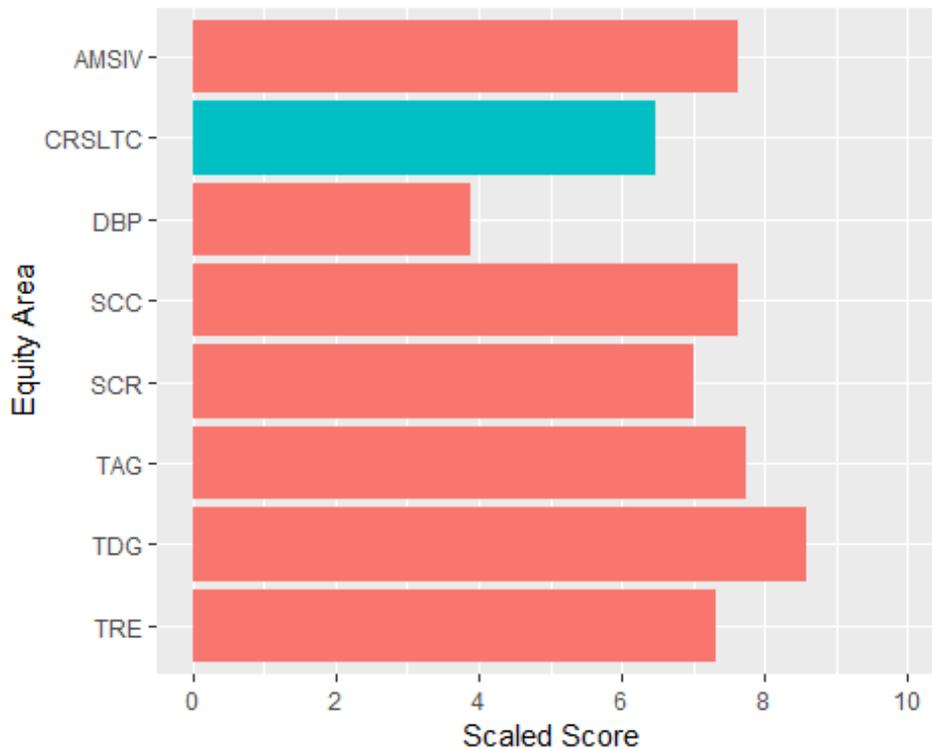2. **Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum (CRSLTC)**
   a. **Summary of Equity Area**
      Address perceptions of how well diverse backgrounds and experiences are incorporated in classroom content and responded to in classroom interactions. Here are some of the questions addressed in this Equity Area:
      1. School environments accept/celebrate students' cultural behaviors/language
      2. Student can culturally relate to teachers and curriculum
      3. Student is able to express cultural selves in school
   a. **Visual Presentation**
      This is how your district scored on the CRSLTC Equity Area relative to the other Equity Areas. This is an indication that Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum are gaps and significant growth-areas for the district. When compared to the strength of other Equity Areas, this was the lowest-ranked Equity Area. This is one of the EAs that we recommend ECCS focus its equity reform efforts:

Overall Summary:

The summary of this Equity Area:

- This is one of the areas deserving the most attention.
- Students, parents, administrators, and teachers all indicate a less favorable view that culturally responsive leadership, teaching and curriculum is present in school.
- There is an indication that Black, Latino, and other minoritized students are not being confirmed in the lessons they receive in school.
    - their own experiences and voices are not coming out in classroom instruction.

Overall Recommendations:

Here is a brief summary of our recommendations for this Equity Area:

