

# Mahwah Schools

District Equity Audit

A Synopsis

November 15, 2023



# Inclusivity: The District's Definition



- All students *are respected*.
  - All students *feel valued*.
    - All students *have a home here* in Mahwah.

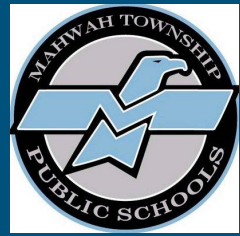
# Equity Audit Timeline: 2022-2023



## District

- October 18/19, 2022: Town Halls
- December 1, 2022: Overview of Surveys
- December 2, 2022: Dissemination of Surveys to Community via e-mail for review
  - December 5, 2022: Adult Survey Link Becomes Active
  - Week of December 12, 2022: Student Survey Administration
- December 15, 2022: Focus Group Interest Form Due
- December 20, 2022: Survey Responses Due
- January 17-20, 2023: Equity Audit In-Person Visits
  - School visits
  - Focus groups

# Survey Structure:



## Mahwah Township Public Schools Student Survey (K-5)

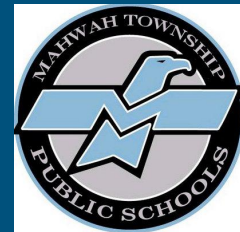
We want to hear from you! Please tell us how you feel and know that your answers will not be shared with anyone else.

## Mahwah Township Public Schools Student Survey (6-12)

Thank you for taking the time to tell us about your experiences as a student within Mahwah Township Public Schools. Emails are collected for internal purposes only and will not be shared with anyone. Please know your information will be kept confidential and all surveys will be compiled to inform the Equity Audit being conducted.

## Mahwah Township Public Schools Adult Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey so that your feedback around Mahwah Township Public Schools and their commitment to providing an equitable and inclusive environment for the entire community can be gathered. Emails are collected for internal purposes only and will not be shared with anyone. Please note that your information will be compiled with other surveys and presented in a final report to provide the district with actionable steps to improve upon issues surrounding equity and inclusion.



# Survey: Captured Within The Following Themes

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## Overarching Themes Embedded

- School Culture
- Ability
- Race
- Identity
- Gender

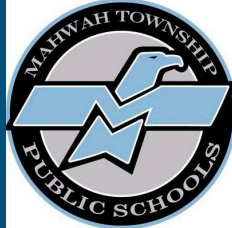
## Student and Adult Survey - Question Categories

- Classroom Culture
- Family and Community Engagement
- Instruction
- Overall Experience

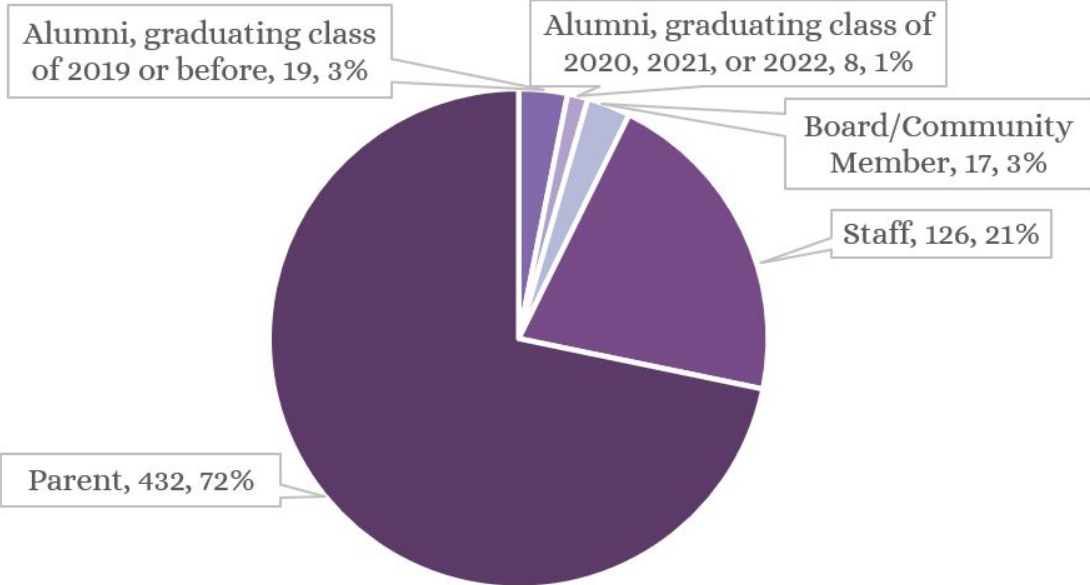
## Adult Survey - Additional Question Category

