



The Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion End-of-Year Report

Newton Public Schools
2023- 2024

Prepared by

NPS DEI Department

Prepared to

**NPS School Committee &
Community**

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DEI Department

The Department of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (created in July 2020) works closely with all members of the school community to identify strengths and opportunity gaps within the NPS system through a lens of equity, social justice and accessibility.

With the support of school leaders, colleagues, students, caregivers and equity partners, the DEI Department expanded its reach throughout the district with a deepened understanding and implementation of culturally-responsive instruction, investment in diversifying our educator and leadership workforce and reinforced our unwavering commitment to building a school community that is welcoming to ALL.

Each year, we have built upon the foundation from the prior year and are proud to highlight some of our collective work across the district this 2023-24 school year.

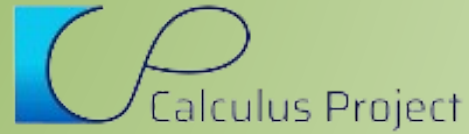
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Kathy Lopes, MSW, LICSW
Director

Naomi Austin, M. Ed
Assistant Director

EQUITY PARTNERS



**CENTER FOR
BLACK EDUCATOR
DEVELOPMENT**



UnboundEd





Department Priorities



The Department of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (created in July 2020) works closely with school leaders to build sustainable systems and structures in alignment with our annual district goals. Our work is done in partnership with school leadership teams and values student, caregiver and community input and contribution.

DISTRICT GOALS 2023-24

Goal 1: Foster Joyful and Supportive Learning Environments

Desired Outcome: Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued, connected, nourished, and prepared to learn.

Goal 2: Provide Culturally Responsive, High Quality, Rigorous Instruction for All

Desired Outcome: Ensure all students engage in grade-level work that is culturally relevant, real-world connected, interactive, and guided by high expectations.

Goal 3: Ensure Equitable Access to Effective Educators

Desired Outcome: Develop and maintain a diverse, culturally responsive, well-prepared educator workforce committed to continuous improvement.

SAFETY POLICIES, PROTOCOLS & PRACTICES

HIRING & RETENTION

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS

CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT & REVISIONS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION



SAFETY POLICIES, PRACTICES & PROTOCOLS

Goal 1: Foster Joyful and Supportive Learning Environments

Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued, connected, nourished, and prepared to learn.



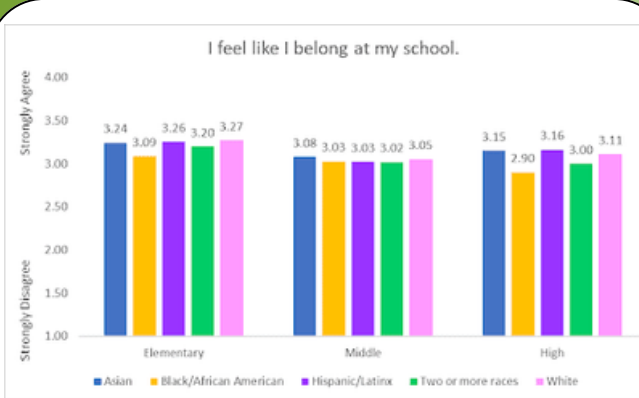
Self-Assessment: SEL & Connectedness Surveys

Elementary (Grades 3-5):

This year, students in grades 3-5 took an SEL survey (once in the fall and once in the spring) that measured seven areas related to social and emotional learning.

Middle & High:

Students in middle school and high school took the district-created Connectedness survey in early winter, which measures seven areas. The high school survey also asks students to indicate the frequency with which they hear, notice or experience various forms of discrimination and the location(s), as well as how they responded to that discrimination.

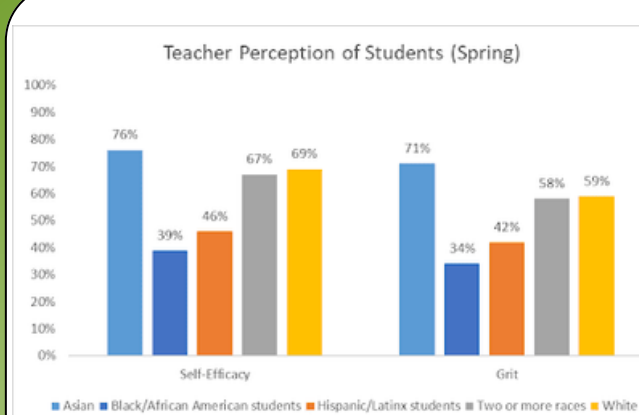


- Black/African American students and Hispanic/Latinx students responded to “I feel like I belong in school” **less positively** than their elementary & high school peers; little variation at the middle school level.
- Students identifying as Asian, White, or Two or more races responded **more positively** to the frequency with which they experience challenging feelings, while students identifying as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx responded **less positively**.*

