



# THE EQUITY-INFORMED SCHOOL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT (EISCA) of Manchester Public Schools (MPS)

A Collaboration between RE-Center, *Race & Equity in Education*  
and Manchester Public Schools



**RE-CENTER**  
RACE & EQUITY IN EDUCATION  
— FORMERLY THE DISCOVERY CENTER —

## THIS REPORT COMPRISES TWO DISTINCT PARTS:

A 16-PAGE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY that distills the purpose of the EISCA project, the findings, and the recommendations into a short, illustrated document. This document is available in print and electronic versions.

A FULL REPORT, which offers a deeper dive into the context for the project, the methodology, findings, full recommendations, and several appendices, including a glossary and end-note reference pages with web links for easy access.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# THE EQUITY-INFORMED SCHOOL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT (EISCA) of Manchester Public Schools (MPS)

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# PREFACE: A GROUNDING



Dear Reader,

Over the 2017-2018 school year, RE-Center, *Race & Equity in Education* (RE-Center) evaluators gathered input from students, staff, and families from Manchester Public Schools (MPS) as part of conducting the Equity-Informed School Climate<sup>1</sup> Assessment (EISCA) of the district. The experiences, responses, and perspectives of these stakeholders have been synthesized in the following pages. This preface highlights key points to remember while reading this assessment.

## Visionary Leadership

In deciding to conduct this assessment, MPS leadership has taken an important step in committing to institutionalizing equity in its schools. Throughout the assessment, district leaders engaged in a collaborative process with RE-Center evaluators to uncover institutional inequities impacting students, staff, and families from marginalized groups. The initiative MPS leaders have shown in collaborating on this assessment should be acknowledged and celebrated.

## An Opportunity for Insight

This assessment was devised to report on the experiences of people who belong to currently and historically marginalized groups, including students, staff, and families of color; students, staff, and families who are women, transgender, or gender non-conforming; students, staff, and families with currently and historically marginalized sexual orientations; students and families from low-income backgrounds; students, staff, and families with disabilities; students, staff, and families who are not native English-speakers; students, staff, and families who are not Christian; and students, staff, and families whose identities belong at the intersections<sup>2</sup> of these groups.

All supporting details to this Executive Summary can be found in the full [Equity Informed School Climate Assessment \(EISCA\) Report](#).



Some of the responses that evaluators recorded may be different from the personal experiences of readers, and, because of this difference, these narratives may be difficult to believe and accept. Readers should consider the information within this report as an opportunity to understand perspectives that may have previously been invisible to them. This new information can be used by the MPS community to create an engaging, safe, and accessible school climate that values all stakeholders.

## A First Step Toward Action

The process of identifying inequities is a necessary first step toward institutionalizing equity in the education system. MPS has the potential to change inequitable policies, practices, and patterns and to develop the knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to create a more equitable school environment for all stakeholders. This assessment is not a solution but a starting point, intended to provide information and recommendations to be used by the MPS community in developing a strategic action plan to achieve equity in its schools.

It is important to note that even though this report is focused on Manchester Public Schools, the challenges described herein are not unique to MPS. Other school districts in Connecticut and across the country have similar issues, with similar root causes of inequity.<sup>3</sup>

## Accessibility and Language

There has been an attempt to use straightforward and clear language in this report. Throughout the report, both quantitative data and descriptive language synthesizing qualitative data are used to convey the results of the assessment. Using both quantitative and qualitative information to evaluate the state of school climate in the district was an important part of conducting this equity-informed assessment, as quantitative information alone cannot capture the nuanced reality of an educational environment.<sup>4</sup> Other concepts will be defined throughout the report, and there is a Glossary of Terms in Appendix A with definitions that readers can reference as needed.



**RE-Center, *Race & Equity in Education* (formerly The Discovery Center)** works in collaboration with school districts that are seeking to institutionalize equity in all facets of their operations and within district culture.

## Acknowledgments

It is important to realize that many of the stories in this report are personal and were difficult for members of the MPS community to share. RE-Center would like to thank and honor the numerous students, staff, and families in the MPS community who shared their stories for this assessment and used their individual experiences as a way to highlight inequities and offer solutions to improve the school district.

RE-Center would like to thank the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund for support of this project. We would like to thank EdChange for consultation and project design support, in particular, Paul Gorski, Ph.D., Gisella Zuniga and Duhita Mahatmya.

RE-Center thanks the following Project Directors and Contributors who worked on this project.

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# INTRODUCTION

Imagine there is a car accident on I-84 involving 20 cars. First responders arrive at the scene ready to help the individuals who are hurt. It is vital that each person involved in the accident receives the care they need to survive and heal their injuries.

## EQUALITY

Imagine the first responders giving each person an ice pack and two bandages. This is equality—everyone involved in the accident receives the same thing.

## EQUITY

But is this distribution of resources fair?

Does everyone receive what they need?

Equity means allocating resources to meet the needs of an individual, group, or community.

## What is Equity in Education?

Equity in education exists when students from marginalized groups reap the same social and educational benefits as their peers. Achieving an equitable educational environment requires institutions to transform their policies, practices, and cultural patterns to re-distribute access and opportunity to those who belong to currently and historically marginalized groups.

### In education, equity:

- + Requires eliminating disparities in access and opportunity and directly confronting inequity;<sup>5</sup>
- + Refers to what is fair and not necessarily equal,<sup>6</sup> and encompasses a wide variety of educational models, programs, and strategies that may be considered fair;<sup>7</sup>
- + Prioritizes examining how policies and practices impact the experiences of people from marginalized groups;
- + Addresses “structural and systemic conditions, processes, and barriers that exacerbate societal inequities”<sup>8</sup> existing within school systems, thus interrupting the replication of systems of oppression; and
- + Should lead to equality as an outcome.<sup>9</sup>

This report summarizes where the assessment found inequities in the district and highlights areas where work is already being done to create a more equitable school environment. The concept of equity is already woven into the fabric of Manchester Public Schools (MPS) and has been adopted as part of the vision for what MPS can and should be. The mission of MPS asserts, “Through an active partnership with students, school personnel, families and community, the Manchester Public Schools will create safe, inclusive schools where equity is the norm and excellence is the goal.” Research shows that equity is essential to creating a school climate that effectively serves students, staff, and families. A positive school climate has been shown to improve academic outcomes, improve graduation rates, improve motivation to learn, reduce suspension and discipline issues, dramatically reduce “risky” behaviors, provide physical, social, and emotional benefits for students, and improve staff morale.<sup>10</sup>

An equitable school climate is an essential part of a healthy and safe learning environment in which students, staff, and families can thrive.<sup>11</sup> If school climate is going to be able to provide

all the positive benefits it can, it must serve all students. An analysis of equity within a school district helps us to understand which school community members are being served and which have needs that are not being met. Learning in an inequitable school environment can be a stressful experience that compromises a child’s ability to succeed. There is a significant amount of research on the impacts of childhood trauma on a child’s ability to learn.<sup>12</sup> The discourse on childhood trauma seldom considers the impact of the discrimination, harassment and microaggressions<sup>13</sup> that young people from marginalized groups experience regularly in educational environments. An essential piece of the work to uncover systemic inequities is to consider the devastating impacts that inequities in schools have on students and their ability to learn. The school community has control over changing these harmful patterns and incidents and must do the hard work of examining how schools themselves are at times causing harm to children. The Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment for Manchester Public Schools tackles this challenge head on, and the results have been detailed in the pages to follow.

# EISCA

The Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA) of Manchester Public Schools (MPS) is an evaluation of the culture and climate of the district through the lens of racial equity and its intersections.

Research shows that equity is essential to creating a school climate that effectively serves students, staff, and families and positively improves all student outcomes.

This assessment examines the educational, emotional, and social experiences of students, staff, and families from marginalized groups to uncover institutional and systemic inequities that prevent all students from reaping the same social and educational benefits. When those with the most marginalized identities are served well, the school district creates a healthier learning environment for everyone – because a school is only as equitable as those most marginalized experience it to be.

MPS



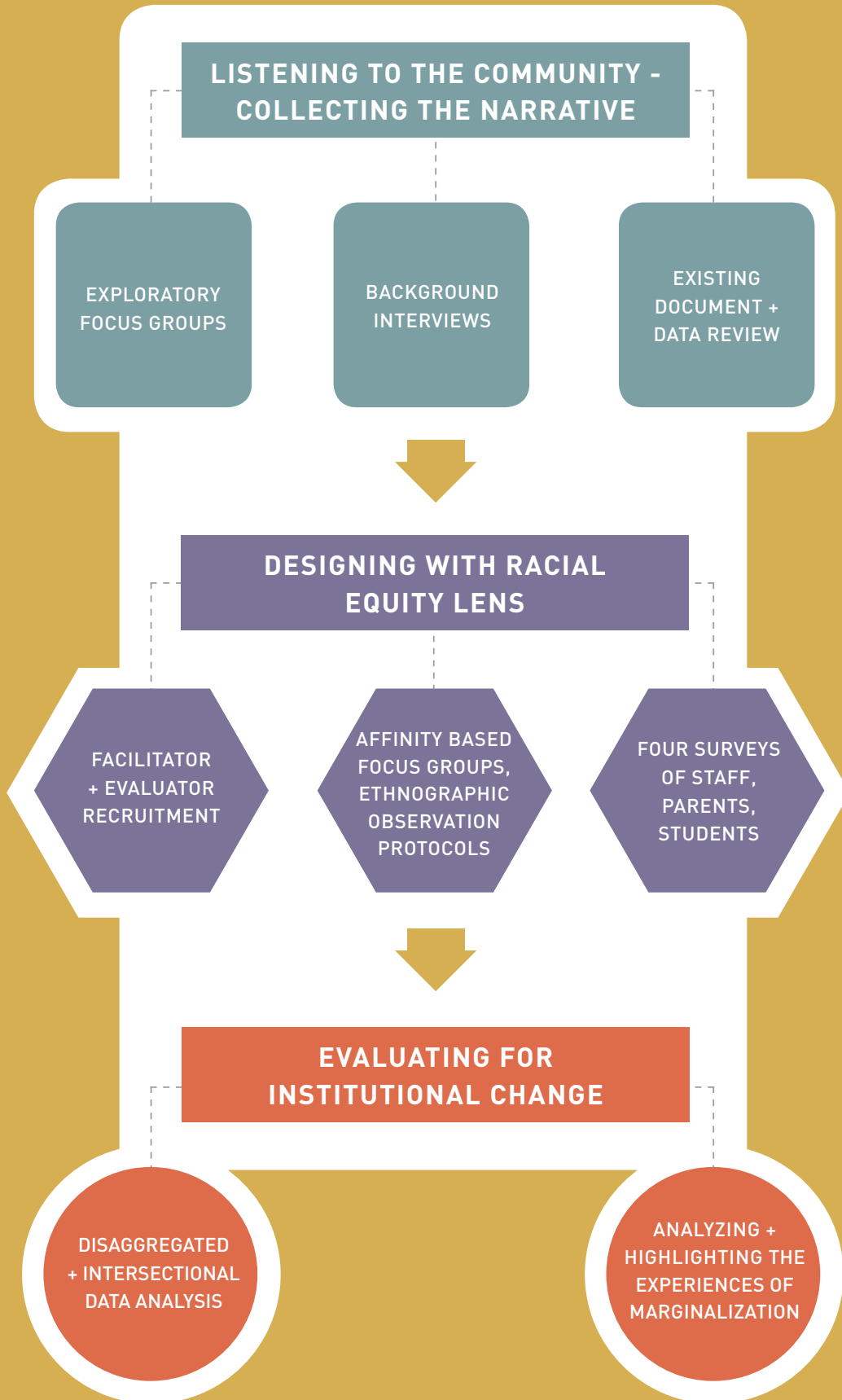


THE CENTRAL QUESTION GUIDING THIS ASSESSMENT WAS:

**To what extent is Manchester Public Schools an equitable environment for all members of the district community?**

This assessment was conducted as a collaboration between RE-Center, *Race & Equity in Education* (formerly The Discovery Center), and MPS with the purpose of identifying existing obstacles to an equitable climate and providing recommendations to guide administrators in creating an action plan that directly addresses the impacts of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, and other forms of inequity within MPS. The assessment highlights the promising work that the district has begun and details key areas for continued progress and improvement.

# PROCESS



## WE EVALUATED SCHOOL CLIMATE BY ASKING ABOUT:

- + Safety
- + Access to Opportunities
- + Value
- + School Engagement and Connectedness

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### Data to inform this assessment of school climate were collected during the 2017-2018 academic year.

Evaluators gathered quantitative data through four separate surveys:

- + a survey of students in grades 5 and 6;
- + a survey of students in grades 7-12;
- + a survey of MPS administrators, educators, certified staff members, and non-certified staff members;
- + and a survey of family members of children attending schools in the district.

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### Designed with a racial equity lens.

Evaluators collected qualitative data through affinity-based focus groups, background interviews, write-in survey questions, and ethnographic school site observations. Evaluators designed affinity-based focus groups to capture the experiences of students, staff, and families with currently and historically marginalized identities, specifically focused on race, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, disability, and their intersections.

### Evaluating for institutional change.

The information gathered through these methods of engagement painted an expansive and detailed picture of the school climate in MPS. Manchester Public Schools is taking important steps to address inequities within the district, and many opportunities exist for MPS to fully support all students, staff, and families, including those from marginalized groups. Naming and understanding the key themes emerging from this assessment can inform the district's action plan to create a more equitable school environment for students, staff, and families.

# WHAT IS GOING WELL IN MANCHESTER

Students, staff members, and family members from marginalized groups offered their perspectives of the current culture and climate in Manchester Public Schools.

**1** Students, staff & families are **EAGER to have CONVERSATIONS** about racial identity and other identities they hold

**2** MPS students embody **MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY**

**3** Staff report **POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

**4** Students reported receiving **ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT** from teachers and staff

**5** There are individuals at MPS with a deep **COMMITMENT to EQUITY**

**6** **FAMILIES FEEL RESPECTED** and have a positive outlook on their child's experience



OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND





**1. Students, staff members, and family members were eager to have conversations about race, gender identity, and any other identities they might hold.**

Evaluators found that MPS students were enthusiastic about discussing their experiences, both positive and negative, and excited to have an opportunity to be included in reshaping their schools. Staff members were eager to offer their insights into both the challenges and effectiveness of equity initiatives in MPS through their participation in focus groups, conversations, and background interviews. Many of the family members who participated in the family focus groups were parents and guardians deeply involved in their children's education and knowledgeable about equity issues at their children's schools.

**2. The MPS student body embodies multicultural diversity.** Many students, especially those new to the district, recognized their school's diversity as a positive and important aspect of their educational environment. Based on a number of key metrics in surveys, focus groups, and interviews, evaluators found that the vast majority of students, including students from marginalized groups, are building community at school through friendships with their peers.

**3. Staff members, including those from marginalized groups, reported overall positive experiences in their work environments in MPS.** When surveyed, more than 90 percent of staff, including more than 90 percent of staff members of color, agreed that they are proud to work in their school or office, agreed they feel a warm connection with at least two coworkers, and agreed that they are valued members of their school or office team.

**4. Students reported receiving encouragement and support from teachers, and staff members have begun learning how to implement social-emotional learning tools and restorative practices in schools.**

When surveyed, 85 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that teachers help them discover how they learn best and 89 percent agreed that teachers show them how to learn from their mistakes. Eighty-eight percent of family members agreed that their child's school helps them develop social and emotional skills. Restorative Practices have been introduced in MPS elementary, middle, and high schools to help school community members build and sustain positive relationships with each other and address student behavioral issues. Through quantitative and qualitative data analysis, evaluators found there is more work to be done in fully implementing these tools and practices and aligning them with equity principles; however, introducing them is an important step towards building an equitable school district and creating alternatives to exclusionary disciplinary actions.

**5. There are individuals within MPS with a deep understanding and commitment to equity.** During the EISCA process, evaluators spoke with numerous staff members who are deeply committed to creating equitable environments in MPS. Evaluators found that there are staff members in key roles who have the knowledge, awareness, and skills to be leaders in moving the district's equity work forward.

**6. Family members surveyed feel respected by district staff and have a positive outlook on their child's experience at and beyond MPS.** When surveyed, more than 90 percent of family members, including families of color and families for whom English is not their native language, agreed that they feel good about their child's future; agreed that they feel comfortable speaking with their child's teachers; and agreed that they are greeted with kindness when they call or visit the school. Family members also reported easy access to interpretation services in MPS, a key part of experiencing schools as welcoming environments for non-native English-speaking family members.

"In school, people say that Puerto Ricans are dumb and idiots."

- MPS Student

"Being bisexual in this school...I'm not able to tell anyone and I don't feel like myself when I am here."

- MPS Student

"8th grade boys are very inappropriate. They treat us like 'fresh bait.'"

- MPS Student

"Children need to be taught more things about their own culture. The education is very one-sided."

- MPS Parent of Color

"We need teachers of color...but I do not feel like I want to ask people of color to come work in a place to struggle with us."

- MPS Staff Member of Color

"Indirectly, they expect me to explain certain aspects of minority culture. They ask me to speak to the 'aggressive' POC [people of color] parents. I don't want to be seen as the angry Black woman."

- MPS Staff Member of Color

"My six-year-old should never be called the 'n-word'."

- Parent of a Black MPS Student

"One is a Black child who is suspended two times and teachers are saying, 'I wish his mother would do something.' The other is a white child who was suspended one time. Teachers are saying, 'His meds aren't working'."

- MPS Staff Member

# **FINDINGS** Through survey questions, background interviews, focus groups, and conversations held during the ethnographic site observations, evaluators identified these major themes as opportunities for improvement in Manchester Public Schools (MPS):

## **1 Discrimination is still impacting students, staff, and families from marginalized groups in MPS.**

Students, staff members, and family members in MPS reported witnessing racist behavior and experiencing microaggressions. Students, staff members, and family members from marginalized groups, in particular those belonging to more than one marginalized group, reported they do not feel safe at school including students and staff members of color and students experiencing food insecurity. Female students, including female students belonging to more than one marginalized group, reported being harassed in school. LGBTQ+, transgender, and gender non-conforming students, in particular LGBTQ+, transgender, and gender non-conforming students of color, reported being discriminated against in school. Across all races, students, staff, and family members with one or more disabilities reported feeling unsafe in school, and, across all races, non-Christian students and staff reported feeling stereotyped and discriminated against in school.

## **2 There is a lack of institutional structures for support of staff in creating an equitable school climate in MPS.**

MPS lacks a comprehensive vision for equity work that can help the district systematically address obstacles to an equitable climate, more effectively communicate opportunities for engagement, and share successes in the district's equity work. The current organization of equity work in MPS and the lack of requirements for professional learning also fail to distribute the responsibility of institutionalizing equity onto all leadership. MPS is lagging in its stated recruitment goals for staff of color and in its retention of staff members of color; and the lack of staff members of color, particularly educators of color, was a common concern among students, staff, and families. There are particular gaps in institutional support structures needed by staff members of color and staff members with disabilities. MPS lacks a true multicultural curriculum and the tools staff members need to create an equitable classroom environment.

## **3 There are significant gaps in MPS staff members' skills needed to foster equitable learning environments.**

Based on survey data and conversations with MPS staff members, evaluators found that many MPS staff members lack the knowledge, awareness, and

skills to address the ways race, class, sexuality, gender identity, ability, religion, and language are impacting climate in MPS schools and workplaces. Staff members fail to consistently respond to discrimination, harassment, and inequities in MPS, and evaluators found a school culture in which administrators and adults are not encouraged to talk about race, class, sexuality, gender identity, and other critical equity issues. This lack of knowledge and skills among MPS staff is impacting relationships between staff and students from marginalized groups and their families.

## **4 Students, staff, and families from marginalized groups reported barriers to accessing academic, extracurricular, and professional learning opportunities, major factors that contribute to the creation and maintenance of the equity gap.**

The unequal access to opportunities includes: students from marginalized groups disproportionately experiencing exclusionary disciplinary actions; students and families from marginalized groups facing cost and transportation barriers preventing them from taking full advantage of academic and extracurricular opportunities in MPS; family members from marginalized groups—especially family members with disabilities—lacking information needed to support their students' learning opportunities; a lack of clear entrance and exit criteria for alternative education placements in the district; and significant disparities between mainstream school environments and alternative education programs in climate and academic rigor. Low expectations from educators also prevent students from marginalized groups from fully accessing academic opportunities available in MPS.

## **5 Students and staff from marginalized groups reported a lack of connectedness to their school environment.**

This trend emerged prominently among LGBTQ+ students, transgender students, and gender non-conforming students, in particular students of color belonging to one of these marginalized identities; students and staff with disabilities; and non-Christian students. It is important to note that when assessing the experiences of male students of color, evaluators collected conflicting data on feelings of safety and belonging in school.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**This assessment was not intended to uncover and correct every instance of discrimination and marginalization that occurs in Manchester Public Schools. Rather, the key themes detailed in this report have been used to make systems-level recommendations at the district level to aid MPS leaders in reexamining and revising the policies and practices that govern all MPS schools. Based on the key findings of this report, we recommend that Manchester Public Schools prioritize the following actions in its plan to build an equitable school environment for the most marginalized—and thereby, all students:**

- 1 Address policies and practices that have been shown to be inequitable
- 2 Develop a multi-year District Equity Plan (DEP)
- 3 Implement a multi-year strategy for comprehensive equity-focused professional learning for all staff
- 4 Fill institutional gaps in equity-based skills
- 5 Create and implement a meaningfully multicultural curriculum
- 6 Invest in creating institutional policies and culture that will attract and retain teachers of color
- 7 Collect and analyze additional equity-based data and increase accessibility of data
- 8 Center student voices and leadership

Many school districts are facing challenges when working to institutionalize equity. Manchester Public Schools is doing the forward-thinking work of identifying opportunities to solve pervasive school climate problems impacting students, staff, and families from historically and currently marginalized groups—a process that will benefit other school districts around Connecticut and across the country.

Evaluators anticipate this report will provide guidance for administrators in directly addressing the impacts of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of inequity within MPS. Identifying existing obstacles to an equitable climate—as MPS has done in this assessment—will help the district implement real solutions to address issues of racism and other forms of inequity and build a healthy and equitable environment in Manchester Public Schools.





# The Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment of Manchester Public Schools is a Collaboration between RE-Center, *Race & Equity in Education* (formerly The Discovery Center) and Manchester Public Schools

## Project Design & Analysis in Consultation with EdChange

### RESOURCES

- <sup>1</sup> School Climate: School climate is based on the patterns of people's experiences of school life; it reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures that comprise school life. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for references.
- <sup>2</sup> Intersectionality: When identities along race, class, gender, socio-economics, and ability [and other identity markers] intersect within an individual, the confluence of their identities informs how they view, discuss, and navigate through the world. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for references.
- <sup>3</sup> Education Equality in America: Comparing the Achievement Gap Across Schools, Cities, and States. Education Cities and the Education Equality Index, 2016, [www.educationequalityindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Education-Equality-in-America-v1-4.pdf](http://www.educationequalityindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Education-Equality-in-America-v1-4.pdf).
- <sup>4</sup> "When quantitative methods are used alone, or used to acquire more depth about the topic, they are not sufficient. To get the complete picture, it is important to understand and be able to conduct qualitative research – research that traditionally does not include numbers, and statistical figures, or 'count' data... As we work to change not only life-styles but also systems, built environments, and policies, the 'deeper data' that we can tap into using qualitative methods become increasingly valuable": Watkins, Daphne C. "Qualitative Research: The Importance of Conducting Research That Doesn't 'Count'." *Health Promotion Practice*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 153-158, 1 Mar. 2012, doi. org/10.1177/1524839912437370.
- <sup>5</sup> Gorski, Paul. "Five Paradigm Shifts for Equitable Educators." EdChange and the Equity Literacy Institute, 26 Nov. 2017, [www.edchange.org/handouts/paradigmshifts.pdf](http://www.edchange.org/handouts/paradigmshifts.pdf); Gorski, Paul. "Basic Principles for Equity Literacy." EdChange and the Equity Literacy Institute, 9 Dec. 2017, [www.edchange.org/handouts/Equity-Literacy-Principles.pdf](http://www.edchange.org/handouts/Equity-Literacy-Principles.pdf).
- <sup>6</sup> "Equity." The Great Schools Partnership: The Glossary of Education Reform, 21 Apr. 2016, [www.edglossary.org/equity](http://www.edglossary.org/equity).
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Galloway, Mollie K., and Ann M. Ishimaru. "Equitable leadership on the ground: converging on high-leverage practices." *Education Policy Analysis Archives/Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas*, vol. 25, no. 2, 9 Jan. 2017, doi: dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.25.2205.
- <sup>9</sup> See endnote 6 in full report.
- <sup>10</sup> "Why Is School Climate Important?." National School Climate Center, [www.schoolclimate.org/about/our-approach/why-is-school-climate-important](http://www.schoolclimate.org/about/our-approach/why-is-school-climate-important). Accessed 9 June 2018.
- <sup>11</sup> Ross, Randy. "School Climate and Equity." National School Climate Center, February 2013, [www.schoolclimate.org/themes/schoolclimate/assets/pdf/practice/sc-brief-equity.pdf](http://www.schoolclimate.org/themes/schoolclimate/assets/pdf/practice/sc-brief-equity.pdf).
- <sup>12</sup> McNerney, Maura and Amy McKlindon. "Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms & Transformational Schools." Education Law Center, December 2014, [www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trauma-Informed-in-Schools-Classrooms-FINAL-December2014-2.pdf](http://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trauma-Informed-in-Schools-Classrooms-FINAL-December2014-2.pdf).
- <sup>13</sup> Microaggressions: subconscious and often well-meaning actions or remarks that convey an unconscious bias and hurt the person at the receiving end. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for references.

For the full report and complete list of references, visit [www.re-center.org](http://www.re-center.org) or contact us at (860) 284.9489 to request a copy of the full report.



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(formerly The Discovery Center) and Manchester Public  
Schools**

**Project Design & Analysis in Consultation with EdChange**

**2018**



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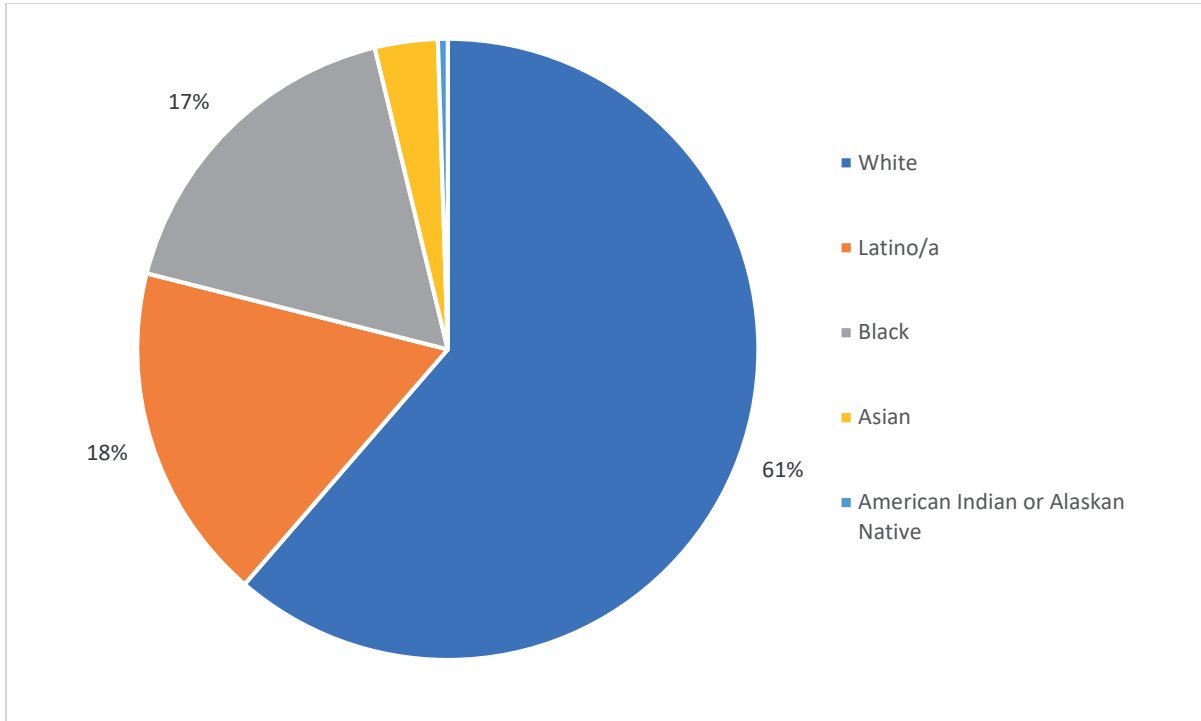
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## Demographics of Manchester and Manchester Public Schools

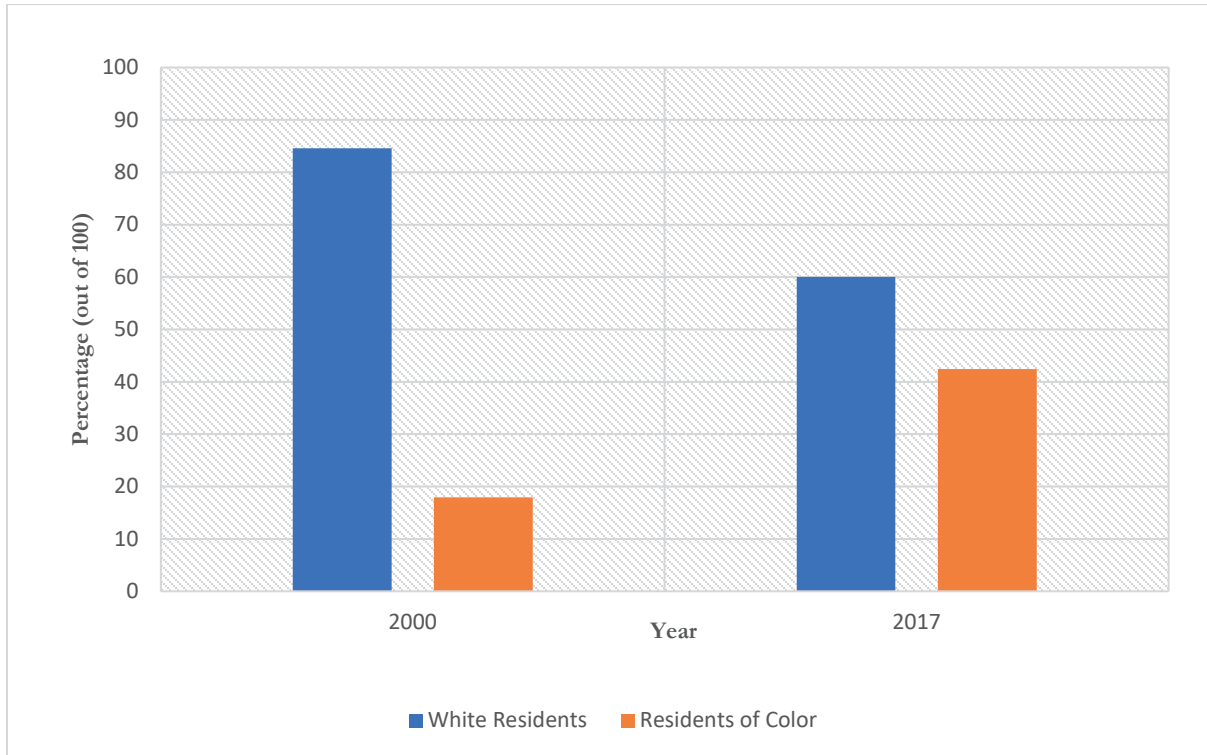
According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau estimates from 2017, 57,932 people reside in the town of Manchester.<sup>1</sup> The following charts show the demographic composition of Manchester:

Figure 1: 2017 Racial Demographics in Manchester<sup>2</sup>



Manchester has experienced a decrease in white residents and an increase in residents of color over the last three decades. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of white residents in Manchester decreased by 3,680 as the number of Hispanic, Black, and Asian residents increased.<sup>3</sup> Between 2000 and 2017, there was an 18 percent decrease in the town’s white population and another influx of Black, and Latino/a residents.<sup>4</sup> The percentage of Manchester residents who are people of color more than doubled between 2000 and 2017.<sup>5</sup> As of 2017, almost a quarter (22 percent) of the population was under the age of 18 and ranged from a wide variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 2: Racial Demographic Shifts in Manchester, 2000 and 2017<sup>7</sup>



The district’s schools encompass Manchester Preschool Center, 9 elementary schools, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade school, a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade middle school, a high school, two alternative education schools for elementary and high school students, and an adult and continuing education program.<sup>8</sup> Although shifting town demographics have changed the population of students who attend public school in Manchester, they have not proportionally affected the demographics of current district educators, as shown in the figures below.