- Adult Leadership and Role-Modeling

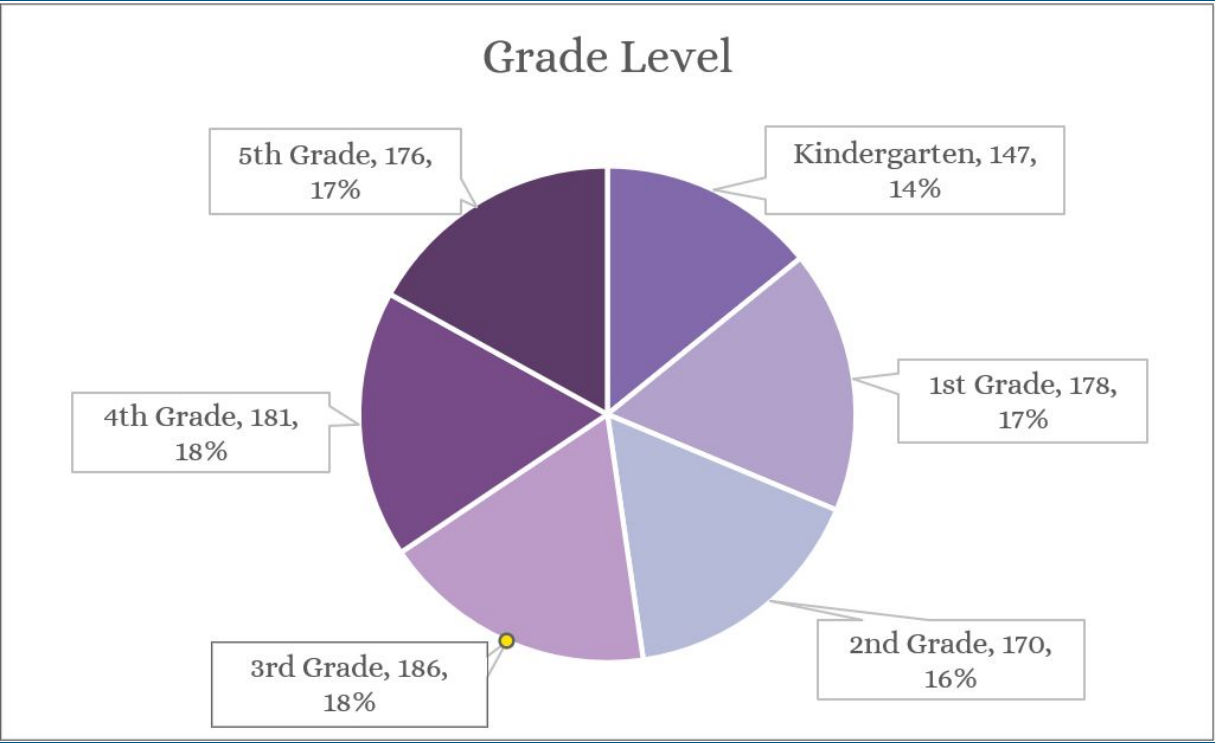
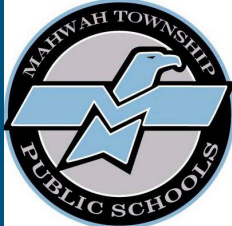
# Survey: Respondents (Adult)