- Increase training and PD, equity-guided professional learning communities, and activities that allow students and community-based stakeholders to develop curricular content, and contribute to policies impacting instruction.
- Student-led research projects
- Instructor engagement in community-based projects could help them understand and incorporate more of culturally responsive practices in school, and improve community-school overlap.
    - Giving opportunities for teachers and administrators learn how to become more culturally responsive through community engagement.
    - Pull in community-based perspectives and histories into their professional behaviors and curriculum.
- A significantly higher presence of Black, Indigenous, Somali, Vietnamese, Hmong, and other minoritized staff. This hiring should be not exclusive to support staff, but should include teachers, administrators, counselors, mentors, and other core staff persons.
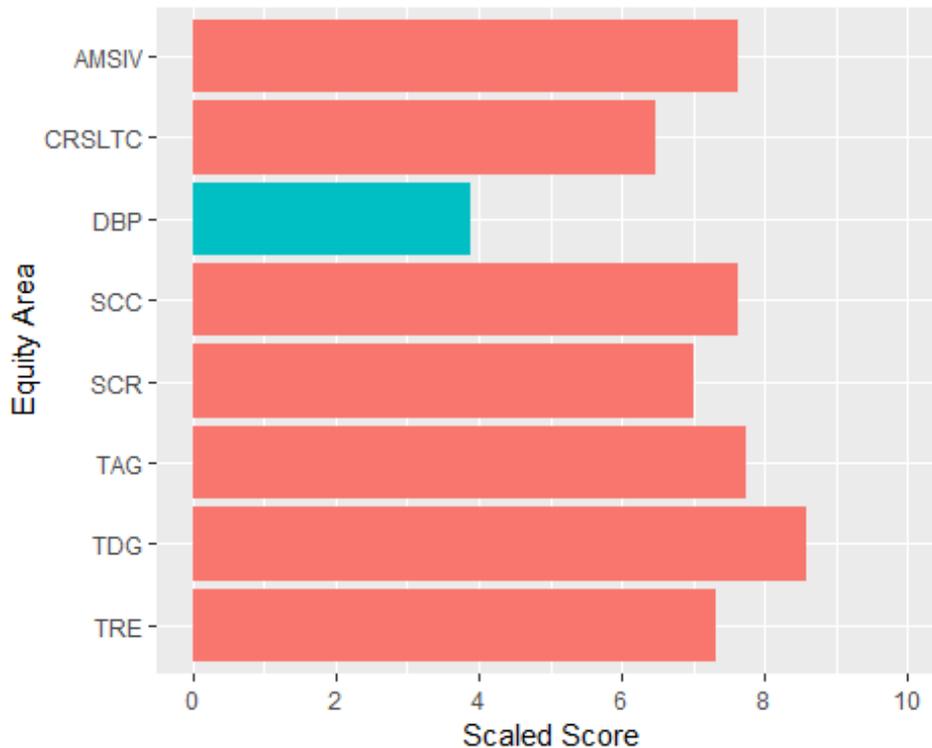
3. **Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices (DBP)**
   a. **Summary of Equity Area**
      Addresses perceptions about discrimination that some students experience.
      (i.e., certain student characteristics or groups are treated better than others).
      Here are some of the interests in this particular Equity Area:
      1. Racism is reproduced in the school or district
      2. School is actively trying to reduce racism
      3. Minority students have been consistently marginalized in the same ways
         for more than 3 consecutive years
   b. **Visual Presentation**
      This is how your district scored on the DBP Equity Area relative to the other
      Equity Areas. Contrary to what it may seem when compared to the other
      Equity Areas, this DBP score is inversely calculated, and the low score means
      that stakeholder perceptions of DBP are that it is not widespread. It suggests
      that Discriminatory Behavior and Practices are not the most pressing EA for
      most students. There are several reasons for this, including the prevalence of
      this EA throughout all other EAs measured and the inability to recognize the
      discriminatory practices:

Overall Summary:

Based on the data collected in this Equity Area, there are certainly discriminatory behaviors and practices, but we believe it to be at a level that would be addressed best by focusing efforts on other, more 'actionable' Equity Areas. This EA is cross-cutting. The summary of this Equity Area:

- Two possible interpretations of data: one, that there are perceptions that discriminatory behaviors and practices only minimally exist. But this finding can be read in another way: that a majority of stakeholders are not aware of the discrimination that is actually present in the district.
- Significant differences exist between races and language groups; minoritized families experience more discrimination in the district than traditional White families.

Overall Recommendations:

Here is a brief summary of our recommendations for this Equity Area:

- The primary recommendation here is to look at all of the "equity" data, across programs, across teachers, and across student groups, at once and in an aligned way; and to do so several times throughout the year. Equity data discussions should include but not be limited to:
  - racial academic and discipline data, graduation, attendance data, programmatic data, GT data, student government and extra-curricular data, teacher data, special education data, ELL data (i.e., length of time in ELL classes), and parent engagement data.
- A culture of discussing teacher-specific "equity" data needs to be implemented, but a culture of this type of racial conversation needs to be fostered within the district.
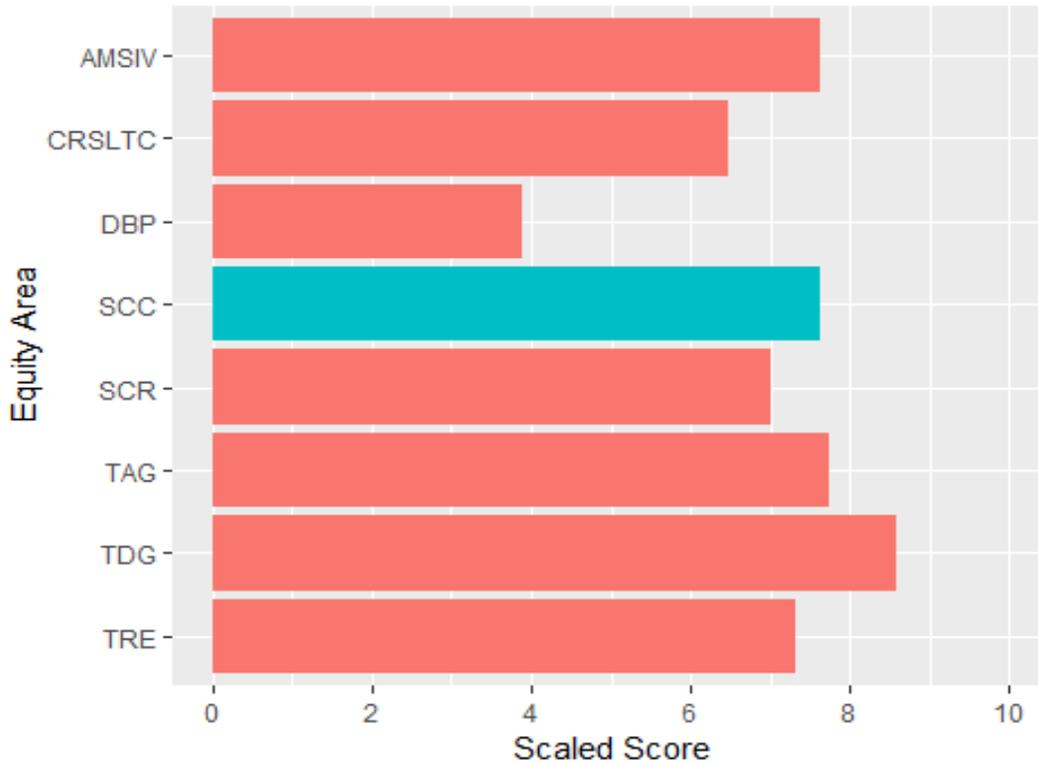
4. **School Culture and Climate (SCC)**
   a. **Summary of Equity Area**
      Addresses how respectful adults (and students) in the school building are when speaking to students as well as the overall positivity of student experiences.
      - School climate as the quality and character of school life as it relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, as well as organizational processes and structures (source: National School Climate Center).

   b. **Visual Presentation**
      This is how your district scored on the SCC Equity Area relative to the other Equity Areas. A higher score would have meant more positive culture and climate in the district. The School Culture and Climate was the fourth highest score in EA rankings, indicating that this EA is one of the Equity Areas needing attention in the district:

Overall Summary:

The summary of this Equity Area:

- There is a need to improve ECCS school climates.
- More than other Equity Areas, there are stark racial differences in this finding.
- Minoritized parents feel more so than White parents that the climate is poor.
- In comparison to other EAs, we suggest that a significant amount of resources be directed into improving this Equity Area.
- There are significant differences in how students interpret climate from how adults (educators, and even parents) interpret climate.
  - This remains a concern, and suggests that adults—staff and parents—may not know that their perceptions are different from their students' perceptions.

Overall Recommendations:

Here is a brief summary of our recommendations for this Equity Area:

- SCC needs to be a major focus area. A number of studies have linked SCC to dropout and estranged community relationships with school.
- Restorative Justice and Positive Behavior Supports are good options, but if chosen, must be implemented with nuance and specificity.
- Reach out to local Indigenous Native American groups and other community-based groups within the Black, immigrant, and Latinx communities in the area.
- Youth-led research projects can give students a stronger sense of belonging. This might be a way to help students and community members choose artifacts, readings, curriculums that are natural and recognizable to students, and in particular, minoritized students.
- We suggest community-based mentoring programs for poor, minoritized, and disadvantaged students in the district. If there are none available in the area, we recommend that ECCS partner with other community-based organizations to start such a mentoring program.
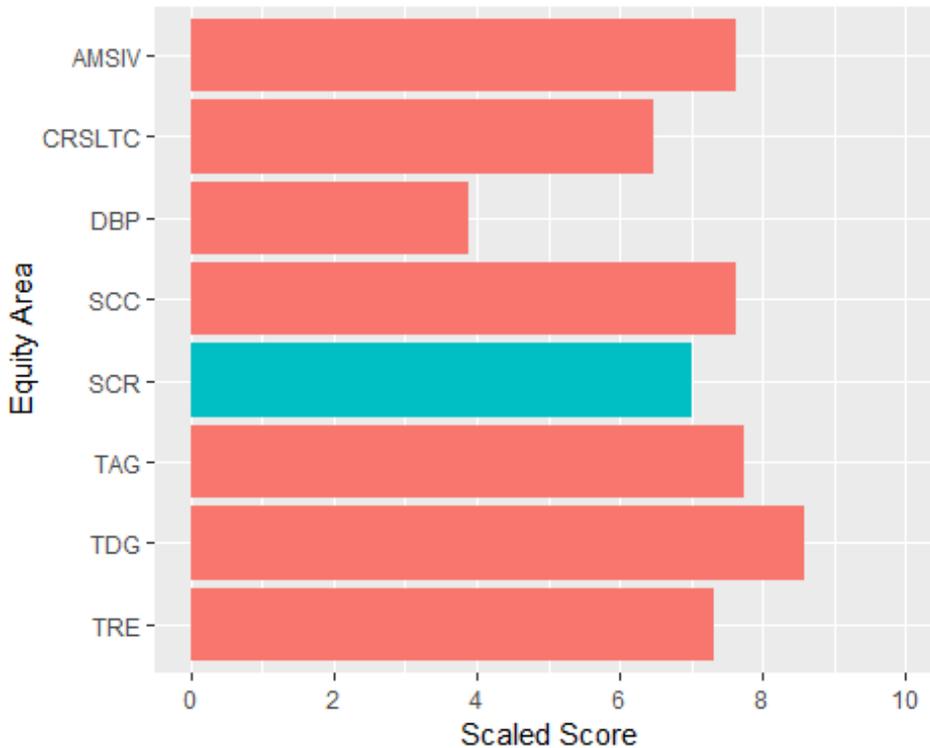
5. **School Community Relationship (SCR)**
    a. **Summary of Equity Area**
        Addresses how comfortable parents feel attending school events, approaching school staff, and the effectiveness of communication between parents and schools. Some of the interests taken up in this Equity Area include:
        1. There exist overlapping space between school and community
        2. Parent voice is welcomed in the school
        3. Parent voice shapes policy in the school
        4. Educators have a presence in the communities they serve
        5. Community behaviors are allowed/celebrated in school
    b. **Visual Presentation**
        This graph represents how your district scored on the SCR (aka, Community Engagement) Equity Area relative to the other Equity Areas. Compared to other Equity Areas, this was one of the lowest-scored EAs. This score is the second-lowest, suggesting that community-stakeholders and school staff all believe the school-community relations are not as good in comparison to other Equity Areas:

Overall Summary:

The summary of this Equity Area:

- This is the second lowest-ranked Equity Area, and requires significant attention.
- Parents feel a disconnect between themselves and the school.
- Parents and staff have very different interpretations of SCR and community engagement.
  - Several survey items indicate a willingness of staff to blame families for the achievement/discipline gap.
  - It is also concerning that some of the parents in the community are blaming minoritized students for the gaps.
  - That some parents blame other parents (or themselves) is quite problematic and contradicts the most current research.
- Improving this EA can greatly enhance other Equity Areas as well, such as SCC, CRSLTC, and AMSIV.
- Significant differences exist in how White/ minoritized parents interpret SCR.

Overall Recommendations:

Here is a brief summary of our recommendations for this Equity Area:

- We suggest that extra resources, community-based staff, and non-traditional community engagement strategies are brought into ECCS.
- Instead of traditional parent-teacher conferences or sports programs, a deeper community engagement is needed.
  - For example, incentivizing teachers and administrators to attend community-based meetings and then advocating for the goals of the local community is one potential strategy.
- We also recommend an investment into ways that will allow for more overlap between school and community.
  - Becoming involved in community-based activities will go a long way in improving SCR, as well as many other Equity Areas.
  - Examples of this engagement can be: attending community-based meetings and lending support, advocating for causes important to communities such as job training or food security, offering the school as a space for community events and meetings, and even educators serving in local mentors in the community. Districts should actively seek funding to support community-engagement activities.
- We suggest leaders and teachers discover local community interests, concerns, and causes, and advocate for community issues. This is due to the fact that some minoritized parents have less favorable SCR experiences than White parents.
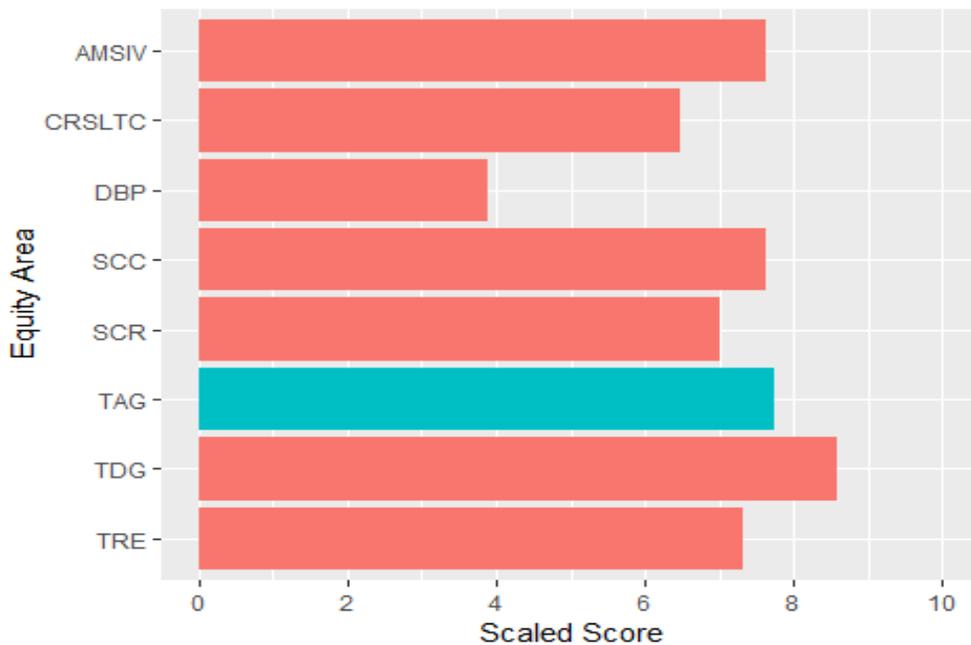
6. **Thoughts on Achievement Gap (TAG)**
   a. **Summary of Equity Area**
      Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in achievement (i.e., achievement gaps).
      1. Students are eager to attend school
      2. Students perceive adults in the school care sincerely about them and their success
      3. Students and teachers feel safe physically and emotionally
      4. Teachers believe students are likely to succeed academically
      5. Students and parents feel a personal connection to the adults at school
      6. Teachers believe they are part of a team that is making a powerful difference in the lives of students
      7. Teachers and administrators believe their work has a purpose
      8. Students, teachers, and administrators believe administrators care sincerely about them and their success
      9. Teachers and students see administrators as sources of support and leadership who are skillful enough and caring enough to help them achieve excellent learning results
   b. **Visual Presentation**
      This is how your district scored on the TAG, relative to the other Equity Areas. This is the second highest score in relation to other EA values. This is positive, because it indicates that educators maintain more positive thoughts on eliminating the Achievement Gap, and therefore have a greater capacity to change, and to reject "deficit-based" descriptions of students and communities:

<u>Overall Summary</u>:

The summary of this Equity Area:

- This EA is one in which the district performed better than most other Equity Areas.
- There was unfortunately still some deficit thinking, where teachers seemed to attribute low performance to students or families (and not school-based factors like better instruction).
- It is positive that the data indicated teachers have a deep capacity and willingness improve their practice.
    - This is a significant finding because research suggests that the *capacity* and *willingness* to change are some of the most necessary aspects for equity reforms.
- There is a significant difference in how school staff and parents assign responsibility for the gap.

<u>Overall Recommendations</u>:

Here is a brief summary of our recommendations for this Equity Area:

- Based on the data collected in this Equity Area, we recommend regular PD and *PLC* learning activities that focus on culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy.
- *School Equity Teams* can be used to address this as well. This should be sufficient in helping staff and leaders to understand their role, responsibility, and ability to impact learning outcomes and equity goals.
- The district should also consider designing a few brief guides or booklets with the aim of:
    1. Getting all staff into a general understanding of equity-related concepts
    2. Ensuring that all schools regularly discuss the data around their gaps
    3. Introducing and implementing a '<u>common</u>' equity vocabulary across district
    4. Adding timeline and accountability to district and school equity plans
    5. Sharing writings that empower staff with knowledge of how some minoritized groups in the district have faced historical barriers and discrimination
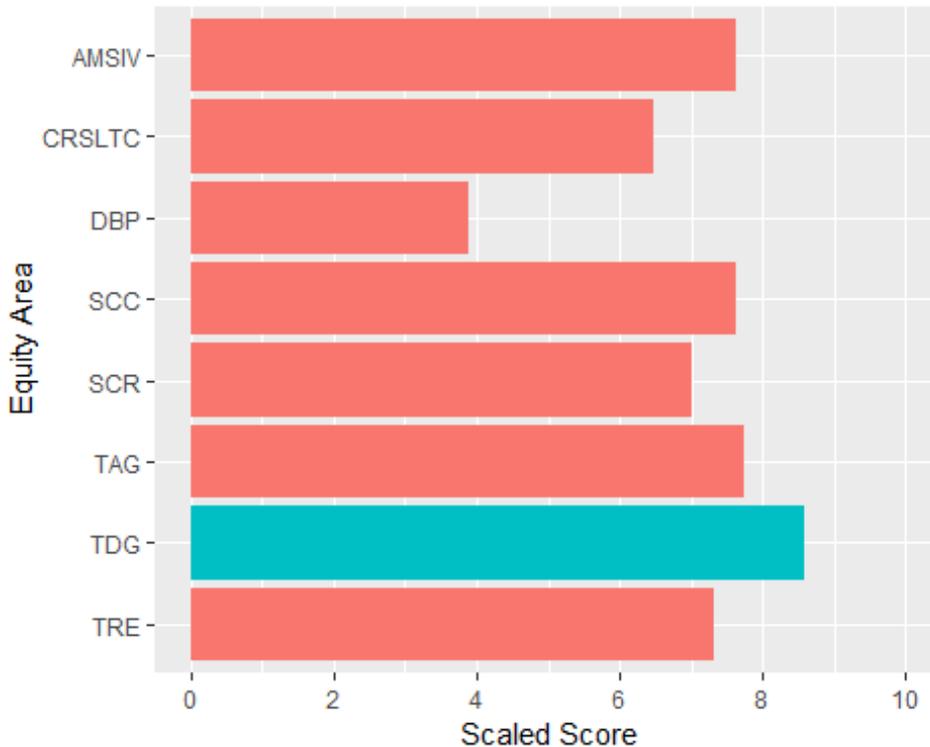
7. **Thoughts on Discipline Gap (TDG)**
   a. **Summary of Equity Area**
   Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in discipline (i.e., discipline or suspension gaps) exist:
      1. minoritized parents and students believe educators care about their child;
      2. minoritized parents and students feel welcome at school;
      3. minoritized parents feel that educators perceive them as strong, positive partners in the education of their child; and,
      4. parents and students feel that their concerns and insights are appreciated