Figure 3: Student Demographics in Manchester Public Schools, School Year 2016-2017<sup>9</sup>

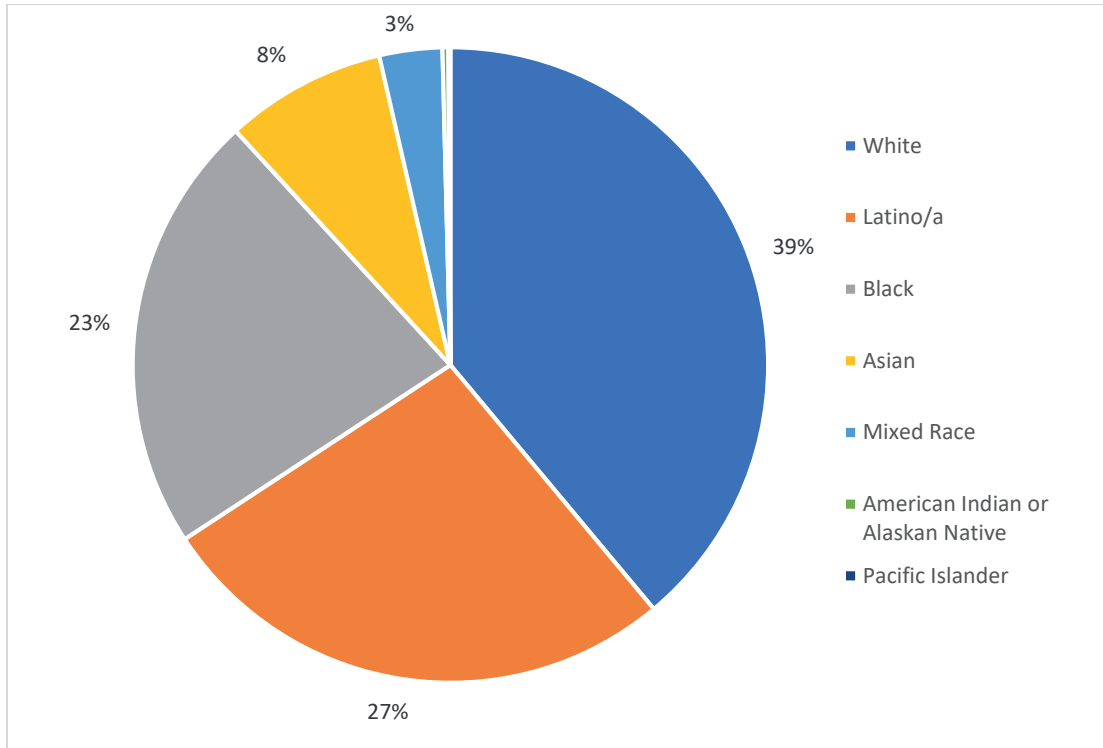
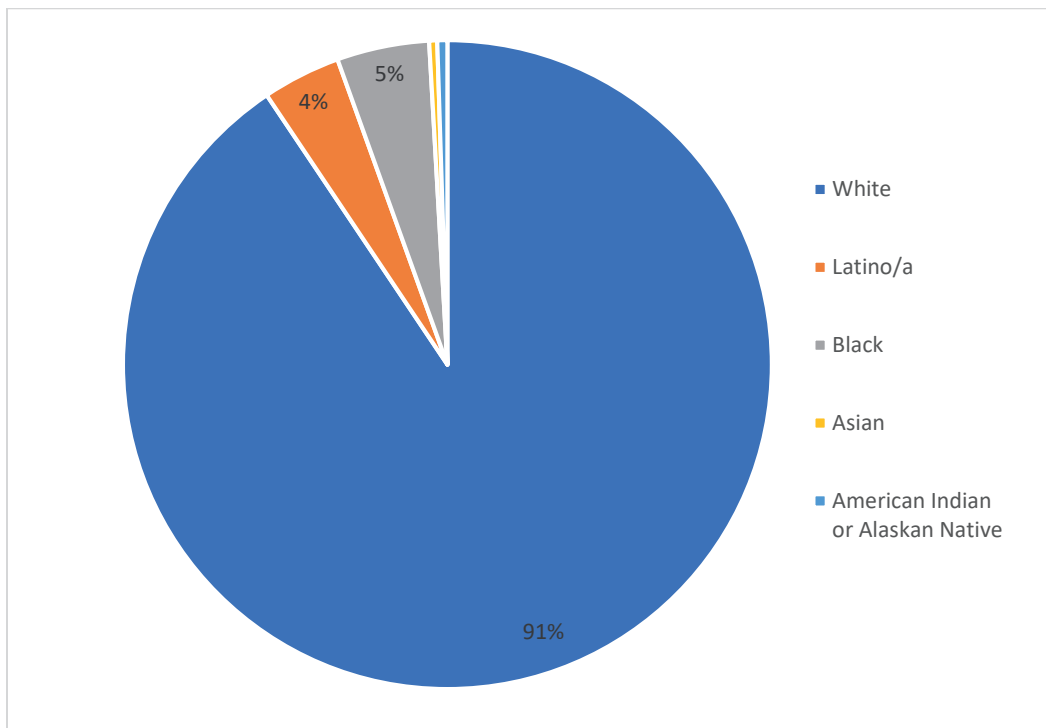
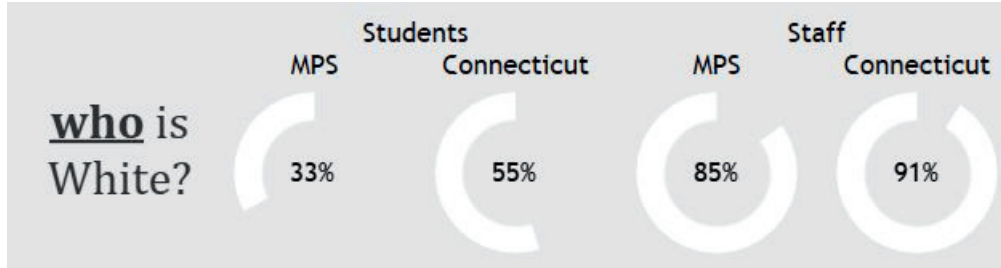


Figure 4: Educator Demographics in Manchester Public Schools, School Year 2016-2017<sup>10</sup>







According to the 2016-2017 Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), District Profile and Performance Report, Manchester Public Schools (MPS) employs approximately 1,294 staff and serves 6,291 students.<sup>11</sup> White students are independently the largest racial group (38.9 percent), followed by students identifying as Latino/a (26.8 percent), Black (22.4 percent), Asian (8.2 percent), Mixed Race (3.2 percent), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.3 percent), and Pacific Islander (0.1 percent). When taken together, students of color outnumber white students in the district. Regarding gender, 48.5 percent of the student population is female, 51.5 percent is male, and, currently, there is no data at the state level for students who are transgender or gender non-conforming. During the same 2016-2017 school year: 6 percent of students (375 students) were considered English learners, which is close to the state average of 6.8 percent of students being English learners; 51.7 percent of students (3,250 students) in MPS were eligible for free or reduced-price meals, significantly more than the state average of 35.9 percent of students; and 14.2 percent of students (895 students) in MPS had one or more disabilities that qualified them for an Individualized Education Program, almost equivalent to the state average of 14.3 percent of students.<sup>12</sup>

In the 2016-17 academic year, 90.6 percent of MPS certified staff identified as white, with 4.6 percent identifying as Black or African American, 3.9 percent as Hispanic or Latino, 0.4 percent as Asian, and 0.5 percent of staff as American Indian or Alaska Native. These numbers have not changed dramatically since the CSDE began reporting educator race and ethnicity data. For example, during the 2002-2003 academic year, 93.8 percent of educators identified as white, 3.2 percent as Black or African American, 2.7 percent as Hispanic or Latino, and 0.3 percent as Asian. There were no reported American Indian or Alaska Native administrators or educators.<sup>13</sup>

A “gap” remains in educational outcomes as measured by the district performance index<sup>14</sup> for students from marginalized groups and students from mainstream groups in MPS (see Figures 5 and 6). As discussed in “Achievement Gap to Opportunity Gap to Equity Gap: Correcting Systems” on page 27, evaluators acknowledge that there are significant problems with the concentrated focus on test scores when evaluating a school district’s success in meeting the needs of students from marginalized groups. However, district leaders can use standard measures of educational performance in conjunction with more holistic evaluations (like this assessment) of the district’s success in closing the Equity Gap and creating an educational setting that serves all students.

Figure 5: District Performance Index (DPI) by Race

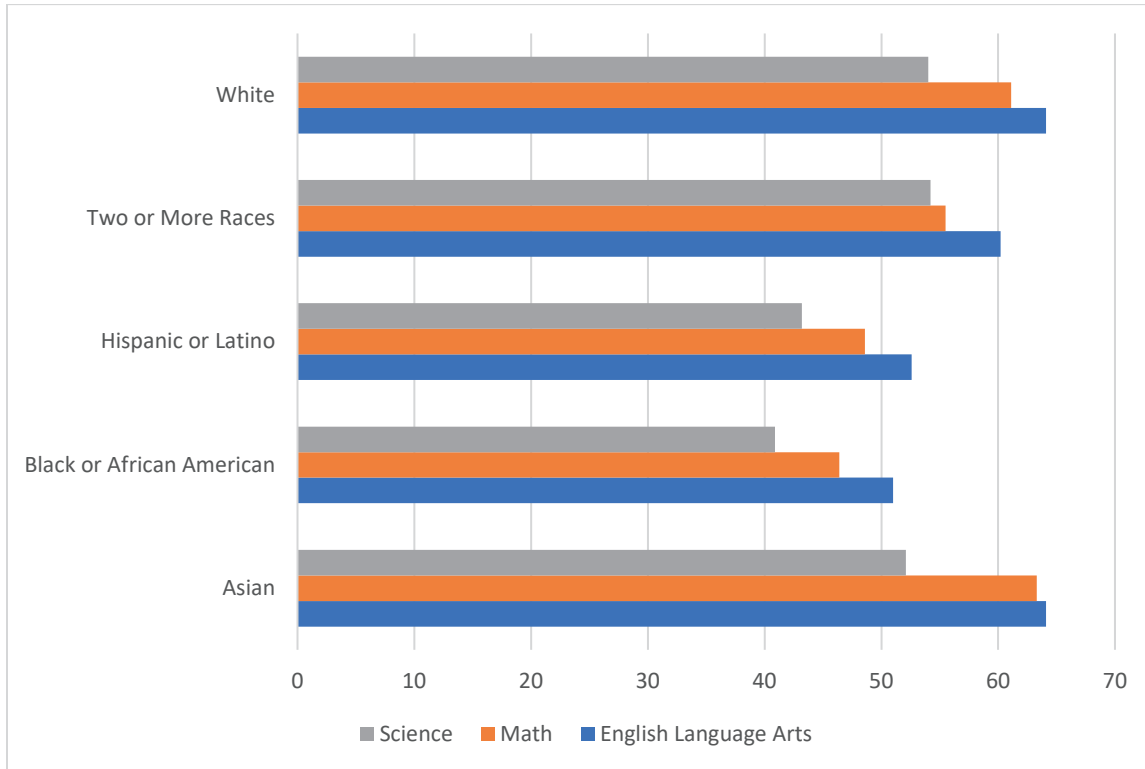
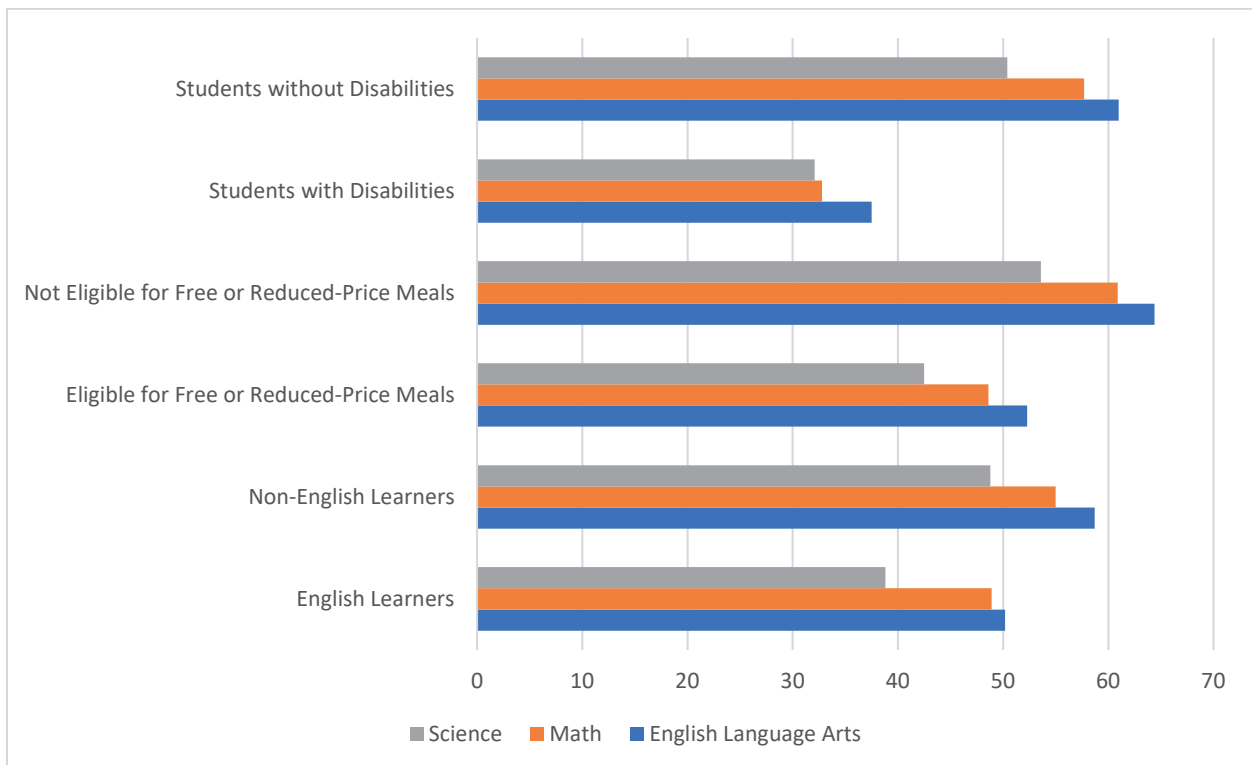


Figure 6: District Performance Index by Language, Food Insecurity, and Disability



Current data on disciplinary actions in MPS is displayed in Figures 7, 8, and 9. The impact of disciplinary actions on students is discussed in the results section of this report.

Figure 7: Discipline Data Trends from Manchester Public Schools, 2012 – 2017 Academic Years<sup>15</sup>

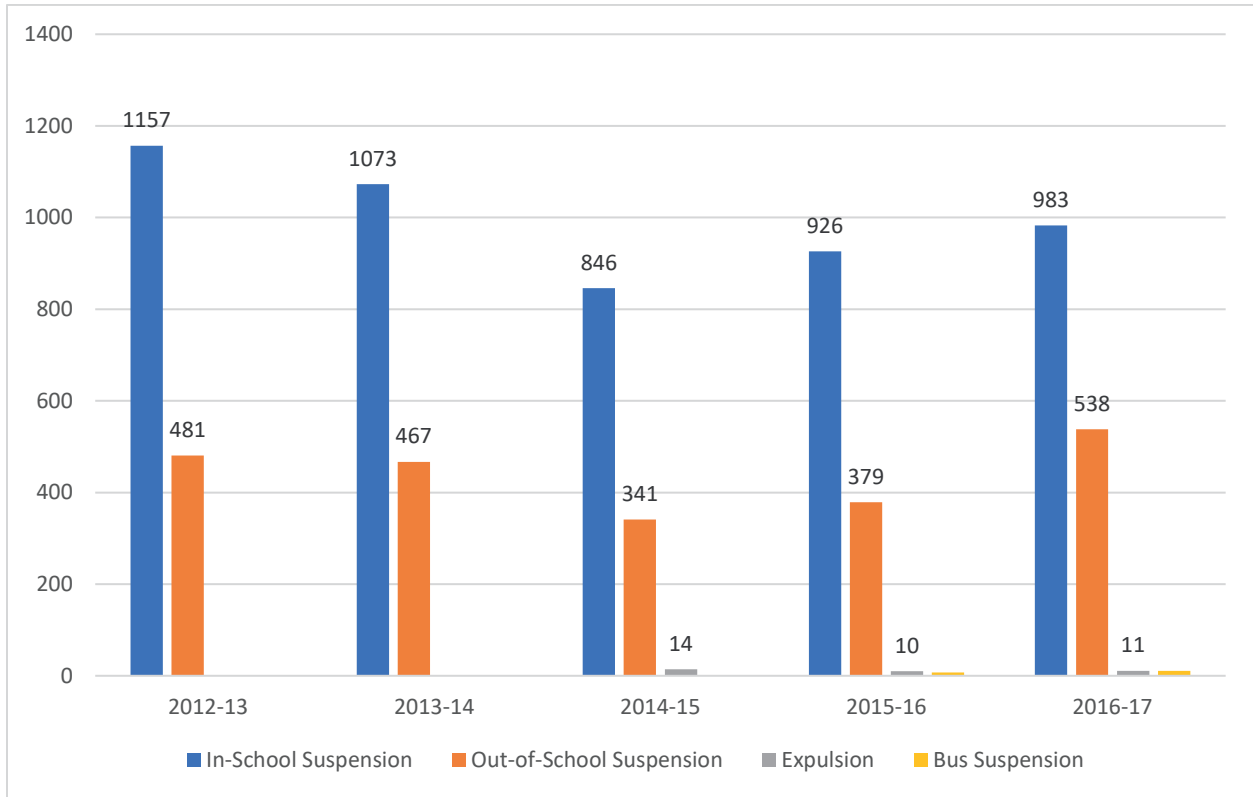


Figure 8: Disciplinary Data by Race from Manchester Public Schools, School Year 2016-2017<sup>16</sup>

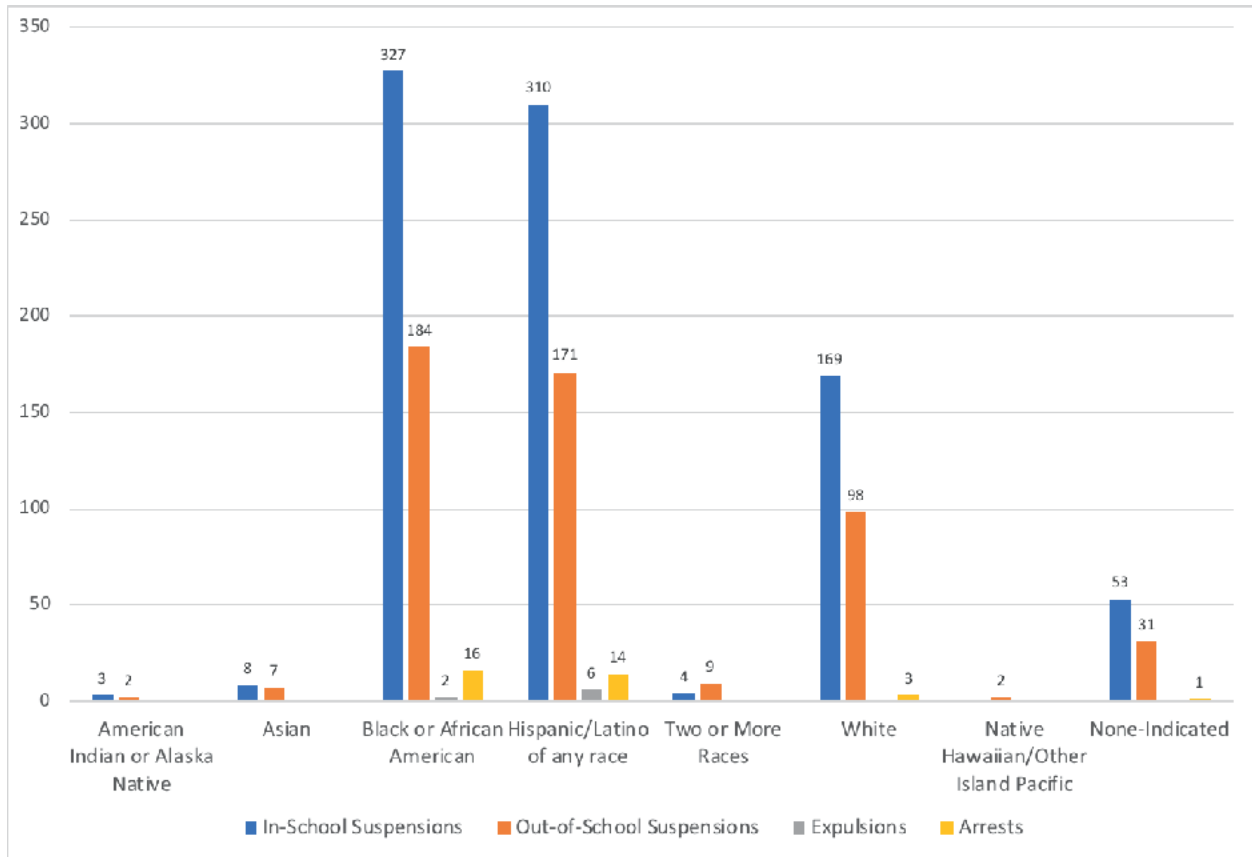
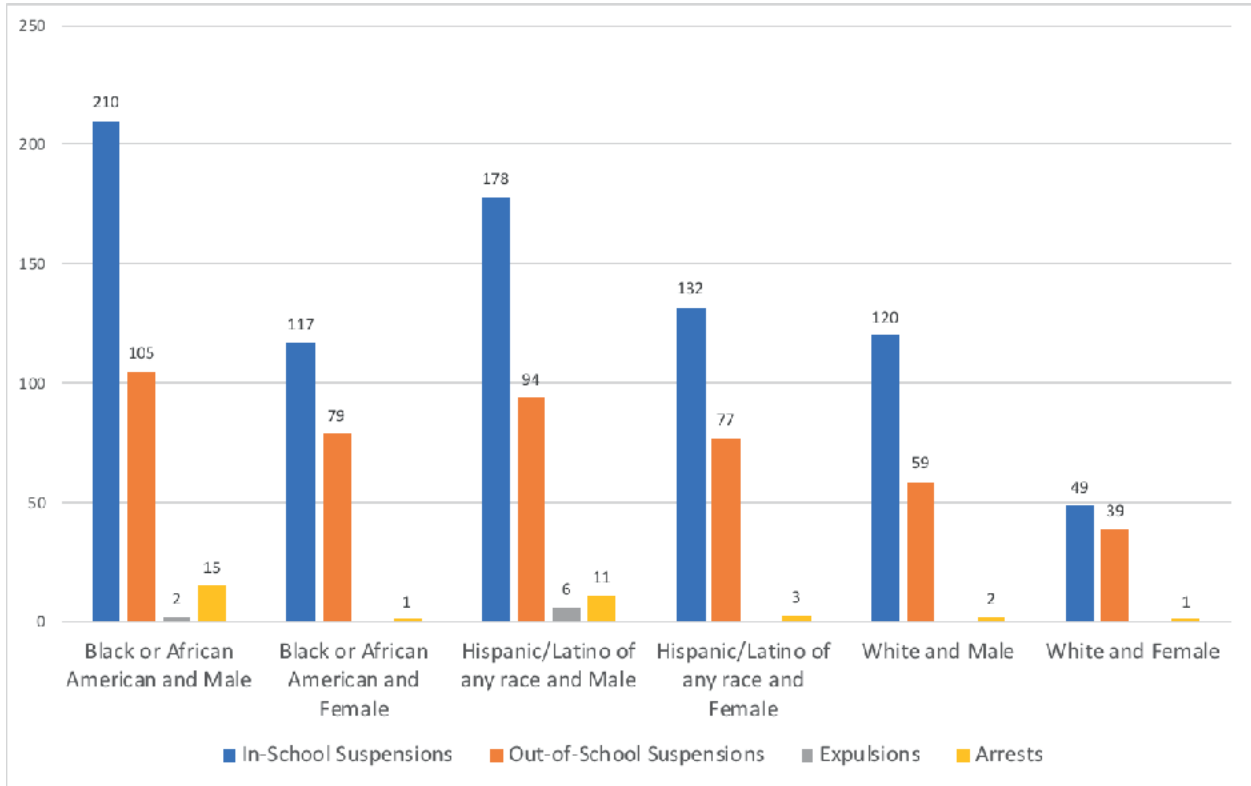


Figure 9: Disciplinary Data by Race and Gender from Manchester Public Schools, School Year 2016-2017<sup>17</sup>

This chart displays race and gender counts of disciplinary actions for the three racial groups that received the most disciplinary actions in 2016-2017. Only data for male and female genders were provided.



**Manchester Public Schools Mission Statement**

Manchester Public Schools will engage all students in the highest quality 21st century education preschool through graduation. Through an active partnership with students, school personnel, families and community, the Manchester Public Schools will create safe, inclusive schools where equity is the norm and excellence is the goal. All students will be prepared to be lifelong learners and contributing members of society.

From "The Manchester Public Schools Mission." Manchester Public Schools Office of Equity & Partnerships, [mpsfcp.com](http://mpsfcp.com). Accessed 8 July 2018.



## Evaluators' Approach to Equity

RE-Center, *Race & Equity in Education* (formerly known as The Discovery Center) works in collaboration with school districts that are seeking to institutionalize equity in all facets of their operations and within district culture. The Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA) of Manchester Public Schools (MPS) is a collaboration between MPS and RE-Center in consultation with EdChange.

**Achievement Gap to Opportunity Gap to Equity Gap: Correcting Systems** Conducting an assessment through the lens of equity requires evaluators to shift from a framework that defines educational challenges in terms of an “achievement gap” to one that concentrates on addressing an “opportunity gap” and “equity gap.”

The “achievement gap” is commonly measured by assessing test scores and noting that students from marginalized groups typically score lower than their peers. It is a prevalent symptom in school systems that consistently provide inequitable educational opportunities to students from marginalized groups. The framework of “achievement gap,” regardless of its intention, places implicit blame for lower test scores on students from marginalized groups.

Evaluators use “opportunity gap” and “equity gap” as alternative frameworks. The opportunity gap framework focuses attention on the ways in which students from marginalized groups have been systematically excluded from educational opportunities. The opportunity gap acknowledges the disparate economic resourcing of schools and the tendency for schools serving students of color and low-income students to have less qualified teachers, low expectations of students of color and low-income students, and a less rigorous curriculum.<sup>1</sup> The opportunity gap also highlights the many societal inequities contributing to more challenging educational circumstances for students from marginalized groups, such as disparities in healthcare, nutrition, and parental ability to be involved in their child’s education due to onerous work and financial demands.

The “equity gap” framework builds off the opportunity gap framework by focusing on inequities *within* educational institutions, delving deeper into the ways in which students from marginalized groups are systematically excluded from educational opportunities. The equity gap points to policies, practices, and patterns within educational institutions through which students from marginalized groups are treated as less than, are subjected to regular microaggressions, are forced to confront institutionalized oppression (racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of inequity),<sup>2</sup> and disproportionately experience exclusionary discipline practices. Some of these terms may be new to readers – they will be defined throughout the report and compiled in a Glossary of Terms in Appendix A for reference.

References:

<sup>1</sup> Milner, H. Richard. “Let’s Focus on Gaps in Opportunity, Not Achievement.” *Education Week*, vol. 30, issue 30, May 2011, [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/05/06/30milner.h30.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/05/06/30milner.h30.html).<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for definitions and references on racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia.

## Foundational Values: The Equity Literacy Framework

The foundation of the assessment and corresponding recommendations were informed by the Equity Literacy Framework.<sup>18</sup> The framework is outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1: Equity Literacy Framework from EdChange**

Equity Literacy Framework	
Abilities	Examples of Associated Knowledge and Skills
<b>1. Ability to Recognize even the subtlest biases and inequities</b>	<p>Equity Literate Educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>notice even subtle bias in materials and classroom interactions;</li> <li>show curiosity about ways school policy and practice might disadvantage some students in unintentional (or intentional) ways; and</li> <li>reject deficit views that outcome inequalities (like test score disparities) are the result of the cultures or mindsets of students of color, students experiencing poverty, or other marginalized-identity students.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Ability to Respond to biases and inequities in the immediate term</b>	<p>Equity Literate Educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop the facilitation skills and content knowledge necessary to intervene effectively when biases or inequities arise in a classroom or school;</li> <li>cultivate in students the ability to analyze bias and inequity in classroom materials, classroom interactions, and school policies; and</li> <li>foster conversations with colleagues about equity concerns at their schools.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Ability to Redress biases and inequities in the long term</b>	<p>Equity Literate Educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advocate against inequitable school practices like racially or economically biased tracking, and advocate for equitable school practices;</li> <li>never confuse <i>celebrating diversity</i> with <i>equity</i>, such as by responding to racial conflict with cultural celebrations; and</li> <li>teach about sexism, poverty, racism, ableism,<sup>19</sup> transphobia, and heterosexism.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Ability to Create &amp; Sustain bias-free and equitable classrooms, schools, and institutional cultures</b>	<p>Equity Literate Educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>express high expectations through higher-order pedagogies;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider how they assign homework and communicate with families, understanding that students have different levels of access to resources like computers and the Internet; and</li> <li>• prioritize consideration of the needs, challenges, and barriers experienced by students who are from marginalized groups in each discussion and each decision about classroom, school, or district policy and practice.</li> </ul>
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The Equity Literacy Framework grew out of the field of multicultural education, a field with more than fifty years of foundational scholarship. According to the multicultural education framework, efforts falling under the equity umbrella should have a single goal: the establishment and maintenance of an equitable environment for all members of a learning community that sees, values and honors race, gender identity, first language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, (dis)ability, religion, or any other social or cultural identifier. While most schools attempt to accomplish multicultural education through small, additive changes (such as individual courses or one-day programs), an inclusive education can be accomplished authentically only through larger shifts that guide individual practice.

## Critical Shifts Needed to Work Toward Equity

RE-Center frames the systems-level work of institutionalizing equity using the following critical shifts.<sup>20</sup> Each critical shift listed below has the traditional, status quo frame on the left side of the arrow, and the more equitable frame on the right side of the arrow. The goal is to move toward incorporating equity in all strategies and approaches.

### 1. Intent → Impact

One of the challenges of creating an equitable learning environment is that many, or even most, inequities present are unintended or unconscious. These inequities are part of an implicit culture of subtle messages that students receive about their identities that are delivered through the school culture and larger educational environment. For example, if most of the staff members of color in a school are in support roles, there is an implicit message to students that people of color in school environments belong in support roles. Addressing unintended inequities and manifestations of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, and other forms of inequity can be extremely difficult.

An approach that places blame for unintended inequities is often destructive. At the same time, in a truly equitable environment, all members of the community must take responsibility for reflecting on their own practice to minimize the extent to which they contribute to existing inequities. Unintentional inequities impact students in exactly the same negative ways that intentional inequities impact them. Attempts to defend good intentions or uphold specific policies that contribute to inequities create a missed opportunity to address the ways marginalization and oppression are replicated. Whether it is a verbal microaggression, disparate discipline, or academic tracking – if people from marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted, it is an inequity.

## 2. Deficit → Systems

Instead of addressing the root causes of inequities, initiatives to fix the achievement gap or the opportunity gap often rely on a deficit model. A deficit model focuses on the lack of educational attainment by students from currently and historically marginalized groups while ignoring the larger structural and systemic reasons for this phenomenon. It finds fault in students of color, low-income students, and students and families from other marginalized groups (i.e. There is something wrong with the culture, values, or motivation of under-performing students and/or their families.).

A systems approach examines the ways in which policies, practices, and cultural patterns – as well as larger societal factors such as inequities in access to living wages, health care, and safe and affordable housing – influence disparate educational outcomes.

Example:

*Deficit:* The problem is that these parents don't speak English.

*System:* The problem is that our school is not prepared to accommodate our linguistically diverse community.

Policies that address the equity gap appropriately capture the disparities in opportunity, treatment, and access to educational advantages within the schools themselves. It positions the problem at an institutional and systemic level that acknowledges there is something wrong with our current education system. Solutions which address systemic challenges can be difficult to identify because they require changes in values, approaches, and relationships from the people who hold power within an institution and require leadership to place people who are the most impacted at the center of creating the solutions.

## 3. Celebrating Diversity → Committing to Equity

Often students from marginalized groups are invited or even required to “celebrate diversity” while the inequities they experience go unaddressed. Equity must be understood as a primary expectation and a foundational community value as opposed to a program to be added or an optional value.

## 4. Colorblindness and Denial of the Significance of Difference<sup>21</sup> → Self-Examination

One of the most pervasive ideologies affecting the ability for school systems to implement solutions to the equity gap, is viewing race through a “colorblind” approach. People expressing colorblindness might say and even believe that they “don't see race”, and often this assertion comes from a deep desire to “not be racist.” The myth of colorblindness frequently functions as a way to skirt difficult conversations about race, racism, and the racial privilege<sup>22</sup> that white people are afforded in the United States and beyond. Colorblindness allows people to avoid addressing inequities by denying that racial differences exist and that differences in people's racial identities impact their experiences and access to opportunities.

The cultural pattern of denying difference and the significance of difference shows up in all forms of oppression. For example, the expectation of silence and secrecy around issues of sexuality and gender identity continue to force LGBTQ+, transgender, and gender non-conforming people into “closeted” lives. For inequities to end, systems and individuals must commit to self-examination, ongoing learning, and

acting to recognize, respond to, address, and sustain changes to inequitable policies, practices, and patterns.

### **5. Students and Families as Subject to Change → Students and Families as Agents of Change**

Solutions presented from students and families, and those who are directly impacted by the education system, are the most effective and lasting vehicles for change. At the same time, it is not the responsibility of students and families to lead the work to make their schools more equitable environments. School districts and schools must create opportunities for students and families to provide feedback on district equity efforts. To this end, data and research tools like the EISCA must be accessible to students and families, and conversations about educational inequities must be brought into community spaces.

### **6. Mainstreams<sup>23</sup> → Margins**

Schools, like all institutions, are only as equitable as the most marginalized stakeholders experience them to be. In order to transform policies, practices, and cultural patterns to become more equitable, school districts must focus on understanding the experiences of those who are marginalized. Individuals with lived experiences of marginalization and oppression hold the greatest knowledge and potential to envision new systems that will meet their needs. Systems designed to serve students who have been historically and currently placed in the margins will serve all students well.

