Educational Equity Audit Report

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Introduction

School districts across the country are working to address systemic inequities that persist in school systems. Systemic equity is defined as the "transformed ways in which systems and individuals habitually operate to ensure that every learner - in whatever learning environment that learner is found - has the greatest opportunity to learn enhanced by the resources and supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence, responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and life" (Scott, 2018). A commitment to ensure systemic equity requires that school districts continuously collect, analyze, and evaluate all aspects of the educational process through an equity lens. As such, research indicates that comprehensive and on-going Equity Audits are essential to ensuring education equity (Hanover, 2020-a; 2020-b).

The purpose of this Equity Audit is to identify the most common causes of inequities that exist in Sycamore Community District 427. This report represents data collected from stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, staff, caregivers, and families. Equity Audits are tools that allow districts to make guided reforms, which are based on a variety of data and stakeholder voices. This Equity Audit summarizes current performance and identifies areas of growth pertaining to educational equity. The findings of the Sycamore Equity Audit outline specific goals and recommended actions based on the data reviewed.

eq·ui·ty *ek-wi-tee*, noun.

Just and fair inclusion. An equitable society is one in which all can participate and prosper. The goals of equity must be to create conditions that allow all to reach their full potential. In short, equity creates a path from hope to change.

Methodology: *What data were collected?*

There are several tools that have been used to complete this equity audit for Sycamore Community District 427. These tools include a district-level Equity Self Assessment-School (ESA-S), school-level Equity Self Assessment-School (ESA-S), and focus groups (teachers, staff, and caregivers/families).

District-level Equity Self Assessment (ESA-D)

The district-level ESA-S is an equity audit tool completed by a designated district-based team. These members used artifacts which included but are not limited to: *district handbook and other stand-alone policies, Illinois Report Card data, 5E data, enrollment and retention data, data for special populations (e.g., English learners, students with disabilities), curricular maps, literature/book lists, district behavior/discipline policies and accompanying data, budget/finance materials, and more* to reflect and respond to 11 district-level equity indicators *(Vision, Strategy, and Culture; Focus on Equity; Organizational clarity and Collaboration; Focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning; Student Readiness to Learn; Talent; Stakeholder Engagement and Communications; Finance; Data; School Management; and Central Services and Operations).*

School-level Equity Self Assessment-School (ESA-S)

The Equity Self-Assessment at the School level (ESA-S) is a slightly adapted version of the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium Equity Audit tool (MEAC, 2021). This tool was created for school leaders, educators, and other staff members to assess if their schools and classrooms are equitable across various criteria. The ESA-S has 101 items across eight domains: (1) School Policy, (2) Assessing Community Needs, (3) School Organization/Administration, (4) School Climate/Environment, (5) Staff, (6) Assessment/Placement, (7) Professional Learning, (8) Standards and Curriculum Development. It provides a snapshot of the district/school's state at one point in time. By no means is it exhaustive, nor does it include every single potential systemic barrier to equity.

Focus Group Interviews (Teachers, Staff, and Caregivers/Families)

Multiple focus group interviews were conducted with two separate groups of Sycamore Community District 427 stakeholders (Teachers/Staff & Caregivers/Families). The focus groups followed a written protocol that was read to all participants before participating in the focus group interviews and allowed stakeholders to provide their perspectives on how equity, diversity, and inclusion is included in the Sycamore Community District 427 community and what they believe is necessary to further the inclusion of diversity and equity in the district.

Demographic Summary: *Who is Sycamore Community School District 427?*

Student Demographics

We pulled the most recent student demographic data available from the Illinois Report Card website. The graphs *(Figures 1-3)* below compare Sycamore CUSD student demographics to the state for FY21.

Figure 1: Student Demographics
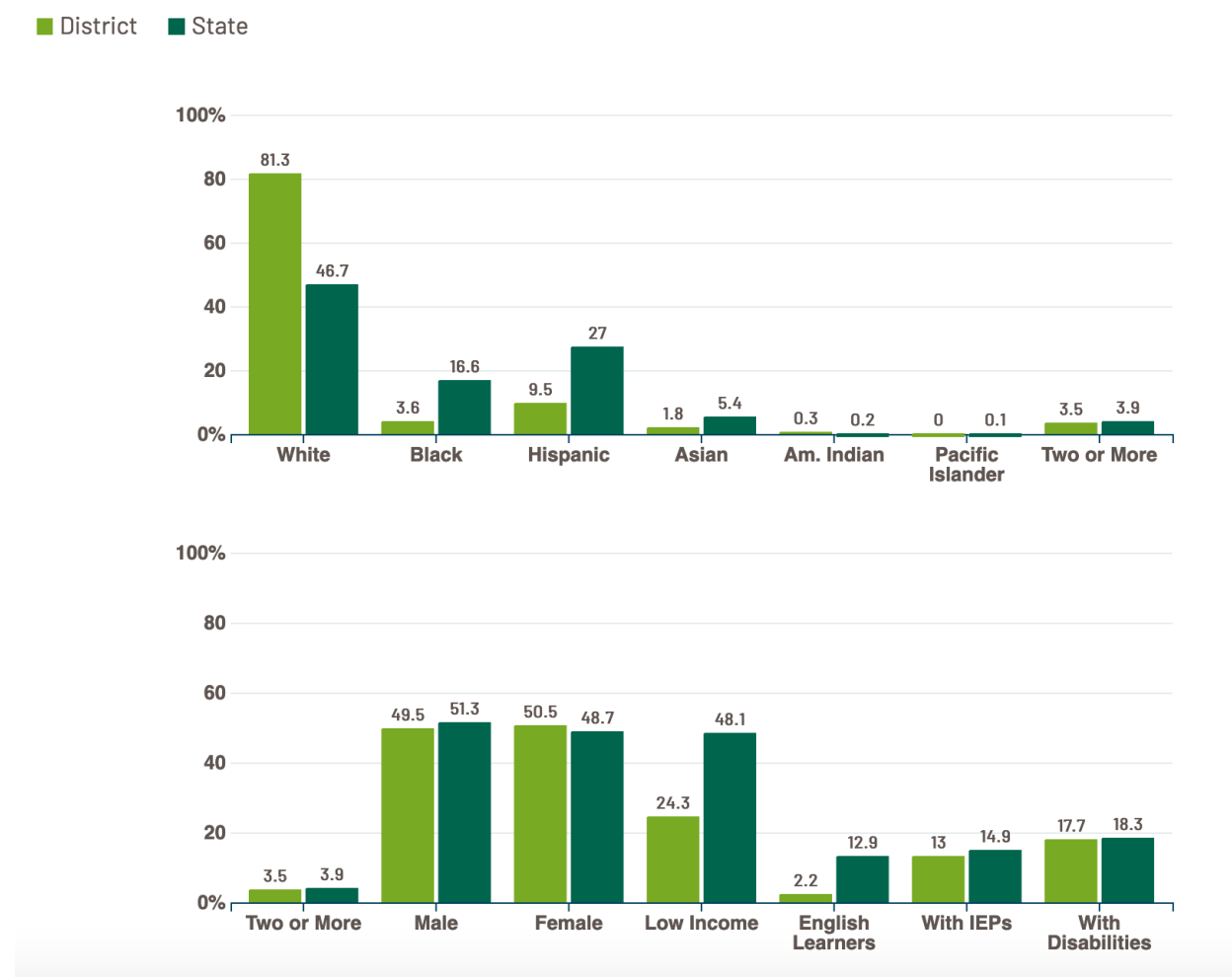
Teacher Demographics

In FY22, 28.5% of Sycamore CUSD teachers were male and 71.5% were female. Teacher demographic data by race are provided in the pie chart below.

Figure 2: Teacher Demographics
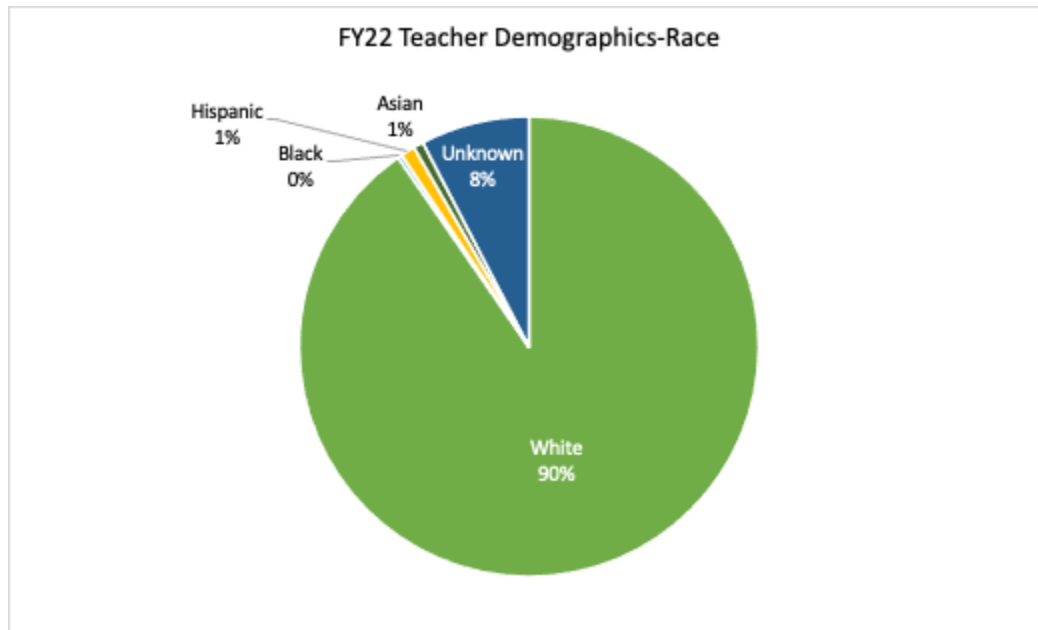
Administrator Demographics

       In FY22, 68.4% of Sycamore CUSD administrators were male and 31.6% were female. Administrator demographic data by race are provided in the pie chart below.

Figure 3: Administrator Demographics

Equity Audit Data Summary

District-level Data from Equity Self-Assessment (ESA-D)

The equity self-assessment rubric for completion at the district level by the IDEA committee is a consultant-created tool comprised of 11 domains: ***Vision, Strategy, and Culture; Focus on Equity, Organizational Clarity and Collaboration, Focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning; Student Readiness to Learn; Talent; Stakeholder Engagement and Communica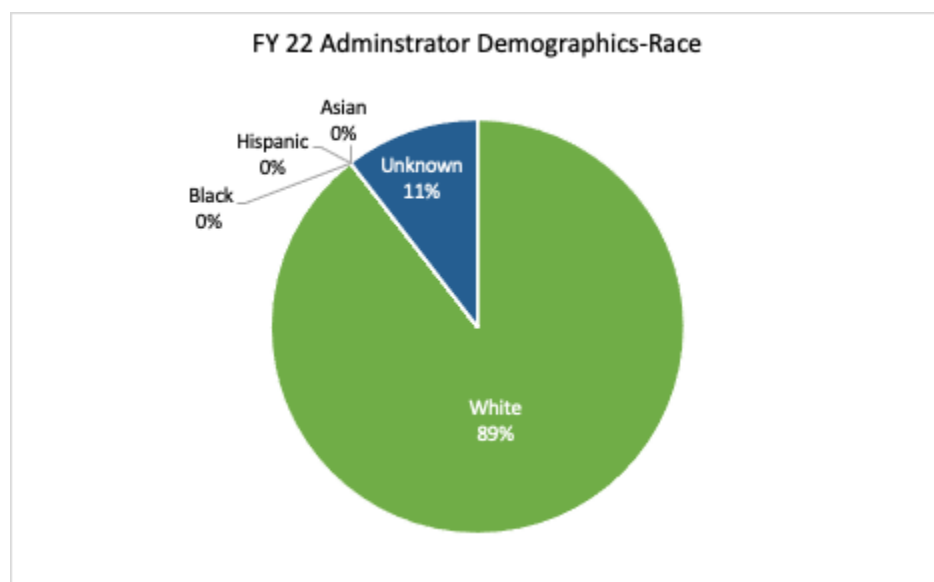tions, Finance, Data, School Management, Central Services and Operations.*** The tool's rating scale, shown in Figure 4, was created to align with the school-level self-assessment tool (ESA-S):

Figure 4: Rating Scale for District-level Data from Equity Self-Assessment (ESA-D)

Latent (0 Points)	Emergent (1 Point)	Established (2 Points)	Advanced (3 Points)
This rating corresponds to the district currently not doing anything, or having no system in place as it relates to the domain.	This rating corresponds to the district having some systems/processes in place, but the systems/processes are not explicit or strong. The district might still be working towards establishing policies and norms related to the topic of this domain.	This rating corresponds to a district having established explicit systems in place. In many cases, to be rated as established, the district has to have created documentation regarding this item's topic(s).	This rating corresponds to a district going above simply establishing explicit systems. This rating is reserved for items where a policy, process or norm is centered on equity. A district scoring "advanced" is focused on creating an environment that acknowledges and addresses equity complexities.

Method

The ESA-D tool was created in Qualtrics. The Qualtrics survey options allowed respondents to complete the ESA-S in multiple sessions if needed. The principal equity consultants held a meeting with the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Acceptance (IDEA) Committee, a task force of staff (administration and teaching) formed in spring 2020 to focus on district-wide DEI issues. During this meeting, the IDEA Committee was provided guidance on how best to complete the ESA-D. The IDEA Committee decided to complete the ESA-D during their next regularly scheduled monthly session with the understanding that an additional session or sessions might be needed.

Following the initial session, two members of the IDEA committee met with the principal equity consultants to ask follow-up questions and seek clarification on some of the ESA-D items. One person from the team was selected as the data entry liaison who then recorded the team's responses into the Qualtrics online survey link. In total, the ESA-D took one session and approximately 45 minutes for the team to complete, not including data entry time.

Participants

The following individuals took part in the team-based approach to ESA-D completion:

Kristine Webster- Curriculum Director

Nicholas Reineck- Assistant superintendent

Sarah Frankiewicz- Assistant Principal of Middle school

Amy Walker- teacher at Southeast

Miriam Ojaghi- ROE rep

Claribel Robles- ELL Director

Superintendent Steve Wilder was unable to be present for the session in which the ESA-D was completed but did work with the principal educational equity consultants as needed throughout the audit process.

Results

The self-ratings on the ESA-D are provided in Table 1 below, including additional commentary provided by the IDEA committee to contextualize their ratings on a particular item. The IDEA committee assigned ratings of 1 (Emergent) on just over half (n=6) of the ESA-D indicators and ratings of 2 (Established) on the remaining 5 indicators. The overall mean rating on the ESA-D was a 1.45 which signifies that the district is performing approximately halfway between Emergent and Established. This means that, overall, policies and practices are largely established but not all may be in alignment across schools and documentation is evidence with some but not all indicators related to equity.