   b. **Visual Presentation**
   This is the highest of all scores in relation to other EA values. This is positive, and indicates educators are willing to see themselves as contributing to the discipline gap. While some educators likely blame students and communities for the discipline gap, this score demonstrates a willingness (i.e., capacity) to take responsibility and address this. This is how your district scored on the TDG Equity Area relative to the other Equity Areas:

Overall Summary:

The summary of this Equity Area:

- This is the highest scored Equity Area. This is a really positive finding because it suggests that staff did see themselves as contributing to the discipline gap (over-disciplining of specific groups of students).
- Staff, students, and parents did not always see discipline in the same way. The data here suggests that stakeholders recognize:
  - that students are treated differently based on race or other factors, and
  - that there is a discipline gap (i.e., are disciplined differently even when they commit similar or like offenses).
  - that there is a problem and seem to have the capacity to want to improve it and eliminate the gap.

Overall Recommendations:

Here is a brief summary of our recommendations for this Equity Area:

- We recommend PBIS and restorative practices, community-based mentoring programs, and community forums to address the humanization of students in school.
  - This forum, for example, might highlight student-led presentation on diversity and equity. When community and student identity and voice are enhanced, the discipline gap will begin to decline.
- Regular review of discipline data with staff, and discussing the specific discipline data of specific staff would be extremely useful and allowed in most union-district contractual agreements. Though difficult at first, one or two years, staff will grow to expect the conversations.
- Small booklets or equity guides would be helpful. Sample equity tools/guides may be found here:
  - http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/RACIAL%20EQUITY%20GUIDE%20DRAFT.pdf
  - http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary
- Finally, we strongly recommend forming *Equity Team* study groups (via PD or PLC) that highlight how some minoritized and low-SES students, have historically been marginalized in school and the surrounding community.
  - This is frequently one of the most effective tools that can be used to addressed deficit-based thinking about how students are disciplined (i.e., some students are bad, so that is why they are punished more).
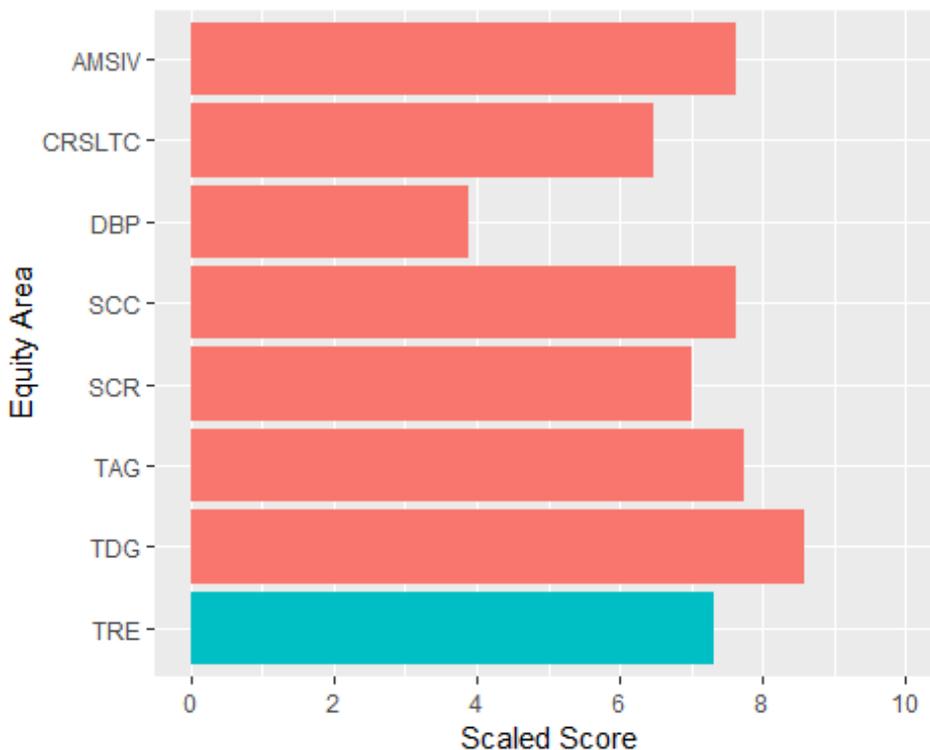
8. **Expectations and Teacher Ratings (TR)**
   a. **Summary of Equity Area**
      Addresses perceptions on how committed and successful students from various backgrounds can be, and the expectations that are held of various student groups. Here are some of the core components of interest in this Equity Area:
      1. Teachers have high or low expectations of minoritized students
      2. Teachers encourage students to attend college
      3. Minority students are allowed to disengage from academic rigor
      4. Minority students are allowed to demonstrate poor behavior
      5. Teachers assign challenging homework and tests
      6. Minority students are encouraged to take advanced classes
      7. Minority students are placed in remedial classes
      8. Minority student are referred to/placed in special education courses
   b. **Visual Presentation**
      This EA score is in the middle-to-low range in comparison to other scores, indicating that the need to address the amount of expectations teachers have for students is significant. The is how your district scored on the TR Equity Area relative to the other Equity Areas:

Overall Summary:

The summary of this Equity Area:

- Some teachers have low academic and behavioral expectations of students.
    - Race, too, seems to be a factor in teacher expectations. Likewise, researchers commonly find that teachers often expect minoritized students to misbehave, and thus they more intensely observe and penalize them.
- Teachers expectations, like other Equity Areas, are linked to deficit-based understandings of students and communities: if teachers believe that students have cultural handicaps or are culturally deficient, they will not expect them to learn at high levels.

Overall Recommendations:

Here is a brief summary of our recommendations for this Equity Area:

- If this EA is improved, it will likely enhance the climate, and student performance.
- We recommend PD around teacher expectations of student achievement.
- Ensure that AP, advanced, and enrichment courses are open to all students.
- Implement an extra layer of review for Special Education referrals, disciplinary referrals, and any other program in which minoritized students are disproportionately represented.
    - Here, a group of staff from each building can look at the referrals and look at the language used to describe their placement of students, for example.
- Also, teacher observation procedures/forms, as used by administrators, should specifically address equity in classroom instruction and management.
- And finally, quarterly or bi-annual administrator-staff discussions (perhaps within PLCs) should discuss the expectations teachers have for minoritized students. Sample questions for this can be found on p. 144 Dr. Khalifa's recent book, *Culturally Responsive School Leadership.*

Appendix A: Equity Area and Descriptions

1. **Accepting or Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice (AMSIV)**: Addresses how comfortable students feel voicing opinions and expressing behaviors in school? Here are some of the core interests in this Equity Area:
   a. All student identity and voice is recognized equally in school;
   b. Minority student identity is welcomed in school;
   c. Student identity and voice is celebrated in school;
   d. Student identity or voice is discouraged or punished in school;
   e. Student voice impacts policymaking in school/ district.

2. **Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum (CRSLTC)**: Address perceptions of how well diverse backgrounds and experiences are incorporated in classroom content and responded to in classroom interactions. Here are some of the questions addressed in this Equity Area:
   a. School environments accept/celebrate students' cultural behaviors/language;
   b. Student can culturally relate to teachers and curriculum;
   c. Student is able to express cultural selves in school.

3. **Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices (DBP)**: Addresses perceptions about discrimination that some students experience. (i.e., certain student characteristics or groups are treated better than others). Here are some of the interests in this particular Equity Area:
   a. Racism is reproduced in the school or district;
   b. School is actively trying to reduce racism;
   c. Minority students have been consistently marginalized in the same ways for more than 3 consecutive years.