## Central Question and Climate Indicators

In designing an assessment guided by RE-Center's critical shifts and the Equity Literacy Framework, evaluators identified a central question and four climate indicators. These are not strictly delineated categories but gauges of school climate that can overlap and intersect. Evaluators used these indicators as guidelines in the construction and analysis of the assessment, and to tell the story of school climate and its effect on the school culture<sup>24</sup> in MPS.

### Central Question:

To what extent are Manchester Public Schools equitable environments for all members of the school community?

### Climate Indicators:

1. **Safety:** Do students, staff, and families feel safe within school environments? Do students, staff, and families experience harassment and discrimination in their schools or workplaces? During the assessment, MPS community members were asked about their experiences of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, and other forms of marginalization and oppression that exist in their school environments; their explicit feelings of safety or lack thereof while at their schools or workplaces; and about MPS staff members' responses to reported instances of discrimination and harassment. Students were also asked about their experiences of physical and online harassment and bullying.
2. **Access to Opportunities:** Do students, staff, and families have equitable access to opportunities within the school system? MPS students were asked about barriers to accessing MPS academic and extracurricular opportunities, including their experiences of the school curriculum, access to transportation, program affordability, language barriers, and expectations of success from their educators. Evaluators closely examined the way disciplinary practices exclude students from equitable access to educational opportunities. Staff members were asked how the district supports their work, including questions about work roles and obligations, access to advancement opportunities, and the ability to communicate with their supervisors about important issues. Family members were asked about language, cost, and transportation barriers, and whether they are supported by MPS staff members in advancing their children's education.
3. **Value:** Do students, staff, and families feel valued by the school community? Students, staff, and families were asked whether they see themselves reflected in the MPS staff and MPS curriculum, whether they feel respected in their school environment, and whether they feel listened to and afforded opportunities to give suggestions and feedback.
4. **School engagement and connectedness:**<sup>25</sup> Are students, staff, and families connected to and engaged with the school community? Students, staff, and family members were asked about their relationship to their school communities, including their expressed pride in their school community, their sense of belonging to their school community, their trust in their supervisors, and the depth of their relationships with their superiors and their peers in their educational environments.



## Methodology

Evaluators from RE-Center, in consultation with EdChange, designed the Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA) of Manchester Public Schools through the lens of racial equity. This methodology details the processes used to design assessment tools and gather data through surveys, focus groups, background interviews, and ethnographic site visits.

### **Exploratory Focus Groups, Background Interviews and Surveys, Records Review, and Facilitated School Presentations**

An element in developing an equity-based assessment framework involved gathering stakeholder input and support before designing the assessment. Evaluators conducted a series of exploratory focus groups with students and families, and background interviews with MPS staff members and administrators. MPS and RE-Center staff co-facilitated presentations at Manchester Board of Education meetings and at each school in the district<sup>26</sup> to create awareness of the assessment and garner broad stakeholder support.

Background interviews and surveys of MPS staff, administrators and community members were conducted to gather perspectives about school climate in the district. Participants were selected for reasons including positional authority, influence in the district, and at the recommendation of other members of the MPS community. Evaluators collected 41 responses to an EISCA Background Interview Survey, to which participants responded in written form to questions. At least 16 of the 41 respondents to this survey were interviewed in-person, or via video or phone interviews. Evaluators conducted a total of 28 background interviews lasting approximately 75 minutes.<sup>27</sup>

RE-Center staff reviewed the district's internal data on Manchester Board of Education (BOE) policies; student, staff, and faculty handbooks; prior equity plans and climate survey results; school discipline data; staff professional learning data; the overall district performance index; and overall district demographic data. Particular attention was given to policies and practices that might contribute to institutional inequities.

The information obtained through the exploratory focus groups, background interviews, and MPS internal data were used to inform the process for constructing affinity-based focus groups, interview questions, survey questions, and for planning the ethnographic site observations. The assessment was conducted during the 2017-2018 academic year.

### **Surveys of Students, Staff, and Families from Marginalized Groups**

To help assess school climate through the experiences of students, staff members and family members from marginalized groups, evaluators issued two student surveys: one developed for elementary school students in grades 5 and 6 and another for middle and high school students in grades 7-12; one survey for certified and non-certified staff members; and one survey for the families of students in the district.

## Affinity-Based Focus Groups and Ethnographic Site Observations

Evaluators conducted a total of 32 affinity-based focus groups in Manchester Public Schools, including 19 focus groups with students, six focus groups with families, and seven focus groups with school staff. Focus groups were designed to capture the experiences of persons from marginalized groups. By design, facilitators and note-takers shared the identities of the focus group participants to allow for honest and safe dialogue in conversations lasting approximately one hour. To protect the anonymity of participants, note-takers attributed numbers and perceived identities to each participant on a seating chart. Prior to the conclusion of each focus group, participants were asked to fill out a demographic form that asked them to self-identify on race, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, religion, native language, and other relevant demographics.

Evaluators did not convene focus groups specifically for students, staff members or family members identifying as white, with the understanding that an equity-informed assessment requires evaluators to center the experiences of the most marginalized persons. White students, staff, and family members were included in focus groups when they fell into other categories of marginalization, such as religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

Evaluators conducted six ethnographic site observations at five different locations in the district. The elementary school survey was administered to students from grades 5 and 6, and the elementary school student focus groups were held with students in grade 5. However, evaluators gathered qualitative data from children in grades 1 through 5 at the elementary schools selected for the ethnographic site observations.

The ethnographic site observations were conducted in the following way: evaluators observed the day-to-day interactions between administrators, educators, school staff, students, and family members; observed activities throughout the buildings, in and out of classrooms; and staffed a space during school hours, called the “drop-in room,” that was open to any student, staff, family, or community member who wanted a private, or small group conversation with a RE-Center evaluator. Evaluators spent a total of 16 days combined at Washington Elementary, Keeney Elementary, Illing Middle School, Manchester High School, Bentley Alternative Education (embedded within the Manchester High School building), and Manchester Regional Academy. RE-Center staffed each location with anywhere from five to 20 evaluators.

While analyzing the various data sources collected during the EISCA process, evaluators examined participant responses using an intersectional lens. This means that when looking at the responses from students, staff, and families from marginalized groups, when possible, evaluators considered the multiple intersecting identities that respondents had and how those identities impacted their experiences. Data were coded, analyzed, and interpreted using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR)<sup>28</sup> techniques, to ensure the qualitative results report on the themes that emerge through this process, rather than the specific number of people from whom the theme emerged.

## Results and Analysis of the Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment of Manchester Public Schools

The next sections detail the results and a brief analysis of the Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA) of Manchester Public Schools (MPS). As detailed in the methodology, evaluators collected data using surveys, focus groups, background interviews, and ethnographic site visits with students, staff members,<sup>29</sup> and family members to evaluate the educational environment at the district level. The results of this assessment tell a compelling story of Manchester Public Schools' successes and challenges in working towards an equitable school environment and shed light on focused opportunities to address systemic issues and begin to institutionalize equity.

When surveying and interviewing students, staff, and families in Manchester Public Schools, evaluators structured the assessment around the climate questions (see page XX). Patterns in the information collected from focus groups, interviews, and ethnographic site visits were analyzed in conjunction with the survey data to uncover overall trends in the student, staff, and family member experience of school climate in MPS. For some marginalized groups (for example, students and staff members, including students and staff members of color, identifying as transgender or gender non-conforming), the number of individuals surveyed or interviewed was small. However, a school district that listens to and serves the most marginalized community members will take time to hear and respond to the feedback of those at critical junctures of social marginalization even when they compose a small percentage of the overall population. A district that serves the most marginalized well serves its entire population well.

The term **statistically significant** is used often in the report to describe the groups whose survey responses differed beyond chance according to the statistical analysis used in this assessment, especially when responses were disaggregated into those of mainstream and marginalized groups. Notable differences between group responses were reported in the survey data below when they contributed to overall patterns of feedback gathered in this assessment.<sup>30</sup> Evaluators also summarize the non-numerical patterns emerging from our processes of qualitative data collection. What follows are the results of the most prominent patterns emerging from this district-wide assessment of school climate from the perspectives of the most marginalized community members.

### What Is Going Well in Manchester Public Schools

**This section highlights important steps that the district has taken to build an equitable learning environment. This assessment of the current climate in MPS includes the perspectives of students, staff, and families from marginalized groups.** The district is committed to transforming its schools by institutionalizing equity for the benefit of every member of the school community. District leadership also understands the considerable challenges to achieving equity within MPS. This assessment is an important step on the path towards creating an equitable school environment and the foundation upon which further transformative change can occur. From the beginning of the EISCA process, district and school leaders have expressed sincere desire and motivation to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for students from marginalized groups.

## What Is Going Well for Students

### **Students were eager to have conversations about race, gender identity, and other identities they hold.**

Evaluators found that MPS students were enthusiastic about discussing their experiences, both positive and negative, and excited to have an opportunity to be included in the discussion about their schools. Students in MPS shared a wealth of wisdom and knowledge about their school experience and provided important recommendations for improvement and continued dialogue.

**The MPS student body exemplifies multicultural diversity.** This diversity is often missing in other school districts.<sup>31</sup> (See page 21 for demographics of MPS.) Evaluators found that many students, especially those new to the district recognized their school's diversity as a positive and important aspect of their educational environment. When surveyed, 95 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they have friends at their school from their race and other races. Eighty-three percent of students in grades 7-12 agreed that they have a group of friends at their school that is racially and ethnically diverse. Students reported positive experiences with the racial and ethnic diversity of Manchester Public Schools when speaking to evaluators:<sup>32</sup>

“I feel like I fit in more. I didn't know schools could be so diverse and everyone is different,” said a high school<sup>33</sup> Latina student in a focus group. “There are so many people from different places and people adapt to each other.”

“My experience has been very good. I really value how our school is urban and diverse. As a person who identifies as LGBT, there are some downsides, but as a whole I really love [my high school]. I like how we are unique,” shared an LGBTQ+ student in a focus group.

**Students reported receiving encouragement and support from teachers and staff.** Evaluators spoke with students who found reliable support from MPS teaching staff. One former student, a Middle Eastern female, reported receiving essential support from her guidance counselor when searching for scholarships and applying for college. She also described receiving emotional and academic support from her English teacher; she felt engaged in the class because of her teacher and felt supported by her teacher, who listened to students' stories. A white female 4th grader who struggled with math reported, “Division was really hard...There are some teachers that take the time to work with me.”<sup>34</sup>

**During the assessment, evaluators found that educators are implementing a “social-emotional learning curriculum” in elementary schools in the district.** This curriculum is an important set of lessons that help students learn social skills, understand themselves as learners, and develop as social thinkers. When surveyed, 85 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that teachers help them discover how they learn best, and 89 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that teachers show them how to learn from their mistakes. Eighty-eight percent of family members agreed that their child's school helps them develop social and emotional skills. Family members of elementary school students reported positive impressions of the social-emotional learning curriculum:

During a focus group for new families to the district one parent shared, “I will say that the day of open house, I was impressed. I complimented her [student's teacher] on the way she does things. They [teachers] talk about finding out what kind of learners [students] are,” said one white female parent in a focus group for new families to the district. “I love the way the kids are treated and that they have the kids figure themselves out.”

Students commented on aspects of their experiences related to the social-emotional learning curriculum:

“There is a “calm down” space in the classroom. I was taught [at school] to stop, breathe and think. This helps me. I taught my dad to do it,” said a white female 5<sup>th</sup> grader, commenting on the “calming center”<sup>35</sup> set up in the classroom as part of the social-emotional learning curriculum.

“The teacher’s treat me different in a good way. I’m a slow worker and she [the teacher] said we all learn at different paces,” said a Latino 5<sup>th</sup> grader.

### What Is Going Well for Staff

Staff members reported positive experiences across many aspects of working and teaching in Manchester Public Schools (MPS).

**Teachers, administrators, certified and non-certified staff members were eager to offer their insights into both the challenges and effectiveness of equity initiatives in MPS.** In focus groups, conversations in the drop-in room, and during background interviews, evaluators spoke with numerous staff members in MPS who expressed their dedication to their students’ academic and emotional success, and the district’s mission of school equity. Many staff members reported feeling hopeful about the district’s equity initiatives during these conversations.

**Staff members, including those from marginalized groups, reported overall positive experiences in their work environments in MPS.** When surveyed, more than 90 percent of staff, including more than 90 percent of staff members of color, agreed that they are proud to work in their school or office, agreed they feel a warm connection with at least two coworkers, and agreed that they are valued members of their school or office team. Of note, 96 percent of staff surveyed agreed that their supervisors think they are a good employee, including 97 percent of staff members of color, and 98 percent of LGBTQ+ staff members, and 95 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. Across several staff focus groups, and from interviews conducted during the ethnographic site observations, evaluators heard reports of positive peer-to-peer interactions in their work environments:

One staff member of color shared in a focus group, “People always welcomed me, especially being Muslim...Teachers were always eager to hear about my culture.”

In an interview conducted during an ethnographic site observation, another staff member shared, “As a staff member of color, I feel that the staff here, even when they lack understanding about socio-economic issues, [and] sensitivity about racial issues are open to dialogues and with a level of humility.”

**Staff members have begun learning how to implement social-emotional learning tools and restorative practices in schools.** When surveyed, more than 90 percent of staff members agreed that they know where to send students if they need support with emotional issues and agreed that they understand how trauma affects learning and behavior in school. While only 74 percent of staff members surveyed agreed that they were confident in their ability to use “Restorative Practices,” 93 percent of staff members of color agreed they were confident in their ability to use these practices. Restorative Practices have been introduced in MPS elementary, middle, and high schools to help school community members build and sustain positive relationships with each other and address student behavioral issues. Although there is more work to be done in fully implementing these tools and practices, and aligning them with equity



principles, introducing them is an important step towards creating an equitable school district and creating alternatives to exclusionary disciplinary actions.

**There are individuals within MPS with a deep understanding and commitment to equity.** During the EISCA process, evaluators spoke with numerous staff members who are deeply committed to creating equitable environments in MPS. Evaluators found that there are staff members in key roles who have the knowledge, awareness, and skills to be leaders in moving the district's equity work forward. One white female staff member shared, "All the work that all of us do needs to be and is connected with equity. All of what we do is connected to equity. Everything I set up I need to think about equity to make sure everyone has access to what it is we are providing. I try to keep the lens that we have 7,000 parents and guardians that we serve. How are we making sure that we are getting people access in whatever way they need?" In an interview, another white female staff member said, "You have to have the conversations about diversity and equity. It's not enough to talk the talk, you have to walk it, you have to live it. If I didn't believe that every kid could achieve, I have no business being here."

### What Is Going Well for Families

Family members highlighted positive trends in creating a welcoming and equitable school climate for families in MPS.

**Many of the family members, from marginalized groups, who participated in the family focus groups were deeply involved in their children's educations and engaged and knowledgeable about equity issues.** Family members who are aware of systemic inequities are vital to the future of the district's equity work and can be a bridge to other families in the district. Some participants in the family focus groups reported that the district offers opportunities and events that facilitate their participation in their children's school lives:

"I am very involved in my daughter's life, and I pop up [in school] often," shared one female parent of color.

"I know all the teachers. They are in contact with us daily. Constant contact. I talk on the phone, email, or I'm in the school on Fridays," shared a white female parent of a LGBTQ+ child.

"I like that they have after school programs that bring in families. They have a lot of events here," shared a Black<sup>36</sup> female parent during a focus group for families of color.

**The vast majority of family members surveyed, including those from marginalized groups, feel respected by district staff and have had positive experiences interacting with school staff.** When surveyed, 98 percent of family members agreed that they are treated with respect by their child's teachers, including 98 percent of family members of color, 96 percent of LGBTQ+ family members, and 97 percent of family members whose child(ren) participate(s) in the free and reduced lunch program.<sup>37</sup> More than 93 percent of family members surveyed also agreed that:<sup>38</sup>

- Their child's teachers think that they are a good parent or guardian, including 97 percent of family members of color.
- Teachers and staff at their child's school respect their family structure, including 97 percent of LGBTQ+ family members and 98 percent of family members of color.

- Adults at their child's school understand and respect their child's cultural background, including 96 percent of family members of color and 98 percent of non-native English-speaking family members.
- Their religion is respected at their school, including 94 percent of non-Christian<sup>39</sup> family members.

In addition to feeling respected by school officials, when surveyed, more than 95 percent of family members agreed that they feel comfortable speaking with their child's teachers and agreed that they are greeted with kindness when they call or visit the school, including more than 95 percent of family members of color. Ninety-one percent of family members also reported easy access to interpretation services in MPS, including 90 percent of non-native English-speaking family members. Access to interpretation services for non-native English-speaking families is a key indicator of a welcoming school environment. When surveyed, 90 percent of family members surveyed, including 90 percent of family members of color, agreed that they are satisfied with the way adults at their school respond to conflicts about race.<sup>40</sup>

**High percentages of family members surveyed, including those from marginalized groups, have a positive outlook on their child's experience at and beyond Manchester Public Schools.** When surveyed, more than 90 percent of family members, including families of color, families who are not native English-speakers, and families who are non-Christian, agreed that:

- They feel good about their child's future.
- Their child is treated fairly in school.
- Their child has at least two friends at school that accept them.
- Their child has friends from various racial and ethnic backgrounds.<sup>41</sup>

## Areas for Improvement and Continued Dialogue in Manchester Public Schools

The information gathered from this assessment will be valuable to Manchester Public Schools (MPS) as school community members work to create equitable schools. Identifying systemic barriers to equity is the first step towards overcoming them. Evaluators would like to note that this report is not claiming to have revealed all inequities in the district. Evaluators identified the following major themes as key areas for improvement and continued dialogue in Manchester Public Schools.

### (1) Discrimination Is Still Impacting Students, Staff, and Families from Marginalized Groups in MPS

The following results of the assessment highlight discrepancies between the experiences of marginalized and mainstream groups in MPS and discrimination.

**Students, staff, and families in MPS reported witnessing racist behavior and experiencing microaggressions.** When surveying students of color in grades 5 through 12, more than 15 percent agreed they have heard racist jokes or comments from adults at their school and more than 35 percent agreed that they have experienced conflicts about race in their school. When surveyed, 60 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 and 75 percent of students in grades 7-12 agreed that they have heard racist jokes or remarks from other students at their school.

In conversations with evaluators, students of color reported being the targets of racially-motivated insults, acts of discrimination, and microaggressions. In a focus group, one Latinx<sup>42</sup> elementary school student reported, “In school, people started saying that Puerto Ricans are dumb and idiots. I would cry because all my family is from Puerto Rico, none of them are dumb...Also, fights broke out because people want to comment on the color of your skin.” A middle-school Asian student shared that she’s been called a “chink” and has been asked if she eats dogs. In a high school classroom, an evaluator observed a teacher repeatedly calling a student wearing a hijab the name of another student in the class who was also wearing a hijab. In a focus group, several Black male students reported various instances of adults yelling at them to ‘shut up,’ and when asked what would improve their school they indicated that the biggest improvement would be if adults at their school changed the tone, volume, and language they use to address students. One Black male student said, “One of the teachers kept yelling and the new vice principal says, ‘shut up’ and all that because he says he can hear us down the hall.” Another Black male student reported, “If I’m just eating they tell me to ‘shut up.’”

When surveyed, staff members of color were more than twice as likely (21 percent v. 9 percent) as white staff members to agree that racism is a problem in their work environment and more than four times as likely (4 percent v. 1 percent) to agree that white supremacy is a problem in their work environment. Half of all staff members (50 percent) surveyed agreed that they have heard racist jokes or remarks from students at their school, and staff members of color were significantly more likely than white staff members to agree that they have heard racist jokes or remarks from adults at their school.<sup>43</sup> White staff members were significantly more likely than staff members of color to agree that staff at their workplace respect people who are different from them and are significantly more likely to agree that their religion is respected at their school or office.<sup>44</sup> One staff member of color described her experience of

discrimination: “Indirectly, they expect me to explain certain aspects of minority culture. They ask me to speak to the ‘aggressive’ POC [people of color] parents. I don’t want to be seen as the angry Black woman,” she said. “My white co-workers can be upset, and I can’t.” Numerous staff members of color talked about the strained relationships between white staff members and students of color because of racial biases. Below is a transcript of one interview with a staff member of color:

**Interviewer:** “What do you see as you observe the relationships between white teachers and students of color?”

**Interviewee [staff member of color]:** “Fear... [white teachers] are so scared of [students of color] ...and in particular, the boys. And don’t let them be tall. Then it’s the ‘I feared for my life’ talk all over again. And you see that a lot. There is this fear that these students are going to beat the teachers... and I’m not saying that students are angels...”

**Interviewer:** “Has that ever happened? Has a student ever beaten up a teacher?”

**Interviewee:** “No. That’s what I am talking about. This is a child...I am not afraid of a child. My job is to educate, protect, in my opinion to provide love and nourishment to some degree. So, when I see how scared [white teachers are], constantly...these boys are constantly getting security called on them. Constantly. When you look at the stats, it’s all there. So that is the biggest thing. They are just so scared of them. Girls...super sassy. Latinas might talk with an extra twang or they might talk with their hands, or whatever the case might be, but for some reason they are so scared of them.”

A white male staff member commented on how racialized fear is showing up in student and staff relationships in MPS. “I think there is lots of fear. Fear of the kid. Fear of the parent. Some is actual, ‘I am afraid of you. You could actually hurt me.’ Some of it is, ‘I am afraid to do the wrong thing.’ Especially when it is a white staff and student of color.”

One white female staff member who has been a part of the MPS community for over a decade talked about how fear of people of color within MPS connects to the history of Manchester. This staff member explained that resentment from white Manchester residents arose when Black people began to move to Manchester in large numbers. She pointed out that some residents hold the belief that, “‘Black people are to be feared and they ruined our town’. That is the pervasive attitude. There are teachers here who hold those beliefs, and it definitely interferes with the work we are trying to do.”

Throughout the assessment, evaluators heard reports from staff members about comments from colleagues referring to students of color as “those kids.” One white female staff member recounted a teacher who was referring to students of color who were exhibiting challenging behaviors in a class saying to her, “I don’t know why they keep putting those kids in our classrooms.” The staff member went on to say, “it’s funny how parenting is in question when it is one of ‘those kids’” and went on to describe the ways that she sees white parents and students treated differently than Black parents and students. The staff member talked about two children exhibiting ‘identical behaviors’: “One is a Black child who is suspended two times and teachers are saying, ‘I wish his mother would do something.’ The other is a white child who was suspended one time. Teachers are saying, ‘His meds aren’t working’.”

Family members of color reported conflict about race and racist behavior impacting the school experiences of their children. Family members of color were significantly more likely than white family

members to agree that they feel pressure from adults at their school to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to fit in and that they have experienced conflicts about race with other parents from their child's school.<sup>45</sup> A focus group participant and parent of a Black student reported, "There is a huge problem in school. My six-year-old should never be called the 'n-word'. My other children have been called this disgusting word." The same parent suggested, "They need to have clear and effective conversations about race relations."

## Marginalized Groups and Intersectional Identities

Analyzing data through an intersectional lens highlights how multiple, intersecting social identities impact marginalization. Human lives are complex, multi-dimensional, and shaped by the layers of social identities each person holds. Intersectionality refers to "the social, economic and political ways in which identity-based systems of oppression and privilege connect, overlap and influence one another."<sup>1</sup>

Intersectional identity explains the nuanced way that multiple forms of oppression converge to create unique experiences of discrimination and oppression based on the multiple identities each person holds, and their geographical location. Recognizing that the intersection between race, gender, sexual orientation, class, (dis)ability, language, ethnicity, or religion all contribute to inequality, provides expansive insight into the full range of experiences and challenges people have. Individuals in positions of power who are aware of the impact of intersectionality are able to consider its layers when crafting policy, allocating resources, and creating inclusive and equitable environments.<sup>2</sup> The EISCA data uncovered what other research has shown: beyond racial discrimination, LGBTQ+, transgender, and gender non-conforming students of color experience additional layers of victimization, invisibility, and discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Bell, Monita K. "Teaching at the Intersections." *Teaching Tolerance*, issue 53, 2016, [www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2016/teaching-at-the-intersections](http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2016/teaching-at-the-intersections). All work about intersectionality derives from the original work of Kimberlé Crenshaw: Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, issue 1, article 8, [chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8](http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8).

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, Robert P. "Intersectionality: The Many Layers of an Individual." *The Harvard Gazette*, 31 Oct. 2016, [news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/10/intersectionality-the-many-layers-of-an-individual](http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/10/intersectionality-the-many-layers-of-an-individual).

<sup>3</sup> "Examining Oppression: Layers of Identity." GLSEN, 2003-2018, [www.glsen.org/examining-oppression-layers-identity](http://www.glsen.org/examining-oppression-layers-identity). Accessed 13 Sept. 2018.



**Students, staff members, and family members from marginalized groups, in particular those belonging to more than one marginalized group, do not feel safe at school.** Across both student surveys, female, transgender and gender non-conforming, LGBTQ+ students, students who have one or more disabilities, and students experiencing food insecurity – including students of color belonging to one or more of these marginalized groups – were more likely to not feel safe at school than their mainstream counterparts.

**Female students, including female students belonging to more than one marginalized group, reported feeling unsafe and being harassed in school.** Across both student surveys, more than 20 percent of female students surveyed disagreed that they feel safe at their school. Twenty-five percent of female students of color in grades 7-12 disagreed that they feel safe at their school. Thirty-one percent of female students in grades 7-12 and 15 percent of female students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them at school.

### Body Autonomy and Consent: How Sexual Harassment Impacts School Climate for MPS Girls

During the data collection process, middle school girls in Manchester Public Schools told evaluators about in-school violations and degradations of their minds and bodies in ways that consistently denied them body autonomy.

The concept of “body autonomy” recognizes each person as the sole authority over their body – every individual has full ownership over and the right to decide what happens to their body with full consent and without being coerced. Recognizing each individual’s body autonomy is an important part of creating an educational environment that works to eradicate (covert and overt) gender-based violence.<sup>1</sup> A number of reports from middle school girls informed evaluators that middle school boys were regularly engaging in activities that constitute harassment or a violation of female students’ consent and body autonomy. These behaviors from male students ranged from name-calling with sexual undertones to touching female students’ bodies without asking for their permission.

One 8<sup>th</sup> grade girl told evaluators that her male peers make her uncomfortable by calling her names in class and touching her without her consent. She says that boys call girls THOTS, (shorthand for ‘that whore over there’). One boy told her, ‘It’s not my fault you’re a THOT’ and another boy made a crude remark explaining what their friend ‘wanted to do to her.’ She reported multiple cases of inappropriate touching by her male peers, including a boy who tries to touch girls while in class. A larger pattern appeared when several other female 7<sup>th</sup> graders reported instances of harassment. One student said, “8<sup>th</sup> grade boys are very inappropriate. They treat us like ‘fresh bait.’” Another student reported that a boy she had a relationship with has shared details about their relationship with other boys. Those boys now come to her and say, “I want to get some of that.” Another 7<sup>th</sup> grade girl who rides the late bus home reported that there is a boy on this bus who constantly tries to touch her breasts, even when she tells him no.

Evaluators spoke with a 7<sup>th</sup> grade boy who was observed roughly touching a female classmate’s face. He explained that he sometimes plays games at school that involve touching his female classmates. He said, “Why should I have to ask her if we are playing? That girl is my friend and we always joke around every single day...It’s a game if the other person is laughing. If you’re not in the mood you say so except if someone laughs at it.” One 7<sup>th</sup> grade girl explains her reaction to this behavior: “When boys say something rude or flick my face, I laugh because I don’t want to be the person that stands out. I don’t want to be the one that can’t take a joke.”

Middle school girls report that there is a lack of adult support from MPS staff in confronting this behavior by male students in their schools. According to the student being called a THOT, there is not enough supervision in the halls and she has not heard of any boys facing consequences despite reporting the behavior to her guidance counselor. One middle school girl reported feeling embarrassed when a teacher used a mocking tone after she reported that a boy in class was bothering her. The teacher said to the whole class, “Oh, Bobby, are you bothering her?” Another girl said that a teacher refused to move a boy that has been bothering her to a seat that is further away from her. The girls say they often get in trouble for retaliating against boys who are harassing them. References:

<sup>1</sup> “The Gender Toolbox: Gender-Based Violence and Education,” Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, March 2015, [www.sida.se/contentassets/a3950e8788ec48a78218358a0457fa63/genderbased-violence-and-education.pdf](http://www.sida.se/contentassets/a3950e8788ec48a78218358a0457fa63/genderbased-violence-and-education.pdf).

### How Backpack Rules Connect to Menstrual Equity and Respect for Women and Girls

A closer look at the backpack-carrying policy in MPS revealed that the rule prohibiting students to carry their backpacks or other bags had a negative effect on middle school girls – an impact unforeseen by the district when the rules were created. Female middle school students reported that the backpack policy was an obstacle to taking care of themselves safely and privately while they are menstruating. This connects to the important concept of “menstrual equity” – the idea that periods must be de-stigmatized in spaces that are safe for women and girls and that women and girls should have access to menstrual products.

During the EISCA ethnographic site observation days, five 7th grade girls who all identified as female students of color came together to the drop-in room to report on the challenging experience of having their periods while not being allowed to carry a backpack. The students said they were not allowed to carry purses or bags and reported being made fun of when carrying a visible pad in their pocket. Students also reported that bathrooms in the school do not have receptacles for female sanitary products like pads and tampons.

One student reported that she waits until she has class with a female teacher with whom she feels comfortable enough to ask to go to the bathroom for ‘a girl thing.’ Some days she must wait until 3rd or 4th period before she is in a class with a female teacher she trusts. When she is granted permission, she races to her locker to get her tampon, which she hides in her hand as she runs to the bathroom. Once she’s in the bathroom she doesn’t know what to do with the old tampon and the wrapper. Due to her friends’ negative experiences, a young student expressed her fear of the future, saying, “I haven’t gotten my period yet, and I’m so scared to get it. I wish I never had to get my period.”

A school staff member commented on the situation, saying, “The students’ ‘safe zone’ should be here, at school. Access to feminine products, feeling safe around bodily changes are systemic issues...Every adult in the building needs to be comfortable with and empathetic of students’ needs.”

District administration has already begun to make policy changes to create a safe environment for middle school girls who are menstruating, including holding focus groups with female staff and students around this issue. Modifications have been made to the downstairs bathrooms and there is a plan to modify the upstairs bathrooms by the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. In addition, district administration is looking to create a better gender balance among the 7th grade staff members.

**When surveyed, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, pansexual, and asexual (LGBQ+) students,<sup>46</sup> in particular students of color belonging to one of these marginalized groups, reported feeling discriminated against and unsafe in their schools:**

- When asked whether discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender students is a problem at their school, more than 40 percent of LGBQ+ students across both surveys agreed.
- When asked whether they feel safe at their school, more than one-third of LGBQ+ students across both surveys disagreed.
- Twenty-seven percent of LGBQ+ students in grades 7-12 agreed they have felt verbally or physically intimidated by an adult at their school, making them significantly more likely than their heterosexual peers to agree to this question. LGBQ+ students in grades 5 and 6 were significantly less likely than their heterosexual peers to agree that they have a teacher or staff member at school that they can talk to when they are struggling or upset.<sup>47</sup>
- Sixty-four percent of LGBQ+ students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they have been made fun of or intimidated by other students in their school.<sup>48</sup> More than 40 percent of LGBQ+ students in grades 7-12 agreed that they have been harassed or intimidated by other students in school and that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them, making them significantly more likely than their heterosexual peers to agree to these questions.<sup>49</sup>

When surveyed, 23 percent of LGBQ+ students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they have been made fun of or threatened by other students from their school on social media, and 32 percent of LGBQ+ students in grades 7-12 agreed that they have felt harassed or intimidated by other students from their school on social media. When looking at student survey responses by sexual orientation and race, LGBQ+ students of color and LGBQ+ white students most strongly agreed that they have been harassed or intimidated by other students on social media.<sup>50</sup>

### Concerning the Analysis of Survey Responses from Students, Staff Members, and Family Members Belonging to Multiple Marginalized Groups

As part of this assessment, evaluators analyzed survey responses from students, staff members, and family members who belong to multiple marginalized groups (see text box on page 42). Responses from those at the intersections of the marginalized identities considered in this assessment (marginalization by race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, disability, and food insecurity) were compared to evaluate where significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) exist between marginalized and mainstream groups. This analysis is explained in the methodology in Appendix B on page 89.

Throughout the results, evaluators report on comparisons between groups at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities and “their peers.” At the intersection of race and disability, for example, the groups being compared would be: students of color with one or more disabilities, students of color without a disability, white students with one or more disabilities, and white students without a disability: i.e., “students of color with one or more disabilities were significantly more likely to agree to [survey statement] than their peers.” Evaluators used the language of “peers” in the report to represent the other intersectional groups involved in the particular comparison, in this case: students of color without a disability, white students with one or more disabilities, and white students without a disability.

When analyzing the results of both student surveys by race and sexual orientation, there were particularly stark differences in the patterns of responses of LGBTQ+ students of color and those of heterosexual white students concerning safety. In the survey of students in grades 5 and 6, LGBTQ+ students of color were:

- Significantly more likely to disagree that they feel safe at their school than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to agree that they feel pressure from adults at their school to change the way they speak, act or dress in order to “fit in” than their peers; and
- Significantly more likely to disagree that they belong at their school and feel proud to be a student at their school than their peers.

In the survey of students in grades 7-12, LGBTQ+ students of color were:

- Significantly more likely to disagree that they feel safe at their school, disagree that the school resource officers make them feel safer, and disagree that the security guards make them feel safer than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to agree that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them at their school than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to agree that they have felt harassed or intimidated by other students from their school on social media than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to disagree that their teachers think they are a good person than their peers; and

- Significantly more likely to disagree that they belong at school than their peers.