Table 1: Self-Ratings for District-level Data from Equity Self-Assessment (ESA-D)

	Domain	Descriptor	Rating	Context/Comments
1.	**Vision, Strategy, and Culture**	*Clear and well-aligned vision, strategy, and manageable set of priorities have been established at the district level that recognize the local environment and district's capacity for change while promoting a district-wide culture of inclusiveness, excellence, and high expectations for all.*	1	D427 does not necessarily have a well-aligned vision, strategy, and priorities. Different schools have their vision and priorities, but we don't necessarily have them all aligned with each other.
2.	**Focus on Equity**	*Equity orientation demonstrated by district staff and modeled by leaders is evidenced in policies, structures, systems, and resources that ensure equitable, high-quality education for all students.*	2	In the wake of SB100 in 2016, D427 reviewed all handbooks, providing staff with professional development and implemented restorative practices. We looked at discipline data and shared it with the board. We worked situationally to incorporate restorative practices that included school support staff. However, this PD was not ongoing and embedded and was primarily implemented at the high school level. Additional barriers noted for this indicator: disruptive nature of COVID-19 and the lack of alignment of practices and policies district wide

3. **Organizational Clarity and Collaboration**	*Clear school committee and central office structures, systems, processes, and policies that work together to advance the district towards equity and its vision.*	1	We do have a committee and some systems, structures, policies, but they do not necessarily work together to advance the district toward equity and its vision. Because we decided to put some of our IDEA committee work on hold, there hasn't been a clear district announcement. We've made statements and put out videos, but we are looking to identify actionable items. We are, for example, asking questions of candidates that we wouldn't be asking before.
4. **Focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning**	*Curricula, materials, tools and supports that help school leaders, teachers and other school staff constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice.*	1	The content of the question does not specifically reference CRT. We are in agreement that we are a 2 in the Culturally Responsive lens-we are emerging. This is because we have pockets of culturally responsive materials and teaching materials though the CRT approach is not being applied systemically.
5. **Student Readiness to Learn**	*District policies, systems, and practices enable schools and staff to establish safe, positive, and inclusive learning environments, and proactively address student non-academic needs.*	1	D427 is not proactive in addressing student non-academic needs. We have Second Step, but is that proactive or reactive? We are heavy on our practices, but we don't necessarily have the policies and the systems to support student non-academic needs systemically.
6. **Talent**	*Systems and processes to recruit, place, develop, and retain talented and diverse faculty and staff.*	1	Our district is making an effort to ask different questions than before. However, we can look at our staff representation as well as retention to understand this better.
7. **Stakeholder Engagement and Com-munications**	*Intentional systems and processes to authentically engage and communicate with staff, family, and community stakeholders.*	2	We do have some systems in place such as school messenger and translator available. Are we answering this question in general or are we looking at a culturally responsive lens? Are we engaging with every subgroup? If we look beyond people of color such as LGBTQ or low SES, we do not necessarily have intentional systems and processes to authentically engage and communicate with staff, family, and community stakeholders.
8. **Finance**	*Alignment of financial resources with district, school, and student needs and priorities.*	2	We are doing well at the district level but not necessarily at the school and student level.
9. **Data**	*Data are available and inform decision-making at all levels of the district and in schools. Data are utilized regularly to identify and address inequities in the system.*	1	none
10. **School Management**	*Policies, structures, and systems that create the conditions needed for school success, maintain accountability for results, and enable effective school leaders.*	2	none
11. **Central Services and Operations**	*Effective delivery of services to schools, allowing school-based educators to focus on teaching and learning.*	2	none
Overall Mean Score			**1.45**

School-based data from Equity Self Assessment-School (ESA-S)

The section below provides an aggregate analysis of the ESA-S, a self-assessment tool created by the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (MEAC, 2021) and slightly adapted (e.g., for language/terms) for use during the current equity audit process. You may view the adapted version of this tool in Appendix C of this report. This tool was created for school leaders, educators, and other staff members to assess if their schools and classrooms are equitable across various criteria. The ESA-S has 101 items across eight domains: (1) School Policy, (2) Assessing Community Needs, (3) School Organization/Administration, (4) School Climate/Environment, (5) Staff, (6) Assessment/Placement, (7) Professional Learning, (8) Standards and Curriculum Development. For each domain, school-based teams were asked to rate each item using the following scale, shown in Figure 5:

Figure 5: Rating scale for School-based data from Equity Self Assessment-School (ESA-S)

Latent (0 Points)	Emergent (1 Point)	Established (2 Points)	Advanced (3 Points)
This rating corresponds to the district/school currently not doing anything, or having no system in place as it relates to the question.	This rating corresponds to the district/school having some systems in place, but the systems are not explicit or strong. The district might still be working towards establishing policies and norms related to the topic of the question.	This rating corresponds to a district/school having established explicit systems in place. In many cases, to be rated as established, the district/school has to have created documentation regarding the question's topic.	This rating corresponds to a district going above simply establishing explicit systems. This rating is reserved for items where a policy, process or norm is centered on equity. A district/school scoring "advanced" is focused on creating an environment that acknowledges and addresses equity complexities.

Method

We worked with one primary liaison from the IDEA committee to help form school-based equity teams composed of any combination of the following stakeholders: administrator, teacher, support staff, other school professional, caregiver, other community member/stakeholder. Once these teams were formed, we sent email communication with support documents and instructions for team-based completion of the ESA-S along with an ambitious timeline for competition of May 10th (2 weeks). After receiving feedback that this timeline might be too challenging given the time of year, we modified the timeline for completion by extending to May 31st. We also provided a virtual technical assistance (TA) session and additional TA documents to support team-based completion. Each team had email contacts of their own team members and were then tasked with working together to arrange meeting times to complete the ESA-S. For those who approached the ESA-S as a school-based team, one person from each team was selected as the data entry liaison who then recorded the team's responses

into the Qualtrics online survey link. The Qualtrics survey options allowed respondents to complete the ESA-S in multiple sessions if needed. Several school-based teams utilized this approach.

Participants and Completion Approach

Stakeholders from all seven Sycamore schools participated in the completion of the ESA-S. Six of the seven schools had complete ESA-S data, and one school had partial data (for Domains 1-3). The ESA-S survey was completed using a team-based approach for five of seven schools. For one of the two remaining schools, the ESA-S was completed by one individual. For the other school not utilizing the team-based approach, two individuals separately completed the ESA-S. This resulted in eight Qualtrics entries for seven Sycamore schools. Thus, the aggregate results provided below should be interpreted with the understanding that the *n* provided in each table on pages 12-26 represents a school-based team and/or an individual.

Overall, 22 Sycamore stakeholders contributed to the school-based self-assessment survey process for the six participating schools. A breakdown by stakeholder type is provided in *Table 2* below.

Table 2: Sycamore Stakeholders Data that Contributed to School-Based Self-Assessment

Administrator or Dean	Teacher	Other School Professional	Caregiver	Community member
2	7	6	6	1

Aggregate Quantitative Results

Figure 6 below provides aggregate means for each of the eight ESA-S domains and the overall mean across all domains. Based on these data, schools in Sycamore CSD 427 have self-evaluated at the *Established* level of equity. This means that there are explicit systems in place, accompanied by documentation, that center equity.

Figure 6: School-Level Equity Assessment Means
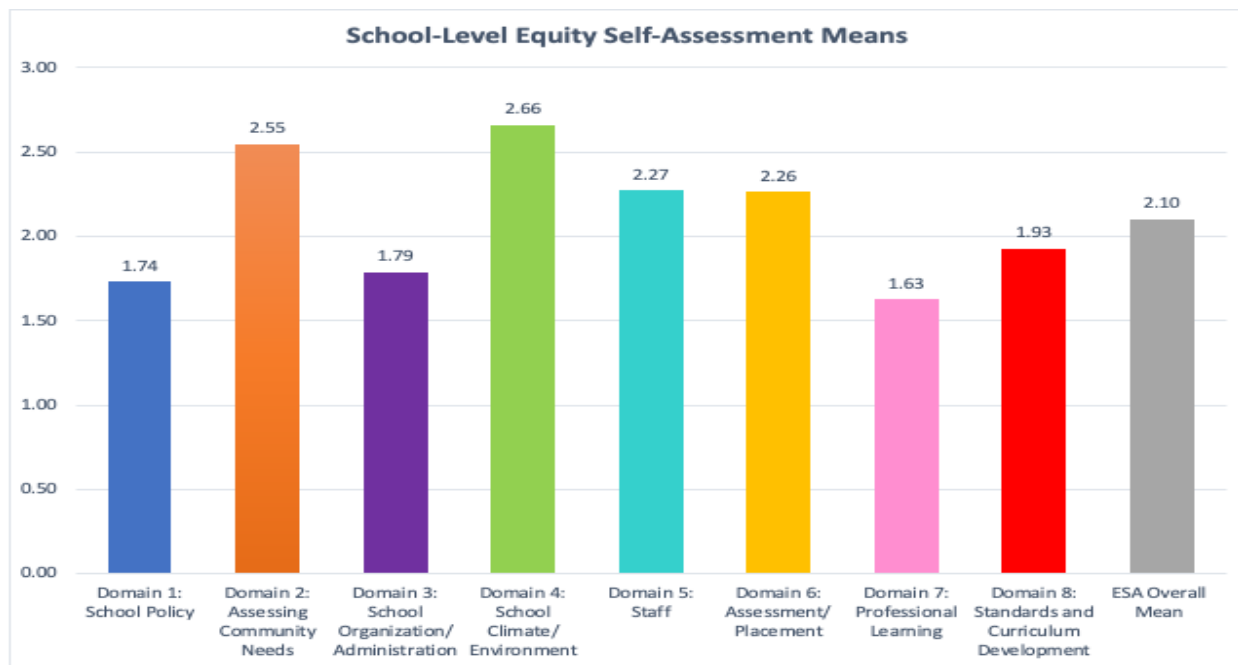
Itemized data across each domain are further provided in *Tables 3-10* below.

Table 3: Domain 1: School Policy Data

Domain 1: School Policy	Latent (0)	n	Emergent (1)	n	Established (2)	n	Advanced (3)	n	Mean (scale 0-3)
1. Does the school/school system have a specific educational equity policy in areas related to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, and disability status?	37.50%	3	50.00%	4	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.75
2. Does the educational equity policy clearly explain the procedures for reporting complaints, investigating complaints, and appeals?	37.50%	3	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	1.88
3. Is the educational equity policy monitored for consistent and complete implementation as well as amended if necessary?	50.00%	4	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.63
4. Does the educational equity policy regarding racial equity address the harmful impacts of racial stress and trauma?	75.00%	6	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.25
5. Does the educational equity policy identify the roles of teachers, staff, and administrators in mitigating race-based disparities?	75.00%	6	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.25
6. Does the school have a clear mission statement regarding educational equity?	37.50%	3	50.00%	4	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.75
7. Are updates to policies and procedures publicized to staff, students, and families in an accessible manner and on a timely and continuous basis?	62.50%	5	12.50%	1	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	1.63
8. Has the school developed an equity plan of action based on the policy, mission statement, and analysis of its current equity needs?	62.50%	5	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.50
9. Did all relevant stakeholder groups (staff, families, students, and community members) participate in the development of the mission statement and equity plan?	75.00%	6	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.25
10. Does the school have a policy regarding accommodations for students with disabilities and English Learners?	0.00%	0	25.00%	2	62.50%	5	12.50%	1	2.88
11. Are there policies and procedures to assure that no student is denied participation in extracurricular or co-curricular activities (as health and safety guidelines permit) because of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, or transportation limitations)?	25.00%	2	25.00%	2	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	2.38
12. Does the school have a clear and equitable attendance policy that takes into consideration, and does not penalize students, for barriers (e.g., technological issues, families' schedules) they might face during COVID-19?	12.50%	1	25.00%	2	50.00%	4	12.50%	1	2.63
13. Does the school have a policy regarding using names students identify as their preferred name and personal pronouns?	87.50%	7	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	1.38
14. Does the school have a policy regarding bathroom and locker room use by transgender students?	87.50%	7	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.13
Domain 1 Overall Mean									**1.74**

Table 4: Domain 2: Assessing Community Needs

Domain 2: Assessing Community Needs	Latent (0)	n	Emergent (1)	n	Established (2)	n	Advanced (3)	n	Mean (scale 0-3)
1. Does the school/school system have a plan for family engagement that encourages and provides avenues for the involvement of all school staff and all families, and sustains community partnerships?	12.50%	1	25.00%	2	50.00%	4	12.50%	1	2.63
2. Does the school have clear processes and structures for school staff to meet student needs by providing additional targeted or intensive supports as necessary?	0.00%	0	62.50%	5	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	2.50
3. Does the school encourage the engagement of all families and community members in school planning, support, and governance (e.g., through forming a school advisory committee, conducting a survey, organizing focus groups), whether in-person, hybrid, or distance learning?	12.50%	1	37.50%	3	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	2.50
4. Are families and community members involved in school planning, support, and governance representative of the school community by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, language, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, and disability status?	50.00%	4	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.63
5. Does the school use multiple methods of communication, including translation, to engage with families regarding their priorities, feedback, and concerns regarding distance learning?	0.00%	0	37.50%	3	62.50%	5	0.00%	0	2.63
6. Does the school ensure that families have access to information, virtually and in person, in a language they can understand?	12.50%	1	50.00%	4	37.50%	3	0.00%	0	2.25
7. Are current needs of the school community frequently assessed regarding COVID-19 (e.g., food, transportation, housing, physical health, social-emotional well-being, etc.)?	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	50.00%	4	12.50%	1	2.50
8. Has the school surveyed families' technological needs?	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	50.00%	4	37.50%	3	3.25
9. Has the school enacted an actionable and timely plan to ensure that all families have access to technology and stable internet, and know how to navigate technology and key software the school may be using?	12.50%	1	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	25.00%	2	2.63
10. Does the school monitor attendance to help identify potential barriers students might experience in accessing their education (whether in-person, hybrid, or distance learning)?	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	75.00%	6	0.00%	0	2.63
11. Does the school reach out to families of students to address potential barriers that students may experience in accessing their educational learning (whether in-person, hybrid, or distance learning)?	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	75.00%	6	12.50%	1	2.88
Domain 2 Overall Mean									2.55

Table 5: Domain 3: School Organization/Administration

Domain 3: School Organization/Administration	Latent (0)	n	Emergent (1)	n	Established (2)	n	Advanced (3)	n	Mean (scale 0-3)
1. Do school administrators have the knowledge and skills to be able to identify equity issues?	0.00%	0	50.00%	4	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	2.63
2. Are school administrators trained to provide leadership in developing creative strategies to achieve excellence and equity among all staff and students?	25.00%	2	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	2.00
3. Are there personnel or an advisory committee that coordinates school improvement and assures equity compliance in all phases of school management?	25.00%	2	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	2.25
4. Have interpreters and translators been identified for the varied languages present in the school community to facilitate two-way communication between families and school staff?	12.50%	1	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	2.38
5. Is enrollment monitored in special education, vocational education, gifted education, and advanced courses for the disproportionate representation of language, gender, racial, or ethnic groups?	87.50%	7	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.25
6. Is enrollment, including special education, vocational education, gifted education programs, and advanced courses, composed of students who proportionately reflect the diversity within the overall student population?	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	2.25
7. Are guidance and counseling provided to encourage all students to take higher-level courses, particularly in the critical filter areas of Honors, STEM, AP, and IB courses?	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	1.75
8a.Are data regarding course level enrollment regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed and done so by different racial, ethnic, ability (e.g., IEP/gifted status), and language groups?	75.00%	6	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.38
8b. Are data regarding grade point average/achievement scores regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed and done so by different racial, ethnic, ability (e.g., IEP/gifted status), and language groups?	62.50%	5	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.50
8c. Are data regarding standardized test scores regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed and done so by different racial, ethnic, ability (e.g., IEP/gifted status), and language groups?	37.50%	3	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	1.88
8d. Are data regarding student discipline (including office disciplinary referrals), suspensions, and expulsions regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed and done so by different racial, ethnic, ability (e.g., IEP/gifted status), and language groups?	87.50%	7	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.25
8e. Are data regarding bullying and harassment regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed and done so by different racial, ethnic, ability (e.g., IEP/gifted status), and language groups?	75.00%	6	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.38
8f. Are data regarding participation in school activities and honors regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed and done so by different racial, ethnic, ability (e.g., IEP/gifted status), and language groups?	75.00%	6	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.38

8g. Are data regarding attendance regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed and done so by different racial, ethnic, ability (e.g., IEP/gifted status), and language groups?	62.50%	5	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.50
9a. Have the following been modified as needed as a result of the data from question 8 combined with anecdotal and other information: Policies?	87.50%	7	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.25
9b. Have the following been modified as needed as a result of the data from question 8 combined with anecdotal and other information: Programs?	87.50%	7	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.25
9c. Have the following been modified as needed as a result of the data from question 8 combined with anecdotal and other information: Curricular choices?	87.50%	7	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.25
9d. Have the following been modified as needed as a result of the data from question 8 combined with anecdotal and other information: Instructional strategies?	75.00%	6	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.38
10. Does the school prioritize hiring psychologists, counselors, social workers, and nurses to support the social-emotional well-being of students and staff?	25.00%	2	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	2.00
11. Does the school utilize restorative approaches to support the social-emotional well-being of students and staff?	37.50%	3	50.00%	4	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	1.75
12. Are consequences for violating school procedures taught and reinforced to students using evidence-based strategies (e.g., restorative practices, culturally responsive PBIS)?	25.00%	2	37.50%	3	37.50%	3	0.00%	0	2.13
13. Does the district provide a user-friendly, accessible location (e.g., an online learning portal) for students and families to retrieve virtual learning materials?	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	2.63
14. Does the school provide access to learning materials (e.g., textbooks, reading materials) in order for students to complete learning assignments?	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	2.75
Domain 3 Overall Mean									**1.79**