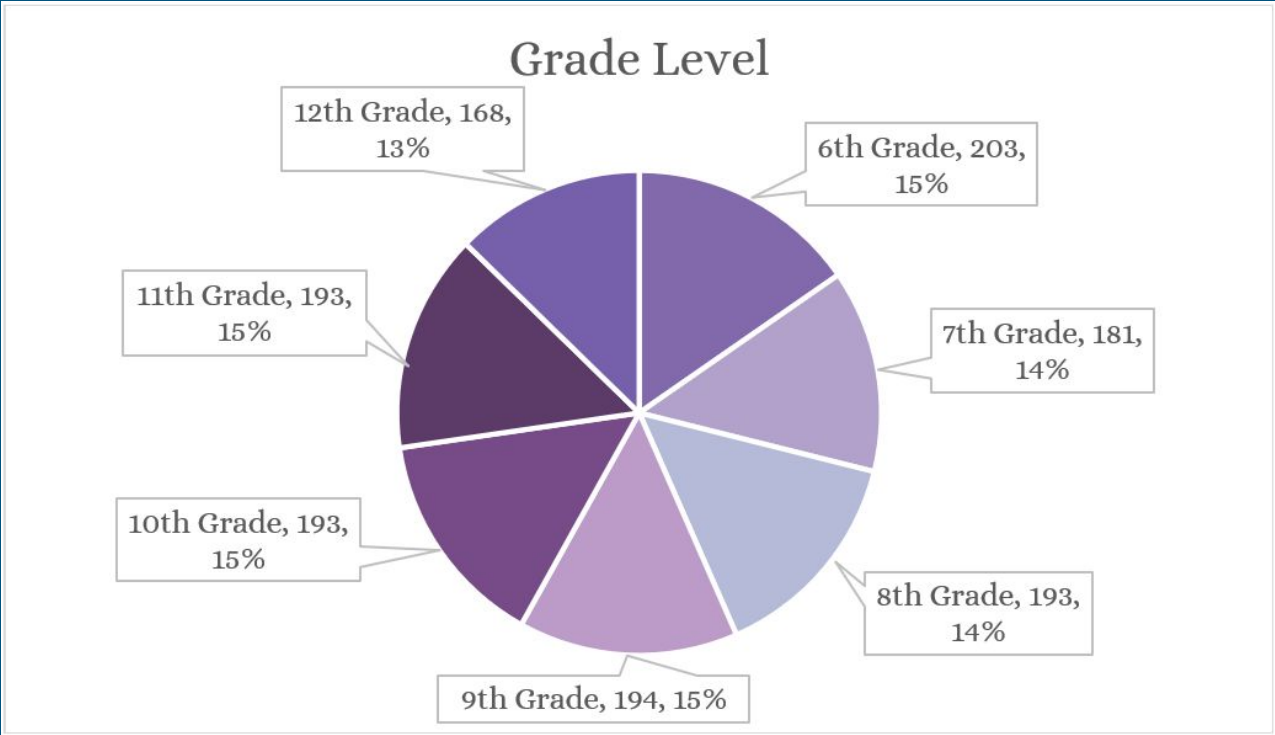
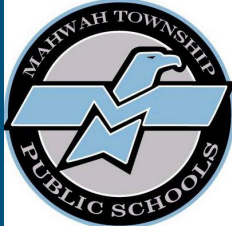
### Role in District