In contrast, white heterosexual students were:

- Significantly more likely to agree that they feel safe at their school; to agree that school resource officers make them feel safer; and to agree that security guards make them feel safer;
- Significantly more likely to disagree that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them at school; and
- Significantly more likely to agree that their teachers think they are a good person than their peers.

Evaluators heard several reports from LGBTQ+ students about feeling unsafe at their school. A bisexual student reported experiences of harassment about her sexual orientation and gender identity, “I look androgynous. People think I’m a boy, even though I identify as a girl. I’ve had people dare other kids to ask me if I’m a lesbian and they’ll buy them stuff if they do it. People just look at my appearance and are just like, ‘oh, she’s gay’, even though I’m bi.”

Another student shared an experience of harassment: “The other students in the hall, they are really disrespectful. They give dirty looks and sometimes make comments. [They say] ‘Eww, really, that’s gay. Are you not a child of God?’ Sometimes when I hear that, I get so angry. Being bisexual in this school...I’m not able to tell anyone and I don’t feel like myself when I am here [at school]. I wish you can be able to be who you want to be in school without people judging you and making comments. I don’t tell anybody. There are a lot of kids... [who are LGBTQ+]. I have a friend that wants to [come out] but he doesn’t feel comfortable telling anyone else, and I don’t blame him.”

**Transgender and gender non-conforming<sup>51</sup> students, in particular students of color belonging to one of these marginalized groups, reported feeling discriminated against and unsafe in their schools:**

- When asked whether discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender students is a problem at their school, more than 40 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students across both student surveys agreed to that question.
- When asked whether they feel safe at their school, more than 40 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 7-12 disagreed. When looking at survey responses from students in grades 7-12 by gender identity and race, transgender and gender non-conforming students of color were most likely to disagree that they feel safe at their school when compared to their peers.
- When looking at survey responses from students in grades 7-12 by race and gender identity, transgender and gender non-conforming students of color, white transgender and gender non-conforming students, and white female students were most likely to agree that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them at their school.
- Across all races, 63 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they have been physically hurt by another student more than once at school, and 31 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 7-12 agreed that they have been verbally or physically intimidated by an adult at their school.
- 38 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 7-12 agreed that they have felt harassed or intimidated by other students from their school on social media. When looking at



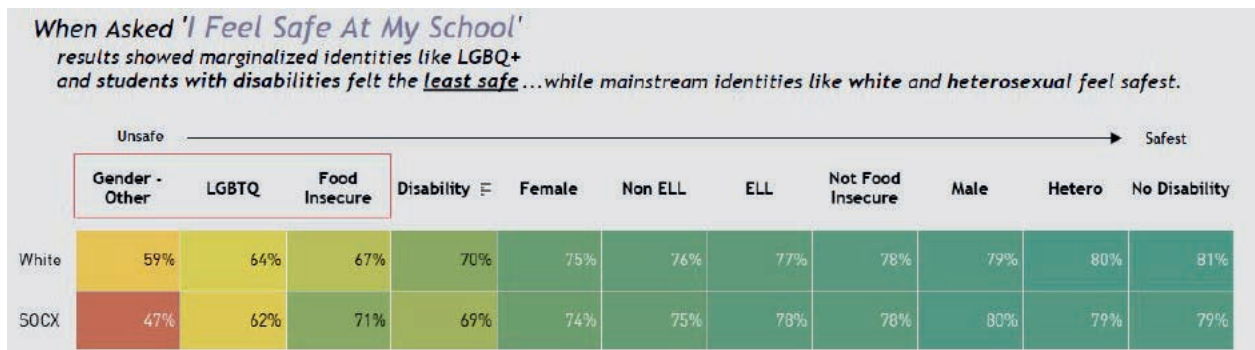
survey responses from students in grades 7-12 by race and gender identity, transgender and gender non-conforming students of color and white female students most strongly agreed.

When analyzing the results of the 7-12 grade survey by race and gender identity, there were particularly sharp differences in the patterns of responses of transgender and gender non-conforming students of color, and those of white male students. In the survey of students in grades 7-12, transgender and gender non-conforming students of color were:

- Significantly more likely to disagree that they feel safe at their school, disagree that the school resource officers make them feel safer, and disagree that the security guards make them feel safer than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to agree that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them at their school than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to disagree that they are treated fairly by adults at their school, disagree that adults at their school understand and listen to them than their peers, and disagree that they are able to dress and do their hair how they want and still be respected by adults at their school than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to agree that they have felt harassed or intimidated by other students from their school on social media than their peers; and
- Significantly more likely to agree that they have been given out-of-school suspension or been physically restrained by an adult at school than their peers.

In contrast, white male students in grades 7-12 were:

- Significantly more likely to disagree that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them at their school than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to agree that they are treated fairly by adults at their school; agree that adults at their school understand and listen to them than their peers; and agree that adults at their school are supportive when they are feeling negative emotions than their peers;
- Significantly more likely to disagree that they have felt harassed or intimidated by other students from their school on social media than their peers; and
- Significantly more likely to agree that they belong at their school than their peers.



\*SOCX refers to students of color or of mixed race

**Across all races, students, staff members and family members with one or more disabilities<sup>52</sup> reported feeling unsafe in school.** Across both student surveys, more than a quarter of students with one or more disabilities surveyed disagreed that they feel safe at school, and more than a quarter of students with one or more disabilities in grades 7-12 agreed that they have been physically hurt by another student more than once at school. There were significant differences in the responses of students with one or more disabilities and students without a disability to these questions about safety.<sup>53</sup>

When analyzing the results of the 7-12 grade survey by race and disability, there were significant differences in the patterns of responses of students of color with one or more disabilities and those of their peers. 31 percent of students of color with one or more disabilities disagreed that they feel safe at their school, making them significantly more likely to disagree to this question than their peers.

16 percent of family members with one or more disabilities agreed that they have been insulted, harassed, intimidated, or targeted by an adult in their child's school – making them 5 times more likely (16 percent v. 3 percent) to agree to this question than family members without a disability.

Staff with one or more disabilities were significantly more likely to agree that ableism is a problem in their work environment. More than a quarter of staff members with disabilities agree that they have been insulted, harassed, intimidated, or targeted by another staff member in their school or workplace – making them twice as likely (26 percent v. 13 percent) to agree to this question as staff without a disability. Six percent of staff with one or more disabilities agreed that they have experienced sexual harassment at their school or office. Moreover, only 32 percent of staff with one or more disabilities agreed that the district's grievance procedure is an effective tool to ensure equitable solutions to problems in my workplace.

Some staff members who identified struggling with mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and ADHD felt that their conditions were not considered disabilities in the district. Staff members reported feeling alienated, and unable to talk to anyone about their experiences:

"I have PTSD due to emotional abuse at school. I was sick to my stomach driving to school every day," shared a staff member with a disability during a focus group.

**Students experiencing food insecurity,<sup>54</sup> including those belonging to more than one marginalized group, report feeling unsafe in school.** Forty percent of students in grades 5 and 6 who experience food insecurity agreed that an adult from their school has yelled at them in a way that scared them, and 23 percent of students in grades 7-12 who experience food insecurity have felt verbally or physically intimidated by an adult at their school. Students experiencing food insecurity were significantly more likely to agree than their peers not experiencing food insecurity to agree to both of these questions.

When analyzing the results of the 7-12 grade survey by race and food insecurity, there were significant differences in the patterns of responses around questions of safety from students of color experiencing food insecurity and those of white students not experiencing food insecurity. Students of color experiencing food insecurity were significantly more likely to agree that they had been physically restrained by an adult at their school and that they have been given an out-of-school suspension this school year than their peers. In contrast, white students not experiencing food insecurity were

significantly less likely to agree to these questions than their peers. Students of color not experiencing food insecurity were also significantly less likely than their peers to agree that there are teachers at their school who support them when they are feeling negative emotions, and that their teachers think they are a good person.

In an interview, a staff member said, “The impact of poverty, at times intersecting with race and culture, on children in a system that has many ‘haves’ is challenging.”

**Across all races, non-Christian students and staff reported feeling stereotyped and discriminated against in school.** In both student surveys, Christian students were significantly more likely to agree that their religion is respected at their school than their non-Christian and non-religiously-affiliated peers.<sup>55</sup> In focus group discussions and conversations during the ethnographic site observations, non-Christian students reported feeling negatively stereotyped by peers and adults at their school because of their religion. Students described wanting to be respected for who they are, not the stereotypes they’ve been assigned:

A Muslim student expressed that she wants to be heard as an individual, not seen as representing all of Islam when she expresses an opinion. “I never felt unsafe but more so targeted... I just realized how much people’s perception changed when I took off my hijab. I got a lot of terrorist comments [wearing it].”

The same student said, “I had to use the faculty bathroom all year last year because of something happened in the bathroom – a group of girls said I was making a bomb in the bathroom and it was constant. The teachers were all nice about it but why do I have to be different?”

When compared to their Christian and religiously unaffiliated colleagues, non-Christian staff were significantly less likely to agree that their religion is respected in their school or office and significantly more likely to agree that Christian hegemony is a problem in their work environment.<sup>56</sup>

An Asian staff person commented that the district does not support their practice of culture and faith. “As an [Asian], I feel that I am the minority of the minority,” they said. “[We don’t] have one religion, and [my] New Year is not acknowledged [in MPS]. People think about food [from my culture] but not holidays. I [would have] to take a personal day to celebrate the New Year.”

## **(2) Lack of Institutional Structures for Support of Staff in Creating an Equitable School Climate in MPS**

Evaluators found the following gaps in institutional structures to support creating an equitable school climate:

**Manchester Public Schools lacks a comprehensive vision for equity work including clear goals, outcomes, and channels for involvement.** Evaluators found a substantial amount of enthusiasm and passion from staff members to tackle large equity issues present in the district. In interviews and surveys, many staff members talked and wrote about leadership in MPS being committed to equity, and evaluators had numerous opportunities to witness district leadership demonstrating an ideological commitment to creating equitable environments in MPS. Evaluators also received reports that while equity is a priority in MPS, there is a dire need for a clear path toward equity with specific goals. In interviews and focus groups, staff members expressed an eagerness for the district to focus on specific goals and equity initiatives and

clearly communicate how staff members can participate. One staff member recommended that the district, “Pick three initiatives, and zoom in. Do them long enough to see results. If you keep switching detergents, you don’t know where the hell you’re getting your rash from.”

**The current organization of equity work and lack of requirements for professional learning fail to distribute the responsibility of institutionalizing equity onto all leadership.** Evaluators found, through surveys interviews and focus groups, a number of staff members at the administrative level have the awareness, knowledge, and skills to connect their everyday work with the larger vision of creating an equitable school district. At the same time, many of these staff members appear to be working in isolation from each other, without formal structures to partner, strategize, plan and problem-solve around vital equity issues in the district. Evaluators also found, through surveys and interviews, administrators who had significant gaps in their awareness, knowledge, and skills around educational equity, and were not being supported in finding ways to build their awareness, knowledge, and skills nor were required to work on filling these gaps. The resulting pattern in the district was that a small number of administrators appeared to be shouldering the vast task of institutionalizing equity in MPS, without the benefit of a formal structure with the authority to design and implement policy and practice changes.

**Although Manchester Public Schools has provided a number of equity-focused workshops and trainings for staff members, these initiatives have been limited, unsystematic, and often optional.** Manchester Public Schools have taken steps to offer equity-focused professional learning opportunities to staff. Notably, these opportunities have included: The Administrators Race and Culture Group which held regular meetings during the spring of the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years; workshops for staff and families provided by the Anti-Defamation League during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years; and various workshops on topics related to cultural competence lead by the district Equity Coordinator. In addition, school community members attended local equity-focused conferences and convenings during the 2017-2018 school year.<sup>57</sup>

Occasional and optional equity-focused professional learning opportunities have not provided ways for educators to engage in ongoing learning and growth. Many staff members reported that they could benefit from additional professional development in these areas:

- 17 percent of staff members agreed that they would like additional professional development to be able to better work with students or family members of color;
- 16 percent of staff agreed that they would like additional professional development to work with student or family members identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, asexual, or pansexual;
- 20 percent of staff agreed that they would like additional professional development to be able to work with students or family members identifying as transgender, gender non-conforming, gender fluid or non-binary;
- More than a third of staff members (34 percent) agreed that they would like additional professional development to work with students receiving ELL services or family members whose primary language is not English;
- More than half of staff members (52 percent) agreed that they would like additional professional development to work with students or family members with a history of trauma; and
- More than a third of staff members (38 percent) agreed that they would like additional professional development to work with students or families living in poverty.

In focus group discussions with paraprofessional staff members, these staff members reported that there is limited access to ongoing professional learning for non-certified staff. In an interview, one staff member spoke passionately about feeling unprepared to support an elementary student that she perceived to be questioning their gender identity. The staff member shared that she would benefit from additional training in how to support transgender and gender non-conforming students, and students questioning their gender identity. The teacher said, “She would shut down and cry and not talk like I’ve never seen before...I felt like she was a true at-risk kid and I didn't know what to do for her...I can read up on it, but it still doesn’t equip me as a teacher.”

**MPS is losing staff members of color to other school districts and is lagging in its stated recruitment goals for staff members of color.** Many staff members of color talked about the challenges of being the only person of color or one of few people of color in their school or workplace. In particular:

- Staff members of color reported feeling pressure and judgment from their colleagues and administrators at Manchester Public Schools. Staff members of color were twice as likely (15 percent v. 7 percent) to agree that they have felt excluded by their colleagues because of an aspect of their identity, twice as likely (16 percent v. 7 percent) to agree that they feel pressure at their school or office to change the way they speak, dress or act in order to fit in, and three times as likely (15 percent v. 4 percent) to agree that they have felt unwelcome in their school or office because of an aspect of their identity. Twenty-three percent of staff members of color agreed that they feel they have been overlooked for a promotion or a desired position change as an employee of MPS.
- Staff members of color reported being forced to take on the role of “spokesperson” about race among their peers and simultaneously criticized for speaking up about issues of race. During interviews and focus group discussions, many staff members of color recounted experiences when white colleagues failed to address how race and racism were impacting a situation. In some instances, after naming or addressing a racial issue, Black staff members reported being labeled and stereotyped as ‘an angry Black person’. A female staff person of color in a focus group said, “I find when I am in meetings and I say something that is related to race, it’s like, ‘Oh no, what is she going to say?’...Whenever I speak people get defensive.” When equity and inclusion are being discussed in a school setting, staff members of color reported feeling less engagement from their colleagues and feeling like equity work is considered their responsibility as staff members of color.
- Staff members of color reported being relied on more frequently than their white peers to implement the schools’ disciplinary and restorative practices. In focus group discussions and interviews, staff members of color reported having built strong relationships with their students regardless of race and describe these relationships as important when applying MPS discipline and restorative practices. Staff members of color surveyed were significantly more likely than their white colleagues to agree that they are comfortable with the plan outlined for behavior management at their school, that the disciplinary rules established by the school district are easy to understand, and that they are confident in their ability to use restorative practices with students or adults.<sup>58</sup> In focus groups and interviews, staff members of color reported feeling disproportionately called upon to leverage their relationships with students and their comfort with restorative practices to take on disciplinary and restorative work in MPS:

“Kids of color who have issues with white teachers get sent to me because I will fix it,” said one staff member of color in a focus group.

“I remember having to be that person who has to deal with the POC kids. Then I hear, 'You're only doing things for the Black kids!'" said a female staff member of color. “The stress and the expectations of the white teachers who think you'll deal with it because you're Black. They have you deal with the parents as well because they want you to deliver the bad news about their kid's behavior.”

Another staff member of color stated, “They put us in a corner until we have to mentor a young Black person, I am not just a token.”

- Focus group discussions and interviews revealed that some staff members of color do not feel their school administration is creating a welcoming environment for honest and direct feedback for staff members of color. When surveyed, the vast majority, 92 percent of staff members of color agreed that they feel comfortable speaking to their supervisors; however, focus group discussions and interviews revealed a pattern of staff members of color who were uncomfortable reporting their full and complete experiences and recommendations to the school administration. One educator of color did not want evaluators to take notes during their interview for fear of being tied back to the conversation. Another educator of color repeatedly mentioned in an interview that they didn't want to speak ill of the district, saying it was better than where they had been teaching prior and they did not want to get fired. One former teacher of color described efforts to change their classroom and school environment: “The department hated me. I felt silenced. It was psychologically damaging. That's why I had to leave.”

**The lack of staff members of color, particularly educators of color, employed by the district was a common concern among students, staff and families.** In MPS, there are disproportionately fewer staff members and administrators of color than students of color.<sup>59</sup> When surveyed, 45 percent of students of color surveyed in grades 7-12 disagreed that there are teachers at their school who have a similar life experience as them. In focus groups and interviews, students commented on the lack of educators of color in MPS:

In a focus group, a Black female student said, “White kids excel and they're seeing themselves reflected. It's not fair that we don't have that.”

One Black male student commented in an interview, “We should have more Black teachers. More teachers that actually understand the culture and understand the students. These teachers don't understand the students and what they go through. They would at least understand how it feels. I have never had a Black teacher...just a counselor or an ISS [in-school suspension] person.” During a focus group, a Black female student said, “It's harder to be the teacher's favorite when you are Black, no matter what you do. When I was cheering, nothing I could do could make me the favorite. I had to act more of like how white people act. To get anywhere in school, I needed to act white.”

In survey responses and focus group discussions, family members reported discomfort with the lack of staff members of color:

Through a survey response, a white parent of a Black child stated, “I don't believe that anyone other than his guidance counselor has taken the time to get to know him.” Another parent in a focus group for families of color said, “She has not had a teacher of color aside of the assistant in her classroom. However, I think children would feel a connection to their teachers of color if they had them. You're more inclined

to feel like they can do things too. The discipline is an issue too, they are more inclined to see a child as a child not a “Black” child. They won’t associate the culture with the behavior. Things would be more fair.”

A white parent of a white child also stated in a survey response, “I worry about the cultural responsiveness training (or lack thereof) for teachers and staff. I worry that my child’s peers do not have a racially and culturally diverse group of teachers and teacher aides working with them, and this is a deficit for my daughter and her peers. Teachers and staff should better represent their classrooms racially and culturally.”

A staff member of color commented on recruitment of other staff of color in an interview, “We need teachers of color...but I do not feel like I want to ask people of color to come work in a place to struggle with us.”

### **Staff members with one or more disabilities report lack of support from Manchester Public Schools.**

When surveyed, 39 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities disagreed that they are satisfied with the way their concerns are addressed by school and district leadership, and 41 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities disagreed that leadership at their schools or in their offices are proactive in resolving conflicts between staff members. Staff members with one or more disabilities were significantly more likely than staff members without a disability to agree that they feel they have been overlooked for a promotion or desired position change while being an employee in MPS.<sup>60</sup> Staff members without a disability were significantly more likely than their peers with one or more disabilities to agree that:

- They are comfortable reporting issues of discrimination that they see in their school or district;<sup>61</sup> and
- They feel comfortable talking to their supervisor.<sup>62</sup>

Evaluators observed a lack of physical structures to support staff members with one or more disabilities. One staff member at a middle school described how the building is “not friendly for people who cannot go far,” citing the lack of accessibility to athletic fields, band room, bathrooms, the conference room, and some entrances. While the main entrance and courtyard are accessible, this staff member described how the facility’s one elevator is foul-smelling, inconveniently located, and too small, leading to uncomfortable and potentially unsafe situations for students and staff. “If a teacher worked here with mobility issues, it would be a nightmare,” they said.

Across focus group discussions and in interviews with staff members with one or more disabilities, a recurring topic was concern over affordable and accessible health insurance options:

In a focus group, a staff member shared, “I had anxiety, ADHD, and depression. Teaching is a hard job with that, but I really love teaching... Our insurance doesn’t cover it [the medication] and that’s ridiculous. I’m unmedicated right now. I don’t know what that would be like...walking in to my administrator’s office and telling him. ‘I had a panic attack this morning and I was wondering where I should go. Could I go to the nurse’s office?’”

Another staff member said, “About coverage, there is no vision coverage. And most of the people in here are wearing vision correction.”



A white female teacher reported equity issues around prescription drugs for teachers in high deductible health insurance plans. The deductible in these plans has doubled and the Town's funding mechanism for its share of the deductible forces some teachers to spend the summer without the necessary medications for themselves and their dependents.

**Manchester Public Schools lacks a meaningfully multicultural curriculum.** Research shows that a curriculum centering on the perspectives and history of white people causes “students to disengage from academic learning.”<sup>63</sup> The vast and varied histories, narratives, and contributions to modern society of the countless ethnic groups that have shaped our world's history are trivialized, simplified, or erased without a curriculum that is meaningfully multicultural.<sup>64</sup> Evaluators received numerous reports and observed that the MPS curriculum includes minimal histories and narratives of people from marginalized groups, connection to current events, and examination of larger global justice issues.

**Students, staff members and family members reported gaps in the current MPS curriculum.** When surveying students of color in grades 7-12:

- Forty-six percent disagreed that they see their racial and ethnic identities reflected in the things they learn at school;
- Fifty percent disagreed that they read stories about people who share their racial and ethnic identity in school; and
- Forty-three percent disagreed that they learn about the history of people from their culture at school.

White students in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely than their peers of color to agree that they see their racial and ethnic identities reflected in the things they learn at school; read stories about people who share their racial or ethnic identity in school; and learn about the history of people from their culture at school.<sup>65</sup>

In interviews and focus group discussions, staff members and family members commented on the lack of cultural representation in the MPS curriculum:

When asked about the top inequities in the school district, one educator responded, “The lack of culturally responsive, Afro-centric, and Latinx cultures and “stories” (along with other ethnic and cultural backgrounds) as a central part of the learning experience/curriculum for our youth.”

One Black parent noted that the biggest challenge they faced as a parent is the “lack of cultural information in the school.” They elaborated, “Children need to be taught more things about their own culture. The education is very one-sided.” Another Black parent responded stating that their biggest challenge is “finding better reading materials and books that relate truthfully to our history, culture and experiences” and “having more teachers of color represented in my children's schools.”

“We need cultural competence – representation of cultures throughout the curriculum and not just during Black History Month or Women's History Month. I want marginalized studies to be the focus and not the elective,” said one staff member of color in an interview. “Nowhere in any of these history books, not any class I have been to, has there ever been a lesson on the Stonewall Riots. This is so ridiculous to me for a variety of reasons. It ties into LGBT (issues), but also transgender women of color...I don't know of any Puerto Rican history (being taught) ...none. But yet our population are a majority of Puerto Rican students.”

While there are some isolated attempts to make the MPS curriculum more inclusive of the voices of people from marginalized groups, evaluators did not find evidence of a consistent a broad strategy for updating its curriculum to include delivery, content, teaching and learning materials, and assessment in a way that is “meaningfully multicultural.”<sup>66</sup> Currently, there is only one staff person in the school district that is tasked with working with teachers to support them in making their curriculum more “culturally relevant” and “culturally responsive.”

### **(3) Gaps in Staff Skills Necessary to Support Students, Staff, and Families from Marginalized Groups**

Many certified staff members and non-certified staff members in Manchester Public Schools lack the knowledge and skills to address the ways race, class, sexuality, gender identity, ability, religion, and language are impacting the learning environment in MPS schools and workplaces. These skill gaps<sup>67</sup> largely stem from the lack of institutional structures to support equity-focused learning and professional learning among staff members. An understanding of the following skill gaps identified by this assessment can help MPS focus future professional learning opportunities and equity initiatives according to the needs of district employees. The following skill gaps in MPS staff are contributing to an inequitable school climate:

**Staff members fail to consistently respond to discrimination, harassment, and inequities within a school culture in which staff members are not encouraged to talk about race, class, sexuality, gender identity, and other critical equity issues – highlighting the presence of color blindness in the district.** More than a quarter of staff members surveyed disagreed that they openly talk about race and racism with their students and disagreed that they are prepared to respond to racial conflicts at their school or office. Only 13 percent of staff members agreed that they have reported issues of discrimination to a supervisor in their school or in the district. Some staff members reported a hesitation and unwillingness by some white staff in the district to recognize race as an issue.

One white staff member reported, “Staff mindset is a big challenge because of implicit bias. Public schools are reflective of society, and our society has an issue admitting white privilege.”

Another white female staff member said, “I am super frustrated...There is no talk about race, class and gender. Nothing said about the immigration and Muslim ban, and nothing from the district about what to do...Every morning I bring up privilege, Flint, other people who don’t have things we have. We have to talk about it and I feel like no one is talking about it.” This staff member went on to explain that she felt district leadership should be doing more to support students from marginalized groups. She explained that she wanted the district to “stand up for your marginalized students, especially Muslim students and undocumented students and families. Tell our undocumented students that we will protect them, that we will stand with them, that they are valued. Tell our community that as well.”

Unsafe learning environments are sustained when administrators and staff do not respond to complaints of discrimination and harassment as they arise. Eighteen percent of students of color in grades 5 and 6 and 31 percent of students of color in grades 7-12 disagreed that teachers respond to conflicts about race in the classroom in a way that makes things better.

Evaluators repeatedly heard reports of staff concerns that discussing topics like sexuality and racism with children will only make things worse. This places students in a school culture that erases their experiences and makes teachers feel uncomfortable talking to students about these issues. Many educators also lack

knowledge and practice about how to talk about racism, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression that impact students, staff, and families from marginalized groups, which is connected to a lack of adequate training for staff members. In this school climate, staff members of color frequently end up being some of the only adults comfortable talking about race, thereby forcing them to act as a “spokesperson” about racialized issues (see discussion on page 54 concerning the lack of institutional structures to support staff of color).

In focus group discussions and interviews, students reported not feeling supported by their teachers and other staff members at Manchester Public Schools:

When asked about teachers’ responses to in-school harassment, one LGBTQ+ student said, “They don’t care. They don’t pay attention. I have been called a dyke a lot. I have been told to kill myself. I have had a teacher laugh and tell me to get back to work.”

“It’s about the look of my face,” said one Asian American student. “I feel like a kid from Manchester. Kids used to say ‘konnichiwa’ to me, but it’s now stopped. Other kids continue to call me Chinese. I just want to be called my name.” He added, “It would help if the teacher would tell the class that I’m from Manchester, but my family came from [name of country].<sup>68</sup>

**Many students from marginalized groups reported a lack of positive relationships with educators and experiences of inequitable treatment.** Students reported the following patterns connected to relationships between staff members and students from marginalized groups:

- Students, particularly Black and Latinx students, reported feeling categorized as either a “good kid” or a “bad kid” by adults at their school. Students in focus group discussions reported feeling labeled as “bad kids” based on how they talk, act, dress, who they associate with, or due to a single behavioral incident. Students of color, particularly Black and Latinx students, reported experiencing different treatment, and feeling labeled by adults as “bad kids” based on their appearance and behavior. White students surveyed in grades 5 and 6 were significantly more likely than their peers of color to agree that their teachers think that they are a good kid.<sup>69</sup> Students of color surveyed in grades 5 and 6 were significantly more likely than white students to agree that they feel pressure from the adults at school to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to “fit in.”<sup>70</sup>

According to one teacher of color, “They’re called ‘bad kids’ but they’re just making poor choices due to frustration in class, they’re not getting the attention they need so they disrupt the class or exhibit poor hallway behavior.”

In focus group discussions, Black female students reported feeling treated differently by adults at their school than white female students. They more often reported being treated as angry or disruptive when they are upset. Female students of color in grades 7-12 were most likely to disagree that adults at their school are supportive when they are feeling negative emotions when compared to their peers.

“I came from being an A+ and B student to almost failing,” shared a Black female student during a focus group. “I felt like I couldn’t do it. Teachers ignore how you feel. If I’m sad, I have an attitude. They don’t care, they don’t ask me. They [staff] expect me to be angry, but I’m sad.”

- Students, particularly female students, students of color, and students with one or more disabilities, reported feeling that teachers do not believe them. Positive student-staff relationships, in which staff members believe students – especially in instances of students reporting harassment and discrimination from other students and/or staff members – are essential to maintaining an equitable school environment that invites students to report inequities. Girls, especially girls of color, reported to evaluators that their teachers do not believe them; in a number of cases, girls reported that teachers don't believe that boys hit them or are bothering them (see “How Backpack Rules Connect to Menstrual Equity and Respect for Women and Girls” on page 45). One Latina elementary school student commented that they did not feel believed when describing a conflict with a substitute teacher, “When I told an adult [about a conflict with a substitute teacher], they wouldn't listen to me and would think I lied.” When surveyed, students without a disability in grades 5 and 6 were significantly more likely to agree that if something bad happens to them at school, there is an adult who believes them and responds in a way that makes things better than their peers with one or more disabilities.<sup>71</sup> In both student surveys, students without disabilities were significantly more likely to agree that teachers understand and listen to them than their peers with one or more disabilities.<sup>72</sup> In focus group discussions, some students with one or more disabilities reported not feeling listened to by their teachers, and often reported feeling threatened by their teachers:

A Latina student with one or more disabilities reported that, “They are getting two more cops at [my school]. They don't trust us.” She also said, “My mom and dad don't trust the teachers in the school.”

**The current relationship of staff members as authority figures and students as subordinates does not encourage student participation or collaboration with problem-solving, decision-making, and determining consequences, and it limits the development of positive relationships.** The assessment revealed numerous instances of teachers carrying out their roles primarily as figures commanding authority and requiring control over students – relationships in which teachers are in charge, and students must comply with the rules, values, and norms set by teachers. Forty-two percent of staff members surveyed agreed that punishment is effective at changing students' behavior. More than 40 percent of students surveyed in grades 7-12 disagreed that adults at their school involve them in decisions to make the school better. There are few structured opportunities for MPS students to participate in their education and give feedback to the school administration.

Evaluators observed an overall focus on order and compliance as a central part of the school climate of some MPS schools. One staff member of color commented on this focus, “We need an opportunity where kids can be kids. My God, these kids are six years old. ‘Stand in a straight line...be quiet...do not talk in the hallway. Hands behind your back.’ It looks like a prison. And I don't even agree that prison should be run like that. It feels a lot of the time that the fun is taken out of education.”

When asked, during a focus group discussion, how their school could be improved, a Black male student said, “No following shit. They [teachers] stand outside the bathroom to wait for you...if you're taking too long.” Evaluators observed, and students reported several instances of hyper-surveillance of students of color. Another male student of color commented, “They [teachers] feel like they can have an attitude with you.”

A white female administrator in the district said, “Every adult in the building needs to be comfortable with and empathetic of students’ needs. We don’t understand what ‘empowering students’ means. Some adults believe that ‘empowerment’ means giving children license to disrespect adults.”

An administrator of color said, “The challenge to relationship building is relinquishing authority. However, teachers don’t understand the difference between ‘[F] you’ and ‘[F] this’ and that it’s not always personal.”<sup>73</sup>

In focus group discussions with Black students, a recurring topic was the lack of having their ideas heard by staff members at their schools:

One student said, “Give kids a voice in the school, nobody asks us anything. We need a voice.”

Another student reported that adults in their building did not listen to students’ input, “Like they asked us about Power Hour but didn’t listen to us.”

Yet another student said, “The people who run things are the ones who don’t want us there. The opportunities are there. But they don’t want us.”

#### (4) Inequitable Access to Opportunities for MPS Students, Staff, and Families

Students, staff members, and family members from marginalized groups reported barriers to accessing academic, extracurricular, and professional learning opportunities, major factors that contribute to the creation and maintenance of the equity gap. The most prominent findings from this assessment related to the accessibility of opportunities for MPS students, staff members and family members from marginalized groups are:

**Exclusionary discipline is a major barrier to access to educational opportunities for students of color, students with disabilities, and students who experience food insecurity.** Exclusionary disciplinary measures are any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from [their] usual educational setting.<sup>74</sup> Students of color in grades 7-12 were:

- **Significantly more likely** than their white peers to agree that they have been given an in-school suspension (ISS) or sent to ISS or given an office referral because of behavior this school year;<sup>75</sup>
- **More than twice** as likely as their white peers to agree that they have been removed from or told to leave their classroom this year (17 percent v. 8 percent);
- **More than twice** as likely as their white peers to agree that they have received an office referral because of their behavior during this school year (9 percent v. 4 percent);
- **More than three times** as likely as their white peers to agree that they have been given an out of school suspension this school year (4 percent v. 1 percent) – with male students of color being significantly more likely to agree that they have been given an out of school suspension than their peers; and
- **Four times** as likely as their white peers to agree that they've been physically restrained by an adult in school (4 percent v. 1 percent).

White students in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely than their peers of color to agree that they are treated fairly by the adults at their school.<sup>76</sup>

A quarter of the staff (26 percent) surveyed disagreed that they are confident in their ability to use restorative practices. Evaluators spoke with numerous staff members who were excited about the district's move toward restorative practices, yet felt they needed more training. Evaluators also observed challenges with the implementation of restorative practices in all settings where they held ethnographic site observations. Evaluators received multiple reports from staff that there is a conflict between the application of punitive and exclusionary discipline measures, such as ISS, and attempts to incorporate restorative practices. This created confusion for teachers and students.

One staff member who managed an In-School Suspension (ISS) room expressed concerns over the lack of parameters for staff when referring students to ISS and explained that students are referred to ISS for a variety of disciplinary infractions that seem to range in severity. According to this staff member, some infractions are inconsequential while others are significant enough that student removal from the classroom is the only way to restore the learning environment. The lack of clear parameters for removal to ISS was observed by evaluators at other schools. In addition, some staff members charged with supporting student behavior struggled with how to implement restorative practices once students were punitively removed from the classroom. An example highlighting staff challenges with restorative practices can be seen in the quote below:

A male behavioral technician in the district said, "100 to 200 kids move through ISS each month. They [school staff]<sup>77</sup> are following the restorative practices model in adult to student interactions. [The] Bulk of discipline is restoring adult-student relationships. It's challenging dealing with teachers' inconsistencies and correcting behavior without consequences."