Table 6: Domain 4: School/Climate Environment

Domain 4: School Climate/Environment	Latent (0)	n	Emergent (1)	n	Established (2)	n	Advanced (3)	n	Mean (scale 0-3)
1. Does the visual environment, including online school portals, virtual and in-person classrooms, bulletin boards, displays, hall decorations, and offices, show diverse students of varied racial, ethnic, language, gender, gender identity groups, and people with disabilities in a variety of roles?	14.29%	1	42.86%	3	42.86%	3	0.00%	0	2.29
2. Does the interaction of school staff with each other, students, families, and community members convey a respect for people regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability status, age, or religion?	0.00%	0	14.29%	1	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	3.14
3. Are values of equity, fairness, and inclusion modeled by all school staff?	0.00%	0	28.57%	2	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	3.00
4. Is the code of student conduct applied fairly and equitably to all students?	0.00%	0	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	28.57%	2	2.86
5. Are acceptable standards for students' behavior (both in person and online), language, and dress non-discriminatory?	0.00%	0	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	2.43
6. Do school assemblies, special programs, and speakers reflect the diverse nature of the school and larger community?	14.29%	1	71.43%	5	0.00%	0	14.29%	1	2.14
7. Are the people involved in planning school events and programs (e.g., athletic, arts, service learning or volunteer, PTA/PTO) representative of the school community by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, or disability status?	14.29%	1	71.43%	5	0.00%	0	14.29%	1	2.14
8. Do all segments of the school community participate in and are encouraged to attend school events (including service-learning or volunteer opportunities, PTA/PTO)?	0.00%	0	28.57%	2	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	2.86
9. Are school emblems, mascots, team names, and other symbols free from racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity, gender expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability bias?	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	42.86%	3	42.86%	3	3.14
10. Does the virtual and in-person library/media center have recent visual, print, and non-print materials that accurately provide information about diverse student groups in traditional and non-traditional roles?	0.00%	0	28.57%	2	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	3.00
11. Are materials, notices, and other school communication available in multiple languages, and accessible to individuals with disabilities as required?	0.00%	0	71.43%	5	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	2.29
Domain 4 Overall Mean									2.66

Table 7: Domain 5: Staff

Domain 5: Staff	Latent (0)	n	Emergent (1)	n	Established (2)	n	Advanced (3)	n	Mean (scale 0-3)
1. Do staff set expectations, teach, and reinforce positive behavior; support students to get back on track; and hold all students to consistent standards of behavior?	0.00%	0	28.57%	2	71.43%	5	0.00%	0	2.71
2. Are consequences for student actions, such as discipline infractions and praise, distributed equitably in the classroom?	0.00%	0	42.86%	3	57.14%	4	0.00%	0	2.57
3. Is there an equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers across classrooms?	0.00%	0	14.29%	1	42.86%	3	42.86%	3	3.29
4. Are highly qualified teachers representative of the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender or gender identity, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status composition of the student body?	28.57%	2	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.86
5. Is the school staff's composition representative of the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity, gender expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status composition of the student body and larger school community?	28.57%	2	71.43%	5	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.71
6. Are staff members of different races, ethnicities, languages, national origins, sexes, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientations, and/or with different disabilities distributed equitably across the various job classifications from administration to noncertified positions?	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.57
7. Are all staff members responsive to the varied needs of demographic groups and communities in the school?	14.29%	1	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	2.29
8. Do staff members communicate on a regular basis with other staff members from culturally diverse backgrounds?	28.57%	2	42.86%	3	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	2.14
9. Do staff members engage in healthy, productive, and respectful professional interactions with other staff members from culturally diverse backgrounds?	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	42.86%	3	14.29%	1	2.43
10. Are members of the instructional staff able to utilize personalized instructional methods for in-person or distance learning to meet diverse student needs and learning preferences?	14.29%	1	28.57%	2	57.14%	4	0.00%	0	2.43
11. When staff members are assessed, are competencies in educational equity an integral part of their performance?	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	1.86
12. Do staff at different paid or volunteer job levels feel that a culture of respect exists within the school?	0.00%	0	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	2.43
Domain 5 Overall Mean									2.27

Table 8: Domain 6: Assessment/Placement

Domain 6: Assessment/Placement	Latent (0)	n	Emergent (1)	n	Established (2)	n	Advanced (3)	n	Mean (scale 0-3)
1. Does the school/school system have a policy regarding culturally responsive assessments and grading during COVID-19?	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.57
2. Do teachers collaborate with families regarding the expectations of distance learning and student academic progress and achievement?	0.00%	0	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	2.57
3. Are multiple instruments used for student assessment, including performance measures?	0.00%	0	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	28.57%	2	2.86
4. Are students given access to resources, facilities, and academic placement dependent on individual talent, skill, and interest?	14.29%	1	42.86%	3	14.29%	1	28.57%	2	2.57
5. Are English Learners properly identified, assessed, and placed?	0.00%	0	42.86%	3	42.86%	3	14.29%	1	2.71
6. Are assessment procedures and accommodations available for English Learners and students with disabilities?	0.00%	0	28.57%	2	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	2.86
7a. Are all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by race?	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	1.86
7b. Are all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by ethnicity?	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	1.86
7c. Are all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by socioeconomic status?	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	1.86
7d. Are all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by gender?	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	1.86
7e. Are all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by disability?	14.29%	1	28.57%	2	57.14%	4	0.00%	0	2.43
7f. Are all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by language?	14.29%	1	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	2.14
							Domain 6 Overall Mean		**2.26**

Table 9: Domain 7: Professional Learning

Domain 7: Professional Learning	Latent (0)	n	Emergent (1)	n	Established (2)	n	Advanced (3)	n	Mean (scale 0-3)
1. In order to ensure flexible, heterogeneous, and integrated grouping within classes, are teachers trained in a variety of instructional approaches to meet differing learning preferences and foster both competitive and cooperative skills?	14.29%	1	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	2.14
2. Are staff members trained to identify equity needs and to utilize instructional methods to meet the learning preferences of diverse students and groups in a virtual classroom environment?	28.57%	2	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.86
3. Are equity issues in professional learning activities relevant to current events and community needs?	28.57%	2	42.86%	3	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	2.00
4. Have all staff members received in-service training regarding strategies for countering bias?	71.43%	5	0.00%	0	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	1.57
5. Have all staff received training on culturally responsive practices to support English Learners?	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.57
6. Have all staff received training on how to adjust the way they talk to provide opportunities for English Learners to acquire academic language (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP) and social language (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS) (e.g., speaking clearly, having a slower rate of speech, using simple sentence structures, repeating/ paraphrasing as necessary)?	85.71%	6	0.00%	0	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.29
7. Have all staff received trauma-informed training to support student success and well-being using restorative practices?	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.43
8. Are opportunities provided for staff at all levels and in all job descriptions to obtain in-service training regarding educational equity issues and concerns relevant to specific populations?	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.43
9. Are in-service opportunities offered to encourage dialogues between policymakers, administrators, teachers, support staff, and families, as well as business and community leaders, to develop comprehensive strategies for addressing equity issues?	85.71%	6	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.14
10. During professional learning events, are translators and interpreters available for participants from different language or disability groups?	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.43
11. Is content training offered to provide staff with curricular information and knowledge that positively affirms and values cultural differences to enhance educational equity?	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.43
12. Do staff members receive training in culturally responsive communication and practices to increase their effectiveness in working with diverse populations?	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.43
13. Are critical educational issues addressed in ways that do not stereotype or stigmatize particular groups?	14.29%	1	42.86%	3	42.86%	3	0.00%	0	2.29
14. Are presenters and facilitators of in-service training programs representative of the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity, gender expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status groups of the student body and larger school community?	85.71%	6	0.00%	0	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.29
15. Are professional learning techniques delivered authentically and in a way that is relevant to diverse groups?	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.57
16. Are staff equipped with the skills, knowledge, and expertise to develop partnerships with families that are built on trust and respect and enhance students' learning and well-being?	28.57%	2	28.57%	2	42.86%	3	0.00%	0	2.14
Domain 7 Overall Mean									1.63

Table 10: Domain 8: Standards and Curriculum Development

Domain 8: Standards and Curriculum Development	Latent (0)	n	Emergent (1)	n	Established (2)	n	Advanced (3)	n	Mean (scale 0-3)
1. Are all teachers involved in improving the curriculum through continuous and systematized feedback and revision, so that all students can learn and achieve at high levels?	14.29%	1	28.57%	2	42.86%	3	14.29%	1	2.57
2. Are all families and students encouraged to provide feedback on educational programs, both planning and instructional?	71.43%	5	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.29
3. Are all students held to the same standards?	0.00%	0	57.14%	4	42.86%	3	0.00%	0	2.43
4. Do all virtual education materials provided by the school meet the criteria set by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0?	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	1.86
5. Is digital content accessible on a wide variety of devices that are available to students and their families?	14.29%	1	14.29%	1	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	2.71
6. Does the curriculum utilize accessible digital and print materials that represent diverse groups?	14.29%	1	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	0.00%	0	2.14
7. Do teachers leverage in-person and virtual classroom lessons to increase awareness and counter the past effects of bias and discrimination?	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.57
8. Do recommended textbooks and other instructional materials reflect, as much as possible, the experiences and perspectives of diversity among racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity and expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status groups?	14.29%	1	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	2.00
9. Are the teachers' classroom activities and examples culturally responsive according to race, ethnicity, national origin, language, sex, gender identity and expression, religion, and disability?	42.86%	3	42.86%	3	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.71
10. Does the curriculum infuse culturally responsive information into instructional approaches?	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.57
11. Does the curriculum prepare students for a diverse society and workplace?	57.14%	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.57
12. Are people with disabilities shown in the curriculum actively interacting with both people with and without disabilities?	28.57%	2	71.43%	5	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.71
13. Is language used that does not stereotype people or groups?	28.57%	2	28.57%	2	42.86%	3	0.00%	0	2.14
14. Are both person-first and identity-first language used dependent on the preferences of individual or groups of students with disabilities and their families?	42.86%	3	42.86%	3	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.71
15. Does the curriculum suggest ways to examine the perspectives and contributions of people of different races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, national origins, languages, sexes, gender identities and expressions, religions, sexual orientations, or disability statuses in every subject area, especially in mathematics, science, social studies, history, and English?	28.57%	2	57.14%	4	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	1.86
16. Are teachers encouraged to use and provide examples produced by people of different races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, national origins, languages, sexes, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, religions, or disability statuses as part of the curriculum?	14.29%	1	71.43%	5	14.29%	1	0.00%	0	2.00
							Domain 8 Overall Mean		1.93

Aggregate Qualitative Results

School-based teams were encouraged but not required to provide input in the open-ended item at the conclusion of each of the eight ESA-S domains. For each open-ended item, the prompt was as follows: *This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the [Insert Name of Domain] domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, and evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as areas in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.* These open-ended responses were analyzed for patterns related to strengths and priorities. They are summarized in *Table 11* below.

Table 11: Open-ended Responses

Domain	Rating	Strengths	Priorities/Needs/ Concerns
Domain 1: School Policy	1.74	School level communication is timely and consistent Consistent efforts are being made to acknowledge the items in Domain 1, but specific policy has not yet been laid out for all items Sex equity grievance policy clearly laid out in school handbook	District-level policy updates are inconsistent and not always completed in a timely manner Policies and manuals at the district and school levels are challenging to find on the Sycamore website Reassignment of students from their home building to other district elementaries due to their EL status is concerning Buzzwords and catch phrases in the strategic design, vision, and domains portions of the Sycamore district site, but it is difficult to measure in a meaningful way Other grievance policies are not clearly laid out in handbook
Domain 2: Assessing Community Needs	2.55	Frequent communication (often via email) sent to families Principal(s) are great at communicating to families Consistent outreach efforts across professional roles (e.g., teacher, social worker, nurse)	Unsure of district plan for meeting needs of families who are not native English or Spanish speakers; much of the communication is rarely translated (interpreter for district works part time and has long backlog)

Domain 3: School Organization/ Administration	1.79	Building Leadership Teams (BLT) meet regularly for school improvement (strength); however, it is unclear on how the BLT intentionally addresses equity issues in these meetings	Translator needs-high demand but only one translator

Not enough full-time interpreters

Many practices in place (strength), but they are more sporadically than systematically implemented (area for growth)

No committees or personnel that assure equity compliance in the school building |
| **Domain 4: School Climate/ Environment** | 2.66 | One of the main outcomes of the IDEA committee from last year was diversifying our media at the elementary level to include a wider variety of cultures, abilities, and identities. This is reflected across libraries and classrooms. | There was a point in time when the district was putting out social media posts with picture descriptions for people with vision impairment (strength). They also made a point to acknowledge various holidays and cultures (strength). These things seem to be less consistent (which could be due to the transition within the communication department).

We need a better mechanism of determining if volunteers are representative of the school community. |
| **Domain 5: Staff** | 2.27 | All teachers meet certification standards and/or the definition of highly qualified | The lack of diversity among the staff makes it difficult to respond to some of the questions in this domain. We feel that there is a respectful and collegial culture, but answering some of these through an equity lens makes it difficult.

no staff reflection on concepts such as implicit biases or cultural differences at a building level. While some people have sought out continuing education and work to reflect on their own practices, it is not a norm for the building.

Diversity among the staff is minimal, and students may go their entire elementary career without a teacher they can identify with. |
| **Domain 6: Assessment/ Placement** | 2.26 | We use multiple instruments (e.g., NSGRA, MAP, ISEL, formative assessments) for student assessment | No data appears to be sorted by anything other than performance. |

		(performance)	
Domain 7: Professional Learning	1.63	In general, continuing education opportunities are not denied if it is relevant to an educator's field.	There has not been much done to provide continuing education in these areas to all staff by the district. Most of the time it feels like acknowledging differences in our community is largely ignored, and not addressed at all. Training on culturally responsive practices to support English Learners has occurred once in 3 years.
Domain 8: Standards and Curriculum Development	1.93	The IDEA committee from last year tried to bring awareness to classroom teachers and provide media in the form of books for the library and classrooms. Special education staff do a sound job of using person-first and/or identity-first language.	It is unclear how each teacher in the building is using them (diverse lit), and accountability has not been discussed. Diversity in textbooks or digital information has not been a driving choice in curriculum selection

ESA-S Relative Strengths. Domains of relative strengths across the six participating schools include: *School Climate/Environment* (mean=2.66; no items means below 2) and *Assessing Community Needs* (mean=2.55; only one item mean below 2).