**Responses for all races/ethnicities are still above the national average (based on Panorama’s national data).*

Elementary Teachers:

Some schools piloted the teacher survey (responses were received for 59% of students in grades 3-5 in the spring), evaluating their students on seven areas.



- The teacher perception survey displayed **more disparities** in responses by student race/ethnicity than the student survey.
- Teachers were **less likely** to report that their Black/African American students and Hispanic/Latinx students were confident in their ability to learn in the classroom than their Asian, White, or Two or more races peers and **less likely** to report that their Black/African American students and Hispanic/Latinx students had grit than their Asian, White, or Two or more races peers.



SAFETY POLICIES, PRACTICES & PROTOCOLS

Goal 1: Foster Joyful and Supportive Learning Environments

Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued, connected, nourished, and prepared to learn.



"As an educator you don't get to pick which students you protect, we protect **ALL** students. It's our job."
~ Dr. Miguel Cardona, U.S. Secretary of Education



Non-Discrimination Protocol Training

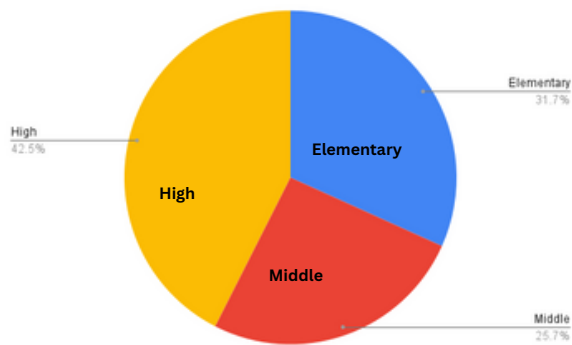
In November, nearly 100 administrators participated in a refresher training on the NPS Non-Discrimination Protocol at our monthly Admin Council convening. We highlighted the responsibility of **ALL** NPS staff to report **ANY** act of witnessed or reported discrimination, reviewed the reporting & investigation process & timelines, and reinforced the ultimate goal of education and restoration when possible.

Discrimination Reporting

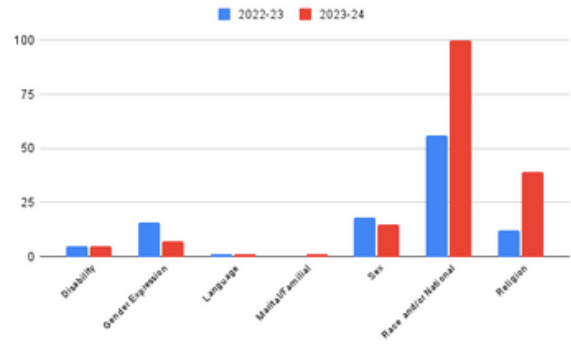
Revised in Spring 2022, our Non-Discrimination Policy has streamlined our district reporting and investigation procedures in attempt to interrupt and address harm more efficiently, as well as create targeted approaches to educational and restorative responses.

Initiated Discrimination Complaints

Reports by Grade Level



Nature of Discrimination



- Total of 169 reports of discrimination in 2023-24 school year, increase of **55%** since last school year.*
- Reported incidents identifying **race** as the protected class make up the largest percentage (**60%**) across the district and all grade levels.
- While reports identifying **religion** as the protected class (majority antisemitic and islamophobic acts) make up **23%** of all reports, the number has more than tripled since last year (**39 total**).
- There was a decrease in reports identifying gender expression and/or sex as the identified protected class.**

*Increase in # of reported incidents were anticipated due to an intentional increase of awareness and accessibility of reporting tool and reinforced expectation of responsibility of reporting.
**Gender category was modified to "gender expression" to more accurately capture the nature of the targeted discrimination.



SAFETY POLICIES, PRACTICES & PROTOCOLS

Goal 1: Foster Joyful and Supportive Learning Environments

Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued, connected, nourished, and prepared to learn.