Students of color in grades 5 and 6 were more than twice as likely as their white peers to agree that they have been given an in-school suspension (ISS) (12 percent v. 5 percent) and significantly more likely than their white peers to agree they have been sent to ISS or given an office referral because of behavior this school year.<sup>78</sup> According to a former MPS teacher and local resident, "The students feel it. The students of color get stopped in the hallways more and asked for passes, than the white kids."

Staff members talked about how adult behavior impacts and at times, fosters challenging student behavior:

A staff member of color who often supports students of color with behavioral challenges explained, "I am hitting the wall a lot of the time. The teachers just want to know... 'what are we going to do about the kids? They are out of control! What are we going to do?' They say they'd like to respond with, 'What are we going to do about you? You are kind of mean and you don't have good relationship skills. What are we doing about that? -- which you can never ask somebody for some reason.'"

Students with one or more disabilities in grades 5 and 6 were significantly more likely than their peers without a disability to agree that they have:

- Been removed or told to leave the classroom this year;<sup>79</sup>
- Received an office referral for their behavior;<sup>80</sup>
- Been put in a room by themselves for their behavior;<sup>81</sup> and

- Been given an in-school suspension or sent to ISS this school year.<sup>82</sup>

In focus group discussions, middle school students receiving special education services reported that teachers frequently disciplined them by removing them from their learning environment with little to no explanation. According to one middle school student, “Teachers kicked me out of the room and they don’t tell you why.” Another classmate added, “[The Teacher] kicked me out because I didn’t get a quiz and said I should’ve been paying attention.” Some students receiving special education services felt targeted by particular teachers. One student shared, “They lie to parents. They like to pick on you. Period.”

In an interview a staff member reported, “It frustrates me when colleagues think [students] are not capable and penalize them for something they’re not able to do, instead of making the necessary modifications. I had a 7<sup>th</sup> grader last year who couldn’t read *Cat in the Hat*. He was going to class and being a behavioral issue.” She said that staff frequently ignore, mislabel, or over-diagnose students in need of reading intervention services. “The teachers look just at the test scores and not the big picture.”

**Entrance and exit criteria for alternative education placements in the district are not clearly defined nor understood.** Within MPS, there are several alternative education placements aimed to support students who are not succeeding in mainstream schools. According to the Alternative Placement Referral Form, these alternative placements include:

- District and District-Wide Learning Centers (DWLC/DLC) at Elementary Schools, Bennet Academy, Illing, and MHS;
- In-District Special Education Program, Manchester Regional Academy;
- Alternative Regular Education Program in District, Bentley Alternative Education Program; and
- Alternative Regular Education Option in District, E-Credit.<sup>83</sup>

Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, MPS plans to open a new alternative placement for middle-school students.<sup>84</sup>

While assessing access to opportunities, staff members reported a lack of clearly outlined and applied guidelines for how students enter and exit alternative placements. Alternative placements are used in MPS as places for students who are not successful in the regular education settings, oftentimes because of behavioral issues. A student is typically placed in an alternative setting after a group of school and district staff convene to discuss the options for a student that experiences challenges at school.

In focus group discussions and interviews of students in middle and high school, some students in alternative placements reported not understanding many facets of their experiences – including the purpose of their placement, how long they would remain in an alternative education program, or what they needed to do in order to transition into a mainstream environment. Some staff members and students described a lack of clear and consistent processes to review the progress of students in alternative placements and evaluate their readiness to return to a mainstream environment.

In addition to the alternative placements listed on the Alternative Placement Referral Form, evaluators learned about several alternative placements for elementary students in regular education who are experiencing behavioral challenges. Based on interviews with staff members, these classrooms were referred to as Room 101 or Room 1. Across schools, evaluators observed confusion about these particular “behavior rooms” and heard reports of a lack of communication about the existence and purpose of these



placements. Staff members described a lack of formal policies and procedures to guide the use of these settings, including a lack of clear policies on how students enter and exit Room 101 or Room 1. One staff member explained, “The idea behind them is that there is a strict plan to address skill deficits, fill a void, and start applying them in regular ed. When they were first opened they were meant to be a six-week placement. There are kids who haven’t left and have been there for a year-and-a-half.”

An administrator of color at MPS described the process by which students who exhibit challenges in mainstream environments begin to be ‘tracked’ for alternative education, “At a monthly Admin meeting there’s talk about a tough time with three 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. Girls. What to do with them? Test them...because there must be something wrong with them. It can’t be the administrators’ fault!” She went on to say, “Not every black girl who acts up is mentally deranged! They [administrators] don’t want to hear the truth – They are the problem! But, they [administrators] are never the problem. It is something wrong with the kids or parents.”

**Students in alternative placements are unable to access the same social and academic opportunities as students in mainstream environments.** Alternative education placements provide a beneficial focus on supporting students with the social, emotional, and practical life skills needed to survive outside of school, yet students in alternative placements are not able to access the full range of academically rigorous programming, extra-curricular programming, enrichment opportunities, and additional supports offered to students in mainstream environments. Students in alternative placements repeatedly reported feeling outcast, as seen in the student experiences reported on page 64.

During ethnographic observations at the alternative education program housed on its own campus, evaluators observed a school climate in which the care and respect that staff members demonstrated for students had a clear positive impact on the school climate, and on students’ lives. Evaluators experienced this school as an inclusive environment, where the emotional needs of the students were prioritized. One former student expressed that, “The people that changed my life were the teachers at [this school] ...I think that I was looking for a support system and I found it here... I came from an abusive family, became a young father, sold drugs, graduated, went straight and made it out with no felonies. I live too careful now.”

One white staff member talked about meeting student’s needs, “Success to me is that a student finds something they love and that they do it well. We’re dealing with a select group of students. We have to look at every child and determine what they need.”

Another white male staff member said, “This school has a family feel where children are allowed to be children, staff is very connected to the children. The staff has intentionally built a culture of inclusivity.”

However, several educators brought up their concerns about the lack of academic rigor at the school. A white, male teacher was asked how he inspires greatness into his students. He replied, “I listen to them and I believe them.” He also stated that in his opinion, kids aren’t being academically prepared for college, but stressed that if the students don’t learn to take care of themselves, to develop their character, and manage their emotions, academic rigor won’t even matter. Other staff members described the same tension between meeting students’ social and emotional needs at the expense of foregoing academic rigor.

In addition to lack of academic rigor, evaluators noted other disparities between mainstream school environments and alternative education programs, particularly those that currently exist in a school-within-a-school model. During ethnographic site observations evaluators noted disparities in climate; school materials and supplies; and sense of belonging between the mainstream school environment, and the alternative education programs structured as a school-within-a-school. In focus group discussions and drop-in conversations with students and staff at an alternative education program, there was a recurring theme that the structure of this alternative education program was that of a locked-down hallway with no identity of its own and without access or rights to the educational experiences and opportunities afforded to the students and staff in the mainstream school.

A staff member described comments she has heard from students in an alternative placement: “The kids in the DLC’s (District Learning Centers) say to me, ‘we are here because we don’t belong anywhere.’” In an interview, a high school student with a disability who is in an alternative placement explained some of the challenges he has faced throughout his educational life as a student with dyslexia: “I wish they had actually explained to me what dyslexic was. I didn’t learn about it until this year. All I knew is that I was being taken out of classes because I couldn’t read. No one ever explained to me what dyslexic was or why I was struggling. I wish they actually kept me in speech because I can’t pronounce a lot of things. I wish they would actually explain it...I asked my speech teacher why I took speech and she explained to me that it is a disability where you see things backwards or stutter, that’s also why I have an IEP. I didn’t know I had an IEP until freshman year in high school. High school is when I struggled the most...and when I was getting stressed out, I felt stupid...especially in History and English. I hated being forced to read aloud...me being forced to read made me worse. I was sad.”

A white female staff member said, “[These] students go to lunch last. Sometimes there is no food left for the students. [The school] doesn’t have its own identity.” She went on to say that she has a different image of the alternative education program, “These are not ‘bad kids’, they have learning differences. This is not the ‘bad kids’ school. Alternative isn’t bad; it’s flexible, adaptable to learning and social-emotional needs...There need to be alternative paths for life after high school. Alternative schools need to prepare kids to be skilled and able to enter the workforce, but more resources are needed. We’re only one hallway.”

Another white female staff member remembers when the alternative education program used to have two middle school teachers. Now the program only has one middle school teacher. She said, “People over there [at the mainstream school] don’t care about us.” And, a Latina student in the alternative education program reported, “[This school] is a hallway; the only time students get to leave is for lunch, gym, or an elective...There is no room for middle-schoolers [here]!” She also said, “[This school] is known for having all the ‘bad’ kids.”

A white female student in the alternative education program said, “They say [this school] is the ‘island of misfit toys,’ but I don’t feel like a misfit.” She reports that when she tells people that she is at the alternative education program, they ask her: ‘who did you have to fight to get there?’ She is very concerned about the lack of academic rigor in the program. She says that she is never given any homework assignments at [the school] and thinks this may impact her ability to do college level work.

In focus group discussions, several students reported that people’s perception of the students in alternative education programs are extremely negative. One Black male student expressed, “I feel like they generalize us based on who we are and how we talk. Like ‘these types of kids’.” Another Black male

student said, “They [teachers and staff] think we’re all juvenile delinquents out here. We got handcuffs and shackles on. They look at us like we’re not normal people.”

Silk City Café, a student run eatery and popular location at the high school, in the direct sight-line of most of the alternative education classroom windows and provides a stark example of the difference in student experience between mainstream students and those in alternative education programs who are denied access to the educational experiences and rights afforded to mainstream students. Alternative education students reported that they were rarely, if ever, allowed access to the Café. One student said, “It feels like I’m less than a student here.”

During the ethnographic site observations, evaluators found that although the stated function of alternative education programs is to provide students who struggle with achievement and/or behavior in mainstream learning environments, in practice, these programs serve as an expansion of the district’s exclusionary discipline system. The structure of the alternative education programs makes it possible for district schools to remove students who are seen as difficult or problematic, and in effect reduces the district’s obligation to provide these students with an equitable education, as supported by research.<sup>85</sup>

**Family members from marginalized groups reported challenges accessing information about school policies, parental and student rights, activities, and resources to ensure their children’s equitable access to educational opportunities.**

When surveyed:

- Almost a quarter of family members surveyed (22 percent) disagreed that they know where they can get information about their rights as a parent of a child in Manchester Public Schools, and family members without a disability were significantly more likely than family members with one or more disabilities to agree that they know where they can get information about these rights.<sup>86</sup>
- More than half of family members of color, LGBTQ+ family members, family members with one or more disabilities, and family members whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program disagreed that they have received information about Gifted and Talented instruction, acceleration/enrichment classes, AP, Honors, and/or Early-College courses for their child. Less than half of all family members surveyed agreed that they have received this information.
- 18 percent of family members of color disagreed that they know about after-school programs or extra-curricular activities available to their child. White family members were significantly more likely than family members of color to agree to this question.<sup>87</sup>
- Heterosexual family members were significantly more likely than LGBTQ+ family members to agree that they can access additional programs and services that will help their child when they need academic support and that they are given the tools and support they need to help their child learn at home.<sup>88</sup>
- Family members whose children are not participating in the free and reduced lunch program were significantly more likely than family members whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program to agree that they know about after-school programs or extra-curricular activities available to their child and that it is easy for their child to get to school on time.<sup>89</sup>

Some staff members and families reported that information about parental rights and student services is shared inconsistently across the district. In an interview, a white staff member reported, “The parents at

[school name] don't know their rights so they get less. There is a serious disparity in this District. It's almost sickening and I've considered leaving.”

The same staff member explained, “There are definitely kids with severe needs that we aren't even touching. It's about how much the parents know about their rights and can advocate for their child. We have a culture of not educating parents...”

Another white female staff member reported, “If you have no idea of your child's rights you are going to be walked all over; if you have a big mouth they will do whatever you want.”

In a focus group for families with one or more disabilities or living with someone with one or more disabilities, a white parent described her experience accessing services from the district: “[I have a child] who has been at 3 different schools in MPS. [The child] had a hard time for a year and a half before they agreed that he needed to be in a Special Ed class. Instead of an experienced teacher, he had a rookie teacher who was hired because the other one quit,” she said. “He is doing good now, but it was a fight with the people at the school. The vice-principal told me it was because I didn’t know how to discipline him.”

In the same focus group, another parent whose child with a disability has been at a number of different schools over the past three years reported that they did not have a positive experience accessing services in the district. The parent described the arduous process of getting a lawyer to prove that their child needed an individualized educational plan (IEP).<sup>90</sup> The parent felt that the district should have done more to support families of students with one or more disabilities instead of leaving family members to do the extra work on their own. A third parent of a child with a disability echoed this point and explained that their partner had to leave their full-time job in order to advocate for their child’s education.

**Across all races, family members with one or more disabilities reported challenges accessing the same facilities, information, and opportunities available to their peers without a disability.** When surveyed, family members without a disability were significantly more likely than family members with one or more disabilities to agree that they:

- Are treated with respect by their child's teachers;<sup>91</sup>
- Feel comfortable speaking with their child's teachers;<sup>92</sup>
- Are satisfied with the way their child’s school responds to their concerns;<sup>93</sup>
- Have been invited to volunteer at their child’s school;<sup>94</sup>
- Are greeted with kindness when they call or visit the school;<sup>95</sup>
- Know how their child is doing academically at all times;<sup>96</sup> and
- Receive information from the school about what their child is expected to learn during the year.<sup>97</sup>

Family members with one or more disabilities were significantly more likely than family members without a disability to agree that they feel pressure from the adults at their child's school to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to “fit in.”<sup>98</sup>

During a focus group discussion, two family members with mobility issues described challenges accessing an elementary school building. They described having trouble accessing parking spaces close to the building and needing to locate a staff member in order to be granted access to the elevator. They also

described parent-teacher conferences being held in inaccessible locations on the second floor of the school building and one instance in which they tried to attend a school event during which the handicapped accessible doors to the auditorium were not opened.

**Lack of access to transportation is a barrier to taking full advantage of academic and extracurricular opportunities for many students and families from marginalized groups.** When surveyed, family members of color, LGBTQ+ family members, non-native English-speaking family members, and family members whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program were at least twice as likely to agree that it is challenging to attend events at their child's school because of transportation when compared to their mainstream peers.<sup>99</sup> Family members with one or more disabilities were also significantly more likely to agree to this question than family members without a disability.<sup>100</sup>

When asked whether it is difficult to get to school because of transportation:

- In both student surveys, students of color were significantly more likely than their white peers to agree;<sup>101</sup>
- In both student surveys, students who do not speak English at home were significantly more likely than their peers who speak English at home to agree;<sup>102</sup> and
- Students in grades 5 and 6 who experience food insecurity were significantly more likely than their peers who do not experience food insecurity to agree.<sup>103</sup>

A male elementary school student of color reported challenges around being a 'walker,' "I'm a walker but I can't walk home because my house is at the edge of the woods." He says his parents are worried that something will happen to him by the woods. Access to transportation involves more than the distance a student has to travel and encompass other compounding factors such as a student's health, well-being, and other safety concerns such as the number of high traffic intersections on the way to school, safety during inclement weather, among others.<sup>104</sup>

**Cost is a barrier for participation in school activities for many students and families from marginalized groups.** In both student surveys, when asked whether they do not participate in some school activities because they cost too much money, students of color, students with one or more disabilities, and students experiencing food insecurity were significantly more likely to agree than their mainstream peers.<sup>105</sup> When surveyed, family members of color, LGBTQ+ family members, family members with one or more disabilities, and family members whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program were significantly more likely to agree that the cost of extra-curricular activities makes it difficult for their child to participate than families whose children do not participate in the free and reduced lunch program.<sup>106</sup>

**Low expectations prevent students from marginalized groups from accessing academic opportunities and achieving academic success in MPS.** Through analyzing data collected in survey responses, interviews, ethnographic site observations, and focus group discussions, evaluators found evidence of low expectations of students from marginalized groups in MPS. White students and students not experiencing food insecurity in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely than students of color and students experiencing food insecurity to agree that their teachers encourage them to achieve at a high level.<sup>107</sup> Transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 7-12 were significantly less likely than male and female students to agree that teachers encourage them to achieve at a high level.<sup>108</sup> White students in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely than students of color to agree that their classes are academically challenging for them.<sup>109</sup> 35 percent of non-native English-speaking students in grades 7-12

agreed that they are placed in classes that are too easy for them, making them significantly more likely to agree to this question than native English-speaking students.<sup>110</sup>

During ethnographic site visits, evaluators sat in on classes to observe lessons and instruction. Evaluators found lower-level classes included less engaging material, less engaging teaching strategies, and often more behavioral disruptions. Additionally, evaluators saw an over-representation of students of color in the lower-level classes observed during the assessment and an under-representation of students of color in academically advanced classes.

A white female staff member explained that low expectations “play out in students of color being overly represented in lower-level courses...and students of color being less engaged in certain activities.” She went on to explain how she believes teachers cultivate and transmit the message of lowered expectations particularly for students of color: “I think it is sometimes a discrete moment in a classroom, sometimes a student is not told they can do it.”

A staff member of color commented on the low expectations that some students of color face from adults, saying, “Just because a student’s pants are hanging [low], it doesn’t mean they are any less intelligent. I have a student who I can’t get to pull his pants up, but he speaks five languages – but no one has tapped into that.”

During a focus group discussion, Black male students were asked if they felt supported by their teachers when they asked for help. One Black male student said, “Sometimes I feel like I don’t get the help I need. She [the teacher] just tells me to keep trying.” Another Black male student responded, “Yea they tell you to try your best. She [the teacher] just keeps saying that for every problem! Mostly I don’t feel like I’m being pushed hard.” A third Black male student concurred and added, “Sometimes math is too easy. Some teachers have really high expectations for behavior.” He alluded to experiencing low academic expectations, while experiencing much higher expectations for his behavior.

A Black female student said, “I feel like they set us up for failure. If a white kid says they don’t care, and they want to fail the teacher pushes them. But if Black kids don’t care then they [teachers] don’t [push].”

A Latino student expressed that, “I’ve been told by [a counselor], ‘Let’s be realistic, you’re not ready for a real college experience.’ There’re so many kids here that don’t want to go to college, but I do! And so many people keep telling me I’m not the smartest kid around. I’ve done stupid things, but that doesn’t mean that I’m stupid.”

Through interviews with staff members and during observations of classrooms in alternative education settings, evaluators noted a tension between the focus on supporting students to learn social, emotional, and basic life skills, and ensuring that each student is challenged and held to high academic expectations.

Evaluators heard several accounts from students in alternative placements about their experience of low academic expectations. One student of color with a disability said, “I feel like we should learn more. We are not getting enough work. Some of the work is too easy. No homework.”

Conversely, evaluators found that the expectations placed on Asian students posed a different challenge. Asian students repeatedly expressed feeling forced into classes that were too hard for them. Some Asian

students expressed that once they were in those classes they were expected to understand the content and received little to no support from teachers when questions or concerns arose.

During a focus group discussion, one Asian student reported, “Teachers will suggest things and tell your counselor to be in a certain class. They’ll say, ‘oh but you need it’.... they’ll force you to do it.” The student shared that, “Once you get good grades their standards are higher and maybe they should have the same standards for all the kids in the class.”

In the same focus group another Asian student shared, “My counselor also encouraged me to take a math class that was too hard for me. I’d be a lot more comfortable in a class where I know what I’m doing.”

One white female teacher spoke about how the academic leveling or tracking system at a high school connects with low expectations, particularly of students of color, “What I have noticed is that there is a lot of coded language... ‘That was pretty good for a CP [College Prep] class...That was amazing for a [College Prep] class’. Lower level classes, teachers make comments about it right in front of the kids... I have been super frustrated with excessively coded talk, not even coded. It’s taken on a super weird twist. They talk about behavior in a really strange way...They talk about hoodies. ‘You won’t deal with hoodies in those classes!’ I don’t know what’s going on there...People shit on the lower level classes a lot. I’ve been shocked. People will say, ‘This school is changing. The direction this school is going...’ The demographics are changing, and the comments are so negative.”

A white female teacher commented on her observations about the lack of resources allocated to provide instruction to ELL students. She talked about a South Asian student who is doing great with hands-on learning but hasn’t yet learned to read. “[ELL] Students were kept in guidance because they have to go through testing, but since there is no ELL teacher available to test these kids, these kids are out of the classroom. The first marking period ends November 6, and kids have lost all this instruction time. You don’t send children who have just come to this country to sit in Guidance... It’s not healthy to do this to new arrivals. These parents are trusting that the school is caring for and teaching their children!”

### **(5) Students and Staff Members from Marginalized Groups Feel Less Connected to School Than Their Mainstream Peers**

**There was a significant difference in reported feelings of school connectedness between heterosexual and LGBTQ+ students, in particular students of color belonging to one of these marginalized groups.** When surveyed, more than 30 percent of LGBTQ+ students across both student surveys disagreed that they feel like they belong at their school, disagreed that they feel proud to be a student at their school, and disagreed that they are interested in what they are learning in school.

During a focus group, an LGBTQ+ student said, “It’s not a very supportive and open environment. [The adults] try to change things... but in my opinion nobody is really listening to the kids. The adults are doing things their own way. There’s a lot of disrespect from both the kids and the adults, and not really a lot of effort to communicate what both sides think is wrong or what would help.... I think adults in general think kids don’t have valid views, like we don’t experience enough to know anything.” She commented to the evaluator that she’s never before had a space to discuss her experiences and express how she feels as student in Manchester Public Schools.



**Transgender and gender non-conforming students of color and LGBTQ+ students of color reported challenges connecting to their schools.** When surveyed, female students of color and transgender and gender non-conforming students of color in grades 7-12 were significantly less likely than their peers to agree than they feel like they belong at their school. LGBTQ+ students of color in both student surveys were also significantly less likely to feel like they belong at their school than their peers. Transgender and gender non-conforming students of color were significantly less likely than their peers to agree:

- They are treated fairly by adults at their school;
- Teachers at their school understand and listen to them; and
- They are able to dress and do their hair how they want and still be respected by adults in their school.

In a focus group, one Black male student who identified as queer reported being called a “fruit loop” by an upperclassman and laughed at as the upperclassman proceeded down the hallway. Other queer students agreed: “That stuff always happens, like almost every day.”

The same queer Black male student reported that he struggled to get help when he was being physically abused at home the previous year. He said he had tried to tell the principal and social worker but was ignored. He said that often he would be late to school, and he would try to explain what was happening at home and explain why it was difficult to get to school on time. He felt that his appearance as a big, Black “man” prevented MPS adults from listening to him – he expressed the feeling that if he was a ‘little white girl’ who was telling them ‘these things’, the school would have acted right away. When he was out of school for a few days, his friends went to school administration to express concern for his safety. He said he had reached the point of contemplating suicide. Once his friends expressed their concern, DCF was called, an investigation was conducted, and he was removed from the home. Although he now feels safe, he also expressed that he has no faith in the adults at MPS.

### Need for Further Data on the Experience of Male Students of Color

Of note, when assessing the experiences of male students of color, evaluators collected conflicting data on feelings of safety and belonging in school. Using certain measures, male students of color reported feeling safer than other students. In survey responses, male students of color in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely than their peers to agree that they feel safe at their school, and that they belong at their school.<sup>1</sup>

On some occasions, as with the case study profiled in the section above, male students of color reported feeling unsafe and disconnected. Male students of color were also significantly more likely to receive out of school suspensions, an exclusionary disciplinary practice that removes them from their normal learning environment, as discussed in the “Inequitable Access to Opportunities” section (see page 60).

In other survey responses connected to belonging, male students of color in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely to disagree that teachers at their school understand and listen to them compared to their peers (21 percent v. 13 percent). Male students of color in grades 7-12 were also more likely to disagree that they are treated fairly by the adults at their school than their peers (16 percent v. 9 percent). Male students of color in grades 5 and 6 were also more likely to agree that they felt pressure from the adults at their school to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to ‘fit in’ than their peers (27 percent v. 13 percent).

In focus group discussions, both students and staff members reported that students of color, including Black male students, are treated differently than other students by the adults at their school. Examples of this can be found in the “Lack of Institutional Structures” section of the report (see page 53). Additionally, both students and staff members described how students of color are subjected to low expectations from adults at their school, which impacts the students’ experience of their school’s climate and learning environment (see page 67).

Given the ample evidence provided by national research about the negative experiences plaguing young men of color in educational environments<sup>2</sup> and the dialogue happening across the country regarding the lack of safety afforded to young men of color (including nation-wide discipline disparities and high rates of criminalization), this is a critical area where self-reports of safety are couched in a more complex and well-documented reality of lack of safety. The district needs further study to ensure that it is creating an environment where male students of color are safe and included.

#### References:

<sup>1</sup> Eighty percent of male students of color reported feeling safe at their school, and 81 percent reported feeling like they belong at their school. Male students of color were significantly more likely to agree to these questions than white female students, female students of color, and transgender and gender non-conforming students of any race.

<sup>2</sup> *The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color: Capturing the Student Voice*. College Board Advocacy & Policy Center and Business Innovation Factory, 2011.

**Across all races, there was a significant difference in reported feelings of school connectedness between male students, female students, and transgender and gender non-conforming students.** When surveyed, male students in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely to agree that they feel like they belong at their school and feel proud to be a student at their school than female students or transgender and gender non-conforming students.<sup>111</sup> In the survey of students in grades 5 and 6, transgender and gender non-conforming students were significantly less likely than their male and female peers to feel proud to be a student at their school – only 65 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 5 and 6 agreed to this question.<sup>112</sup> During focus group discussions and individual student interviews during ethnographic site visits students highlighted the experiences that contributed to feeling a lack of belonging at their school.

In a focus group discussion, Black female students in elementary school, connected with one another over the way that boys mistreated and harassed them at their school. One student shared, “They [boys] try to start fights and try to get us mad...” to which a second black female student responded, “Disrespectful! [Boys] Don’t know how to treat a lady.” A third student shared, “They [boys] say bad things about you. They say things about your family. They try to get your attention.” A fourth student added, “They push you.” A fifth student said, “They steal your stuff, they say the B-word and the F-word, and it makes girls really mad and want to punch them.”

When asked how these interactions with boys make them feel, Black female students from the same focus group responded:

- “It makes me mad;”
- “It makes me feel unwanted at this school. It makes me feel like they want me to be in another state;”
- “They make you want to cry, and they make you uncomfortable;” and
- “It makes me uncomfortable; I don’t want to be over the top.”

**Across all races, there was a significant difference in reported feelings of school connectedness between students with one or more disabilities and students without a disability.** In both student surveys, students with one or more disabilities were significantly more likely than their peers without a disability to agree that they have been made fun of or intimidated by other students in school and that they feel pressure from adults at their schools to change the way they speak, dress or act in order to ‘fit in.’<sup>113</sup> In both student surveys, students without disabilities were significantly more likely than their peers with one or more disabilities to agree that:

- They have a group of friends that accepts them;<sup>114</sup>
- They feel like belong at their school;<sup>115</sup> and
- Students at their school respect people who are different from them.<sup>116</sup>

In the survey for students in grades 7-12, white students without a disability and students of color without a disability were most likely to agree that they feel like they belong at their school compared to their peers. According to a white staff member during an interview, there is a prevailing attitude in the district about special education students – that they are not the responsibility of all staff members. She explained, “There’s an attitude of ‘we have bigger fish to fry’ and they are ‘those kids’... No! They are our kids.”

**Across all races, there was a significant difference in reported feelings of school connectedness between staff with one or more disabilities and staff without a disability.** Staff members without a disability were significantly more likely than their peers with one or more disabilities to agree that they enjoy being in their school or office;<sup>117</sup> that they are given sufficient material to perform their job well;<sup>118</sup> that there are opportunities at their school or workplace that allow them to get to know their colleagues;<sup>119</sup> that they are a valued member of their school or office team;<sup>120</sup> that they are proud to work at their school or office;<sup>121</sup> and that there are opportunities for them to pursue positions with greater leadership and pay within Manchester Public Schools.<sup>122</sup> Staff members with one or more disabilities were significantly more likely than staff without a disability to agree that they feel pressure at their school or office to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to fit in.<sup>123</sup> A third (33 percent) of staff with one or more disabilities agreed they could have had a better career or experience working in a different school, a significantly higher percentage than staff without a disability.<sup>124</sup> Staff with one or more disabilities were also significantly more likely than staff without a disability to agree that it is difficult to get to work on time because of transportation.<sup>125</sup>

During focus group discussions, several staff members with one or more disabilities shared experiences that contributed to their feeling a lack of connection to their school or office.

One staff member said, “I just wonder, do the people who I work for care about me? Or do they just care about the results I can get for them?”

“I have ADHD. It is ok if I am able to be on my medication, but when I’m not it’s hard to plan,” said another staff member with a disability. “I have not had the good experience others have. When teachers talk about students with the same disability as me it’s always negative. I’ve never felt comfortable enough with any of them to say I have challenges.”

**Across all races, there were significant differences between non-Christian, Christian, and non-religiously-affiliated students’ experiences of school climate in MPS.** Christian students in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely than their non-Christian and non-religiously-affiliated peers to agree that:

- They are treated fairly by adults at their school;<sup>126</sup>
- Their teachers understand and respect their families’ traditions;<sup>127</sup>
- They feel optimistic about their future;<sup>128</sup> and
- Their teachers think they are a good person.<sup>129</sup>

During focus group discussions and individual student interviews, non-Christian students reported feeling misunderstood by their peers and the adults at their school.

In a focus group, a Muslim female student shared, “I try not to be rude when people say weird stuff about my religion or something that impacts me. It’s like once you say something people think you represent Islam in general.” When asked what conversations she’s had about religion in her school, she described people commenting on her hijab, asking “why are you wearing that thing?” She also said that people mention terrorist groups whenever the topic of Islam comes up and explained, “Those are two separate things. You can’t talk about it in the same unit.” A second student added that discussing terrorism along with Islam would be tantamount to talking about the KKK when someone brings up Christianity.

Another non-Christian student shared, “Teachers get along with social students – they will just be like “oh cut it out.” Last year, I was the only hijab and this guy was like, “oh I really like Donald Trump,” and they didn’t even care because they were popular and knew they weren’t going to face any consequences... [They were making] anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish jokes, and no one was laughing but no one would stop them. I don’t know if the teacher didn’t hear it, but she was just writing on the board and didn’t stop it.”

A white female educator said, “[When] the countdown to Christmas begins...family issues around Christmas start to surface for the kids. Regardless of whatever religion kids might have, all you hear about from school staff is all about Christmas.”

This assessment does not purport to uncover every instance of discrimination and marginalization that occurs in Manchester Public Schools. Rather, the key themes detailed in this section have been used to make systems-level recommendations at the district level to aid MPS leaders in reexamining and revising the policies and practices that govern all MPS schools. MPS can use the following recommendations to build an educational environment that corrects inequities for marginalized groups and supports the success of all students.

## Recommendations

The purpose of the following set of recommendations is to guide administrators in their efforts to directly address the impacts of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of inequity on students, staff members, and family members from marginalized groups at the district level and ensure that systemic inequities are not reasserted or replicated within the district’s institutional policies and practices.

**Based on the key findings of this report, we recommend that Manchester Public Schools prioritize the following actions:**

1. **Immediately address policies and practices that have been shown to be inequitable and are causing harm to students, staff, and families.** These include:

- The district should take immediate action to respond to, correct and prevent acts of discrimination, sexual harassment, and denial of body autonomy, especially against students from marginalized groups – ensuring that the responsibility for prevention rests in the hands of leadership and not on the people experiencing discrimination and harassment.
  - The district should engage students and families in facilitated school community conversations and workshops specifically around issues of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and consent. MPS should ensure it is following all the provisions under Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally-funded educational institutions.<sup>130</sup> MPS should ensure that students, staff members and family members know their rights under these rules, and make the Title IX Coordinator’s contact information, roles, and responsibilities accessible to the entire MPS community. The district should provide resources to the Title IX Coordinator for collaboration with the MPS Equity Coordinator to design professional learning that addresses issues of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and consent in the school environment.
  - MPS should engage students and families in facilitated school community conversations and workshops specifically around issues of race and racism; gender identity and transphobia; sexuality and heterosexism; disability and ableism, and religion and Islamophobia. The district should raise awareness among students and families of their rights under Manchester Board of Education’s “Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment” policy for students (policy 5013)<sup>131</sup> and “Non-Discrimination” policy for students (policy 5014).<sup>132</sup> MPS should reassess policies 5013 and 5014 through an equity lens – to ensure that the policies and corresponding processes are not having any unintended impact on people from marginalized groups – and ensure that students are receiving information about these complaint processes, as stated in each policy. MPS should ensure that the policies allow for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints and clearly established systems for tracking complaints and responding to individuals so

that students and family members may easily report incidents anonymously, informally, or formally.