# Survey: Respondents (Students, Grades K-5)

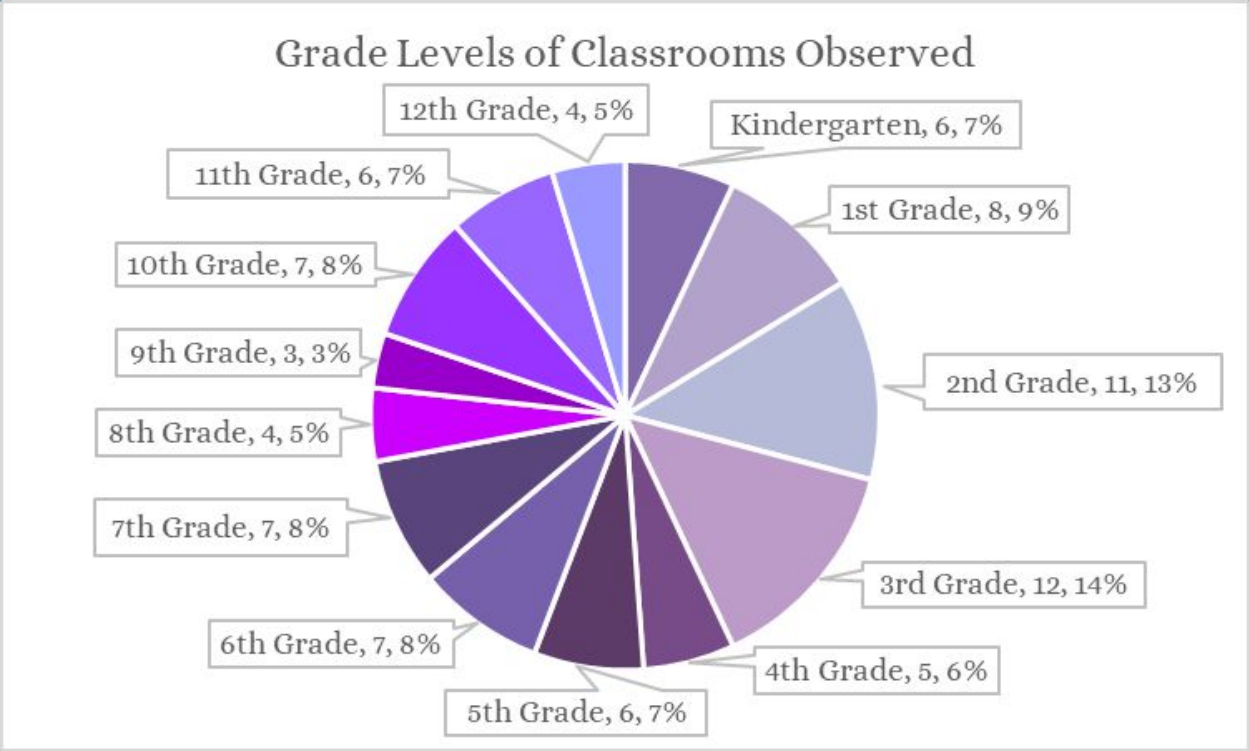
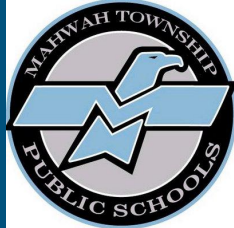


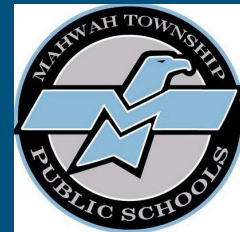
# Survey: Respondents (Students, Grades 6-12)





# Classroom Observations: By Grade Level





# Participants Across the District

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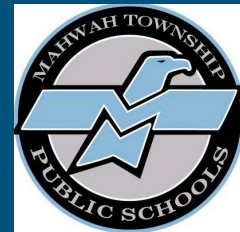
- Focus Groups (385 Individuals Across 7 Stakeholder Groups)
  - 117 Students
  - 25 Administrators
  - 39 Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Caregiver(s)
  - 126 Instructional Staff Members
  - 58 Non-Instructional Staff Members
  - 13 Community Members/Partners
  - 7 Board Members
- Classroom Observations
  - 73 classroom observations in total
  - Averaging 12 classroom observations per school building