4. **School Culture and Climate (SCC)**: The National School Climate Center defines school climate as the quality and character of school life as it relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, as well as organizational processes and structures. In these learning environments:
   a. Students are eager to attend school;
   b. Students perceive that adults in the school sincerely care about them and their success;
   c. Students and teachers feel safe both physically and emotionally;
   d. Students believe they are likely to succeed academically;
   e. Students feel a personal connection to the adults at their school;
   f. Teachers believe they are part of a team that is making a powerful difference in the lives of students;

g. Students believe administrators care sincerely about them and their success.

5. **School Community Relationship (SCR)**: Addresses how comfortable parents feel attending school events, approaching school staff, and effectiveness of communication between parents and schools. Some of the interests taken up in this Equity Area are as follows:
   a. There exists overlapping space between school and community;
   b. Parent voice is welcomed in the school;
   c. Parent voice shapes policy in the school;
   d. Educators have a presence in the communities they serve;
   e. Community behaviors are allowed/celebrated in school;
   f. Parents believe educators care about their child;
   g. Parents feel that their concerns and insights are appreciated.

6. **Thoughts on Achievement Gap (TAG)**: Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in achievement (i.e., achievement gaps) exist.
   a. Students are eager to attend school;
   b. Students and parents perceive adults in the school care sincerely about them and their success;
   c. Students and teachers feel safe physically and emotionally;
   d. Students believe they are likely to succeed academically; and,
   e. Students and parents feel a personal connection to the adults at school;
   f. Teachers and administrators believe they are part of a team that is making a powerful difference in the lives of students;
   g. Teachers and administrators believe their work has a purpose;
   h. Teachers and students believe administrators care sincerely about them and their success;
   i. Teachers see administrators as sources of support and leadership who are skillful enough and caring enough to help them achieve excellent learning results

7. **Thoughts on Discipline Gap (TDG)**: Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in discipline (i.e., discipline or suspension gaps) exist.
   a. Minoritized parents and students believe educators care about their child;
   b. Minoritized parents and students feel welcome at school;
   c. Minoritized parents feel that educators perceive them as strong, positive partners in the education of their child; and,
   d. Parents and students feel that their concerns and insights are appreciated.

8. **Expectations and Teacher Ratings (TR)**: Addresses perceptions on how committed and successful students from various backgrounds can be, and the expectations that are held of various student groups. Here are some of the core components of interest in this Equity Area:
    a. Teachers have high or low expectations of minoritized students;
    b. Teachers encourage students to attend college;
    c. Minority students are allowed to disengage from working hard;
    d. Minority students are allowed to demonstrate poor behavior;
    e. Teachers assign challenging homework and tests;
    f. Minority students are encouraged to take advanced classes;
    g. Minority students are placed in remedial classes;
    h. Minority student are referred to/placed in special education courses.

Appendix B: Definition of Core Items

Core Terms	Definition
Equity Audit/Assessment	A research-based way of identifying the causes of inequities in education, and based on the data, identifying appropriate reforms that will remedy causes of inequities.
Educational Equity	Providing educational services and fostering educational contexts in a way that gives all children the same level of opportunity to become academically successful. Most schools in the U.S are designed in a way that gives White, middle-class students greater access and opportunity.
Educational Inequity	Educational services and contexts that are marginalizing for some students and give greater access to other students to be academically successful.
Minoritized	Students who have been historically marginalized, and thus do not have the same opportunity at being academically successful. This has happened in the U.S. for a number of reasons, which include but are not limited to reasons of: race, income, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, behavior, national origin, and legal status.
Oppression (in school)	Systemic (or personal) ways of blocking the well-being or learning opportunities of children; unjust or distressing educational environments for children; lack of addressing unjust educational opportunities or contexts. Examples in the U.S. are disproportionate school failure, drop out rate, or disciplinary measures. Cultural or racial shaming, punishing cultural behaviors, not hiring minority teachers, and favoring White students are all established type of oppression.
Culturally Responsiveness	When instruction and curriculum, classroom and school climate, interactions, treatment, persons in schools represent the knowledge and culture of all students in buildings. Currently, U.S. schools only reflect White histories/knowledges/cultures, yet claim that it is simply "American." This approach hides or invisiblizes White privilege, and thereby default allows White students to be more successful. But when cultural referents, language, behaviors,

and knowledge from minoritized students are used" and they are honored and protected their chances of academic success drastically increase.

Achievement Gap	When demographic groups of students systematically, academically out-perform another group of students. In the U.S. context, educators are most comfortable blaming this problem on students or communities. But many significant research studies indicate that it is neither the students nor community's fault, or because of a unintelligence or lack of student motivation, but rather, it is that either the learning environments are not conducive for minoritized students, or the academic content is not culturally responsive.