Gender Affirming Guidance

Newton Public Schools is committed to upholding our values of inclusion and equity for all of our members by providing a learning environment in which transgender and gender expansive students, staff, and family members are welcomed and can engage in their full identities.

With the collective voice of our [DEI Advisory](#) and district stakeholders, a draft of the **NPS Guidance on the Basis of Gender Identity** is in its final stage and prepared to be shared with the NPS community in the upcoming school year.

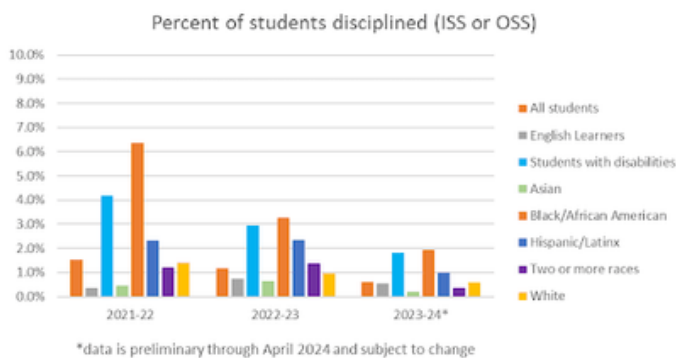
This guidance, in accordance with State and Federal law and policy, will support and increase our ongoing efforts to provide educational and social opportunities that affirm, support, and/or acknowledge gender identity and gender diversity.

The 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People found that **more than half (54%) or transgender and nonbinary young people found their school to be gender-affirming**, and those who did reported lower rates of attempting suicide.

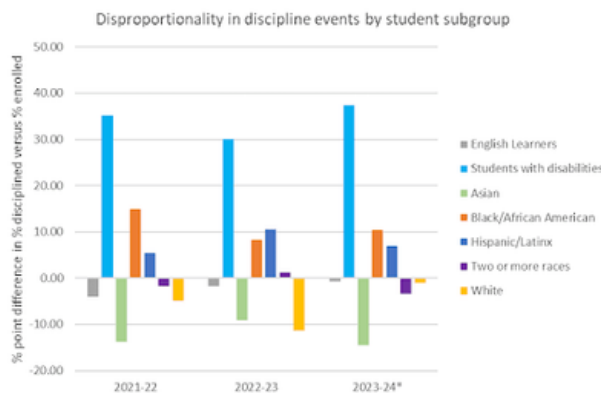
~ [The Trevor Project](#)



Discipline Data



- Overall, the percent of students disciplined has **decreased** over the past three school years*
- Students with disabilities, Black/African American students, and Hispanic/Latinx students continue to experience discipline events at a **higher rate** than their peers, and **more frequently** than would be expected based on student enrollment.



- The disproportionality graph in this section displays disproportionality in student discipline events compared to student enrollment by subgroup. Student groups with a positive value **experience a higher percentage of discipline events** than their enrollment in the district overall, indicating a disproportionate experience.

*Please note that data from the current school year is preliminary and only covers September 2023-April 2024 and is subject to change.



HIRING & RETENTION

Goal 3: Ensure Equitable Access to Effective Educators

Develop and maintain a diverse, culturally responsive, well-prepared educator workforce committed to continuous improvement.



DESE Teacher Diversification Grant

Research shows that access to teachers of color results in academic and personal benefits for students (particularly Black and Latino students), such as **improved academic performance, lower discipline rates, and higher graduation rates.**

~ National Council on Teacher Quality, 2021

For this school year, NPS was awarded \$82,037 focused to "support local school and district efforts to strengthen and diversify existing teacher recruitment and retention programs."