For the *School Climate/Environment* domain, items for which the majority of schools most highly rated were:

- *Does the interaction of school staff with each other, students, families, and community members convey a respect for people regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability status, age, or religion?*
- *Are school emblems, mascots, team names, and other symbols free from racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity, gender expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability bias?*

For the *Assessing Community Needs* domain, items for which the majority of schools most highly rated were:

- *Has the school surveyed families' technological needs?*
- *Does the school reach out to families of students to address potential barriers that students may experience in accessing their educational learning (whether in-person, hybrid, or distance learning)?*

- *Does the school/school system have a plan for family engagement that encourages and provides avenues for the involvement of all school staff and all families, and sustains community partnerships?*

ESA-S Areas for Growth & Development. Domains with the greatest room for increased equity efforts were: ***Professional Learning*** (mean=1.63), ***School Policy*** (mean=1.74), and ***School Organization/Administration*** (mean=1.79). For the ***Professional Learning*** domain, items for which the majority of schools indicated "Latent=0" were:

- *Q6. Have all staff received training on how to adjust the way they talk to provide opportunities for English Learners to acquire academic language (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP) and social language (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS) (e.g., speaking clearly, having a slower rate of speech, using simple sentence structures, repeating/ paraphrasing as necessary)?*
- *Q9. Are in-service opportunities offered to encourage dialogues between policymakers, administrators, teachers, support staff, and families, as well as business and community leaders, to develop comprehensive strategies for addressing equity issues?*
- *Q14. Are presenters and facilitators of in-service training programs representative of the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity, gender expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status groups of the student body and larger school community?*

For the ***School Policy*** domain, items for which the majority of schools indicated "Latent=0" were:

- *Q13. Does the school have a policy regarding using names students identify as their preferred name and personal pronouns?*
- *Q14. Does the school have a policy regarding bathroom and locker room use by transgender students?*
- *Q4. Does the educational equity policy regarding racial equity address the harmful impacts of racial stress and trauma?*
- *Q5. Does the educational equity policy identify the roles of teachers, staff, and administrators in mitigating race-based disparities?*
- *Q9. Did all relevant stakeholder groups (staff, families, students, and community members) participate in the development of the mission statement and equity plan?*

For the ***School Organization/Administration*** domain, items for which the majority of schools indicated "Latent=0" were:

- *Q5. Is enrollment monitored in special education, vocational education, gifted education, and advanced courses for the disproportionate representation of language, gender, racial, or ethnic groups?*

- *Q8d. Are data regarding student discipline (including office disciplinary referrals), suspensions, and expulsions regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed and done so by different racial, ethnic, ability (e.g., IEP/gifted status), and language groups?*
- *Q9a. Have the following been modified as needed as a result of the data from question 8 combined with anecdotal and other information: <u>Policies</u>?*
- *Q9b. Have the following been modified as needed as a result of the data from question 8 combined with anecdotal and other information: <u>Programs</u>?*
- *Q9c. Have the following been modified as needed as a result of the data from question 8 combined with anecdotal and other information: <u>Curricular choices</u>?*

Focus Groups Data

Focus Group Participant Data

Table 12: Caregivers/Families & Teachers/Staff Participant Data

Focus Group Participant Category	Number of Participants Session 1	Number of Participants Session 2	Total Number of Participants
Caregivers/Families	8	4	**12**
Teachers/Staff	3	5	**8**

Focus Group Participant Interview Data

Below you will find focus group participants' responses in *Tables 13-14.*

Table 13:Caregivers/Families Interview Data

Focus Group Questions	Focus Group (Caregivers/Family Participants) Responses
What do you think Sycamore is doing well with regard to equity, inclusion, and diversity?	A couple of caregiver/family participants responded that they have not heard much regarding issues with equity, inclusion, and diversity or anything anti-equity and inclusion. Therefore they are looking at this as a benefit. Several caregiver/family participants shared that being invited to participate in a focus group is something the district is doing well. A caregiver/family participant shared their awareness that there is an IDEA committee and there was a video that was put out, but never heard of anything else. A caregiver/family participant shared how as a parent of an African-American student, the administrators went above and beyond to find an African-American mentor to come into the school and spend time with her. This was an exception or anomaly. Definitely not a norm within the district. A caregiver/family participant shared how Sycamore does a great job with students who have special needs, but do not do a great job with students from other diverse groups, specifically students of color.
If you see any challenges within the district regarding equity, inclusion, and diversity, might you please provide an example?	A caregiver/family participant shared how as spouses they have to compare notes at times because there is a disconnect in communication throughout the district. Several caregiver/family participants shared how there are not clear point people in the district to contact which makes it challenging to get the answers

that they need.

Several caregiver/family participants shared how students need to see themselves in the books that they are reading and also see other people in the books that they are reading. For example students with disabilities and various other books that address diversity.

Several caregiver/family participants shared how there is not intentional inclusion and diverse topics discussed. Even in history, literature, and political science where you would expect it.

Several caregiver/family participants there are not school-wide acknowledgement of the celebration of Black Heritage Month or Women's History Month through media communications or within the schools. A caregiver/family participant further shared how at the high school, one teacher acknowledged Black History Month for one day.

Another comment made by a caregiver/family participant shared how Sycamore High School received information for Black History Month and it was placed on the screen in the hallways when students could read it while passing. There did not seem to be much conversation regarding the information shared and this is the struggle. Also, Black History information should be spread throughout the month.

A caregiver/family participant shared how the district is not skirting away or ignoring diversity and inclusion, not bringing it to the forefront.

Several caregiver/family participants shared their concern that the school board meetings are sometimes extreme and perception is a concern when it comes to discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Several caregiver/family participants, teachers have not been out of their cultural center and need to be. An example was shared of an incident with kids doing an assignment and there was a picture of Hitler and kids put a Swastika on the photo. It was brought to the attention of a teacher and principal and nobody responded. When it was brought to the attention of another parent they asked if the person was Jewish. Nobody responded and it is believed they did not know how to respond.

A caregiver/family participant shared that she has a developmentally disabled child and has been basically fighting the school district because they have pretty much given up on her son and don't want to deal with him anymore. It is to the point where they want to send him to a therapeutic day school. The district is lacking in having a program for children in their home school who are developmentally disabled instead of being shipped to other schools.

A caregiver/family participant shared that Sycamore does not have a trauma-informed school or trauma-informed practices.

Several caregiver/family participants mentioned how there is a running joke that Sycamore does not hire people of color. They shared it would be hard to prove, but there is a very strong pattern that the district does not hire people of color and they love to keep like-minded people from the community.

Several caregiver/family participants shared there are alot of things done in the

	district to check a box. Black students seem to be treated unfairly within the district.
	Several caregiver/family participants shared that there are no mentorship programs, Latinx Club, Black Student Union.
	Several caregiver/family participants shared concern that the district may not know what equity means. In addition, they are concerned that there has been no professional development provided to students. There is also a concern that the spots for teacher/staff focus groups were not completely filled.
	Several caregiver/family participants mentioned how teachers are the gatekeepers for so many opportunities and these opportunities are not going to students of color. There is not the same access given to Black and Brown students to AP courses.
	Several caregiver/family participants shared how they have experienced biases and microaggressions and so has their children.
What do you wish was prioritized around diversity, equity, and inclusion within the district?	Several caregiver/family participants shared that teachers need to be given skills to have these uncomfortable conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion. They were in agreement that there is a fear that teachers can be singled out if they teach diversity and inclusion topics, so if everyone is doing it then it would not be isolated.
	Several caregiver/family participants suggest that the district address why some teachers are fearful or do not want to teach about diversity, equity, and inclusion.
	Several caregiver/family participants shared that the district can obtain resources regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as reach out to Northern Illinois University (NIU) for support.
	Several caregiver/family participants shared how administrators need to support teachers as they put forth diversity and inclusion in the classroom.
	Several caregiver/family participants suggested that diversity and inclusion be added to the curricula. It should be more than a checkbox.
	A caregiver/family participant shared how there should be a campus wide activity at high school that focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
	Several caregiver/family participants shared how they are learning how to respond to diversity and inclusion, issues and things that may be problematic.
	Several caregiver/family participants made the recommendation that there should be belonging meetings within the district and the community should be invited.
	A caregiver/family participant shared how the district should tap into regional resources.
	Several caregiver/family participants added that the district needs representation

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	across the board in reading books. The district can connect with the local library to get help with finding relevant and non-stereotypical diverse books. A caregiver/family participant shared how the district should get an equity officer to help with equity, diversity, and inclusion within the district. Several caregiver/family participants shared that all teachers should have training or professional development that focuses on implicit biases and identities to help them become empathetic.
Are there any programs, practices, and/or policies that you think would be helpful?	Several caregiver/family participants shared how there needs to be inclusive language across the board in regard to gender. There is a lot of sexist language specifically in gym class. Some students have felt that they have not been taken seriously as female athletes. There are also slurs that are made. There should be a discipline standard regarding this. Several caregiver/family participants suggested there needs to be clearer policy statements regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion.
Do you have any questions for the school district regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion?	How is the district trying to racially diversity faculty, staff, and administration through hiring in this district? What ways are you going to support racially diverse faculty, staff, and administration in the district? How can the school district with their resources help parents have conversations at home regarding diversity and inclusion (i.e., one book, one community that includes everyone reading the same book and having discussion questions)? How is Sycamore preparing students for the diverse world that they are in so that they can be inclusive and help them to be good citizens? What is the district doing to ensure they are pushing students of color into higher level classes and helping them be successful? What type of literature and lessons and overall classes is Sycamore going to add to help students become great citizens of the world (i.e., immersion programs, Program in Evanston named SOAR)? Is the district going to take the results of the equity audit seriously and provide necessary resources to address the challenges within the district? If teachers and staff do not want to complete mandatory DEI training, will there be corrective actions? Will there be an outline provided by the district?

Overall Summary of Caregivers/Families Focus Group Data

Two Caregivers/Families Focus Groups took place on two separate evenings. There were a total of twenty slots available and twelve people participated. Each focus group lasted a little over one hour.

The summary of the focus group data with caregivers/families is that there are several challenges within the district. A common challenge that was brought up in both focus groups was the lack of racially diverse teachers/staff within the district, communication between the district and caregivers/families, having inclusive curricula, and making sure that teachers, administrators, and staff have professional development focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion, and that there is an accountability system in place for those in the district that do not adhere to attending professional development.

Table 14: Teachers/Staff Interview Data

Focus Group Questions	Focus Group Participant Responses
What do you think Sycamore is doing well in regard to equity, inclusion, and diversity?	A teacher participant shared in the interview that at this moment the district seems to be trying by having this equity audit and that seems to be positive. A teacher participant shared, there are some administrators and teachers that seem to be interested in bringing topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the forefront.
What type of professional development, information, programs, policies, protocols, and/or resources might be helpful?	Several teacher participants shared that everyone in the district can benefit from restorative justice. Several teacher participants shared that the handbook has not changed over the years. Some teachers mentioned that if teachers are new to the district, they do not have a handbook. Also, there is no new teacher orientation for those new to the district and this is needed. A teacher/staff participant reported that there are MTSS committees and VLT committees, but no other group looking at policies and procedures and making sure they are current. There needs to be committees that focus on making sure policies and procedures are up-to-date and communicate with teachers/staff regarding these changes.
What do you wish was prioritized around diversity, equity, and inclusion within the district?	Several teacher/staff participants shared that there needs to be consistency and currently there is no consistency within the district and schools. All teachers/staff are not onboard and there is no accountability or support from most administrators. A teacher/staff participant reiterated the need for accountability and consistency. They shared that there needs to be accountability as a district in order to do something to make an impact and make a change within the district. One teacher/staff participant shared that there is a lot of talk within the district, but nothing to back it up. They further shared how the district needs to do what they say they are going to do, which includes follow up. Several teacher/staff participants shared in the interviews that teachers and staff need to reflect the students. The teachers and staff are singularly focused and composed of white men and women. A teacher/staff participant shared how teachers, staff, and students need education

	to bridge empathy and understanding towards people that are marginalized (i.e., Black students, Hispanic students, LGBTQ students, students in poverty)
How prepared do you feel to handle equity, diversity, and inclusion?	A teacher/staff participant shared how there are signs and posters in some schools with information regarding bullying, but nothing specifically about issues of race and racism, sexism, or other -isms. A teacher/staff participant shared how teachers and staff are not prepared at all to handle diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. They expressed how the behavioral system is broken within the school district. They also shared that they start the school year off with no information and no guidance from the district.
As educators and staff what do you need?	Several teachers/staff participants shared they would like resources, specifically a true literature curriculum, that includes diverse texts. In addition, they shared there needs to be a program for both general education and special education classes that offer engagement and covers relevant topics. A teacher/staff participant shared that professional development that does not include Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is needed. In addition, they shared how the same book (Learning by Doing) and company is being used, and it is not working. Some teacher/staff participants shared how there needs to be more diverse speakers coming into the district when guest speakers are invited. A teacher/staff participant shared how educators have written grants for resources that were funded by a local education foundation. They continued to share how It is unfortunate that teachers have to do this and then worry about whether or not they will be able to sustain the programs they were paying for with the grant funds.
Is there anything else you would like us to know?	Several teacher/staff participants shared how there is a lot of overlap with people who work and live in the district. It is a very conservative district that has the "Sycamore Way". This way of being does not offer the opportunity to focus on diversity.

Overall Summary of Teachers/Staff Focus Group Data

Two Teachers/Staff Focus Groups took place on two separate evenings. There are a total of twenty slots available and eight people participated. Each focus group lasted one hour. The summary of the teachers/staff focus group data is that there is a need to hire teachers and staff of color, repeatedly teachers/staff said that students need to see racially diverse teachers and staff. Also, Teachers/Staff participants shared they do not feel teachers and staff are prepared to address equity, diversity, and inclusion within the district. All teacher/staff participants shared the need for professional development and resources that are centered around equity, diversity, and inclusion.

2022 5Essentials Survey Data

In addition to the district and school equity self-assessments (ESA-D, ESA-S), and the teachers/staff and caregivers/families focus groups, we also utilized the 2022 5Essentials Survey data to triangulate patterns related to educational equity indicators. Though the entire 45 page report was not publicly accessible at the time of the writing of this report, the principal equity consultants were granted permission from the district superintendent to access the data on the UChicagoImpact website. *Figures 7-12* below summarize 4-year trend data across the 5Essentials domains. We used these data and additional Illinois Report Card data to further contextualize our findings that are discussed in the Overall Audit Summary and Recommendations sections of this report.

Figure 7: Supportive Environment domain results of the 5Essentials Survey

Supportive Environment
How is Sycamore CUSD 427 performing on Supportive Environment?

In schools with a Supportive Environment, the school is safe, demanding, and supportive. In such schools:

- students feel safe in and around the school,
- they find teachers trust-worthy and responsive to their academic needs,
- all students value hard work, and
- teachers push all students toward high academic performance.

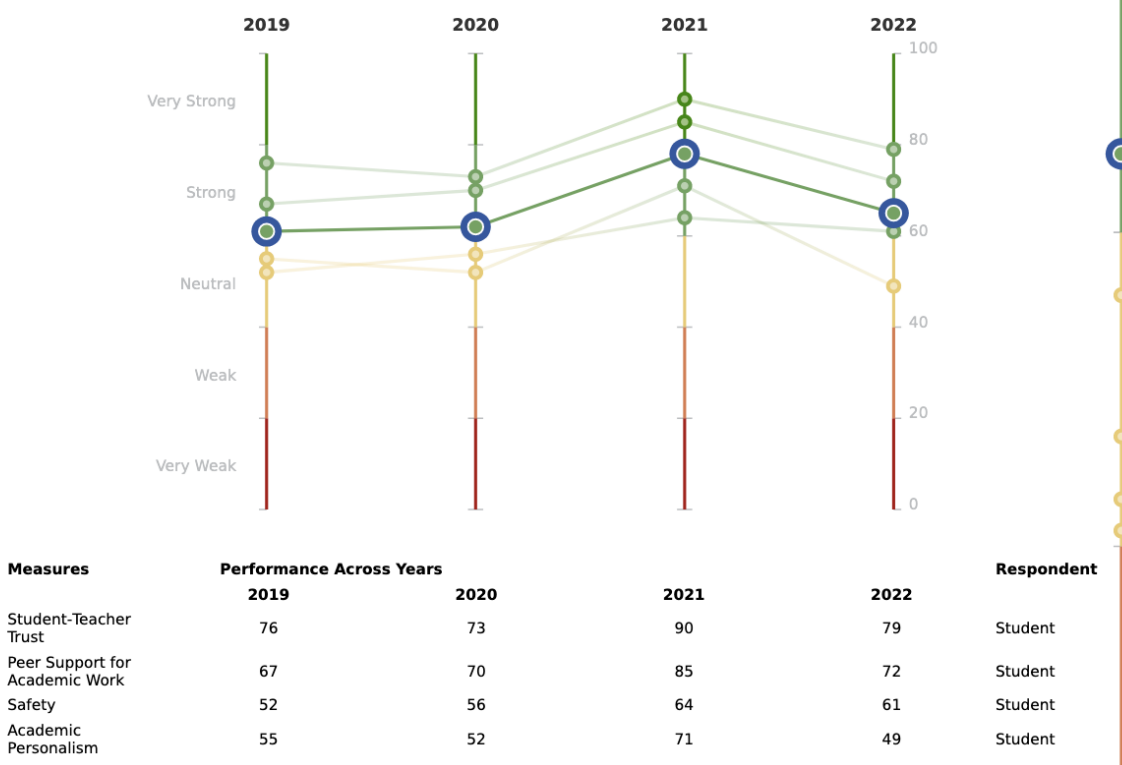**Performance on essential and its underlying measures**

Measures	Performance Across Years				Respondent
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Student-Teacher Trust	76	73	90	79	Student
Peer Support for Academic Work	67	70	85	72	Student
Safety	52	56	64	61	Student
Academic Personalism	55	52	71	49	Student

Figure 8: Ambitious Instruction domain results of the 5Essentials Survey

Ambitious Instruction
How is Sycamore CUSD 427 performing on Ambitious Instruction?

In schools with strong Ambitious Instruction, classes are challenging and engaging. The instruction is clear, well-structured, and encourages students to build and apply knowledge. When combined with a supportive environment, Ambitious Instruction has the most direct effect on student learning. It is:

- well-defined with clear expectations for student success,
- interactive and encourages students to build and apply knowledge,
- well-paced (not measured), and
- aligned across grades (not measured).

Performance on essential and its underlying measures

Measures	Performance Across Years				Respondent
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Math Instruction	52	54	52	65	Student
English Instruction	50	43	46	57	Student
Academic Press	56	47	47	52	Student
Quality of Student Discussion	47	44	43	44	Teacher

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Figure 9: Involved Families domain results of the 5Essentials Survey

Involved Families
How is Sycamore CUSD 427 performing on Involved Families?