# Equity Audit Focus Points: Organization



## Each School Building

- Classroom Culture
  - Honoring Student Experience
  - Thoughtful Classroom Setup
  - Promoting Shared Inquiry and Dialogue
  - Providing Social and Emotional Safety
  - Discipline within a Values-based Approach
- Family and Community Engagement
- Instruction
- Curriculum
- Teacher Leadership
- Representation



# Equity Audit Focus Points: Organization

## Each School Building

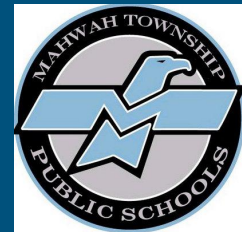
- Classroom Culture
- Family and Community Engagement
  - Culturally-sensitive Communication
  - Inclusion of Family and Community Wisdom
  - Increased Connections among Families
  - Use of Local Resources
  - Engagement with Community Issues and Problems
- Instruction
- Curriculum
- Teacher Leadership
- Representation



# Equity Audit Focus Points: Organization

## Each School Building

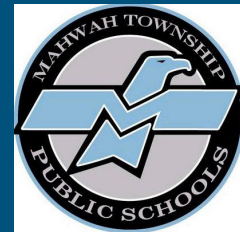
- Classroom Culture
- Family and Community Engagement
- Instruction
  - Critical Engagement with the Material
  - Differentiated Instruction
  - Cooperative and Collaborative Learning
  - Real-world Connections
  - Values-based Assessment, Evaluation, and Grading
- Curriculum
- Teacher Leadership
- Representation



# Equity Audit Focus Points: Organization

## Each School Building

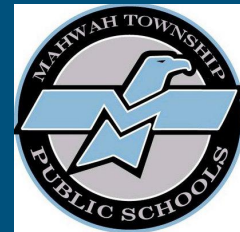
- Classroom Culture
- Family and Community Engagement
- Instruction
- Curriculum
  - Identity within Curriculum
  - Diversity within Curriculum
  - Justice within Curriculum
  - Action within Curriculum
- Teacher Leadership
- Representation



# Equity Audit Focus Points: Organization

## Each School Building

- Classroom Culture
- Family and Community Engagement
- Instruction
- Curriculum
- **Teacher Leadership**
  - Staff growth through professional development
  - Speaking up and responding to prejudicial behaviors and actions
  - Space for discussions around diversity and equity and inclusion
  - Support from staff members
  - Encouragement of professional leadership and development
- Representation



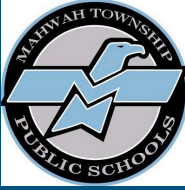
# Equity Audit Focus Points: Organization

## Each School Building

- Classroom Culture
- Family and Community Engagement
- Instruction
- Curriculum
- Teacher Leadership
- Representation
  - Cross-representation in staff, classroom materials, and books
  - Going beyond superficial and non stereotypical manners
  - Barriers to access
  - Disproportionality to programs
  - Discipline numbers



# Equity Audit: Points of Praise and Growth Opportunities



Theme #1: Providing a strong foundation of common vocabulary and purposes guides the work.

Theme #2: Representation changes lives.

Theme #3: Engaging in transparent communication and being present within the school environment leads to a sense of togetherness.

Theme #4: Feeling welcomed, valued, seen, and heard as authentic individuals leads to more understanding among different perspectives.

Theme #5: Trust is critical for growth.

Theme #6: Providing training, expectations, policies, and procedures that all stakeholders are held accountable for leads to higher success and alignment.

# Theme #1: Providing a strong foundation of common vocabulary and purposes guides the work.



## Points of Praise

- All stakeholders care very much for the Mahwah community and the students within our schools.

## Opportunities for Growth

- Create common language amongst the organization.
- Draft a common purpose/"why" related to respect across the district.
- Align our communication so that all stakeholders form a foundational understanding.