- MPS should ensure institutional policies and practices are in place to support staff members in reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment.
- MPS should make significant changes to Alternative Education Programs to ensure that their policies and practices are in alignment with MPS’s vision of an equitable school environment. The district should work to shift the missions, goals, policies, and practices of alternative education programs away from a deficit framework. The district should take concrete steps to shift the negative stereotypes associated with students and staff who teach and participate in alternative education programs with the goal of building a greater sense of community, camaraderie, and respect between students and staff in mainstream environments and those in alternative education programs. The district should reassess the criteria for student placement in alternative education programs to ensure there are clear and transparent processes through which students are placed, and ensure that students are regularly reevaluated for placement in a mainstream school setting. MPS should prohibit involuntary placement of students, support the creation of effective, high-quality alternative programs of choice,<sup>133</sup> and end the practice of placing middle school students in alternative education programs designed for high school students. The district should ensure that alternative education programs are provided with school supplies, materials, and classroom technology on par with other schools in the district. MPS should improve data collection and reporting mechanisms to make the enrollment and outcomes of students attending alternative schools transparent and hold the alternative education programs accountable for their performance.<sup>134</sup> MPS should examine and mirror best practices from other alternative schools including successful school-within-a-school models, and create a process whereby alternative education programs structured as schools-within-schools provide students with access to the areas of the building that mainstream students can access including, but not limited to: the student-run café, libraries, school stores, and cafeterias. MPS should examine successful student-teacher relationship-building strategies used by adults working in alternative education programs and find ways to replicate these elsewhere in the district.
- MPS should make changes to its school transportation policy<sup>135</sup> to ensure transportation is not a barrier for students attending school and students who want to participate in extracurricular activities. This process might include hosting focus groups to understand more about the needs of students from marginalized groups related to transportation. The district should consider the threshold of 0.5 miles<sup>136</sup> for maximum walking distance and provide a formal process for families to make special requests for transportation based on need.
- MPS should engage the school community in facilitated processes to change the current mascot, including listening sessions for students, staff members, and families, and community dialogues about the change process. The Manchester High School’s mascot is the Indians and has remained despite decades of advocacy from hundreds of tribal nations, organizations, and individuals to end this practice because it perpetuates harmful stereotypes, leading to negative psychological effects



on Native youth.<sup>137</sup> MPS should engage students in leading a community brainstorm and school-wide voting process to generate and select a new mascot.

2. **Develop a multi-year District Equity Plan (DEP) to serve as the district’s roadmap for institutionalizing equity.** To operationalize the DEP:

- MPS should engage school community stakeholders (students, staff members, family members, and community members) in developing and advancing a district-wide vision of what MPS looks like where “equity is the norm.”<sup>138</sup> This vision should include a shared understanding of concrete, system-wide strategies to institutionalize equity in MPS schools and workplaces. The district should create a “District Equity Team” that engages staff members, students, and family members in the ongoing work of institutionalizing equity across all departments and schools in the district and a “Staff Equity Team” that is empowered to make high-level decisions that are necessary to move the district’s equity work forward in collaboration with the superintendent. The district should establish regular channels of communication, using a variety of methods, to bring the vision for equity in MPS to all school community stakeholders.
- MPS should define 3-5 key equity goals with corresponding outcomes and indicators for the district to focus on in the next three to five years, regularly assess progress towards the equity goals and establish accountability measures to ensure the district meets its goals. Each district administrator should be responsible for implementing the district equity goals and meeting outcomes within their department, school, or purview.
- MPS should designate the Office of Equity and Partnerships as the district’s core resource for supporting, evaluating, and sustaining equity work in alignment with the District Equity Plan and provide adequate staff for the office to support and sustain key equity initiatives. The district should ensure that current district equity initiatives are ongoing and supported while the DEP is being developed.
- MPS should create and implement a regularly administered equity analysis tool that determines the benefits or unintended negative impact any existing and future programs, policies, and/or processes may have on marginalized groups.<sup>139</sup>

3. **Implement a multi-year strategy for comprehensive equity-focused professional learning for all staff, designed to build staff skills in key areas.** To implement this strategy the district should:

- Raise awareness, with all staff, about their role in implementing the DEP and prepare staff to normalize equity in all aspects of the district’s operations through curriculum, relationship-building, policy creation and implementation, and the overall district culture.
- Shift district culture to ensure that equity-focused professional learning is prioritized and required as the foundation to teaching in MPS. This should include standardizing the district’s equity-focused professional learning goals for all staff, including certified and non-certified staff with particular emphasis on paraprofessional classroom staff, behavioral support staff, security staff,

and substitute teaching staff, providing ongoing professional learning that all staff must attend, and ensuring new staff members cover required content. Create accountability measures to support schools in ensuring all staff receive the required equity-focused professional learning and prioritize addressing logistical and funding issues that prevent staff, including non-certified staff and substitute teachers, from attending equity trainings. As part of a comprehensive district-wide plan for professional learning, continue to provide leadership workshops to district administrators and require all administrators to participate.

- Support teachers in actively addressing issues of inequity in the classroom as they arise. Professional learning should include opportunities for staff to practice intervening when various forms of inequity arise.
  - Support staff members in ensuring that all students are referred to by their correctly pronounced names and correct gender pronouns.<sup>140</sup>
  - Consider adding capacity to existing equity training efforts by establishing an equity training team – consisting of staff members with expertise, and/or emerging skills in delivering equity-related professional learning. Provide the necessary resources to allow this team to expand their training capacities and create district-wide curriculum.
  - Bring in outside expertise to facilitate workshops around equity and equity literacy,<sup>141</sup> build the skills of the equity training team, assist the district in determining learning priorities, and assist the equity training team with the development of a district-wide equity curriculum for professional learning.
4. **Fill institutional gaps to meet the needs of students, staff members, and family members with marginalized identities.**
- MPS should provide structured, ongoing professional learning to all certified and non-certified staff specifically around the topics of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, visible and invisible disabilities, class, language, religion and the significant cultural differences and similarities of the major ethnic groups represented at MPS.
  - The district should provide structured, ongoing professional learning to support the continued implementation and refinement in the use of restorative practices.
  - MPS should provide institutional support, including funding, for students, staff, and families from marginalized groups to form affinity spaces in which they are able to regularly discuss their experiences in Manchester Public Schools and, if they choose, provide insight to the district on necessary institutional improvements. Participants in these affinity spaces should be compensated for their time.

- MPS should provide ongoing opportunities for students and staff to engage in open dialogue around race, gender identity, sexual orientation, visible and invisible disabilities, class, language, religion, and other cultural differences.
  - The district should engage with consultants, advocates or organizations that specialize in creating equitable environments for people from particular identity-based groups. Ideally, these entities should be led by people from the marginalized groups the district seeks to support and should specialize in pertinent state and federal laws governing the rights of people from marginalized groups.
  - MPS should ensure that all candidates for positions within MPS are evaluated on their equity literacy skills, making sure that candidates with deficit beliefs about students from marginalized groups are not hired.
  - MPS should evaluate certified and non-certified staff members on their knowledge, awareness, and skills related to understanding and implementation of equity literacy, ensuring that administrative or supervisory staff evaluating annual performance reviews demonstrate a high level of equity literacy. It should create a measure of equity literacy to include as part of the certified and non-certified staff members' annual performance reviews.
  - The district should commit to institutional changes that are widely known to support the creation of equitable environments for people from marginalized groups including, but not limited to:
    - Ensuring that all district buildings are accessible for people with disabilities.
    - Implementing gender-neutral bathrooms in all buildings.
    - Ensuring district policies and funding mechanism are not preventing equitable access to healthcare for staff members.
  - MPS should ensure students in alternative placements receive equitable access to rigorous academic experiences, and create clear policies, procedures, and communication about the various alternative placements in MPS, including entrance and exit criteria. The district should establish a yearly alternative placement accountability mechanism, in the form of an alternative placement audit to ensure students in alternative placements receive regular opportunities to return to mainstream environments, and include in the audit process an analysis of the race, class, disability status, and gender identities of students being recommended for and placed in alternative settings to monitor disproportionality.
5. **Prioritize the creation and implementation of a meaningfully multicultural curriculum.** To operationalize this recommendation, MPS should:

- Immediately encourage educators to use existing resources for developing multicultural curricula such as: Rethinking Schools, Teaching Tolerance, Zinn Education Project, and Teaching for Change. (See Appendix C.)
- Hire external experts to advise and assist the district in a process of updating the MPS curriculum and guiding educators in implementing the new curriculum.
- Implement a district-wide multicultural curriculum advisory board whose members represent the wide range of cultures and identities in Manchester. Members should be compensated for their time to advise curriculum developers and consultants on the process and content of changes to the curriculum.
- Invite students from marginalized groups to offer input to the curriculum advisory board and compensate them for their time.
- Support the expansion of the student health curriculum to incorporate topics about gender identity, sexual orientation, consent, male and feminine hygiene, and body autonomy.
- This curriculum should include opportunities for students to have dialogue about their own experiences with racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and other forms of inequity.

#### 6. Invest in creating institutional policies and culture that will attract and retain teachers of color.

- MPS should rename and revise personnel policy 4235, “Minority Recruitment Policy”<sup>142</sup> adopted on June 14, 1999, and update this policy based on current knowledge of best practices in recruitment and retention of staff members of color. While this policy is being updated, it should adhere to the goal of hiring 25 percent staff members of color annually. The 25 percent hiring goal of staff members of color should be considerably higher in order to be representative of the district’s population of students of color. In the revised policy, the district should create accountability mechanisms to ensure schools are following the district’s updated recruitment policy.
- MPS should prioritize fostering school and workplace environments in which staff members of color feel affirmed, valued, and supported and in which all staff are expected to build their equity literacy skills.
- The district should address institutional cultural patterns that marginalize staff members of color such as colorblindness, stereotyping staff members of color who bring up race and racism as “aggressive”, defensiveness and denial of racism when it is named, retaliation and exclusion after reporting or identifying racism.

- MPS should ensure staff members of color are recognized and compensated for the additional labor done outside of their job descriptions as mentors, advisors, disciplinarians, mediators, or cultural translators. The district should ensure staff members of color are not expected to fill additional roles and provide uncompensated service related to equity work and cultural or diversity celebrations.
  - MPS should invest in programs and initiatives that give non-certified staff members of color pathways to becoming certified staff and address potential barriers to certification. Similarly, the district should invest in programs and initiatives that give certified staff of color pathways to become school administrators and district leaders.
  - The district should implement an exit interview protocol that allows district leadership to gain deeper understanding of why staff members of color leave MPS.
7. **Collect and analyze additional data and increase accessibility of data to support problem-solving around equity issues.**
- MPS should gather additional data through surveys, focus groups and other ethnographic methods to inform the district's perspective on:
    - The experiences of male students of color around discipline disparities, safety and belonging to ensure that MPS is an environment where male students of color are safe and included.
    - The use of academic leveling, or tracking, and the experiences of students based on the classes they are placed in;
    - Academic opportunities and curriculum for students with one or more disabilities;
    - Academic opportunities, curriculum, and experiences of ELL students; and the impact of school resource officers and security guards on the experiences of students with marginalized identities.<sup>143</sup>
  - MPS should create an overall vision for how data is strategically collected, tracked, used, and reported to meet district equity goals and objectives, and streamline current data collection processes.
  - MPS should redesign the data dashboard to allow staff to create and run specific reports on subgroups of students, staff, and families disaggregated by race, gender identity, special education status, and other key categories.
  - The district should ensure that school leadership is accountable to using data with an equity lens when analyzing the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, programs and initiatives, and

policies and practices – disaggregating data by subgroup for key equity analysis. It should also ensure school leadership is using demographic data when considering individual student cases.

- MPS should provide community access to data.
  - MPS should invest in future school climate assessments and reports that report on key equity measures over time.
8. **Center student voices and leadership in Manchester Public Schools.** To operationalize this recommendation, MPS should:
- Shift MPS culture to embrace students as experts in their own experiences, and trusted resources for soliciting feedback about the design of their learning environment.
  - Provide institutional support for a group of students that reflects the many voices of students in MPS to engage in the District Equity Team and for students to create their own student-led body that has the power to influence district equity work.
  - Regularly solicit student feedback through a variety of mechanisms (interviews, surveys, focus groups, writing prompts connected to Language Arts curricula, and open forums) and ensure that feedback is solicited from a wide range of student voices, not only those students who are frequently in positions of leadership.
  - Regularly solicit feedback from students who are struggling academically or behaviorally, and who may be labeled as “bad kids.”

## Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

**Ableism:** the individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress people who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities.<sup>144</sup>

**Achievement gap:** a term used to refer to a difference commonly measured by assessing test scores and noting that students from marginalized groups typically score lower than their peers. This gap is a prevalent symptom in school systems that consistently provide inequitable educational opportunities to students from marginalized groups. The framework of ‘achievement gap,’ regardless of its intention, places implicit blame for lower test scores on students from marginalized groups.<sup>145</sup>

**“Adults at their school”:** includes everyone who works at the school and interacts with the students; certified and non-certified staff.

**Androgynous:** 1.) A person whose biological sex is not readily apparent, whether intentionally or unintentionally. The individual may reflect an appearance that is both masculine and feminine, or who appears to be neither or both a boy and a girl. 2.) A person whose identity is between the two traditional genders. 3.) A person who rejects gender roles entirely.<sup>146</sup>

**Assimilation:** the multi-dimensional process of becoming incorporated and integrated into a mainstream society. This can be cultural, linguistic, and/or political, but involves learning and adopting the ways of a dominant population, culture, or society.<sup>147</sup>

**Body Autonomy:** recognizes each person as the sole authority over their body – every individual has full ownership over and the right to decide what happens to their body with full consent and without being coerced.

**Classism:** any attitude or institutional practice which subordinates people of a certain socioeconomic class due to income, occupation, education, and/or their economic status; a system that works to keep certain communities within a set socioeconomic class and prevents social and economic mobility.<sup>148</sup>

**Code Switching:** the conscious or unconscious act of ‘switching’ between two languages, dialects, or intonations depending on the specific situation of who one is speaking to, what is being discussed, and the relationship and power and/or community dynamics between those involved.<sup>149</sup> In one sense, code-switching is about dialogue that spans cultures. [...] many of us subtly, reflexively change the way we express ourselves all the time. We move or ‘switch’ between different cultural and linguistic spaces and different parts of our own identities – sometimes within a single interaction.<sup>150</sup>

**Color Blindness:** a term referring to the disregard of racial characteristics. Proponents of color-blind practices believe that treating people equally inherently leads to a more equal society and/or that racism and race privilege no longer exercise the power they once did, while opponents of color-blind practices believe that color-blindness allows those in power to disregard or ignore the history of oppression and how it continues to manifest in present day.<sup>151</sup>

**Consent/Consent Culture:** To consent is to agree with or permit something to happen. Sexual consent involves an agreement to participate in a sexual activity and respecting another person’s boundaries.



Consent is freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, and specific.<sup>152</sup> Consent culture is a culture wherein asking for consent is normalized and people have the right to decide what to do with their body.

**Connectedness:** (regarding school climate) the relationship that students, staff, and families have to their school communities including, but not limited to, their expressed pride in their school community, their sense of belonging to their school community, and the trust and depth of their relationships with their superiors and their peers in their educational environments.

**Deficit model:** a model that focuses on the lack of educational attainment by students from traditionally marginalized communities while ignoring the larger structural and systemic reasons for this phenomenon. It finds fault in students of color, low-income students, and other students/families from marginalized groups (i.e. there is something wrong with the culture, values, or motivation of low-performing students and/or their families.)

**Disability:** Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.<sup>153</sup>

**Discrimination:** actions or thoughts, based on conscious or unconscious bias, that favors one group over others.<sup>154</sup>

**Diversity:** a multiplicity of shared and different individual and group experiences, values, beliefs, and characteristics among people.<sup>155</sup> These characteristics can include identities such as race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and class.

**English Language Learner (ELL):** is an active learner of the English language who may benefit from various types of language support programs. This term is used mainly in the U.S. to describe K–12 students.<sup>156</sup> English language learners are identified as not fluent in English and may not learn or be taught effectively in English without language support.

**Equity:** allocating resources to meet the needs of a community. Equity in education exists when students from marginalized groups reap the same educational benefits as their peers. Achieving an equitable educational environment requires institutions to transform their policies, practices, and cultural patterns to re-distribute access and opportunity to those who belong to currently or historically marginalized groups.<sup>157</sup>

**Equity Gap:** a framework that focuses on inequities *within* educational institutions, delving deeper into the ways in which students from marginalized groups are systematically excluded from educational opportunities. The equity gap points to policies, practices, and patterns within educational institutions through which students from marginalized groups are treated as less than, are subjected to regular microaggressions, are forced to confront institutionalized oppression (racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of inequity), and disproportionately experience exclusionary discipline practices.<sup>158</sup>

**Equity Literacy:** is a framework for cultivating the knowledge and skills that enable us to be a threat to the existence of inequity in our spheres of influence. More than cultural competence or diversity

awareness, equity literacy prepares us to see even subtle ways in which access and opportunity are distributed unfairly across race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, language, and other factors. By recognizing and deeply understanding these conditions, we are prepared to respond to inequity in transformational ways in the immediate term. We also strengthen our ability to foster longer-term change by redressing the bigger institutional and societal conditions that produce the everyday manifestations of inequity.<sup>159</sup> See page 15 for the Equity Literacy Framework.

**Erasure:** the act of erasing, dissolving, taking away, and denying [...] Erasure has also been expressed as the ‘wiping out’ of indigenous people and others.<sup>160</sup>

**Exclusionary Discipline Measures:** any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from [their] usual educational setting. Two of the most common exclusionary discipline practices at schools include suspension and expulsion. These discipline measures are typically used to punish undesired behaviors, deter similar behavior by other students, and promote more appropriate behavior. Studies have shown that such practices may result in adverse outcomes for the student and community including increasing student risk for involvement in the justice system.<sup>161</sup>

**Food Insecurity:** is a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.<sup>162</sup>

**Free and Reduced Lunch Program:** or the National School Lunch Program – the nation’s second largest food and nutrition assistance program behind SNAP – makes it possible for all school children in the United States to receive a nutritious lunch every school day. The vast majority of schools – approximately 95 percent – participate in the program, providing meals to more than 30 million children on an average day.<sup>163</sup> It is an income-based assistance program.

**Homophobia:** on a personal level, homophobia is an irrational fear, aversion, or dislike of homosexuality and people who identify as homosexual; on a social level, homophobia is the ingrained structural discrimination against homosexuality and those who identify as homosexual that prevents access to certain resources or opportunities and inhibits individual from feeling safe or able to be socially recognized as homosexual.<sup>164</sup>

**Implicit Bias:** includes the unconscious attitudes, stereotypes, and unintentional actions (positive or negative) towards members of a group merely because of their membership in that group. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. When people are acting out of their implicit bias, they are not even aware that their actions are biased. In fact, those biases may be in direct conflict with a person’s explicit beliefs and values.<sup>165</sup>

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** is a map that lays out the program of special education instruction, supports and services kids need to make progress and succeed in school.<sup>166</sup> This map is created for each public-school student who needs special education.

**Intersectionality:** When identities along race, class, gender, socio-economics, and ability [and other identity markers] intersect within an individual, the confluence of their identities informs how they view, discuss, and navigate through the world.<sup>167</sup>

**Latinx:** is a gender-neutral term for people of Latin American origin or descent (as opposed to Latino or Latina).

**LGBTQIA+ Focus Group:** Evaluators designed the LGBTQIA+ focus group to include family members who identified as having a sexual orientation outside of heterosexual, or identified as gender non-conforming, or were the family members of a child in the district with any of the previously mentioned identities.

**Mainstream/Mainstream counterparts:** are people with mainstream identities such as white, Christian, heterosexual, and cisgender males without disabilities and not experiencing poverty.

**Marginalized groups:** are groups within a culture, context, and/or history that are vulnerable to multiple types of discrimination due to the interaction of different identities, such as race, class, gender identity, sex, age, ethnicity, religion or belief, health status, disability, sexual orientation, education or income, or region.<sup>168</sup>

**Meaningfully Multicultural Curriculum:** has seven components: (1) the “delivery reflects higher-order pedagogies and purposefully shifts power dynamics in the classroom,” (2) the “content should be holistic and accurate, not only acknowledging contribution from various [...] groups, but reshaping the master narrative,” (3) the “teaching and learning materials must be critically examined for bias,” (4) the “content should be presented from a variety of perspectives in order to be accurate and complete,” (5) “critical inclusivity – students must be engaged in the teaching and learning process,” (6) “must educated them [students] about social justice issues and model a sense of civic responsibility,” and (7) the “curriculum should be assessed from completeness, accuracy, and bias.”<sup>169</sup>

**Microaggressions:** are the “subconscious and often well-meaning actions or remarks that convey an unconscious bias and hurt the person at the receiving end.”<sup>170</sup>

**Non-native English speaker:** is a person who learned and used a language other than English from early childhood. Another language than English is their primary language for thinking and could be their most competent language of communication and comprehension.

**“Opportunity Gap”:** “framework focuses attention on the ways in which students from marginalized groups have been systematically excluded from educational opportunities. The opportunity gap acknowledges the disparate economic resourcing of schools and the tendency for schools serving students of color and low income students to have less qualified teachers, low expectations of students of color and low income students, and less rigorous curriculum.<sup>171</sup> The opportunity gap also highlights the many societal inequities contributing to more challenging educational circumstances for students from marginalized groups, such as disparities in healthcare, nutrition, and parental ability to be involved in their child’s education due to onerous work and financial demands.”<sup>172</sup>

**Oppression:** is “the systemic use of institutional power and ideological and cultural hegemony, resulting in one group benefiting at the expense of another; the use of power and the effects of domination.”<sup>173</sup>

**Racism:** is “an ideology and institution that reflects the racial worldview in which humans are divided into racial groups and in which races are arranged in a hierarchy where some races are considered innately superior to others; racism is the effect of domination of certain racial groups by other racial groups, historically the domination of people of color by white/European peoples.”<sup>174</sup>

**Restorative Justice Practice or Restorative Practices:** is “[...] a process in which all the stakeholders affected by an injustice have the opportunity to discuss the consequences of the injustice and what might be done to put them right [...] The key value is that because injustice hurts, justice should heal.”<sup>175</sup>

**School Climate:** School climate is based on the patterns of people’s experiences of school life; it reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures that comprise school life.<sup>176</sup>

**School Culture:** refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity.<sup>177</sup>

**Sexism:** is “the individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress women.”<sup>178</sup>

**“Social-emotional learning curriculum”:** is an important set of lessons that help students learn social skills, understand themselves as learners, and develop as social thinkers.<sup>179</sup>

**Statistically Significant:** The groups whose observed and expected frequencies differed beyond chance according to chi-square tests of independence. The term statistically significant is used often in the report to describe notable differences in survey responses between defined groups, especially when responses were disaggregated into those of mainstream and marginalized demographic, identity groups. See “Survey Data Analysis Protocol” in the methodology in Appendix B for more details of the survey analysis used in this report.

**Students of color:** is “an umbrella term for any [student] that is considered by the society in which they live to be non-white.”<sup>180</sup>

**Systems Approach:** “examines the ways in which policies, practices, and pedagogies – as well as larger societal factors (inequities in access to living wages, health care, and safe and affordable housing, for instance) – influence disparate educational outcomes.”<sup>181</sup>

**Title IX:** is the “Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that receives federal funding. Under Title IX, discrimination on the basis of sex can include sexual harassment, rape, and sexual assault.”<sup>182</sup>

**Toxic Masculinity:** is “a (heterosexual) masculinity that is threatened by anything associated with femininity (whether that is pink yogurt or emotions)” due to factors such as socialization and sexism.<sup>183</sup>

**Transphobia:** is “the hatred and discrimination that transgender and nonbinary people face, or any anti-trans sentiment or actions.”<sup>184</sup> Connected to transphobia is cissexism, or “the discrimination against and oppression of transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming people.”<sup>185</sup>

**Whiteness:** is like race because “whiteness is a social construct rather than an essential characteristics or biological fact; it is used as cultural property and can be seen to provide material and/or social privilege to those who are considered white, pass as white or are given honorary white status.”<sup>186</sup>

**White Privilege:** refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it. Examples of white privilege might be: "I can walk around a department store without being followed." "I can come to a meeting late and not have my lateness attributed to your race;" "being able to drive a car in any neighborhood without being perceived as being in the wrong place or looking for trouble." "I can turn on the television or look to the front page and see people of my ethnic and racial background represented." "I can take a job without having co-workers suspect that I got it because of my racial background." "I can send my 16-year old out with his new driver's license and not have to give him a lesson how to respond if police stop him."<sup>187</sup>

**White Supremacy:** is a “historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by White people and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.”<sup>188</sup>

**Xenophobia:** is “the unreasonable fear or dislike of things, culture, forms of expression, or people that are different from oneself and one’s own experiences of the everyday; fear of that which seems foreign or strange.”<sup>189</sup>

**504 plans:** are legal protection for the fair treatment of students with disabilities. Student qualify for a 504 plan if “they have physical or mental impairments that affect or limit any of their abilities to: walk, breathe, eat or sleep; communicate, see, hear, or speak; read, concentrate, think, or learn; stand, bend lift, or work.”<sup>190</sup> Examples of accommodations from a 504 plan are preferential seating, verbal testing, and extended time on tests or assignments. 504 plans are monitored by classroom teachers. Like an IEP, a 504 plan is an educational plan to ensure fair treatment, but “the goal of 504 plans is for students to be educated in regular classrooms along with the services, accommodations, or educational aids they might need” and IEPs are typically in special education.<sup>191</sup>

## Appendix B: Detailed Methodology

Evaluators from RE-Center in consultation with EdChange, designed the Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA) of Manchester Public Schools through the lens of racial equity. This methodology details the processes used to design assessment tools and gather data through surveys, focus groups, background interviews, and ethnographic site visits.

While analyzing the various data sources collected during the EISCA process, evaluators examined participant responses using an intersectional lens. This means that when looking at the responses from students, staff members, and family members from marginalized groups, when possible, evaluators considered the multiple intersecting identities that respondents had and how those identities impacted their experiences.

### Exploratory Focus Groups, Background Interviews and Surveys, Records Review, and Facilitated School Presentations

An element in developing an equity-based assessment framework involved gathering stakeholder input and support before designing the assessment.

Evaluators conducted a series of exploratory focus groups with students and families and background interviews with MPS staff members and administrators in May and June of 2017 to allow MPS stakeholders to offer their insights on their current experience of school climate and equity. Their input helped guide the design of the assessment. The exploratory focus groups for students were held at Illing Middle School, and the exploratory focus groups for parents and family members of students in the district were conducted with family member groups already being convened within Manchester.

Background interviews of MPS staff, administrators and community members were conducted to provide evaluators with important context about MPS. Participants were selected for a variety of reasons including role in the district, particular expertise and/or experience related to the central question and climate indicators of the assessment, and recommendations from other interviewees and school community stakeholders. Evaluators conducted a total of 28 background interviews averaging approximately 75 minutes per interview and guided by a set of predetermined questions. In addition to interviews, evaluators collected 41 responses to an EISCA Background Interview Survey, in which participants responded in written form to background interview questions. At least 16 of the 41 respondents to this survey also participated in in-person, video, or phone interviews.<sup>192</sup>

RE-Center staff reviewed the district's internal data on Manchester Board of Education policies; student, staff, and faculty handbooks; prior equity plans and climate survey results; school discipline data; staff professional learning data; the overall district performance index; and overall district demographic data. Particular attention was given to policies and practices that might contribute to institutional inequities.

MPS and RE-Center staff co-facilitated presentations at Manchester Board of Education meetings and at each school<sup>193</sup> in the district to create awareness of the assessment and garner broad stakeholder support.

The information obtained through the exploratory focus groups, background interviews, and MPS internal data were used to inform the process for constructing affinity-based focus groups, interview questions, survey questions, and for planning the ethnographic site observations. The assessment was conducted during the 2017-2018 academic year.

## Surveys of Students, Staff Members and Family Members

To help assess school climate through the experiences of students, staff members and family members from marginalized groups, evaluators issued two student surveys: one developed for elementary school students in grades 5 and 6 and another for middle and high school students in grades 7-12; one survey for certified and non-certified staff members; and one survey for the families of students in the district.

### Student Surveys

Students in grades 5 and 6 answered 56 survey questions and students in grades 7-12 answered 62 survey questions regarding their experiences at school. Students responded to survey questions on a Likert-scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. The questions were also re-coded so that strongly disagree and disagree were collapsed into one category and agree and strongly agree responses were collapsed into one category. Both groups answered 8 questions about their experiences with disciplinary practices (1 = yes, 0 = no) and 1 question about where they feel safest at school.

### Staff Member Survey

Staff answered 73 survey questions regarding their experiences at school and perceptions of students and families who attend their school. Staff responded to survey questions on a Likert-scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. The questions were also re-coded so that strongly disagree and disagree were collapsed into one category and agree and strongly agree responses were collapsed into one category. Staff also responded to a 'check all that apply' question regarding their perceptions of problems in their work environment and requests for additional professional development.

### Family Survey

Family members answered 53 survey questions about their perceptions of the school and their child's schooling experiences. Family members were given the option to respond to survey questions about each of their students in the district. Family members responded to survey questions on a Likert-scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. The questions were also re-coded so that strongly disagree and disagree were collapsed into one category and agree and strongly agree responses were collapsed into one category.

### Survey Data Analysis Protocol

The focus of the survey data analysis was to compare responses on the survey items to illuminate statistically significant differences and trends by demographic, identity groups. Following standard guidelines for social and behavioral research<sup>194</sup> and APA 6th edition<sup>195</sup> reporting conventions, we



determined that chi-square tests of independence were the most appropriate statistical test to analyze the data.

Chi-square tests of independence are a type of non-parametric statistical analysis that are run on variables that are categorical in nature (i.e., the demographic, identity groups) and/or ordinal (i.e., Likert Scale, data whose values have naturally ordered categories). Non-parametric tests, such as the chi-square test, are a method that does not require the data to fit a continuous, normal distribution. Instead, chi-square tests of independence analyze the relationship between observed frequencies and expected frequencies and determines whether there is a difference between the data beyond chance (with  $p < .05$  the minimum p-value that the statistical test needs to be achieved to be considered statistically significant). In this way, chi-square tests account for not only differences in frequencies, but how those frequencies relate to the assumptions of independence, sample size, and the distribution of responses within that question. Because the frequencies are sample dependent, we report percentages, instead of actual counts, for two reasons: 1) to standardize the numbers to ease interpretation and 2) to protect results from disclosure issues.

Chi-square tests were run to compare how students, staff, and family members in different groups answered the climate questions. For parsimony and interpretation, chi-square analyses were run on the climate questions with strongly disagree/disagree and strongly agree/agree collapsed to represent 2 response categories rather than 4. Aggregating the responses also allows us to maintain a higher level of confidentiality with the data; in other words, to avoid the potential deductive disclosure of individuals in specific identity groups using cell sizes created from the chi-square analyses.

In the main comparisons, the following groups were compared:

1. Race: White, Students of Color
2. Gender: Male, Female, Gender Non-Conforming
3. Sexual orientation: Heterosexual, LGBT, Don't Know/Not listed
4. Language: ELL, non-ELL
5. Religion: Christian, Not Christian, Not Affiliated/Listed
6. Disability: Yes, No
7. Food insecurity: Yes, No

In the intersectional analyses, the subgroups were created using a cross-tab of each identify group. The following were the resulting comparison groups used for the intersectional analyses:

1. Race\*Gender (6 groups): White + Male, White + Female, White + Gender non-conforming, Color + Male, Color + Female, Color + Gender non-conforming
2. Race\*Sexual orientation (4 groups): White + Heterosexual, White + LGBT, Color + Heterosexual, Color + LGBT
3. Race\*Language (4 groups): White + non-ELL; White + ELL; Color + non-ELL; Color + ELL
4. Race\*Disability (4 groups): White + w/disability, White + no disability, Color + w/disability, Color + no disability
5. Race\*Food insecurity (4 groups): White + food secure, White + food INsecure, Color + food secure, Color + food INsecure

Please see next section on data cleaning and coding protocol for greater detail on how each of the groups were created.

Given the number of cells in the comparisons, adjusted standardized residuals were calculated in all of the chi-square tests to determine the cells whose observed and expected frequencies varied beyond chance (adjusted standardized residual  $> |2|$ ,  $p < .05$ ).<sup>196</sup> The results whose frequencies differed beyond chance were “statistically significant” according to the chi-square tests. The term statistically significant is used often in the report to describe notable differences in survey responses between defined groups, especially when responses were disaggregated into those of mainstream and marginalized groups. Chi-square tests account for not only differences in percentages, but how that percentage relates to the distribution of responses within that question.

### Survey Data Cleaning and Coding Protocol Using Demographic Data

Survey data for the Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment was collected and analyzed through the lens of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, disability, and food insecurity. Table B.1 displays the breakdown of survey respondents by mainstream and marginalized groups. The surveys asked respondents demographic questions related to these categories, and evaluators created and disaggregated the demographic information in these surveys in the following way:

#### Race

In all surveys, students, staff, and family members were asked to select any/all races that described them from the following list: 1) Native American, American Indian, or Alaskan Native; 2) Asian, Asian American, 3) Black, African, or African American, 4) White, European, or European American, 5) Latina, Latino, Latinx, or Hispanic, 6) Arab, Arab American, Middle Eastern, North African, 7) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 8) other. Respondents were also given the option to select “my race is not listed here” and write-in their race(s). For the 8 prescribed groups, one variable was created to denote the selection of the race (1 = selected the race, 0 = did not select the race). The percentage and number of each race group in the demographics table reflects these 8 groups. Because respondents could select multiple race categories, a second variable was created that represented the total number of races (from the prescribed 8) a respondent selected; this variable was created by summing across the race groups for each respondent. This variable was then cross-tabulated with the 8 race groups to create 3 merged groups. The 3 groups were based on:

1. those individuals who selected only 1 race, and that race was White (White);
2. those individuals who selected only 1 race, and that race was one of the other non-White categories (Students/Staff/Family of Color); and
3. those individuals who selected multiple races (Students/Staff/Family of Mixed Race).