In schools with Involved Families, the entire staff builds strong external relationships. Such schools:

- see parents as partners in helping students learn,
- value parents' input and participation in advancing the school's mission, and
- support efforts to strengthen its students' community resources.

Performance on essential and its underlying measures

Measures	Performance Across Years				Respondent
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Parent Involvement in School	56	49	51	51	Teacher
Parent Influence on Decision Making in Schools	44	51	51	47	Teacher
Teacher-Parent Trust	62	59	49	43	Teacher

Figure 10: Effective Leaders domain results of the 5Essentials Survey

Effective Leaders
How is Sycamore CUSD 427 performing on Effective Leaders?

In schools with Effective Leaders, principals and teachers work together to implement a shared vision. In such schools, people, programs, and resources are focused on a vision for sustained improvement. Leaders:

- practice shared leadership,
- set high goals for quality instruction,
- maintain mutually trusting and respectful relationships,
- support professional advancement for faculty and staff, and
- manage resources for sustained program improvement (not measured).

Performance on essential and its underlying measures
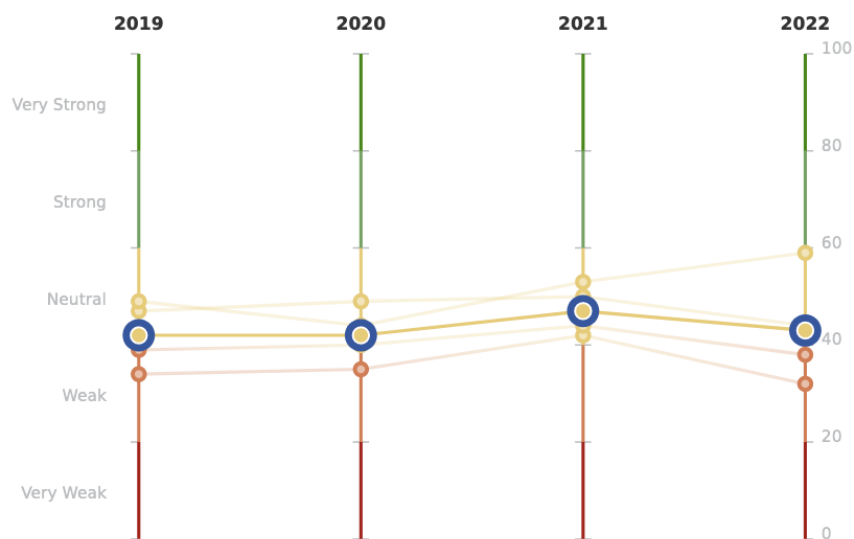
Measures	Performance Across Years				Respondent
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Teacher-Principal Trust	49	44	53	59	Teacher
Program Coherence	47	49	50	44	Teacher
Teacher Influence	39	40	44	38	Teacher
Instructional Leadership	34	35	42	32	Teacher

Figure 11: Collaborative Teachers domain results of the 5Essentials Survey

Collaborative Teachers
How is Sycamore CUSD 427 performing on Collaborative Teachers?

In schools with strong Collaborative Teachers, all teachers collaborate to promote professional growth. In such schools, teachers are:

- active partners in school improvement,
- committed to the school, and
- focused on professional development.

Performance on essential and its underlying measures

Measures	Performance Across Years				Respondent
	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Teacher-Teacher Trust	57	56	52	57	Teacher
School Commitment	53	50	45	47	Teacher
Collective Responsibility	35	29	44	46	Teacher
Collaborative Practices	39	46	38	36	Teacher
Quality Professional Development	26	25	43	21	Teacher
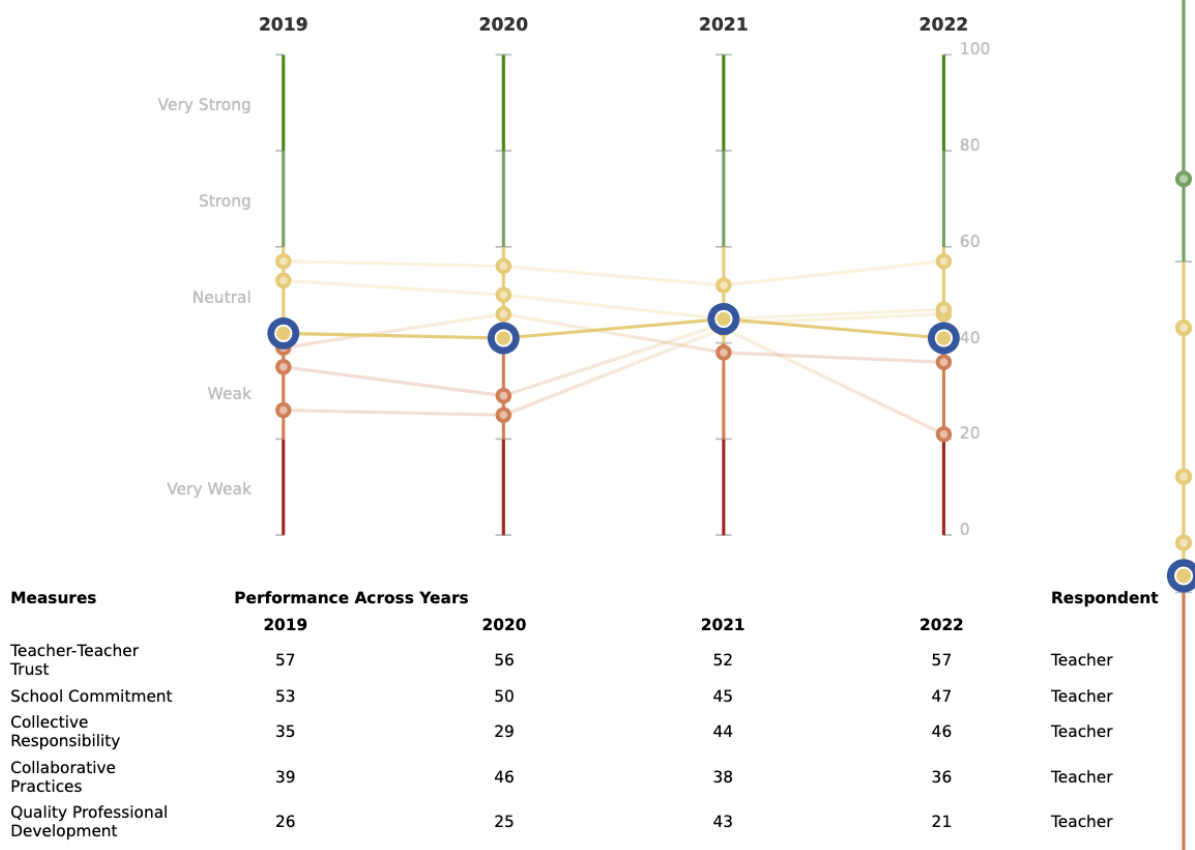
Figure 12: All 5Essentials Measures

All 5Essentials Measures

How is Sycamore CUSD 427 performing on all 5Essentials measures in 2022?

Page	Measure	Change	Performance		Essential	Respondent
9	Student-Teacher Trust	- 11	79 Strong		Supportive Environment	Student
10	Peer Support for Academic Work	- 13	72 Strong		Supportive Environment	Student
11	Math Instruction	+ 13	65 Strong		Ambitious Instruction	Student
12	Safety	- 3	61 Strong		Supportive Environment	Student
13	Teacher-Principal Trust	+ 6	59 Neutral		Effective Leaders	Teacher
15	English Instruction	+ 11	57 Neutral		Ambitious Instruction	Student
16	Teacher-Teacher Trust	+ 5	57 Neutral		Collaborative Teachers	Teacher
17	Academic Press	+ 5	52 Neutral		Ambitious Instruction	Student
19	Parent Involvement in School	+ 0	51 Neutral		Involved Families	Teacher
20	Academic Personalism	- 22	49 Neutral		Supportive Environment	Student
21	Parent Influence on Decision Making in Schools	- 4	47 Neutral		Involved Families	Teacher
22	School Commitment	+ 2	47 Neutral		Collaborative Teachers	Teacher
23	Collective Responsibility	+ 2	46 Neutral		Collaborative Teachers	Teacher
24	Program Coherence	- 6	44 Neutral		Effective Leaders	Teacher
25	Quality of Student Discussion	+ 1	44 Neutral		Ambitious Instruction	Teacher
26	Teacher-Parent Trust	- 6	43 Neutral		Involved Families	Teacher
27	Teacher Influence	- 6	38 Weak		Effective Leaders	Teacher
28	Collaborative Practices	- 2	36 Weak		Collaborative Teachers	Teacher
29	Instructional Leadership	- 10	32 Weak		Effective Leaders	Teacher
30	Quality Professional Development	- 22	21 Weak		Collaborative Teachers	Teacher

Discipline Data

Where relevant, we utilized Illinois Report Card (IRC) and discipline data that were publicly accessible through either the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) website or provided to us in raw form by the district administrative team. We combined the IRC student demographic data with the discipline data to complete a Risk Ratio assessment for *any* Sycamore schools that met the following criteria: (a) 10 or more students suspended (in-school or out-of-school) or expelled and (b) discipline data were reported across more than one race category. Sycamore Middle School and Sycamore High School met these inclusion criteria, but none of the elementary schools in Sycamore met them.

We utilized the Risk Ratio tool created by the Wisconsin RtI Center and Wisconsin PBIS Network to calculate the risk of students of color as compared to White students for behavioral adversity. A risk ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that students of that race are at higher risk of behavioral adversity.
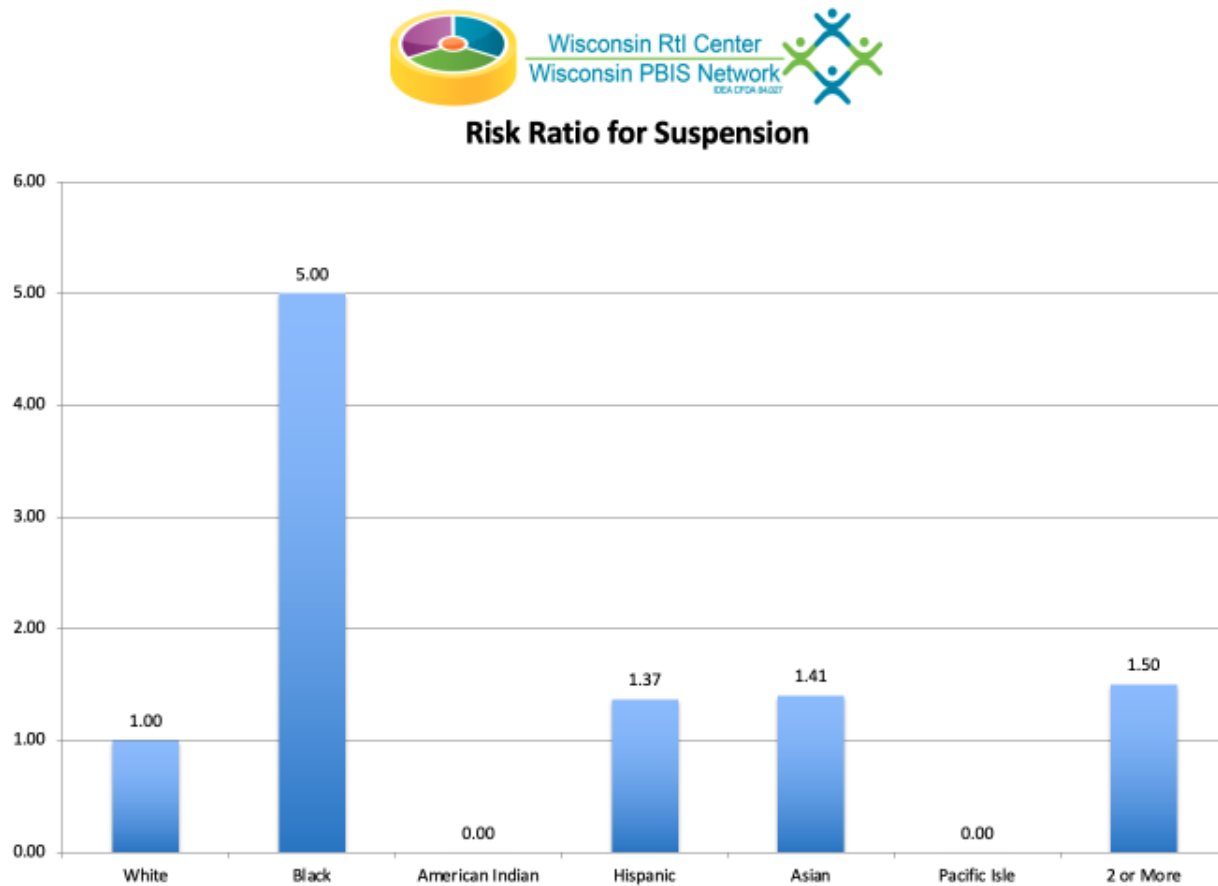
Sycamore Middle School

Table 15 below shows the number of Sycamore Middle School students (not the total number of incidents), who received in-school-suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), police referral, and multiple recorded infractions of any combination of these three punitive consequences.

Table 15: Sycamore Middle School Discipline Data

	ISS	**OSS**	**Expulsion**	**Police Referral**	**Multiple, separate infractions resulting in ISS, OSS, Expulsion, or Police Referral**
# of students	23	22	0	2	11

Shown in the graph below *(Figure 13)* and based on the most recently available 2021-2022 raw data provided to us by the district, Black students at Sycamore Middle School were 5 times more likely than White students to receive in- or out-of-school suspension. Multiracial students were 1.5 times more likely, Hispanic students were 1.36 times more likely, and Asian students were 1.41 times more likely than White students to receive in- or out-of-school suspension.

Figure 13: Risk Ratio for Suspension by Race/Ethnicity (Middle School)

Sycamore High School

     Table 16 below shows the number of Sycamore High School students (not the total number of incidents), who received in-school-suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), expulsion, police referral, and multiple recorded infractions of any combination of these four punitive consequences.

Table 16: Sycamore High School Discipline Data

	ISS	OSS	Expulsion	Police Referral	Multiple, separate infractions resulting in ISS, OSS, Expulsion, or Police Referral
# of students	9	33	1	11	13

Shown in the graph below *(Figure 14)* and based on the most recently available 2021-2022 raw data provided to us by the district, American Indian students were over 14 times more likely and Multiracial students 6.24 times more likely than their White peers to receive in- or out-of-school suspension. Black students and Hispanic students were each just over 3.2 times more likely than White students to receive in- or out-of-school suspension.