# Theme #2: Representation changes lives.



## Points of Praise

- Curricular materials, including novels and social studies supplements, are diverse and represent a range of individuals.
- District's Thunderbird Partnership Program is a powerful opportunity for community members to collaborate with our teachers and work with our students, to provide classrooms with a range of real-world applications.

## Opportunities for Growth

- Consider diversity in hiring practices.
- Rubric connected to accessibility for all learners.
- Analyze trends in student discipline, dress code, and instructional program enrollment.

# Theme #3: Engaging in transparent communication and being present within the school environment leads to a sense of togetherness.



## Points of Praise

- Many students and adults feel a sense of community within their classroom experiences.
- Opportunities for student citizenship.
- Responsive Classroom practices are present.

## Opportunities for Growth

- Create opportunities to connect amongst all school stakeholders, in a range of environments.
- Foster roundtable discussions.
- Engage our new families through advisory opportunities.

# Theme #4: Feeling welcomed, valued, seen, and heard as authentic individuals leads to more understanding among different perspectives.



## Points of Praise

- Classroom culture, overall, is such that students feel safe in school.
- Differentiated instruction is observed across the district, through small-group instruction and whole-class interactions.

## Opportunities for Growth

- Train staff members to conduct informal restorative practices.
- Spotlight staff member successes.
- Encourage student voice in hearing multiple perspectives.

# Theme #5: Trust is critical for growth.



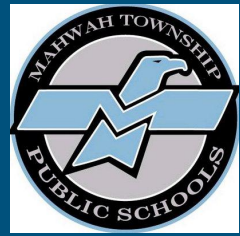
## Points of Praise

- Students report that they have a professional that they can talk to at the school level.

## Opportunities for Growth

- Roundtable discussions to keep lines of communication open amongst stakeholder groups.
- Team-building opportunities amongst staff members.
- Consider training for inquiry-based practices and working through potentially contentious topics.

# Theme #6: Providing training, expectations, policies, and procedures that all stakeholders are held accountable for leads to higher success and alignment.



## Points of Praise

- Resources and professional development are regularly provided so that staff can improve upon their practices.
- Practical use of evaluation instrument (Danielson Framework) as a guide to engage novice and veteran staff in discussions about instructional strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- The majority of adult respondents to the survey share that Central Office team provide direction and support to staff in its schools.

## Opportunities for Growth

- Consistency of enforcement of school rules and policies.
- Consider implementation of ongoing assessment mechanism for new and existing programs and/or curricular implementation.
- Craft a 3-5 year professional development plan, focused on culture and climate.

# Equity Audit: Actionable Items Forward (Immediate)



- Clearly communicate inclusivity efforts across the district, across all stakeholder groups.
  - Website update to provide a clear understanding of our equity efforts and actions.
- Maintaining a model of intervention (NJTSS) to facilitate individual student growth.
- Create opportunities for roundtable dialogue to seek for understanding and procure stakeholders' perspectives related to all aspects of district operations.
- Continue to utilize the LAN Associate's facilities audit to ensure that our schools are accessible to all.
- Review and revise, as applicable, discipline and dress code procedures and protocols.
- Explore professional development opportunities for staff members on facilitating respectful exchange of classroom discourse.
- Continue our recruitment efforts, through job fairs and recruiting events.



# Equity Audit: Actionable Items Forward (Long-range)



- Ensure that all staff are trained in Responsive Classroom (PreK-5) and Restorative Practices (6-12) models of positive school culture and student social skills development models.
- Continue to assess communication efforts among staff, parents, and community.
- Continue to engage communities in district efforts to ensure all students feel respected, valued, and have a home here in Mahwah.
- Maintaining a model of intervention (NJTSS) to facilitate individual student growth.
- Include the information from the audit for consideration in the next phase of the district's strategic planning (2025-2030).

# Equity Audit Tab

## District Website

- Tab on our district homepage:
  - All communication
  - Updates
  - Information related to the equity audit itself