Due to sample size considerations, these three groups were used for the chi-square analyses and an extended factor analysis (EFA),<sup>197</sup> with respondents of color and respondents of mixed race being combined into one group.

## Gender

For the student survey of grades 5 and 6, students were asked to select their gender based on 5 options: 1) female, 2) male, 3) transgender, 4) gender non-conforming, and 5) other (students were then given the option to write-in their gender). Based on sample size, transgender, gender non-conforming, and other were collapsed into one category. For the student survey of grades 7-12, the staff survey and the family survey, respondents were asked to select their gender based on 7 options: 1) female, 2) male, 3) transgender, 4) gender fluid, 5) gender non-conforming, 6) non-binary, and 7) other (respondents were then given the option to write in their gender). Based on sample size, transgender, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and other were collapsed into one category of transgender and gender non-conforming students.

## Sexual Orientation

For the student survey of grades 5 and 6, students were asked to select their sexual orientation based on 6 options: 1) bisexual, 2) straight or heterosexual, 3) lesbian or gay, 4) questioning, 5) I don't know, and 6) my sexual orientation is not listed here (students were then given the option to write in their sexual orientation). Based on sample size, 3 groups were created: 1) Heterosexual, 2) LGBTQ+ (includes bisexual, lesbian or gay, questioning), and 3) not listed or don't know (includes categories 5 and 6 from the list above). For the student survey of grades 7-12, the staff survey, and the family survey, respondents were asked to select their sexual orientation based on 9 options: 1) asexual, 2) bisexual, 3) straight or heterosexual, 4) lesbian or gay, 5) pansexual (only asked in 7-12 survey), 6) queer (only asked in 7-12 survey), 7) questioning, 8) I don't know, 9) my sexual orientation is not listed here (respondents were then given the option to write in their sexual orientation). Based on sample size, 3 groups were created: 1) Heterosexual, 2) LGBTQ+ (includes asexual, bisexual, lesbian or gay, pansexual, queer, and questioning), and 3) not listed or don't know (includes categories 8 and 9 from the list above).

***A note on coding fill-in responses for race, gender, and sexual orientation.*** All respondents were given the option to write-in their race, gender, and sexual orientation identity in the survey. The percentage of write-in questions was greater than 5 percent in the student surveys and thus needed to be coded manually. The EISCA team, in consultation with the EdChange methodologist, coded these write-in responses to align with the prescribed categories of race, gender, and sexual orientation (when appropriate). Coding was completed in three phases. In the first phase, the team met to discuss and review the definitions of race, gender, and sexual orientation 1) set in the survey and/or 2) according to national standards on reporting through the U.S. Department of Education. In phase two, the team members independently coded the same 15 cases. The responses were then compared by the EdChange methodologist and Cohen's kappa for inter-rater reliability was calculated at 0.85. Cohen's kappa needs to be above 0.80 for the coding to be considered reliable. In phase three, the team split up the responses and coded all remaining responses. For race, write-in responses were re-coded using National Center for Education Statistics standards for reporting Race and included: 1) Hispanic/Latino, 2) American Indian or Alaska Native, 3) Asian, 4) Black or African American, 5) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 6) White, and 7) two or more races. Non-valid responses were marked as missing. For gender and sexual orientation, write-in responses were re-coded based on the options listed in the original survey. Non-valid responses (i.e., 'I don't know') were marked as missing.

**Language**

In all surveys, respondents were asked to select the language they speak most often at home. There were 12 options presented to respondents, of which they selected one. Based on sample size, one variable was created to denote 1 = does not speak English at home, and 0 = speaks English at home.

**Religion**

In all of the surveys, respondents were asked to select their religious/spiritual affiliation. There were 11 options presented to students, of which they selected one. Based on the sample size, one variable was created to denote 2 = Christian, 1 = Other religions/spiritual affiliation, 0 = no affiliation or not listed.

**Disability**

In all of the surveys, respondents responded to a question about whether they were a person with a disability (2 = yes, 1 = no, 0 = not sure).

**Food Insecurity**

For the 5 and 6 and 7-12 grade student surveys, students responded to the question “How often do you worry about not having enough to eat at home?”. Students answered on a Likert scale: 0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = often, 3 = most days, and 4 = every day. Options 1-4 were collapsed to represent those students who were food insecure. (In the family survey, we included the question about participation in the free and reduced lunch program (1 = yes, 0 = no) as an indicator for financial strain.)

### Demographic Data Tables

The tables below show the breakdown of survey responses by demographic identity groups used in the assessment, including the total number of survey respondents and the percentage of total respondents that fell into each demographic group. Percentages may add up to less than 100 as some respondents skipped questions and did not provide all demographic information.

Table B.1: Student, Staff Member and Family Member Survey Responses by Race and Gender

	Total Number of People Who Responded to Survey	Race		Gender		
		White Only	People of Color	Male	Female	Transgender or Gender Non-Conforming
Students in Grades 5 and 6	968	17%	83%	46%	47%	2%
Students in Grades 7-12	2,161	29%	71%	47%	47%	3%
Staff Members	1,093	81%	19%	19%	81%	0%
Family Members	2,771	52%	48%	22%	77%	1%

Table B.2: Student, Staff Member and Family Member Survey Responses by Sexual Orientation and Language

	Total Number of People Who Responded to Survey	Sexual Orientation			Language	
		Heterosexual	LGBTQ+	Don't Know or Not Listed	Non-Native English-Speaking	Native English-Speaking
Students in Grades 5 and 6	968	43%	9%	43%	25%	70%
Students in Grades 7-12	2,161	74%	16%	8%	22%	76%
Staff Members	1,093	84%	7%	2%	7%	87%
Family Members	2,771	75%	12%	3%	12%	78%

Table B.3: Student, Staff Member and Family Member Survey Responses by Religion, Disability, and Food Insecurity

	Total Number of People Who Responded to Survey	Religion			Disability			Food Insecure or Using Free and Reduced Lunch	
		Christian	Not Christian	No Affiliation or Not Listed	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No
Students in Grades 5 and 6	968	44%	11%	45%	11%	76%	13%	30%	65%
Students in Grades 7-12	2,161	56%	15%	29%	17%	73%	10%	21%	77%
Staff Members	1,093	71%	11%	18%	11%	86%	3%	Not Asked	Not Asked
Family Members	2,771	64%	14%	22%	10%	89%	1%	39%	61%

Table B.4: Student Survey Responses at the Intersection of Race and Gender

	Total Number of People Who Responded to Survey	Race and Gender					
		White and Male	White and Female	White and Transgender or Gender Non-Conforming	Student of Color and Male	Student of Color and Female	Student of Color and Transgender or Gender Non-Conforming
Students in Grades 5 and 6	968	8%	7%	1%	38%	40%	2%
Students in Grades 7-12	2,161	13%	14%	1%	34%	33%	2%

Table B.5: Student Survey Responses at the Intersections of Race and Sexual Orientation and Race and Language

	Total Number of People Who Responded to Survey	Race and Sexual Orientation				Race and Language			
		White and Heterosexual	White and LGBTQ	Student of Color and Heterosexual	Student of Color and LGBTQ	White and Native English-Speaker	White and Non-Native English-Speaker	Student of Color and Native English-Speaker	Student of Color and Non-Native English-Speaker
Students in Grades 5 and 6	968	8%	2%	36%	7%	15%	1%	55%	24%
Students in Grades 7-12	2,161	22%	4%	52%	11%	27%	2%	49%	20%

Table B.6: Student Survey Responses at the Intersections of Race and Disability

	Total Number of People Who Responded to Survey	Race and Disability			
		White with One or More Disabilities	White with No Disabilities	Student of Color with One or More Disabilities	Student of Color with No Disabilities
Students in Grades 5 and 6	968	2%	13%	9%	63%
Students in Grades 7-12	2,161	6%	21%	11%	52%



Table B.7: Student Survey Responses at the Intersections of Race and Food Insecurity

	Total Number of People Who Responded to Survey	Race and Food Insecurity			
		White and Experiencing Food Insecurity	White and Not Experiencing Food Insecurity	Student of Color Experiencing Food Insecurity	Student of Color Not Experiencing Food Insecurity
Students in Grades 5 and 6	968	4%	12%	27%	53%
Students in Grades 7-12	2,161	5%	23%	16%	53%

### Focus Groups, Ethnographic Site Observations, and Stakeholder Interviews

Evaluators used the following research tools to collect qualitative information about the experiences of students, staff members and family members in Manchester Public Schools. Data were coded, analyzed, and interpreted using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) techniques. The CQR method utilizes a consensus-based approach to data analysis, "...if multiple people who have examined the data independently subsequently agree on an interpretation, researchers may have more confidence that other similar individuals would also agree on that interpretation than they would with only one judge..."<sup>198</sup> In this way, the focus of the qualitative analysis and results are on the themes that emerge as part of this process, rather than the specific number of people from whom the theme emerged.

#### Affinity-Based Focus Groups

Evaluators conducted a total of 32 focus groups in Manchester Public Schools, including 19 focus groups with students, six focus groups with family members with children in the district, and seven focus groups with staff members. Evaluators designed focus groups to capture the experiences of persons from marginalized groups including students, staff and family members of color; students, staff and family members who are women, transgender and gender non-conforming; students, staff and family members with currently and historically marginalized sexual orientations; students and family members from low-income backgrounds; students, staff and family members with disabilities; students, staff and family members who are not native English-speakers; students, staff and families who are not Christian; and students, staff and families whose identities belong at the intersections of these groups.

By design, focus group note-takers and facilitators shared the identities of the focus group participants to encourage honest dialogue in conversations lasting approximately one hour. During the focus groups, facilitators asked participants open-ended questions about their experiences, through the lens of their identity(ies), regarding relationships with adults and peers, curriculum, safety and facilities, discipline, connectedness to school, and access to opportunities. Evaluators generated similar questions for family and staff focus groups.

The note-taker documented the conversation in detail, including participants' expressions, cross-conversations, and seating choices. To protect the anonymity of participants, note-takers attributed numbers and perceived identities to each participant on a seating chart. Prior to the conclusion of each focus group, participants were asked to fill out a demographics form that asked them to self-identify on race, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, native language, and other relevant demographics. Evaluators reconciled perceived identities with individuals' self-reported identities from the demographic forms.

Evaluators did not convene focus groups specifically for students, staff members or family members identifying as white, with the understanding that an equity-informed assessment requires evaluators to center the experiences of the most marginalized persons. White students, staff and family members were included in focus groups when they fell into other categories of marginalization, such as religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

Table B.8: Affinity-Based Student Focus Groups by Location and Number of Participants

School	Student Focus Groups	Number of Participants
Keeney Elementary	Black Male	5
Keeney Elementary	Latinx Male	5
Washington Elementary	Black Female	11
Washington Elementary	Latinx Female	7
Illing Middle School	ELL All Languages	6
Illing Middle School	ELL Spanish Students	5
Illing Middle School	Gay Straight Alliance (GSA Club Members)	5
Illing Middle School	Special Education Students	6
Bentley Academy	Black Male	6
Bentley Academy	Latinx Female	4
Manchester High School	Asian Female	9
Manchester High School	Asian Male	3
Manchester High School	Black Female	10
Manchester High School	Black Male	6
Manchester High School	Latinx Female	4
Manchester High School	Latinx Male	4
Manchester High School	LGBTQIA+	6
Manchester High School	Muslim Female	7
Manchester High School	Native American	1
Total Number:	19	110

## Ethnographic Site Visits

RE-Center evaluators conducted six ethnographic site visits at five different locations in the district. Evaluators observed the day-to-day interactions between administrators, educators, school staff, students, and family members; observed activities throughout the buildings in and out of classrooms; and staffed a space during school hours, called the “drop-in room” that was open to any student, staff, family, or community member who wanted a private or small group conversation with a RE-Center evaluator. Evaluators spent a total of 16 days combined at Washington Elementary, Keeney Elementary, Illing Middle School, Manchester High School, Bentley Alternative Education (embedded within the Manchester High School building), and Manchester Regional Academy. RE-Center staffed each location with anywhere from five to 20 evaluators.

Table B.9: Location and Frequency of Ethnographic Site Visits

School	Number of Days	Dates	Number of Focus Groups	Number of Staff
Washington Elementary	2	Oct. 5, 2017 - Oct. 6, 2017	2	7
Keeney Elementary	2	Oct. 10, 2017 - Oct. 11, 2017	2	7
Illing Middle School	3	Oct. 23, 2017 - Oct. 25, 2017	4	10
Manchester High School	4	Oct. 16, 2017 - Oct. 19, 2017	9	20
Bentley Alternative Education	2	Oct. 16, 2017 - Oct. 18, 2017	2	4
Manchester Regional Academy (MRA)	3	Nov. 28, 2017 - Nov. 30, 2017	N/A	5
	<b>16 Days</b>		<b>19 Focus Groups</b>	

Ahead of each planned site visit, RE-Center staff provided a detailed communication plan to each building administrator and their appointed team of EISCA liaisons. The EISCA communication plan<sup>199</sup> included: contact information for the MPS lead staff assigned to EISCA and RE-Center staff; detailed logistics for moving students in and out of focus groups along with a harm mitigation plan in case students needed

support transitioning from the focus group to their regularly scheduled class or activity; instructions for access to the drop-in room, along with a plan for student passes; a timeline and language for PA announcements; as well as answers to a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about EISCA, focus group participation, classroom observations and the drop-in room.

Site observations included noting interpersonal interactions in classrooms, hallways, libraries, bathrooms, gyms, lunchrooms; at recess, and after-school activities. In the classrooms, evaluators noted curriculum, teaching styles, academic tracking, discipline, and language around consequences. Evaluators also made note of the physical spaces including: hallway signage, library book content, and overall building environment. Evaluators conducted on-site interviews with administrators, teachers, counselors, psychologists, social workers, behavior techs, school nursing staff, support staff, cafeteria employees, janitorial staff, school resource officers (SROs) and security staff, paraprofessionals, ELL tutors, and academic interventionists, among others, to gather insight from their experiences in and perspectives of the school environment.

Previously selected rooms were designated as the EISCA drop-in rooms and made available for private interviews or conversations with students and staff from all identity groups who wished to share their stories and experiences outside of the survey or focus group format. These conversations were held at the request of participants and while many were one-on-one conversations, participants (students in particular) would present to the space with a friend or group of friends, requesting a group discussion.

Many other interviews were conducted by evaluators during the ethnographic site observations at each school. Aside from interviews of building leaders, interviews conducted as part of the ethnographic site observations were not counted as background interviews for this report.

### **Manchester Regional Academy (MRA) Interview and Ethnographic Site Visit Process**

In consultation with school leadership, evaluators chose to conduct individual student interviews in lieu of focus groups at Manchester Regional Academy. Five total EISCA team members conducted approximately 36 total hours of student and staff interviews. Three EISCA team members were onsite at any given time conducting interviews and performing observations.

## Appendix C: List of Resources for Curriculum Development

### **EdChange** ([www.edchange.org/multicultural/teachers.html](http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/teachers.html))

EdChange is a team of educators “dedicated to educational equity and justice. [...who] have joined in collaboration to develop resources, workshops and projects that contribute to progressive change in ourselves, our schools, and our society.”<sup>200</sup> This resource provides information on equity literacy, multicultural education and curriculum, workshops and professional learning that is grounded in the principles of equity and social justice in schools and communities.

### **Education for Liberation Lab** ([www.edliberation.org/resources/lab](http://www.edliberation.org/resources/lab))

The Education for Liberation Lab is an interactive database supported by the Education for Liberation Network, which is a “national coalition of teachers, community activists, researchers, youth and parents who believe a good education should teach people – particularly low-income youth and youth of color – how to understand and challenge the injustices their communities face.”<sup>201</sup> The library allows all (no need to register to use the database) to find, share, and discuss materials for education that liberates.

### **GLSEN** ([glsen.org/educate/resources/curriculum](http://glsen.org/educate/resources/curriculum))

GLSEN was founded in 1990 in Massachusetts by a group of teachers who were dedicated to improve an education system that did not equitably serve LGBTQ students and allowed them to be “bullied, discriminated against, or fall through the cracks”<sup>202</sup> and to guarantee that schools are safe and affirming for LGBTQ students. This resource provides an LGBT-Inclusive Curriculum through lesson plans that ensure LGBT students see themselves represented, allow all students to gain an understanding of the world around them, and encourage respect, critical thinking, and a social justice lens.

### **New York Collective of Radical Educators** ([www.nycore.org/curricula](http://www.nycore.org/curricula))

The New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE) is “committed to fighting for social justice in our school system and society at large, by organizing and mobilizing teachers, developing curriculum, and working with community, parent, and student organizations.”<sup>203</sup> NYCoRE believes that education is essential to social change. This resource provides curricula and workshops that can help educators and students to resist social and educational injustices in our society.

### **Rethinking Schools** ([www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org))

Rethinking Schools is an activist book publisher and independent magazine that advocates for the reform of public schools, especially urban schools and educational equity and social justice.<sup>204</sup> This resource provides access to the publications of Rethinking Schools.

**SoJust** ([www.sojust.net](http://www.sojust.net))

SoJust is a primary source for the history of social justice. It is a collection of speeches, songs, poetry, manifestos and other literature concerning social justice and human rights. SoJust is a product of EdChange, which is referenced earlier in this list.

**Teachers for Social Justice** ([www.teachersforjustice.org/search/label/all%20curriculum](http://www.teachersforjustice.org/search/label/all%20curriculum))

Teachers for Social Justice (TSJ) is a group of activist educators committed to social justice education and “working toward classrooms and schools that are anti-racist, multicultural / multilingual, and grounded in the experiences of our students.”<sup>205</sup> TSJ develops and shares curricula, which can be accessed through this link.

**Teaching Economics As If People Mattered** ([www.teachingeconomics.org](http://www.teachingeconomics.org))

Teaching Economics As If People Mattered is a collaborative project to provide economics lesson plans that are human-centric and concerned with social justice. This resource contains curricula for high-school economics classes.

**Teaching for Change** ([www.teachingforchange.org](http://www.teachingforchange.org))

“Teaching for Change provides teachers and parents with the tools to create schools where students learn to read, write and change the world.”<sup>206</sup> This organization operates with the thought that students can be educated to be “citizens and architects of a better world – or they can fortify the status quo.”<sup>207</sup> Access tools and resources here to make sure that schools are preparing for a better world.

**Teaching Tolerance** ([www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources](http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources))

Teaching Tolerance is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center that “[...] combats prejudice among our nation’s youth while promoting equality, inclusiveness and equitable learning environments in the classroom. We produce an array of anti-bias resources that we distribute, free of charge, to educators across the country – award-winning classroom documentaries, lesson plans and curricula, Teaching Tolerance magazine, and more.”<sup>208</sup> These classroom resources provide age-appropriate curricula and teaching strategies for anti-bias education.

**Zinn Education Project** ([www.zinnedproject.org/materials](http://www.zinnedproject.org/materials))

The Zinn Education Project provides workshops and curricula aimed at introducing students to instruction that provides “a more accurate, complex, and engaging understanding of United States history than is found in traditional textbooks and curricula.”<sup>209</sup> This resource provides teaching materials by time period, theme, and type that showcase the empowering potential of



## Appendix D: Language for Ethnographic Site Observations and Focus Groups

### Equity Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA)

#### EISCA School Site Visit Information

**School:** [Information will be filled out by The Discovery Center ahead of sharing with schools]

**Site Visit Dates:** [Information will be filled out by The Discovery Center ahead of sharing with schools]

#### Introduction

**The Equity Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA) is coming to your school! This packet is intended to provide information about your upcoming EISCA site visit.**

At the invitation of MPS Superintendent, Matt Geary, the staff of The Discovery Center are grateful for the opportunity to spend time at your school and learn more about your school community. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us:

**Ellen Tuzzolo:** Email: XXXX      Cell: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

**Emilia Skene:** Email: XXXX      Cell: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

**Cristher Estrada:** Email: XXXX Cell: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

The Discovery Center Phone: 860-284-9489

#### Pre-visit Interview

A member of the research team will meet with the school principal or their designee before our site visit. This will help our research team gain valuable insight into the necessary logistics for convening the student focus groups and mapping out important times and building locations for the school site visit and drop-in hours.

**Important Information for School Staff**

Students selected for focus group participation are those who hold marginalized identities including: students of color, English Language Learners, students who receive special education services, and students who identify as LGBTQIA+. As our academic and discipline data confirm, students with marginalized identities are experiencing unique challenges because of their identities. The student focus groups are not intended to assess individual student needs; instead, it’s an opportunity to really listen to groups of students representing the identities of those who are currently experiencing the most difficulty being successful in the district. All students from 5th to 12th grades will be asked to participate in the student survey, which will include open-ended questions and opportunities for direct feedback and suggestions for improvement.

**School Liaison(s)**

Each school needs to establish a liaison that will coordinate logistics; both within their schools, including assisting in the recruitment of students for focus groups; and between the MPS EISCA Team Leads & The Discovery Center Project Staff. Luis Moyano, Coordinator of Title I Programming & Outreach is the MPS staff assigned to lead the EISCA Focus Group & Ethnographic Site Visit Working Group.

MPS EISCA LEAD STAFF	THE DISCOVERY CENTER PROJECT STAFF
Luis Moyano:	Ellen Tuzzolo
Rhonda Philbert:	Emilia Skene
Erin Ortega:	Cristher Estrada:

Schools may elect to have more than one school liaison. The school liaison(s) needs to be accessible to The Discovery Center staff for the entirety of the predetermined school days that The Discovery Center is present at the school. School liaison(s) will be particularly needed to assist in moving students through the focus groups. School liaison(s) should:

1. Provide an email address for communication between the MPS EISCA Team Leads and The Discovery Center Project staff ahead of the scheduled visit
2. Provide a cell phone number to The Discovery Center staff--communication during the days The Discovery Center is present at the school will occur primarily through text
3. Gather and convene the students who are participating in focus groups at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the focus group
4. Assist in providing passes (when needed) to students exiting the focus groups so they may return to their normal daily schedule and/or usher students exiting the focus groups back to their assigned classroom
5. Provide support and guidance to The Discovery Center staff for students in the focus groups who may need to exit a focus group, require a bathroom break, or have any other immediate needs

6. Check-in with students after the focus groups to determine if an individual student requires support, needs a referral to Guidance, and/or needs a break before resuming their day
7. Facilitate student, staff, and school community member access to the drop-in hours (*See description of drop-in hours below*)

## Focus Groups

Focus groups will be convened in each of your schools, and student recruitment will be done by members of your administrative staff with guidance from the MPS EISCA Team Leads, and in partnership with The Discovery Center. Student focus groups will be built around specific affinity groups for example: Black/African American Males, Latinx Females, etc. We will only conduct focus groups with students from the 5th grade up. Families of students participating in focus groups will receive a consent form from the district. Each student's family will have provided consent for their student to participate in the focus group; and each student will have personally consented to participate in the focus groups. Students who have been selected, and consented to take part in the focus groups, will be excused from their classes for a minimum of 90 minutes. Due to the diverse grade groups that will be convened, it is important to establish a thorough and efficient logistics plan with each school. For students in 5th and 7th grades, the school liaison(s) will need to usher children to and from focus groups. It is important that your school share with us the most efficient way you see logistics working in your building.

**Focus Groups at Your School:** [Information will be filled out by The Discovery Center ahead of sharing with schools]

**Focus Group Room:** [Information will be filled out by The Discovery Center ahead of sharing with schools]

### Drop-In Hours

Drop in hours will be ongoing throughout the site visit. A member of The Discovery Center research team will be stationed in a previously agreed upon location at the school. The purpose of drop in hours are to provide space for members of the school community to speak with our research team about their experiences in Manchester Public Schools. All shared stories and experiences will be collected anonymously (meaning no names will be gathered or linked to the stories.) Students and school community members should be encouraged to stop by during drop in hours. If students need passes to visit the drop-in location, please allow for them to make this request.

**Drop in Room:** [Information will be filled out by The Discovery Center ahead of sharing with schools]

**Drop in Hours:** [Information will be filled out by The Discovery Center ahead of sharing with schools]

### PA Announcements

In order for EISCA to be successful, the whole school community needs to know that The Discovery Center staff will be visiting the school to conduct student focus groups, observe school in action, and hold drop-in hours.

We are asking all schools to announce our presence at the following intervals:

- Two weeks before the site visit
- One week before the site visit
- The day before the site visit
- Each day of the site visit

### Sample Language for PA Announcements

#### Two weeks before visit:

We are excited to tell you that on \_\_\_\_\_ our friends from The Discovery Center will be visiting our school to learn about equity through your experiences as members of our school. You may see some of The Discovery Center staff in classrooms, the cafeteria, gym, and hallways. Discovery Center staff will also be in Room \_\_\_\_\_ during school hours beginning at \_\_\_\_\_. You are invited to stop by to tell your story about being a student at \_\_\_\_\_ school.

#### Reminder One Week Out:

We want to remind you that on \_\_\_\_\_ our friends from The Discovery Center will be visiting our school to learn about equity through your experiences as members of our school. You may see some of The Discovery Center staff in classrooms, the cafeteria, gym, and hallways. Discovery Center staff will also be in Room \_\_\_\_\_ during school hours beginning at \_\_\_\_\_. Students, staff, and visiting parents, families, and community members are invited to stop by to tell your stories about being a member of \_\_\_\_\_ school.

#### Day Before Reminder:

Tomorrow is the day that members of The Discovery Center are visiting our school! They are here to learn about your experiences as students and members of \_\_\_\_\_ school. Please let your teachers know if you would like to have an opportunity to stop by Room \_\_\_\_\_ to share your story with one of The Discovery Center team. If you see them in the hallways or cafeteria, feel free to ask them questions or share your story with them.

#### Each Day OF Reminder:

Our friends from The Discovery Center are here! They will be here through the end of \_\_\_\_\_. Please let your teachers know if you would like to have an opportunity to stop by Room \_\_\_\_\_ to share your story with one of The Discovery Center team. If you see them in the hallways or cafeteria, feel free to ask them questions or share your story with them.

## FAQs About EISCA Student Focus Groups

### **Q: What is a focus group?**

**A:** A focus group is a way that researchers collect information about people’s experiences. In a focus group there is a facilitator and a notetaker. The facilitator asks open-ended questions from the group and the note-taker writes down what people are saying. The information you share is anonymous and your name will not be used in connection with the information you share.

### **Q: Why are there focus groups happening here?**

**A:** We want to learn more about our own school. The Discovery Center team is here to gather stories about your school life. They want to learn from students about what is going well at your school or how things could be better. They are very interested in whether you feel respected in our school. They also want to find out if you feel you are being treated fairly.

### **Q: Which students are being chosen for focus groups?**

**A:** We know that all students have unique experiences at school. The data shows us that some students experience specific challenges based on their identity. We are interested in learning about your unique experience, as a (name of school) student so we can do a better job of making sure you, and students like you, can do their best in our school.

### **Q: What is a focus group like?**

**A:** A focus group is a conversation. Two people from The Discovery Center and a small group of other students will be in the room with you. The Discovery Center facilitator will ask questions and whoever wants to answer can answer. The Discovery Center notetaker will write down everything that is said. If you have stories that you would like to tell about your experience at school, this focus group is a great place to be heard. An example of a question is: “What is it like for you to be a student at Keeney School?”

### **Q: How long will it be?**

**A:** The focus group will last one hour and fifteen minutes. There will be water and snacks provided in case anyone gets thirsty or hungry.

### **Q: What will happen with the information I tell the people who are running the focus group?**

**A:** The stories you tell are anonymous. This means that no one except the people in the room will know who said what. Your story might be used in a report about Manchester Public Schools, but your name will never be mentioned. This report is about how Manchester Public Schools can do a better job of supporting all students, including students of color, students from low-income families, students who identify as LGBTQIA+, students who receive ELL services, and students who receive Special Education services.

### **Q: What if I have something I want to say, but not in front of the whole group?**

**A:** There will be people from The Discovery Center available throughout the day to have individual conversations. If you would like to talk to someone outside of a large group, please let a member of the team know.

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> “QuickFacts: Manchester town, Harford County, Connecticut.” U.S. Census Bureau, 1 July 2017, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/manchestertownhartfordcountyconnecticut/PST045217](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/manchestertownhartfordcountyconnecticut/PST045217). Accessed 11 July 2018.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Sacks, Michael. “Suburbanization and the Racial/Ethnic Divide in the Hartford Metropolitan Area.” *Hartford Studies Collection: Papers by Students and Faculty*, Paper 17, 2003, [digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/hartford\\_papers/17](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/hartford_papers/17).
- <sup>4</sup> 2000 population by race: “Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000.” U.S. Census Bureau: Census 2000 Profiles, [www.ct.gov/ecd/LIB/ecd/2000census/0600900344700.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/ecd/LIB/ecd/2000census/0600900344700.pdf). Accessed 20 July 2018. 2017 population by race: see endnote 1.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> See endnote 1.
- <sup>7</sup> See endnote 4.
- <sup>8</sup> This district-level information was provided by MPS for the assessment.
- <sup>9</sup> “District Profile and Performance Report for School Year 2016-17: Manchester School District.” Connecticut State Department of Education, 27 Feb. 2018, [edsight.ct.gov/Output/District/HighSchool/0770011\\_201617.pdf](http://edsight.ct.gov/Output/District/HighSchool/0770011_201617.pdf). Accessed on 15 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> To get this estimate of full-time equivalent staff, the Connecticut State Department of Education counts part-time staff as a fraction of full-time staff.
- <sup>12</sup> See endnote 9.
- <sup>13</sup> See endnote 9.
- <sup>14</sup> According to the Connecticut State Department of Education, “A District Performance Index (DPI) is the average performance of students in a subject area (i.e., ELA, Mathematics or Science) on the state summative assessments. The DPI ranges from 0-100. A DPI is reported for all students tested in a district and for students in each individual student group. Connecticut’s ultimate target for a DPI is 75.” There was not enough district data to include figures for American Indian or Alaska Native students or for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students without compromising student confidentiality.
- <sup>15</sup> “Sanction Counts, Trend: Manchester School District.” EdSight: Connecticut State Department of Education, [edsight.ct.gov](http://edsight.ct.gov). Accessed 25 Sept. 2018.
- <sup>16</sup> This district-level information was provided by MPS for the assessment.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Gorski, Paul. “Equity Literacy for Educators: Definitions and Abilities.” *EdChange and the Equity Literacy Institute*, 26 Nov. 2017, [www.equityliteracy.org/equity-literacy](http://www.equityliteracy.org/equity-literacy).
- <sup>19</sup> Ableism: the individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that systematically oppress people who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for references.
- <sup>20</sup> Adapted from: Gorski, Paul. “Five Paradigm Shifts for Equitable Educators.” *EdChange and the Equity Literacy Institute*, 26 Nov. 2017, [www.edchange.org/handouts/paradigmshifts.pdf](http://www.edchange.org/handouts/paradigmshifts.pdf) and “Co-creating Equity Critical Shifts,” *RE-Center (formerly the Discovery Center)*, 2017, [www.discoveringdiversity.com/pdfs/Co-Creating-Equity-Critical-Shifts.pdf](http://www.discoveringdiversity.com/pdfs/Co-Creating-Equity-Critical-Shifts.pdf).

- <sup>21</sup> For more on denial of significant difference, see page 17 of Batts, Valerie. "Is Reconciliation Possible? The Question Remains." *VISIONS, Inc.*, [visions-inc.org/article/is-reconciliation-possible-lessons-from-combating-modern-racism](https://visions-inc.org/article/is-reconciliation-possible-lessons-from-combating-modern-racism). Accessed 15 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>22</sup> Privilege: refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for references.
- <sup>23</sup> Mainstream, in this usage, refers to people with mainstream identities such as white, Christian, heterosexual, and cisgender males, without disabilities, and not experiencing poverty. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for references.
- <sup>24</sup> School Culture: refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for references.
- <sup>25</sup> Connectedness: (regarding school climate) experiencing a sense of being connected through close relationship to members of the school community including, but not limited to administration, staff, and peers. See Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for references.
- <sup>26</sup> There was no school presentation at Bennet Academy, due to scheduling complications.
- <sup>27</sup> There were 7 anonymous responses to the EISCA Background Interview Survey. Some of these respondents may have also been interviewed.
- <sup>28</sup> Hill, Clara E. (ed.). "Consensual Qualitative Research: A Practical Resource for Investigating Social Science Phenomena." *American Psychological Association*, 2011.
- <sup>29</sup> We will be using the term "staff members" when reporting survey data to refer to administrators, educators, certified and non-certified staff members working within the district, all of whom responded to the same survey. When making distinctions between those groups, the terms *administrators*, *educators*, *certified* and *non-certified staff* will be used. Certified staff members include, but may not be limited to, administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and interventionists for reading and math. Non-certified staff include, but may not be limited to, paraprofessionals, behavior technicians, security guards, cafeteria workers, and clerical staff.
- <sup>30</sup> Chi-square analyses were run to test how students, staff members, and family members in different groups answered the school climate questions posed in the survey. In the Results section, evaluators highlight many cases in which responses between different groups (most often between marginalized and mainstream groups) were shown to be "significantly" different according to this statistical test (with  $p < .05$  the minimum p-value that the statistical test needed to be achieved to be considered statistically significant). See Appendix B: Detailed Methodology for a detailed explanation of the statistical analysis used in this assessment.
- <sup>31</sup> Noguera, Pedro A., Jill C. Pierce, and Roey Ahram. "Race, Education, and the Pursuit of Equality in the Twenty-First Century." *Race and Social Problems*, vol. 7, issue 1, pp. 1-4, 2015, doi: 10.1007/s12552-014-9139-9.
- <sup>32</sup> When sharing quotations from people interviewed during the assessment, the greatest amount of identifying information possible is shared while preserving the anonymity of the participant. Names of students were not asked to preserve anonymity.
- <sup>33</sup> All school names have been redacted.