Figure 14: Risk Ratio for Suspension by Race/Ethnicity (High School)

Overall Audit Summary
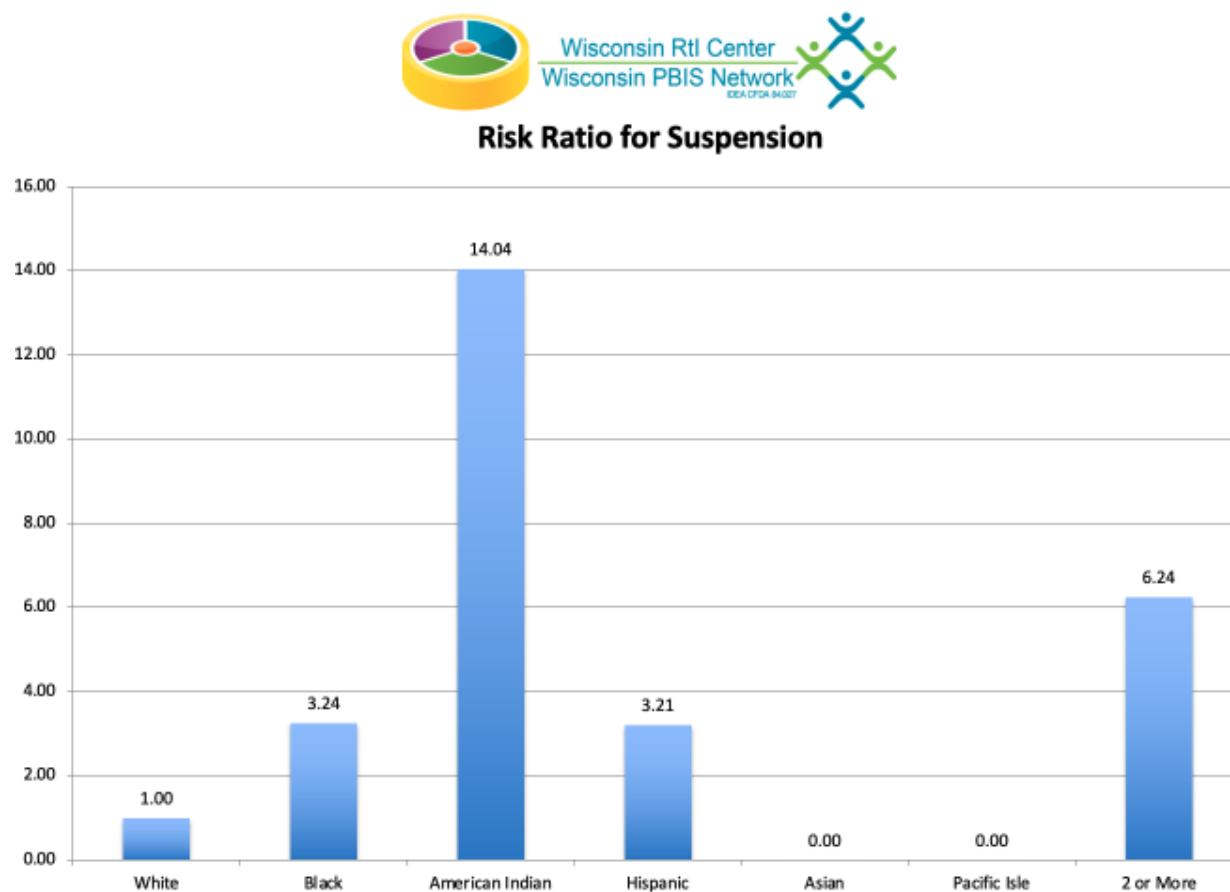
Patterns Found Across Data Sources

Equity-Centered Vision, Policies, Practices

Sycamore's Strategic Design is easily accessible on the district website. The Strategic Design includes: Beliefs, Core Values, Visions, and Domains. One Core Value is "Equality" and includes the statement "Equitable people believe in inclusiveness and embrace diversity". Though this is the only place in which equity or a variation of the word is explicitly present, there are other aspects of the Visions and Domains sections that include characteristics of educational equity.

Less clear is how these four strands of the strategic design align or map onto one another and how the features of the Sycamore Strategic Design link to any explicit policies or practices at district and/or school levels. ESA-D feedback suggests that there may be a lack of clearly laid out policy at the district level which makes it difficult for schools to establish well-aligned equity policies and priorities. Additionally, focus group and ESA-S feedback suggest that stakeholders have difficulty navigating district and school websites to find handbooks and/or policy manuals. Finally, ESA-S data reveal that schools *are* working to acknowledge (through practice) many of the items from ESA-S Domain 1, specific school policies around these topics are largely absent.

Finally, focus group and ESA-S data reveal that, while school-based administrative communication around diversity, equity, and inclusion-focused initiatives has been consistent overall, stakeholders feel that communication on these issues from district-level leadership has been more sporadic and less frequent. There is acknowledgement of PSAs and statements in the summer/early fall of 2020 but that much of the urgency around these topics has since waned.

Community/Stakeholder Engagement

School teams completing the ESA-S noted that there are consistent outreach efforts made to families and that principals do a sound job of communication. These same teams note less consistent communication efforts at the district level and that district and school websites are not easily navigable or accessible, especially if families are not native English or Spanish speakers. District and school representatives who completed ESA-D and ESA-S noted that there are fewer intentional systems and processes to authentically engage and communicate with family and community stakeholders who might be part of other identity markers such as low-SES and LGBTQ+.

Involved Families. Though the ESA-D and ESA-S indicated that Sycamore schools make consistent outreach efforts overall, teacher response on the 2022 5Essentials (5E) survey rated *"Involved Families"* construct (which combines the domains of: Parent Influence on Decision Making in Schools, Parent Involvement in School, and Teacher-Parent Trust) as "Neutral". This rating has remained consistent, with a decreasing trend, across a 4-year period

from 2019-2022. Of note, the domain of Teacher-Parent Trust within this construct has yielded the steadiest decrease over time (from a score of 62 in 2019 to 43 in 2022).

  Parent Connectedness. Caregivers/Families were asked to participate in focus group interviews to provide insight into their perceptions of the Sycamore Community School District 427. The majority of the participants shared how they would like to be able to have communication and information with the district regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. The focus group findings aligned with the analysis of the 2022 5Essentials Parent Survey domain *"Parental Connectedness"*, which showed a consistent increase and decrease trend across a 4-year period from 2019-2022. Specifically, based on the question, "Your voice is valued at the school?", parents' responded the following way: 4% said not at all, 18% said a little, 33% said somewhat, 44% said to a great extent. This data shows that less than half of the parents feel that their voice is valued. In 2021, only 20% of parents felt their voice was heard to a great extent.

Use of Data for Ongoing Improvement

  Both district and school representatives responded that Data is an area in which improvement can be considered. Though multiple student assessment methods are utilized at the school level, most focus primarily on academic performance. Further, staff often have limited access to disaggregated data by student variables (e.g., race, ability, language status). Additionally, data are not systematically or regularly utilized to identify and address inequities in the system.

  Of specific note, we (the principal equity consultants) had difficulty publicly accessing complete discipline data sets for Sycamore CSD 427. Only two schools had recent data available on the ISBE website. We then requested and were provided with raw discipline data for Sycamore Middle and High Schools and were able to code, organize, and analyze suspension data by race. Suspension data at the elementary level were also provided by district leadership; however, only two of the elementary schools had suspension data. Both of these schools had fewer than 10 suspended students, so no risk ratio analysis could be completed at the elementary level. We learned from district leadership that there is no standardized form at the elementary level for office referrals and, unlike the middle and high school, there is no tracking process for student visits to the office in elementary school buildings.

  As provided in an earlier section of our report, we used the discipline and student demographic data to analyze the risk ratio of discipline adversity by race for any school that had data disaggregated across multiple race categories. We found that, though Sycamore Middle and High School student populations are predominantly White, it is Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Multiracial students who are disproportionately disciplined when compared to their representation among the total student populations and in comparison to White students. This is reflective of nationwide racialized patterns of disparate discipline practices towards students of color (Nguyen, Noguera, Adkins, & Teranishi, 2019). Additionally, though we did not have enough data at the elementary level to conduct a risk ratio analysis, we noted that all students who received suspensions had IEPs. This is another important variable to critically review at all

schools when evaluating disciplinary data, as students with disabilities are also disproportionately represented in disciplinary action nationwide (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2021).

School Culture/Environment

Multiple data sources indicate that Sycamore Culture/Environment, at the school level most specifically, is relatively strong. The School Climate/Environment domain of the ESA-S was the most highly rated (2.66) across all 8 domains. Some of the most favorably scored items related to: (a) interactions of school staff with each other, students, families, and community members that convey respect for people across a range of diverse identities and (b) values of equity, fairness, and inclusion being modeled by school staff.

In alignment with these data, students responded positively to the "Supportive Environment" domain of the 5E survey. This domain comprises four primary measures: Student-Teacher Trust, Peer Support for Academic Work, Safety, and Academic Personalism. The first three measures yielded **Strong** ratings, which signifies that students in Sycamore schools feel an overall sense of trust in their teachers, school safety, and peer support. The latter measure, Academic Personalism, yielded a **Neutral** rating. The Academic Personalism domain is defined as "*Teachers connect with students in the classroom and support them in achieving academic goals*" and includes items such as: "Notices if I have trouble learning something"; "Helps me catch up if I'm behind".

Curriculum/Instruction

Data across ESA-D, ESA-S, focus groups, and the 5Essentials Survey yield well-aligned findings related to curriculum & instruction. The IDEA committee noted on the ESA-D (Domain 4: Focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning) that Sycamore as a whole is "Emerging" because there are pockets of culturally responsive materials and teaching materials rather than systematic application of this approach. The ESA-S data completed by school-based teams reflect similar findings. Domain 8: Standards and Curriculum Development had an overall mean of 1.93 with most items being scored at 1 (Emergent) or 2 (Established) and few to none receiving a score of 3 (Established). Focus group data revealed a pattern related to acknowledgment that curricula across schools are not as fully inclusive of diverse experiences as stakeholders believe to be necessary. Finally, student and teacher responses on the Ambitious Instruction Domain of the 5Essentials survey resulted in an overall score of "Neutral" (which falls between Strong and Weak ratings).

Professional Learning

School-based teams completing the ESA-S rated Domain 7: Professional Learning as the lowest (1.63) across all equity domains. Likewise, teacher respondents rated *Quality Professional Development,* a measure under the Collaborative Teachers domain on the 5Essentials Survey, as Weak (Score: 21). This is a 22 point decrease over the previous year

(2021) but is very similar to the score from 2020. Nearly half of Sycamore teachers feel that professional development has not been sustained or coherently focused, and over half believe that professional development opportunities have lacked enough time to think carefully about, try, and evaluate new ideas. Further, focus group findings reveal the need for ongoing professional learning for teachers and staff specific to addressing implicit bias and gaining skills to teach all students about the importance of diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Teaching and Administrative Representation

As shown in the demographic data summaries on pages 4 and 5, Sycamore teachers are majority White (90.0%) and Female (71.5%). Of the data provided to us by a district administrator, only 1% of teachers are Hispanic, 1% are Asian, and 0% are Black. These data may be less accurate given that the race of 8% of teachers is "Unknown". When examining administrator-level data, the majority of administrators are White (89%), with the remaining 11% being "Unknown". Hispanic, Asian, and Black administrator representation are each reported as 0%. There is a gender shift when comparing teacher demographics in Sycamore to that of administrators in that Sycamore teachers are 71.5% percent female but only represent 31.6% of administrators.

An additional discrepancy can be seen when comparing staff demographics to the student population. In Sycamore, the student population is 81.3% White, 3.6% Black, 9.8% Hispanic, 3.5% Multiracial, 1.8% Asian, and less than .5% American Indian. There is disproportionate overrepresentation of White teachers in Sycamore and underrepresentation of Black, Hispanic, and Multiracial teachers when compared to the student population.

School teams completing the ESA-S noted the lack of diversity among staff, as most items in ESA-S Domain 5 related to representative staff composition were rated as Latent (0) or Emergent (1). Of important note regarding hiring practices, the IDEA Committee acknowledged a positive shift in the types of questions related to diversity and cultural competency being asked of candidates interviewing for various positions at the district and school levels.

Recommendations

The goal of educational equity is to make sure the needs of all stakeholders are met. Achieving equity is an iterative journey that requires systematic and strategic reflection and action with the ultimate goal of ***belonging*** for students, families, staff, and the broader community. While the Sycamore Community District 427 Equity Audit findings revealed gaps in practices throughout the district, it is important to acknowledge that identifying barriers and gaps in practices (the component parts of the District's inequity) are essential and *positive* first steps in any continuous improvement process. Below, we suggest recommendations for improvement. Our recommendations are solely based on district-level data from Equity Self Assessment-School (ESA-D), school-based data from Equity Self Assessment-School (ESA-S), Focus Groups data, discipline risk ratio data, demographic data, and the 5Essentials survey data. We spent little time on achievement-related data, as these data are easily disaggregated and viewable via Illinois School Reports Cards and because feedback over the course of this process revealed that academic performance data review is a relative strength for the Sycamore school district. <u>The list of recommendations would be overwhelming to accomplish all at once; therefore, we suggest reading over all the recommendations and choosing a few recommendations to create an initial action plan that should be systematically monitored.</u>

Community Needs/Stakeholder Engagement and Communications
- Identify strategies for understanding how to best meet families' needs for their child(ren)
    - Consult with community organizations that might already have vision-related work around supporting families
- Offer PDs that help teachers/staff identify and use community knowledge in their teaching
- Identify strategies for increasing family engagement in the schooling process
    - Consider the creation of new roles and/or councils, such as school-based family liaisons (paid or volunteer) or Parent Leadership Academies/Institutes (see an initiative in Chicago's Pilsen community for more information: https://www.pilsenneighbors.org/education/academy-of-parents-in-leadership/
- Make intentional efforts to ask caregivers, including non-engaged minoritized caregivers, to participate directly in or provide feedback on policy making at the school and/or district levels. Policies without their voices should be sent back per community approval.

E.g., If implementing PBIS, seek community/family input on how behaviors might be defined based on cultural and/or familial norms to ensure inclusivity and eliminate bias. Consider Culturally Responsive PBIS Resources via PBIS.org.***School Policy/School Organizational Clarity/Administration***
- To establish and sustain a more equitable, socially just, and inclusive school district, it will be important to revisit the District Strategic Plan and:

- - Invite stakeholders to revise, modify, and operationalize language that supports cohesion and connectedness across Core Values, Visions, Domains.
  - Draft a district equity plan aligned to the strategic plan that is based on this equity report to facilitate ongoing equity-centered improvements at the district level
  - Work with Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) to establish school-based equity action plans that are monitored quarterly and revised annually.
- Collaborate with stakeholders within and beyond the school district (i.e. students, families, teachers, administrators, staff, community organizations, and businesses, etc.) to implement change to achieve equity.
  - Host quarterly district meetings for stakeholders within and beyond the school district (i.e. students, families, teachers, administrators, staff, community organizations, and businesses, etc.) to discuss equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts within the Sycamore district.
  - Create a system (i.e. online submission space on district website) for stakeholders within and beyond the school district (i.e. students, families, teachers, administrators, staff, community organizations, and businesses, etc.) to share their concerns and ideas regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Sycamore district.
    - Appoint a person to regularly check the system for stakeholders' feedback and forward it to the correct person within the district.
- 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 in regard to centering equity, diversity, and inclusion.
  - Work with an equity, diversity, and inclusion expert to help implement recommendations from the equity audit and provide consulting for other equity, diversity, and inclusion needs.

Curricula and Instruction
- Establish subject-level and grade-level committees, that involve community-based or caregivers/families input, and include cultural knowledge throughout the curriculum
- Culturally responsive language, examples and artifacts should be included in the curriculum
- Equitable, culturally responsive classroom teaching and practices should be enacted and supported by district and school administration
- School Equity Teams should be established at every school and members should meet regularly with the District IDEA committee (Members of the School Equity Teams should be compensated for their participation)
- Clear vision, policies, and activities for School Equity Teams should be established; and more resources to free their time to engage the work

- Begin positive community and parent outreach (i.e. inviting minoritized families into schools to help with building an environment of equitable academic excellence)
- Find ways to eliminate barriers and increase the number of minoritized students in AP courses

Data Use to Support Equity
- We highly recommend that data be a central driving force in equity action planning and improvement. This can be accomplished by:
  - Providing disaggregated (race, language status, sex, IEP) data access to District- and School-Leadership Teams so that reviews can be conducted (annually, at minimum; quarterly, recommended) around critical areas such as but not limited to:
    - Discipline practices (e.g., risk ratio, trends in infraction and consequence severity)
    - Gifted, honors, and AP programming
    - Graduation and Dropout rates
    - Teacher and student demographic comparisons

Hiring, Retention, and Promotion Practices
- Critically assess current hiring process and strategize how to make the hiring process more equitable
  - Be intentional about who comprises interview panels, types of questions asked, where job announcements are posted.
- Create programs to help to diversify teachers and staff within the district, such as:
  - sign-on incentives, culturally responsive materials stipend, 2+ year mentoring and induction programs
- Enact policies and professional learning opportunities that protect diverse teachers and staff that work for the district, such as:
  - Racially- or identity-caucused professional learning communities (PLC)
  - Educational conferences by and for Black and Latine teachers
- Establish a teacher/administrator mentoring program that addresses concerns for equity (gender, race)
- Consider identifying teachers who might be able to serve as instructional coaches beyond academics such as in culturally responsive practices and restorative justice education who can provide mentoring, modeling, coaching opportunities to teachers who present needed support in these areas.

Professional Learning
- Provide equity training and professional development for all teachers and staff, topics should include, equity within: recruitment, disciplinary referrals, gifted and talented programs, special education programs, classroom management
- Enact *ongoing* and *sustained* professional development focused on diversity, inclusion, antiracism, and anti-oppressive pedagogy and practices.
- Center stakeholder voice *and* use data to make decisions on professional learning initiatives, so as to take intentional care to implement efforts in a community-engaged rather than authoritative approach. This increases buy-in, provides increased autonomy, and substantially improves the probability of sustained implementation efforts at the classroom and school levels.

School Climate/Environment
- Engage in critical dialogue to identify, apply, and critique the terminology and application of daily school operations (i.e. district/school policies, classroom practices, school meetings, and interactions with students, caregivers/families, teachers, and staff)
- Ensure that the voices and experiences of students, teachers, and staff, especially those that are considered marginalized, are included in the polices that will identify and address areas of inequity.
    - Consider conducting equity and inclusion surveys for students and teachers/staff Grades 6-12 on an annual basis:
        - We recommend the free (reliable and valid) survey available for download from https://www.panoramaed.com/equity-inclusion-survey
            - The student survey asks questions related to: Diversity and Inclusion, Cultural Awareness and Action, and Sense of Belonging
            - The teacher/staff survey asks questions related to: Belonging, Cultural Awareness and Action (adult focus, student focus), Educating All Students, and Professional Learning about Equity
    - Consider regularly conducting student focus groups or other focus groups as needed to center stakeholder voices
- 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
- Address staffing and support needs related to English Learners and their families through:
    - Increased interpreting and translations services (and in languages beyond English and Spanish) to balance supply vs. demand concerns in the district

Appendices

Appendix A
Definition of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Culturally Responsive	The inclusion of students' cultural references in all aspects of learning, school experiences and student engagement.
Educational Equity	The practice of distributing resources, access and opportunity based on fairness and justice regardless of race, ethnicity, color, age, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, disability or socio-economic status.
Educational Equity Audit	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.
Implicit Bias	The actions, attitudes or stereotypes that affect people's understanding, actions and decisions in a subconscious manner.
School Climate	The quality and character of school life based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience; it also reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.

Appendix B

District-level Equity Self Assessment (ESA-D)

Below is an explanation of the scale used to rate each domain on the ESA-D.

Latent (0 Points)	Emergent (1 Point)	Established (2 Points)	Advanced (3 Points)
This rating corresponds to the district currently not doing anything, or having no system in place as it relates to the domain.	This rating corresponds to the district having some systems/processes in place, but the systems/processes are not explicit or strong. The district might still be working towards establishing policies and norms related to the topic of this domain.	This rating corresponds to a district having established explicit systems in place. In many cases, to be rated as established, the district has to have created documentation regarding this item's topic(s).	This rating corresponds to a district going above simply establishing explicit systems. This rating is reserved for items where a policy, process or norm is centered on equity. A district scoring "advanced" is focused on creating an environment that acknowledges and addresses equity complexities.

Domain	Descriptor	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)	Evidence *(What evidence do you have or lack that justifies your rating?)*
1. **Vision, Strategy, and Culture**	Clear and well-aligned vision, strategy, and manageable set of priorities have been established at the district level that recognize the local environment and district's capacity for change while promoting a district-wide culture of inclusiveness, excellence, and high expectations for all.					
2. **Focus on Equity**	Equity orientation demonstrated by district staff and modeled by leaders is evidenced in policies, structures, systems, and resources that ensure equitable, high-quality education for all students.					
3. **Organizational Clarity and Collaboration**	Clear school committee and central office structures, systems, processes, and policies that work together to advance the district towards equity and its vision.					
4. **Focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning**	Curricula, materials, tools and supports that help school leaders, teachers and other school staff constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice.					

Domain	Descriptor	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)	Evidence (*What evidence do you have or lack that justifies your rating?*)
5. **Student Readiness to Learn**	District policies, systems, and practices enable schools and staff to establish safe, positive, and inclusive learning environments, and proactively address student non-academic needs.					
6. **Talent**	Systems and processes to recruit, place, develop, and retain talented and diverse faculty and staff.					
7. **Stakeholder Engagement and Communications:**	Intentional systems and processes to authentically engage and communicate with staff, family, and community stakeholders.					
8. **Finance**	Alignment of financial resources with district, school, and student needs and priorities.					
9. **Data**	Data are available and inform decision-making at all levels of the district and in schools. Data are utilized regularly to identify and address inequities in the system.					
10. **School Management**	Policies, structures, and systems that create the conditions needed for school success, maintain accountability for results, and enable effective school leaders.					
11. **Central Services and Operations**	Effective delivery of services to schools, allowing school-based educators to focus on teaching and learning.					

Appendix C

School-based Equity Self Assessment School ESA-S

Equity Self-Assessment-School (ESA-S)

Equity Self-Assessment at the School level (ESA-S) The Equity Self-Assessment at the School level (ESA-S) is a slightly adapted version of the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium Equity Audit tool (MEAC, 2021). This tool was created for school leaders, educators, and other staff members to assess if their schools and classrooms are equitable across various criteria. The ESA-S has 101 items across eight domains: (1) School Policy, (2) Assessing Community Needs, (3) School Organization/Administration, (4) School Climate/Environment, (5) Staff, (6) Assessment/Placement, (7) Professional Learning, (8) Standards and Curriculum Development.

An important reminder is that the ESA-S a tool that provides a starting point in evaluating your district/school's current state concerning equity. It provides a snapshot of your district/school's state at one point in time. By no means is it exhaustive, nor does it include every single potential systemic barrier to equity. Once you receive the initial data from this tool, it will be used as a springboard for action planning to elevate what you are already doing well and to prioritize what rises to the top as the most important equity needs for your school (and district).
Citation: MAEC, Inc. (2021). Equity Audit. Bethesda, MD. February 2021

Q1 Please select the school about which you are completing the ESA-S:

O   North Elementary

O   North Grove Elementary

O   South Prairie Elementary

O   Southeast Elementary

O   Sycamore High

O   Sycamore Middle

O   West Elementary

Q2 Please provide the names and roles of everyone involved in completing this self-assessment:

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Guidance for Completion You are being asked, as a designated school-based team, to complete this self-assessment <u>for your school</u> as part of Sycamore District 427's comprehensive equity audit. It will require about 5-6 hours in total to thoughtfully complete this assessment. We recommend that this assessment be completed over 3 sessions, allotting approximately 2 hours for each session.

To be most prepared for completion of this ESA-S, we recommend that you bring or ensure access to various artifacts to support you in your ratings for each domain and item. Artifacts might include but are not limited to: *district handbook, school handbook, Illinois Report Card data, 5E data, progress monitoring data, enrollment and retention data, data for special populations (e.g., English learners, students with disabilities), curricular maps, literature/book lists, school behavior/discipline policies.*

For each of the 8 domains, we have provided an open-ended item (at the end of each domain matrix) where you might make additional commentary about any items within that particular domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for that domain's ratings. You might make notes of a particular item you recognize as an area in which your school has a well-established process in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority.

The descriptions for the rating scale you will use for this self-assessment can be found below.

If you have any questions about completing this tool or would like additional support in doing so, please email equity consultants, Dr. Shamaine Bertrand (skbertrand25@gmail.com) and Dr. April Mustian (mustianedconsult@gmail.com).

Rating Scale Explanations

Below is an explanation of the scale you will use to rate each item. As you read the items, please think about them in the context of the *past 1-3 years only*.

Latent (0 Points)	Emergent (1 Point)	Established (2 Points)	Advanced (3 Points)
This rating corresponds to the district/school currently not doing anything, or having no system in place as it relates to the question.	This rating corresponds to the district/school having some systems in place, but the systems are not explicit or strong. The district might still be working towards establishing policies and norms related to the topic of the question.	This rating corresponds to a district/school having established explicit systems in place. In many cases, to be rated as established, the district/school has to have created documentation regarding the question's topic.	This rating corresponds to a district going above simply establishing explicit systems. This rating is reserved for items where a policy, process or norm is centered on equity. A district/school scoring "advanced" is focused on creating an environment that acknowledges and addresses equity complexities.

Domain 1 (D1): School Policy (14 items)

	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)
1. Does the school/school system have a specific educational equity policy in areas related to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, and disability status?	O	O	O	O
2. Does the educational equity policy clearly explain the procedures for reporting complaints, investigating complaints, and appeals?	O	O	O	O
3. Is the educational equity policy monitored for consistent and complete implementation as well as amended if necessary?	O	O	O	O
4. Does the educational equity policy regarding racial equity address the harmful impacts of racial stress and trauma?	O	O	O	O

5. Does the educational equity policy identify the roles of teachers, staff, and administrators in mitigating race-based disparities?

    O   O   O   O

6. Does the school have a clear mission statement regarding educational equity?

    O   O   O   O

7. Are updates to policies and procedures publicized to staff, students, and families in an accessible manner and on a timely and continuous basis?

    O   O   O   O

8. Has the school developed an equity plan of action based on the policy, mission statement, and analysis of its current equity needs?

    O   O   O   O

9. Did all relevant stakeholder groups (staff, families, students, and community members) participate in the development of the mission statement and equity plan?

    O   O   O   O

10. Does the school have a policy regarding accommodations for students with disabilities and English Learners?

    O   O   O   O

11. Are there policies and procedures to assure that no student is denied participation in extracurricular or co-curricular activities (as health and safety guidelines permit) because of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, or transportation limitations)?

    O   O   O   O

12. Does the school have a clear and equitable attendance policy that takes into consideration, and does not penalize students, for barriers (e.g., technological issues, families' schedules) they might face during COVID-19?	O	O	O	O
13. Does the school have a policy regarding using names students identify as their preferred name and personal pronouns?	O	O	O	O
14. Does the school have a policy regarding bathroom and locker room use by transgender students?	O	O	O	O

D1-School Policy: Open-ended commentary item

This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the School Policy domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as area in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.

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Domain 2 (D2): Assessing Community Needs (11 items)

	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)

1. Does the school/school system have a plan for family engagement that encourages and provides avenues for the involvement of all school staff and all families, and sustains community partnerships?

○　　　　　○　　　　　○　　　　　○

2. Does the school have clear processes and structures for school staff to meet student needs by providing additional targeted or intensive supports as necessary?

○　　　　　○　　　　　○　　　　　○

3. Does the school encourage the engagement of all families and community members in school planning, support, and governance (e.g., through forming a school advisory committee, conducting a survey, organizing focus groups), whether in-person, hybrid, or distance learning?

○　　　　　○　　　　　○　　　　　○

4. Are families and community members involved in school planning, support, and governance representative of the school community by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, language, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, and disability status?

○　　　　　○　　　　　○　　　　　○

5. Does the school use multiple methods of communication, including translation, to engage with families regarding their priorities, feedback, and concerns regarding distance learning?

○　　　　　○　　　　　○　　　　　○

6. Does the school ensure that families have access to information, virtually and in person, in a language they can understand?

O   O   O   O

7. Are current needs of the school community frequently assessed regarding COVID-19 (e.g., food, transportation, housing, physical health, social-emotional well-being, etc.)?

O   O   O   O

8. Has the school surveyed families' technological needs?

O   O   O   O

9. Has the school enacted an actionable and timely plan to ensure that all families have access to technology and stable internet, and know how to navigate technology and key software the school may be using?

O   O   O   O

10. Does the school monitor attendance to help identify potential barriers students might experience in accessing their education (whether in-person, hybrid, or distance learning)?

O   O   O   O

11. Does the school reach out to families of students to address potential barriers that students may experience in accessing their educational learning (whether in-person, hybrid, or distance learning)?

O   O   O   O

D2-Assessing Community Needs: Open-ended commentary item

 This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the Assessing Community Needs domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as area in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.

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Domain 3 (D3): School Organization/Administration (23 items)

	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)
1. Do school administrators have the knowledge and skills to be able to identify equity issues?	O	O	O	O
2. Are school administrators trained to provide leadership in developing creative strategies to achieve excellence and equity among all staff and students?	O	O	O	O
3. Are there personnel or an advisory committee that coordinates school improvement and assures equity compliance in all phases of school management?	O	O	O	O
4. Have interpreters and translators been identified for the varied languages present in the school community to facilitate two-way communication between families and school staff?	O	O	O	O

5. Is enrollment monitored in special education, vocational education, gifted education, and advanced courses for the disproportionate representation of language, gender, racial, or ethnic groups?	O	O	O	O
6. Is enrollment, including special education, vocational education, gifted education programs, and advanced courses, composed of students who proportionately reflect the diversity within the overall student population?	O	O	O	O
7. Are guidance and counseling provided to encourage all students to take higher-level courses, particularly in the critical filter areas of Honors, STEM, AP, and IB courses?	O	O	O	O
8. Are data regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed in the following areas and by different racial, ethnic, and language groups?				
8a. Course level enrollment	O	O	O	O
8b. Grade point average/achievement scores	O	O	O	O
8c. Standardized test scores	O	O	O	O
8d. Student discipline (including office disciplinary referrals), suspensions, and expulsions	O	O	O	O
8e. Bullying and harassment	O	O	O	O
8f. Participation in school activities and honors	O	O	O	O

8g. Attendance

O   O   O   O

9. Have the following been modified as needed because of the data from question 8 combined with anecdotal and other information?

9a. Policies

O   O   O   O

9b. Programs

O   O   O   O

9c. Curricular choices

O   O   O   O

9d. Instructional strategies

O   O   O   O

10. Does the school prioritize hiring psychologists, counselors, social workers, and nurses to support the social-emotional well-being of students and staff?

O   O   O   O

11. Does the school utilize restorative approaches to support the social-emotional well-being of students and staff?

O   O   O   O

12. Are consequences for violating school procedures taught and reinforced to students using evidence-based strategies (e.g., restorative practices, culturally responsive PBIS)?

O   O   O   O

13. Does the district provide a user-friendly, accessible location (e.g., an online learning portal) for students and families to retrieve virtual learning materials?

O   O   O   O

14. Does the school provide access to learning materials (e.g., textbooks, reading materials) in order for students to complete learning assignments?

O　　　　O　　　　O　　　　O

D3-School Organization/Administration: Open-ended commentary item

This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the School Organization/Administration domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as area in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.

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Domain 4 (D4): School Climate/Environment (11 items)

	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)

1. Does the visual environment, including online school portals, virtual and in-person classrooms, bulletin boards, displays, hall decorations, and offices, show diverse students of varied racial, ethnic, language, gender, gender identity groups, and people with disabilities in a variety of roles?

    O   O   O   O

2. Does the interaction of school staff with each other, students, families, and community members convey a respect for people regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability status, age, or religion?

    O   O   O   O

3. Are values of equity, fairness, and inclusion modeled by all school staff?

    O   O   O   O

4. Is the code of student conduct applied fairly and equitably to all students?

    O   O   O   O

5. Are acceptable standards for students' behavior (both in person and online), language, and dress non-discriminatory?

    O   O   O   O

6. Do school assemblies, special programs, and speakers reflect the diverse nature of the school and larger community?

    O   O   O   O

7. Are the people involved in planning school events and programs (e.g., athletic, arts, service learning or volunteer, PTA/PTO) representative of the school community by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, English Learner status, sex, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, or disability status?

O O O O

8. Do all segments of the school community participate in and are encouraged to attend school events (including service-learning or volunteer opportunities, PTA/PTO)?

O O O O

9. Are school emblems, mascots, team names, and other symbols free from racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity, gender expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability bias?

O O O O

10. Does the virtual and in-person library/media center have recent visual, print, and non-print materials that accurately provide information about diverse student groups in traditional and non-traditional roles?

O O O O

11. Are materials, notices, and other school communication available in multiple languages, and accessible to individuals with disabilities as required?

O O O O

D4-School Climate/Environment: Open-ended commentary item

This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the School Climate/Environment domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as area in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.

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Domain 5 (D5): Staff (12 items)

	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)
1. Do staff set expectations, teach, and reinforce positive behavior; support students to get back on track; and hold all students to consistent standards of behavior?	O	O	O	O
2. Are consequences for student actions, such as discipline infractions and praise, distributed equitably in the classroom?	O	O	O	O
3. Is there an equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers across classrooms?	O	O	O	O

4. Are highly-qualified teachers representative of the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender or gender identity, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status composition of the student body?

    O   O   O   O

5. Is the school staff's composition representative of the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity, gender expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status composition of the student body and larger school community?

    O   O   O   O

6. Are staff members of different races, ethnicities, languages, national origins, sexes, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientations, and/or with different disabilities distributed equitably across the various job classifications from administration to noncertified positions?

    O   O   O   O

7. Are all staff members responsive to the varied needs of demographic groups and communities in the school?

    O   O   O   O

8. Do staff members communicate on a regular basis with other staff members from culturally diverse backgrounds?

    O   O   O   O

9. Do staff members engage in healthy, productive, and respectful professional interactions with other staff members from culturally diverse backgrounds?

  O   O   O   O

10. Are members of the instructional staff able to utilize personalized instructional methods for in-person or distance learning to meet diverse student needs and learning preferences?