<sup>34</sup> While the elementary school survey was only administered to students from grades 5 and 6, evaluators gathered qualitative data from children from grades 1 through 5 at the elementary schools selected for the ethnographic site observations.

<sup>35</sup> "Social Thinking's Mission." Social Thinking, [www.socialthinking.com/LandingPages/Mission](http://www.socialthinking.com/LandingPages/Mission). Accessed 20 Sept. 2018.

<sup>36</sup> RE Center's position is to capitalize the "B" in Black "to respect and honor the fight for the right to a proper name": Watson, Dyan, Jesse Hagopian, and Wayne Oau, editors. "Teaching for Black Lives." *Milwaukee: Re-Thinking Schools Publication*, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> *The National School Lunch Program (factsheet)*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, November 2017, [fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/NSLPFactSheet.pdf](https://prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/NSLPFactSheet.pdf). Accessed 10 Aug. 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Of note, there were significant differences in responses to some of these survey questions between family members with and without one or more disabilities, which will be discussed in "Areas for Improvement and Continued Dialogue in MPS."

<sup>39</sup> Non-Christian respondents were those that selected a religious affiliation other than Christian. There was also an option to select "no religious/spiritual affiliation." The group of respondents who selected this option are referred to as "non-religiously-affiliated" in the report.

<sup>40</sup> Of note, there were significant differences in responses to some of these survey questions between family members with and without one or more disabilities, which will be discussed in "Areas for Improvement and Continued Dialogue in MPS."

<sup>41</sup> Of note, family members without a disability were significantly more likely to agree to this question than those with one or more disabilities and family members whose children do not participate in the free and reduced lunch program were significantly more likely to agree to this question than those whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program. These differences will be discussed in "Areas for Improvement and Continued Dialogue in MPS."

<sup>42</sup> Latinx is a gender-neutral term for people of Latin American origin or descent (as opposed to Latino or Latina).

<sup>43</sup> 20 percent of staff members of color agreed that they have heard racist jokes or remarks from adults at their school v. 14 percent of white staff members. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>44</sup> 88 percent of staff members of color reported that staff where they work respect people who are different from them compared to 93 percent of white staff members. 89 percent of staff members of color reported that their religion is respected at their school or office compared with 97 percent of white staff members. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>45</sup> 6 percent of family members of color agreed that they feel pressure from adults at their child's school to change the way they speak, act, or dress in order to "fit in" compared to 4 percent of white family members. 7 percent of family members of color agreed that they have experienced conflicts about race with other parents from their child's school compared to 4 percent of white family members. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>46</sup> To assess the experiences of students from marginalized groups based on sexual orientation, evaluators gathered survey data from students in grades 5 and 6 who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning and from students in grades 7-12 who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, queer or questioning (LGBQ+). Recognizing that there is no single term that encompasses these particular identities, evaluators will use the acronym LGBQ+ to refer to these survey respondents.

<sup>47</sup> 83 percent of heterosexual students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they have a teacher or staff member at school they can talk to when they are struggling or upset compared to 69 percent of LGBTQ+ students in grades 5 and 6. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>48</sup> 44 percent of heterosexual students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they have been made fun of or intimidated by other students. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>49</sup> 26 percent of heterosexual students in grades 7-12 agreed that they have been harassed or intimidated by other students in school. 24 percent of heterosexual students in grades 7-12 agreed that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them at their school. These differences between heterosexual students and LGBTQ+ students were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>50</sup> In this instance, the intersectional analysis helped evaluators understand patterns of responses among white students in an important way. 24 percent of white students in grades 7-12 agreed that they have felt harassed or intimidated by other students on social media, making white students significantly more likely to agree to this question than students of color. However, when analyzing the survey results within white students, chi-square analyses revealed that white female students were those that most strongly agreed with that statement. When analyzing the survey results by gender and race, gender non-conforming students of color and white female students most strongly agreed. When analyzing the survey results by sexual orientation and race, LGBTQ+ students of color and white LGBTQ+ students most strongly agreed.

<sup>51</sup> To assess the experiences of students from marginalized groups based on gender identity, evaluators gathered survey data from students in grades 5 and 6 who identified as female, transgender, and gender non-conforming and students in grades 7-12 who identified as female, transgender, gender non-conforming, gender fluid, or non-binary. In this section, evaluators will use the phrase “transgender and gender non-conforming” to refer to survey respondents who identified as transgender, gender non-conforming, gender fluid, or non-binary.

<sup>52</sup> To assess the experiences of students and staff from marginalized groups based on disability, evaluators gathered survey data from students and staff who identified as having one or more disabilities. To assess the experiences of family members from marginalized groups based on disability, evaluators gathered information about family members who identified as having one or more disabilities or lived with a family member or student who identified as having one or more disabilities.

<sup>53</sup> 85 percent of students without a disability in grades 5 and 6 agreed they feel safe at their school compared to 75 percent of students with one or more disabilities. 80 percent of students without a disability in grades 7-12 agreed they feel safe at their school compared with 69 percent of students with one or more disabilities. 26 percent of students with one or more disabilities in grades 7-12 agreed that they have been physically hurt by another student more than once at school compared to 16 percent of their peers without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>54</sup> To assess the experiences of students from marginalized groups based on food insecurity, evaluators asked students to respond to the question “How often do you worry about not having enough to eat at home?” In the family survey, respondents were asked if their student(s) participated in the free and reduced lunch program.

<sup>55</sup> In the survey of students in 7-12 grade, this question was phrased “My religious, spiritual, or faith identity, or lack thereof, is respected at my school.” 90 percent of Christian students in grades 7-12 agreed that their religion is respected at their school compared to 85 percent of their non-Christian and 87 percent of their non-religiously-affiliated peers. 95 percent of Christian students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that their religion is respected at their school compared to 82 percent of their non-Christian and 90 percent of their non-religiously-affiliated peers. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>56</sup> 12 percent of Non-Christian staff members disagreed that their religion is respected at their school or office compared to 4 percent of Christian staff members and 3 percent of staff members with no religious affiliation. 7 percent of Non-Christian staff members agreed that Christian hegemony is a problem in their work environment compared to less than 1 percent of Christian staff members and 1 percent of staff members with no religious affiliation. The responses were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>57</sup> The information on professional learning opportunities offered in Manchester Public Schools was obtained from district staff.

<sup>58</sup> 65 percent of staff of color surveyed agreed that that they are comfortable with the plan outlined for behavior management at their school compared to 52 percent of their white counterparts; 70 percent of staff of color surveyed agreed that the disciplinary rules established by the school district are easy to understand compared to 55 percent of their white counterparts; and 93 percent of staff of color surveyed agreed that they are confident in their ability to use restorative practices with students or adults compared to 72 percent of their white counterparts. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>59</sup> According to 2016-2017 estimates, Manchester Public Schools employs approximately 1,294 staff and serves approximately 6,291 students. White students are the largest racial group (38.9 percent), followed by students identifying as Latino/a (26.8 percent), Black (22.4 percent), Asian (8.2 percent), Mixed Race (3.2 percent), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.3 percent), and Pacific Islander (0.1 percent). When taken together, students of color outnumber white students in the district. 48.5 percent of the student population is female, 51.5 percent is male, and, currently, there is no data at the state level for students who are transgender or gender non-conforming. In the 2016-17 academic year, 90.6 percent of MPS certified staff identified as white, with only 4.6 percent identifying as Black or African American, 3.9 percent as Hispanic or Latino, 0.4 percent as Asian, and 0.5 percent of staff as American Indian or Alaska Native. See endnote 9.

<sup>60</sup> 29 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities agreed that they feel they have been overlooked for a promotion or desired position change while being an employee in MPS compared to 18 percent of staff members without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>61</sup> 85 percent of staff members without a disability agreed that they are comfortable reporting issues of discrimination that they see in their school or district compared to 74 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>62</sup> 88 percent of staff members without a disability agreed that they feel comfortable talking to their supervisor compared to 80 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>63</sup> Sleeter, Christine E. *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review*. National Education Association, 2011, [www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> Gorski, Paul. "Characteristics of a Meaningfully Multicultural Curriculum." *EdChange and the Equity Literacy Institute*, 21 Dec. 2017, [www.edchange.org/handouts/curriculum\\_characteristics.pdf](http://www.edchange.org/handouts/curriculum_characteristics.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> 59 percent of white students in grades 7-12 agreed that they see their racial and ethnic identities reflected in the things they learn at school compared to 54 percent of students of color; 60 percent of white students in grades 7-12 read stories about people who share their racial or ethnic identity in school compared to 50 percent of students of color; and 64 percent learn about the history of people from their culture at school compared to 57 percent of students of color. The differences between white students and students of color were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>66</sup> See endnote 64.

- <sup>67</sup> These missing skills are also known as “equity literacy skills.” See page 28 for an introduction to the equity literacy framework.
- <sup>68</sup> The name of this country has been redacted to protect student anonymity.
- <sup>69</sup> 94 percent of white students surveyed in grades 5 and 6 agreed that their teachers think that they are a good kid compared to 86 percent of students of color. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>70</sup> 24 percent of students of color surveyed in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they feel pressure from the adults at school to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to “fit in” compared to 15 percent of white students. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>71</sup> 83 percent of students without a disability agree that if something bad happens to them at school, there is an adult who believes them and responds in a way that makes things better compared to 68 percent of students with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>72</sup> In grades 5 and 6, 87 percent of students surveyed without a disability agreed that teachers understand and listen to them compared to 75 percent of students with a disability. In grades 7-12, 81 percent of students surveyed without a disability agreed that teachers understand and listen to them compared to 75 percent of students with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>73</sup> Explicit language has been paraphrased in brackets.
- <sup>74</sup> “Exclusionary Discipline.” National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline, 2014, [supportiveschooldiscipline.org/learn/reference-guides/exclusionary-discipline](http://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/learn/reference-guides/exclusionary-discipline). Accessed 16 Aug 2018.
- <sup>75</sup> 10 percent of students of color agreed that they have been given an in-school suspension (ISS) or sent to ISS or given an office referral because of behavior this school year compared to 5 percent of white students. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>76</sup> 87 percent of white students surveyed in grades 7-12 agreed that they are treated fairly by the adults at their school compared to 82 percent of students of color. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>77</sup> Name of school redacted to maintain the anonymity of staff member.
- <sup>78</sup> 12 percent of students of color in grades 5 and 6 agreed they have been sent to ISS or given an office referral because of behavior this school year compared to 5 percent of their white peers. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>79</sup> 29 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 with one or more disabilities agreed they have been removed or told to leave the classroom this year compared to 14 percent of their peers without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>80</sup> 28 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 with one or more disabilities agreed they have received an office referral for their behavior compared to 14 percent of their peers without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>81</sup> 11 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 with one or more disabilities agreed they have been put in a room by themselves for their behavior compared to 5 percent of their peers without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>82</sup> 21 percent of students in grades 5 and 6 with one or more disabilities agreed they have been given an in-school suspension or sent to ISS this school year compared to 8 percent of their peers without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>83</sup> Alternative Education Referral Form, provided by district staff.

<sup>84</sup> Brindley, Emily. "Manchester proposes alternative program for middle-schoolers in former Assumption School." *Journal Inquirer*, 9 July 2018, [www.journalinquirer.com/towns/manchester/manchester-proposes-alternative-program-for-middle-schoolers-in-former-assumption/article\\_0b7d601e-838b-11e8-bd28-4725907b4223.html](http://www.journalinquirer.com/towns/manchester/manchester-proposes-alternative-program-for-middle-schoolers-in-former-assumption/article_0b7d601e-838b-11e8-bd28-4725907b4223.html).

<sup>85</sup> McCargar, Laura. *Invisible Students: The Role of Alternative and Adult Education in the Connecticut School-to-Prison Pipeline*. A Better Way Foundation and The Connecticut Pushout Research and Organizing Project, 2011, [cca-ct.org/ABWF\\_PROP\\_InvisibleStudentsFinal.pdf](http://cca-ct.org/ABWF_PROP_InvisibleStudentsFinal.pdf).

<sup>86</sup> Family members without a disability were significantly more likely than family members with one or more disabilities to agree that: they know about after-school programs or extracurricular activities available to their child (85 percent v. 76 percent); they can access additional programs services that will help their child when they need academic support(84 percent v. 75 percent); they are given the tools and support they need to help their child learn at home (85 percent v. 78 percent); they understand the steps their child needs to take to go to college (89 percent v. 81 percent); and they have received information about Gifted and Talented Instruction, acceleration and enrichment classes, AP, Honors, or Early College courses for their child (45 percent v. 37 percent). The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>87</sup> 86 percent of white family members agreed that they know about after-school programs or extra-curricular activities available to their child compared to 82 percent of family members of color. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>88</sup> 84 percent of heterosexual family members agreed that they can access additional programs and services that will help their child when they need academic support compared to 78 percent of LGBTQ+ family members. 86 percent of heterosexual family members agree that they are given the tools and support they need to help their child learn at home compared to 78 percent of LGBTQ+ family members. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>89</sup> 86 percent of family members whose children do not participating in the free and reduced lunch program agreed that they know about after-school programs or extra-curricular activities available to their child compared to 81 percent of family members whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program. 94 percent of family members whose children are not participating in the free and reduced lunch program agreed that it is easy for their child to get to school on time compared with 90 percent of family members whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>90</sup> The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP): a plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services.

<sup>91</sup> 98 percent of family members without a disability agreed that they are treated with respect by their child's teachers compared to 94 percent of family members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>92</sup> 97 percent of family members without a disability agreed they feel comfortable speaking with their child's teachers compared to 92 percent of family members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>93</sup> 87 percent of family members without a disability agreed they are satisfied with the way their child's school responds to their concerns compared to 79 percent of family members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>94</sup> 73 percent of family members without a disability agreed they have been invited to volunteer at their child's school compared to 56 percent of family members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>95</sup> 96 percent of family members without a disability agreed they are greeted with kindness when they call or visit the school compared to 91 percent of family members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>96</sup> 86 percent of family members without a disability agreed they know how their child is doing academically at all times compared to 80 percent of family members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>97</sup> 87 percent of family members without a disability agreed they receive information from the school about what their child is expected to learn during the year compared to 81 percent of family members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>98</sup> 12 percent of family members with one or more disabilities agreed that they feel pressure from the adults at their child's school to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to "fit in" compared to 4 percent of family members without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>99</sup> When asked whether it is challenging to attend events at their child's school because of transportation: Family members of color were four times as likely as white family members (14 percent v. 3 percent) to agree. LGBTQ+ family members were twice as likely (14 percent v. 7 percent) as heterosexual family members to agree. Family members whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program were more than three times as likely (15 percent v. 4 percent) as family members whose children do not participate in the free and reduced lunch program to agree. Non-native English-speaking family members were more than twice as likely (18 percent v. 7 percent) as native English-speaking family members to agree. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>100</sup> 13 percent of family members with one or more disabilities agreed that it is challenging to attend events at their child's school because of transportation compared to 7 percent of family members without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>101</sup> 14 percent of students of color in grades 5 and 6 agreed that it is difficult to get to school because of transportation compared to 6 percent of their white peers. 16 percent of students of color in grades 7-12 agreed that it is difficult to get to school because of transportation compared to 10 percent of their white peers. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>102</sup> 17 percent of students who are non-native English speakers in grades 5 and 6 agreed that it is difficult to get to school because of transportation compared to 11 percent of their English-speaking peers; and 20 percent of students who are non-native English speakers in grades 7-12 agreed that it is difficult to get to school because of transportation compared to 13 percent of their English-speaking peers. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>103</sup> 22 percent of students who experience food insecurity in grades 5 and 6 agreed that it is difficult to get to school because of transportation compared to 8 percent of the students who did not report experiencing food insecurity. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>104</sup> Lee, Chanam Zhu, Chia-Yuan Yu, Xuemei, Zhipeng Lu. "Thresholds and Impacts of Walkable Distance for Active School Transportation in Different Contexts." *Active Living Research*, March 2012, [activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/2012\\_ActiveTraveltoSchool\\_Lee-Zhu.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/2012_ActiveTraveltoSchool_Lee-Zhu.pdf).

<sup>105</sup> When asked if they don't participate in some school activities because they cost too much money: students of color in grades 5 and 6 were significantly more likely than their white peers to agree (26 percent v. 16 percent); students of color in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely than their white peers to agree (28 percent v. 22 percent); students with one or more disabilities in grades 5 and 6 were significantly more likely than their peers without a disability to agree (39 percent v. 21 percent); students with one or more disabilities in grades 7-12 were

significantly more likely than their peers without a disability to agree (34 percent v. 24 percent); students experiencing food insecurity in grades 5 and 6 were significantly more likely than their peers not experiencing food insecurity to agree (37 percent v. 18 percent); students experiencing food insecurity in grades 7-12 were significantly more likely than their peers not experiencing food insecurity to agree (38 percent v. 23 percent). The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>106</sup> When asked whether the cost of extracurricular activities makes it difficult for their child to participate: family members of color were significantly more likely than white family members to agree (35 percent v. 24 percent); LGBTQ+ family members were significantly more likely than heterosexual family members to agree (39 percent v. 27 percent); family members with one or more disabilities were significantly more likely than family members without a disability to agree (48 percent v. 27 percent); and family members whose children participate in the free and reduced lunch program were twice as likely (46 percent v. 19 percent) than family members whose children do not participate in the free and reduced lunch program to agree. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>107</sup> 91 percent of white students and 91 percent of students not experiencing food insecurity in grades 7-12 agreed that their teachers encourage them to achieve at a high level compared to 88 percent of students of color and 84 percent of students experiencing food insecurity. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>108</sup> 20 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 7-12 disagreed that their teachers encourage them to achieve at a high level compared to 89 percent of male students and 90 percent of female students. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>109</sup> 66 percent of white students in grades 7-12 agreed that their classes are academically challenging for them compared to 54 percent of students of color. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>110</sup> 35 percent of non-native English-speaking students in grades 7-12 agreed that they are placed in classes that are too easy for them compared to 26 percent of native English-speaking students. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>111</sup> 82 percent of male students in grades 7-12 agreed that they feel like they belong at their school compared to 73 percent of female students and 58 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming; 80 percent of male students in grades 7-12 agreed they feel proud to be a student at their school compared to 73 percent of female students and 48 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>112</sup> 65 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they feel proud to be a student at their school compared to 87 percent of their male peers and 87 percent of their female peers.

<sup>113</sup> 57 percent of students with one or more disabilities in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they have been made fun of or intimidated by other students in school compared to 42 percent of students without a disability. 34 percent of students with one or more disabilities in grades 5 and 6 agree that they feel pressure from adults at their schools to change the way they speak, dress or act in order to 'fit in' compared to 19 percent of students without a disability. 42 percent of students with one or more disabilities in grades 7-12 agreed that they have been made fun of or intimidated by other students in school compared to 24 percent of students without a disability. 33 percent of students with one or more disabilities in grades 7-12 agree that they feel pressure from adults at their schools to change the way they speak, dress or act in order to 'fit in' compared to 17 percent of students without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.



<sup>114</sup> 95 percent of students without a disability in grades 5 and 6 agreed they have a group of friends that accepts them compared with 85 percent of students with a disability. 95 percent of students without a disability in grades 7-12 agreed they have a group of friends that accepts them compared with 88 percent of students with a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>115</sup> 86 percent of students without a disability in grades 5 and 6 agreed they feel they belong at their school compared with 63 percent of students with a disability. 82 percent of students without a disability in grades 7-12 agreed they feel they belong at their school compared with 63 percent of students with a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>116</sup> 73 percent of students without a disability in grades 5 and 6 agreed students at their school respect people who are different from them compared to 56 percent of students with a disability. 65 percent of students without a disability in grades 7-12 agreed students at their school respect people who are different from them compared to 53 percent of students with a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>117</sup> 94 percent of staff members without a disability agreed that they enjoy being in their school or office compared to 85 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>118</sup> 78 percent of staff members without a disability agreed that they that they are given sufficient material to perform their job well compared to 63 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>119</sup> 85 percent of staff members without a disability agreed that there are opportunities at their school or workplace that allow them to get to know their colleagues compared to 76 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>120</sup> 92 percent of staff members without a disability agreed that they are a valued member of their school or office team compared to 80 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>121</sup> 94 percent of staff members without a disability agreed that they are proud to work at their school or office compared to 89 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>122</sup> 57 percent of staff members without a disability agreed that there are opportunities for them to pursue positions with greater leadership and pay within Manchester Public Schools compared to 45 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>123</sup> 17 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities agreed that they feel pressure at their school or office to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to fit in compared to 7 percent of staff without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>124</sup> Compared to 22 percent of staff members without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>125</sup> 3 percent of staff members with one or more disabilities agreed that it is difficult to get to work on time because of transportation compared to less than 1 percent of staff without a disability. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

- <sup>126</sup> 85 percent of Christian students in grades 7-12 agreed that they are treated fairly by adults at their school compared to 85 percent of non-Christian peers and 82 percent of non-religiously-affiliated peers. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level. Note that chi-square tests account for not only differences in percentages, but how each percentage relates to the distribution of responses within that question.
- <sup>127</sup> 93 percent of Christian students in grades 7-12 agreed that their teachers understand and respect their families' traditions compared to 94 percent of non-Christian peers and 90 percent of non-religiously-affiliated peers. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>128</sup> 83 percent of Christian students in grades 7-12 agreed that they feel optimistic about their future compared to 79 percent of non-Christian peers and 75 percent of non-religiously-affiliated peers. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>129</sup> 92 percent of Christian students in grades 7-12 agreed that their teachers think they are a good person compared to 92 percent of non-Christian peers and 87 percent of non-religiously-affiliated peers. The differences were found to be statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.
- <sup>130</sup> "Title IX Resource Guide." U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, April 2015, [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-title-ix-coordinators-guide-201504.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-title-ix-coordinators-guide-201504.pdf). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>131</sup> "Policy 5013: Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students)." Manchester Board of Education, January 2014, [www.mpspride.org/cms/lib/CT50000127/Centricity/domain/30/policies/5013.pdf](http://www.mpspride.org/cms/lib/CT50000127/Centricity/domain/30/policies/5013.pdf). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>132</sup> "Policy 5014: Non-Discrimination (Students)." Manchester Board of Education, February 2018, [www.mpspride.org/cms/lib/CT50000127/Centricity/domain/30/policies/5014.pdf](http://www.mpspride.org/cms/lib/CT50000127/Centricity/domain/30/policies/5014.pdf). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>133</sup> See endnote 85.
- <sup>134</sup> See endnote 85.
- <sup>135</sup> Manchester Public Schools Transportation Policy, provided by the district.
- <sup>136</sup> See endnote 104.
- <sup>137</sup> "Ending the Era of Harmful 'Indian' Mascots." National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), [www.ncai.org/proudtobe](http://www.ncai.org/proudtobe). Accessed 14 Sept. 2018.
- <sup>138</sup> "The Manchester Public Schools Mission." Manchester Public Schools Office of Equity & Partnerships, [mpsfcp.com](http://mpsfcp.com). Accessed 8 July 2018.
- <sup>139</sup> A model for this type of tool: "Racial Equity Analysis Tool." Seattle Public Schools, [www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_543/File/District/Departments/DREA/racial\\_equity\\_analysis\\_tool.pdf](http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_543/File/District/Departments/DREA/racial_equity_analysis_tool.pdf). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>140</sup> *Equity Language Guide*. Sierra Club, 2018, [static1.squarespace.com/static/5942af072994ca6253840fc1/t/5b2a2ec78a922d13f819fe75/1529491144172/Sierra+Club+Equity+Language+Guide+2018.pdf](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5942af072994ca6253840fc1/t/5b2a2ec78a922d13f819fe75/1529491144172/Sierra+Club+Equity+Language+Guide+2018.pdf). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>141</sup> See endnote 64.
- <sup>142</sup> "Policy 4235: Minority Teacher Recruitment." Manchester Board of Education, June 1999, [www.mpspride.org/cms/lib/CT50000127/Centricity/domain/30/policies/4235.pdf](http://www.mpspride.org/cms/lib/CT50000127/Centricity/domain/30/policies/4235.pdf). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>143</sup> When asked if School Resource Officers make them feel safer at school and whether security guards make them feel safer at school: students of color and white students in grades 7-12 who are transgender and gender non-conforming were significantly less likely to agree than their peers (white male and female students and male and female students of color); and LGBTQ+ students of color were significantly less likely to agree than their peers (white heterosexual students, heterosexual students of color, and white LGBTQ+ students).
- <sup>144</sup> "Social Justice Definitions." The National Conference for Community and Justice, [nccj.org/resources/social-justice-definitions](http://nccj.org/resources/social-justice-definitions). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.

- <sup>145</sup> Find a longer discussion and references within the report.
- <sup>146</sup> “Diversity & Social Justice Glossary.” University of Washington Tacoma Diversity Resource Center, September 2015, [www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity\\_glossary.pdf](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>147</sup> Skerry, Peter. “Do We Really Want Immigrants to Assimilate?” *Brookings Institute*, March 2000, [www.brookings.edu/articles/do-we-really-want-immigrants-to-assimilate](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/do-we-really-want-immigrants-to-assimilate). Accessed 3 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>148</sup> “ABC’s of Social Justice: A Glossary of Working Language for Socially Conscious Conversation.” Department of Inclusion & Multicultural Engagement Lewis & Clark College, 2014, [www.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice](http://www.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>150</sup> Demby, Gene. “How Code-Switching Explains the World.” *NPR*, April 2013, [www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/04/08/176064688/how-code-switching-explains-the-world](http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/04/08/176064688/how-code-switching-explains-the-world). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>151</sup> See endnote 148.
- <sup>152</sup> “Sexual Consent.” Planned Parenthood, [www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sex-and-relationships/sexual-consent](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sex-and-relationships/sexual-consent). Accessed 15 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>153</sup> “Disabilities.” World Health Organization, [www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en](http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en). Accessed 5 Sept. 2018.
- <sup>154</sup> See endnote 148.
- <sup>155</sup> See endnote 148.
- <sup>156</sup> “English Language Learners: A Policy Research Brief.” National Council of Teachers of English, 2008, [www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/PolicyResearch/ELLResearchBrief.pdf](http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/PolicyResearch/ELLResearchBrief.pdf). Accessed 15 Aug. 2018.
- <sup>157</sup> Find a longer discussion and references within the report Executive Summary.
- <sup>158</sup> Find a longer discussion and references within the report on page 27.
- <sup>159</sup> See endnote 19.
- <sup>160</sup> Thompson, Sherwood. *Encyclopedia of Diversity and Social Justice*. Rowman & Littlefield, London, 2015, p. 506.
- <sup>161</sup> See endnote 74.
- <sup>162</sup> “Understand Food Insecurity.” Hunger + Health Feeding America, [hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/understand-food-insecurity](http://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/understand-food-insecurity). Accessed 14 Sept. 2018.
- <sup>163</sup> See endnote 148.
- <sup>164</sup> See endnote 148.
- <sup>165</sup> “Race, Perception and Implicit Bias.” Anti-Defamation League, [www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk/race-perception-and-implicit-bias](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk/race-perception-and-implicit-bias). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.
- <sup>166</sup> “Learning About IEPs.” The Understood Team, [www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/what-is-an-iep](http://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/what-is-an-iep). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.
- <sup>167</sup> See endnote 148.
- <sup>168</sup> “Marginalized Groups.” European Institute for Gender Equality, [eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1280](http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1280). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.
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- <sup>171</sup> Milner, H. Richard. “Let’s Focus on Gaps in Opportunity, Not Achievement.” *Education Week*, vol. 30, issue 30, May 2011, [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/05/06/30milner.h30.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/05/06/30milner.h30.html).
- <sup>172</sup> Find a longer discussion and references within the report.
- <sup>173</sup> See endnote 148.

<sup>174</sup> See endnote 148.

<sup>175</sup> Braithwaite, J. "The Fundamentals of Restorative Justice." *A Kind of Mending: Restorative Justice in the Pacific Islands*, Jowitt A. & Newton T. (authors) & Dinnen S. (ed.), ANU Press, 2010, pp. 35-44, [ezproxy.centre.edu:2079/stable/j.ctt24hbc4.8](http://ezproxy.centre.edu:2079/stable/j.ctt24hbc4.8).

<sup>176</sup> *National School Climate Standards: Benchmarks to Promote Effective Teaching, Learning, and Comprehensive School Improvement*. National School Climate Council, 2007, [www.schoolclimate.org/themes/schoolclimate/assets/pdf/policy/school-climate-standards.pdf](http://www.schoolclimate.org/themes/schoolclimate/assets/pdf/policy/school-climate-standards.pdf). Accessed 14 Aug 2018.

<sup>177</sup> Gonçalves, Diana, and André Paulilo. "School Culture." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, Jan. 2018, doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.59. Accessed 20 July 2018.

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<sup>179</sup> Find a longer discussion and references within the report.

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<sup>181</sup> Find a longer discussion and references within the report.

<sup>182</sup> "Know Your Rights: Title IX and Sexual Assault." ACLU. [www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/title-ix-and-sexual-assault](http://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/title-ix-and-sexual-assault). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>183</sup> Banet-Weiser, Sarah, and Kate M. Miltner. "#MasculinitySoFragile: culture, structure, and networked misogyny." *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 171-174, 2016, doi: 10.1080/14680777.2016.1120490.

<sup>184</sup> "Cissexism." The National Conference for Community and Justice, [nccj.org/cissexism](http://nccj.org/cissexism). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> See endnote 148.

<sup>187</sup> McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." An excerpt from McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (Working Paper 189). Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, 1988, [www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf](http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf).

<sup>188</sup> See endnote 146.

<sup>189</sup> See endnote 148.

<sup>190</sup> "504 Education Plans." KidsHealth, September 2016, [kidshealth.org/en/parents/504-plans.html](http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/504-plans.html). Accessed 14 Aug. 2018.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> There were 7 anonymous responses to the EISCA Background Interview Survey. Some of these respondents may have also been interviewed.

<sup>193</sup> There was no school presentation at Bennet Academy, due to scheduling complications.

<sup>194</sup> Cohen, Patricia, Stephen G. West, and Leona S. Aiken. *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Psychology Press, 2014.

<sup>195</sup> American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, D.C., 2009.

<sup>196</sup> Bishop, Yvonne MM, S. E. Fienberg, and P. W. Holland. *Discrete Multivariate Analysis*. Cambridge, MIT Press, 1975; Haberman, Shelby J. "The Analysis of Residuals in Cross-Classified Tables." *Biometrics*, 1973, pp. 205-220; Saewyc, Elizabeth M., et al. "Gender Differences in Violence Exposure among University Students Attending Campus Health Clinics in the United States and Canada." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 45, no. 6, 2009, pp. 587-594.

<sup>197</sup> Exploratory factor analysis was performed on the full set of climate questions for each group separately (5 and 6 grade, 7-12 grade, staff, family). First, we determined the suitability of the EFA dataset for factor analysis using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. Next, to determine the number of factors, we examined the Kaiser criterion and Scree plots of polychoric correlation matrices (Huck, 2012), followed by Horn’s parallel analysis (PARAN; Dinno, 2009). The inclusion of multiple methods for factor determination is important because these approaches sometimes provide conflicting results (Russell, 2002); for this analysis, we examined and made comparisons across all of these options. Third, the EFA utilized principal factors analysis (PFA) and Promax rotation for the factor loading matrices to provide a more natural presentation of complex factor structures (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Russell, 2002). Based on the EFA results, items with primary loadings greater than 0.40 were included, while items with a difference of less than half between cross-loadings were excluded (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). This process was repeated for the full sample, as well as each identity group (when sample size was deemed to be sufficient). The themes that emerged from the EFA were compared against the original domains on which the questions were formed, to identify areas of similarity in difference in the way that the questions were, theoretically, expected to group together, and the way they ended up grouping together in the sample. Understanding how the questions group on each theme helps to illustrate the elements that uniquely characterize student, staff, and family responses.

<sup>198</sup> See endnote 28.

<sup>199</sup> See assessment tools in Appendix D.

<sup>200</sup> “Who We Are.” EdChange, [www.edchange.org/who.html](http://www.edchange.org/who.html). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>201</sup> “Mission and Purpose.” Education for Liberation Network, [www.edliberation.org/about/mission](http://www.edliberation.org/about/mission). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>202</sup> “Improving Education, Creating a Better World.” GLSEN, [www.glsen.org/learn/about-glsen](http://www.glsen.org/learn/about-glsen). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>203</sup> “Mission.” New York Collective of Radical Educators, [www.nycore.org/nycore-info/mission](http://www.nycore.org/nycore-info/mission). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>204</sup> “About.” Rethinking Schools: The Blog, [rethinkingschoolsblog.com/about](http://rethinkingschoolsblog.com/about). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>205</sup> “About Teachers for Social Justice.” Teachers for Social Justice, September 2004, [www.teachersforjustice.org/2007/09/about-tsj.html](http://www.teachersforjustice.org/2007/09/about-tsj.html). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>206</sup> “What We Do.” Teaching for Change, [www.teachingforchange.org/about/what-we-do](http://www.teachingforchange.org/about/what-we-do). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> “Teaching Tolerance.” Southern Poverty Law Center, [www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance](http://www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

<sup>209</sup> “FAQ.” Zinn Education Project, [www.zinnedproject.org/about/faq](http://www.zinnedproject.org/about/faq). Accessed 10 Sept. 2018.

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