  O   O   O   O

11. When staff members are assessed, are competencies in educational equity an integral part of their performance?

  O   O   O   O

12. Do staff at different paid or volunteer job levels feel that a culture of respect exists within the school?

  O   O   O   O

D5-Staff: Open-ended commentary item

This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the Staff domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as area in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.

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Domain 6 (D6): Assessment/Placement (12 items)

	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)
1. Does the school/school system have a policy regarding culturally responsive assessments and grading during COVID-19?	O	O	O	O
2. Do teachers collaborate with families regarding the expectations of distance learning and student academic progress and achievement?	O	O	O	O
3. Are multiple instruments used for student assessment, including performance measures?	O	O	O	O
4. Are students given access to resources, facilities, and academic placement dependent on individual talent, skill, and interest?	O	O	O	O
5. Are English Learners properly identified, assessed, and placed?	O	O	O	O
6. Are assessment procedures and accommodations available for English Learners and students with disabilities?	O	O	O	O
7. Are all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by the following?				

7a. Race

О   О   О   О

7b. Ethnicity

О   О   О   О

7c. Socioeconomic status

О   О   О   О

7d. Gender

О   О   О   О

7e. Disability

О   О   О   О

7f. Language

О   О   О   О

D6-Assessment/Placement: Open-ended commentary item

 This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the Assessment/Placement domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as area in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.

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Domain 7 (D7): Professional Learning (16 items)

	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)
1. In order to ensure flexible, heterogeneous, and integrated grouping within classes, are teachers trained in a variety of instructional approaches to meet differing learning preferences and foster both competitive and cooperative skills?	O	O	O	O
2. Are staff members trained to identify equity needs and to utilize instructional methods to meet the learning preferences of diverse students and groups in a virtual classroom environment?	O	O	O	O
3. Are equity issues in professional learning activities relevant to current events and community needs?	O	O	O	O
4. Have all staff members received in-service training regarding strategies for countering bias?	O	O	O	O
5. Have all staff received training on culturally responsive practices to support English Learners?	O	O	O	O

6. Have all staff received training on how to adjust the way they talk to provide opportunities for English Learners to acquire academic language (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP) and social language (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS) (e.g., speaking clearly, having a slower rate of speech, using simple sentence structures, repeating/ paraphrasing as necessary)?

    O   O   O   O

7. Have all staff received trauma-informed training to support student success and well-being using restorative practices?

    O   O   O   O

8. Are opportunities provided for staff at all levels and in all job descriptions to obtain in-service training regarding educational equity issues and concerns relevant to specific populations?

    O   O   O   O

9. Are in-service opportunities offered to encourage dialogues between policymakers, administrators, teachers, support staff, and families, as well as business and community leaders, to develop comprehensive strategies for addressing equity issues?

    O   O   O   O

10. During professional learning events, are translators and interpreters available for participants from different language or disability groups?

    O   O   O   O

11. Is content training offered to provide staff with curricular information and knowledge that positively affirms and values cultural differences to enhance educational equity?   O   O   O   O

12. Do staff members receive training in culturally responsive communication and practices to increase their effectiveness in working with diverse populations?   O   O   O   O

13. Are critical educational issues addressed in ways that do not stereotype or stigmatize particular groups?   O   O   O   O

14. Are presenters and facilitators of in-service training programs representative of the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity, gender expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status groups of the student body and larger school community?   O   O   O   O

15. Are professional learning techniques delivered authentically and in a way that is relevant to diverse groups?   O   O   O   O

16. Are staff equipped with the skills, knowledge, and expertise to develop partnerships with families that are built on trust and respect and enhance students' learning and well-being?   O   O   O   O

D7-Professional Learning: Open-ended commentary item

This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the Professional Learning domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as area in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.

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Domain 8 (D8): Standards and Curriculum Development

	Latent (0)	Emergent (1)	Established (2)	Advanced (3)
1. Are all teachers involved in improving the curriculum through continuous and systematized feedback and revision, so that all students can learn and achieve at high levels?	O	O	O	O
2. Are all families and students encouraged to provide feedback on educational programs, both planning and instructional?	O	O	O	O
3. Are all students held to the same standards?	O	O	O	O

4. Do all virtual education materials provided by the school meet the criteria set by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0?

O   O   O   O

5. Is digital content accessible on a wide variety of devices that are available to students and their families?

O   O   O   O

6. Does the curriculum utilize accessible digital and print materials that represent diverse groups?

O   O   O   O

7. Do teachers leverage in-person and virtual classroom lessons to increase awareness and counter the past effects of bias and discrimination?

O   O   O   O

8. Do recommended textbooks and other instructional materials reflect, as much as possible, the experiences and perspectives of diversity among racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, national origin, language, sexual, gender identity and expression, religious, sexual orientation, or disability status groups?

O   O   O   O

9. Are the teachers' classroom activities and examples culturally responsive according to race, ethnicity, national origin, language, sex, gender identity and expression, religion, and disability?

O   O   O   O

10. Does the curriculum infuse culturally responsive information into instructional approaches?

O   O   O   O

11. Does the curriculum prepare students for a diverse society and workplace?

O   O   O   O

12. Are people with disabilities shown in the curriculum actively interacting with both people with and without disabilities?

O   O   O   O

13. Is language used that does not stereotype people or groups?

O   O   O   O

14. Are both person-first and identity-first language used dependent on the preferences of individual or groups of students with disabilities and their families?

O   O   O   O

15. Does the curriculum suggest ways to examine the perspectives and contributions of people of different races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, national origins, languages, sexes, gender identities and expressions, religions, sexual orientations, or disability statuses in every subject area, especially in mathematics, science, social studies, history, and English?

O   O   O   O

16. Are teachers encouraged to use and provide examples produced by people of different races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, national origins, languages, sexes, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, religions, or disability statuses as part of the curriculum?

O   O   O   O

D8-Standards and Curriculum Development: Open-ended commentary item

This item is for you to provide any additional commentary for the Standards and Curriculum Development domain. For example, you might list the various artifacts, data, evidence you utilized for the ratings you chose within this domain. You might make notes of a particular item or items you recognize as area in which your school has well-established processes and/or strategies in place. You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority within this domain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix D

ESA-S Completion Support

Time required to complete:
· 5-6 hours
o It can take as little as 3.5-4 hours, but we always provide cushion time for reviewing of data and discussion
o we recommend chunking into 2-3 meeting times
§ the team will work together to determine meeting availability and format (e.g., virtual, face-to-face)

Deadline for completion:
Tuesday, May 31st

Prior to completing the ESA-S:
1. Each team member should review the word document form of the ESA-S to familiarize yourselves with the self-assessment tool and the 8 domains it comprises
2. Gathering of/access to artifacts to support your decision-making
a. To assist your team's efforts in making valid value judgments about your school's implementation of each item on the ESA-S, we recommend that team work together to gather a variety of artifacts. This task might best be completed by the school-based admin/teachers/other staff on the team who may be able to readily access any of the following
i. *district handbook, school handbook, Illinois Report Card data, 5E data, progress monitoring data, enrollment and retention data, data for special populations (e.g., English learners, students with disabilities), curricular maps, literature/book lists, school behavior/discipline policies*
b. It is not a requirement that *all* of the above be gathered before you begin ESA-S completion but that you look to these kinds of artifacts as "evidence" of where your school may be on the continuum of implementation for any given item/domain.

Completing the ESA-S:
1. You will work as a team to work through each ESA-S item.
2. For each of the 8 domains, we have provided an open-ended item (at the end of each domain matrix) where you might make additional commentary about any items within that particular domain.
o For example:

§ You might list the various artifacts, data, and evidence you utilized for that domain's ratings.

§ You might make notes of a particular item within a domain that you recognize as an area in which your school has a well-established process in place.

§ You might also make note of an item or items you see as areas for focused priority.

3.   There may be questions the members on your team do not feel that you have enough information to answer. In these instances, we recommend the following decision-making process based on the nature of your question:

      a.   Do we not know the answer to a question because the school/district does not collect this kind of data?

            i.   If <u>yes</u> (school/district does NOT collect data, nothing written/established), we recommend a rating of 0 (no system in place)

            ii.   If <u>no</u> (we think the data/policy is there; we just don't have access to it), we recommend that the team pause on the item, seek out a person who can help answer the question, and then return to the item when you feel you have more clarity/needed information to respond.

      b.   Do we not know the answer to a question because we don't quite understand what it's asking?

            i.   If <u>yes</u>, we ask that your school-based team liaison reach out to Drs. Bertrand and Mustian for a list of questions you feel you need support in interpreting

               1.   Dr. Shamaine Bertrand (skbertrand25@gmail.com)

               2.   Dr. April Mustian (mustianedconsult@gmail.com)

4.   You will notice that there is no option for a "Not Applicable" on any of these items. If you feel that any item is truly not applicable to your school community, we ask that you note the # of the item(s) in the open-ended response option at the end of that reflective domain with an explanation as to why you believe it to be not applicable.

5.   ESA-S online access:

      a.   ESA-S survey link: https://tinyurl.com/sycamore427eas

      b.   Password: sycamore427

Additional important reminders as you complete the ESA-S together:

1.   There is no judgment assigned to where you fall in implementation of the items on this self-assessment. What you provide here serves only as a catalyst for continued growth and development around equity-based work in your school community.

2.   Your lived experiences will be important to the completion of this self-assessment, but you also want to be sure you are operating as a representative of a larger school

community. Be sure to think about your own experiences coupled with the experiences of others as you work together to complete this tool.

3. While everyone on your team will have access to the survey, we would like you to designate only one team member to input responses online. This team member should remain the same so that the same computer can be used to pick up where you all left off in a previous meeting. You will always use the same link and password to access your survey progress (until, of course, you complete it).

If you have any questions about completing this tool or would like additional support in doing so, please do not hesitate to email us! We are here to support you!

Appendix E

Teachers/Staff Focus Group Protocol

Teachers/Staff

Introduction: Good evening and Welcome to this group discussion. My name is Dr. Shamaine Bertrand, an Assistant Professor of Elementary and Early Childhood Education and an educational consultant and I am here working as a facilitator of this focus group for Sycamore Community School District 427. I am working alongside my partner Dr. April Mustian, an Associate Professor of Special education and an educational consultant. Dr. Mustian will be working alongside me as we facilitate this focus group. Our role is to help get a conversation going and to make sure we cover many important topics that they (the Sycamore IDEA committee) would like to get your input on.

Purpose: First, I would like to thank you all for taking time out of your day to come here and discuss your ideas. The overall goal is to hear your thoughts about equity and inclusion in Sycamore District Community Schools 427.

Based on our review of data and informal conversations, we know that Sycamore is becoming more diverse incorporating various languages, cultures, faith traditions, types of families, sexual identiies, races, ethnicities, learning styles, abilities, and countries of origin. While an amazing thing is happening in the Sycamore district with all the diversity beginning to come into the district, this change and growth may present challenges for teachers, staff, and administrators because it is different than what teachers, staff, and administrators are used to. We are interested in your views about policies, programs, and professional development that can make the school system stronger and improve outcomes for all students.

We are asking you because you are valued members of the school community. We are doing a small number of focus groups in the interest of getting input from a diverse mix of perspectives. I would like to take a moment to explain the way of operating today in this meeting:

- You are the experts and we are here to listen and learn from you
- This is strictly voluntary
- We will be taking some notes throughout the conversation, however we would like to record the Zoom session so that we do not miss anything important that you say and we can go back and revisit the information if we need to. This recording will not be shared and is for Dr. Mustian and I only.

Housekeeping:

The total length of time of the focus group meeting is expected to be about 1 hour.

As far as the focus groups are concerned, there are a few ground rules:

- I might move you along in conversation. Since we have limited time, I'll ask that questions or comments off the topic be answered after the focus group session concludes.
- I'd like hear everyone speak so I might ask people who have not spoken up to comment
- Please respect each other's opinions. There's no right or wrong answer to the questions I will ask. We want to hear what each of you think and it's okay to have different opinions.
- We'd like to stress that we want to keep the sessions confidential, so we ask that you not include the names of individuals or anything directly identifying when you talk about your personal experiences. We also ask that you not discuss other participants' responses outside of the

discussion. However, because this is in a group setting, the other individuals participating will know your responses to the questions and we cannot guarantee that they will not discuss your responses outside of the focus group.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS SO FAR?

Again, your participation here today is totally voluntary. So, if you are okay with moving forward, we would like to get your consent.

- What do you believe Sycamore does well around diversity, equity, and inclusion? Please provide specific examples.
- Are there any situations that come to mind around diversity, equity, and inclusion that were or are challenging or troublesome? PLEASE DO NOT NAME THE STUDENT, TEACHER, SCHOOL, but might we speak generically about what happened and what the challenge was?
  - What was needed?
  - What do you wish had happened?
  - How well prepared are you to handle some of the issues raised?
  - What did you need help with?
  - What type of help?
- What type of professional development, information, programs, policies, protocols, and/or resources might be helpful?
- What do you wish was prioritized around diversity, equity, and inclusion within the district?
- Is there anything else you would like us to know?

We have come to the end of our questions. Let us be the first to thank you for your honest opinions—you were tremendously helpful at this important stage of the equity audit process.

Again, thank you very much for your participation today.

Appendix F

Caregivers/Families Focus Group Protocol

Caregivers/Community

Introduction: Good evening and Welcome to this group discussion. My name is Dr. Shamaine Bertrand, an Assistant Professor of Elementary and Early Childhood Education and an educational consultant and I am here working as a facilitator of this focus group for Sycamore Community School District 427. I am working alongside my partner Dr. April Mustian, an Associate Professor of Special education and an educational consultant. Our role is to help get a conversation going and to make sure we cover many important topics that they (the Sycamore IDEA committee) would like to get your input on.

Purpose: First, I would like to thank you all for taking time out of your day to come here and discuss your ideas. The overall goal is to hear your thoughts about equity and inclusion in Sycamore District Community Schools 427.
Based on our review of data and informal conversations, we know that Sycamore is becoming more diverse incorporating various languages, cultures, faith traditions, types of families, sexual identiies, races, ethnicities, learning styles, abilities, and countries of origin. While an amazing thing is happening in the Sycamore district with all the diversity beginning to come into the district, this change and growth may present challenges for teachers, staff, and administrators because it is different from what some teachers, staff, and administrators are used to. We are interested in your views about policies, programs, and professional development that can make the school system stronger and improve outcomes for all students.
We are asking you because you are valued members of the school community. We are doing a small number of focus groups in the interest of getting input from a diverse mix of perspectives. I would like to take a moment to explain the way of operating today in this meeting:
  ● You are the experts and we are here to listen and learn from you
  ● This is strictly voluntary
  ● We will be taking some notes throughout the conversation, however we would like to record the Zoom session so that we do not miss anything important that you say and we can go back and revisit the information if we need to. This recording will not be shared and is for Dr. Mustian and I only.

Housekeeping:
The total length of time of the focus group meeting is expected to be about 1 hour.
As far as the focus groups are concerned, there are a few ground rules:
  ● I might move you along in conversation. Since we have limited time, I'll ask that questions or comments off the topic be answered after the focus group session concludes.
  ● I'd like hear everyone speak so I might ask people who have not spoken up to comment
  ● Please respect each other's opinions. There's no right or wrong answer to the questions I will ask. We want to hear what each of you think and it's okay to have different opinions.
  ● We'd like to stress that we want to keep the sessions confidential, so we ask that you not names or anything directly identifying when you talk about your personal experiences. We also ask that you not discuss other participants' responses outside of the discussion. However, because this is a

group setting, the other individuals participating will know your responses to the questions and we cannot guarantee that they will not discuss your responses outside of the focus group.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS SO FAR?
Again, your participation here today is totally voluntary. So, if you are okay with moving forward, we would like to get your consent.

- What do you think Sycamore is doing well in regard to equity, inclusion, and diversity? Why do you say that (provide specific examples/context if possible)?
- If you see any challenges, might you please provide an example? PLEASE DO NOT NAME THE STUDENT, TEACHER, SCHOOL
- What do you wish the schools would do?
- What do you wish was prioritized around diversity, equity, and inclusion within the district?
- Do you have any questions for schools? (We will chart these and bring them back to the Sycamore IDEA for response.)
- Is there anything on your mind you would like Sycamore to know about this topic?
- Are there any programs, practices, and/or policies that you think would be helpful?

We have come to the end of our questions. Let us be the first to thank you for your honest opinions—you were tremendously helpful at this important stage of the equity audit process.
Again, thank you very much for your participation today.

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