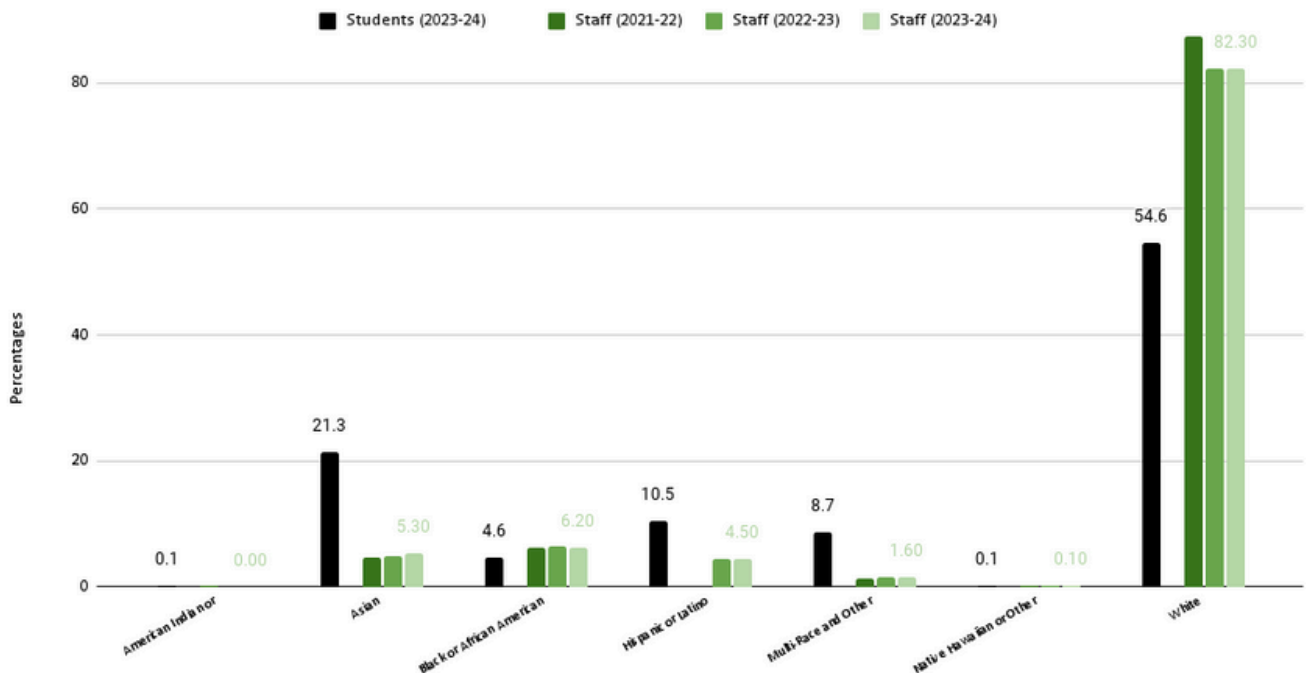
These funds were used for targeted licensure support; to expand affinity groups and resources, support supervisory staff through complex conversations about race and identity; support NPS training and professional development and to enhance teacher recruitment strategies.

As a recipient of the grant, an NPS cohort of administrators participated in a series of online training provided by DESE alongside other MA districts leaders.



Student-Staff Demographics

NPS Demographics





HIRING & RETENTION

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Hiring Manager Training

The Human Resources & DEI Department co-hosted an NPS Hiring Manager training to support efforts of recruiting a diverse workforce. In preparation for the 2024-25 hiring season approaching, hiring managers (principals, assistant principals, and department heads) attended via zoom to learn recruiting strategies and access resources to support an equitable hiring and ongoing retention process.



Lasell University Partnership



NPS entered its' second year in partnership with Lasell University in support of reducing barriers for Unit C staff of color to attain advanced degrees and in hopes of increasing and retaining a diverse educator workforce here at NPS. The Lasell OELA grant has been reviewing applications for Cohort 3 starting in September 2024. Both Cohort 1 and 2 scholars are busy this summer taking courses and Cohort 1 is getting closer to licensure and completion of the program and we are excited to see their growth as professionals preparing to work with diverse students with disabilities as teachers ponce they graduate in May 2025.



Black Male Educator Convening



In December, the Center for Black Educator Development hosted its 6th Annual Black Male Educator Convening (BMEC) in Philadelphia. With collaboration from the Grant, Human Resources, and DEI Depts, NPS was able to support all six Black male administrators to attend the 3 day gathering of 1,000 Black male educators across the country. The agenda included distinguished speakers, lively panels, and targeted workshops to inform, inspire, and energize our commitment to serve the increase and retention of Black educators and improve outcomes for our students. At the Wednesday, March 20th Extended Administrative Council meeting, the group shared their experience and learnings from the conference.





HIRING & RETENTION

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Retention Stipend for Educational Leadership

In our commitment to onboarding and retaining NPS educators of color, funding from the Teacher Diversification Grant supported one educator from every elementary building to be honored by their building principal for a small stipend to support their continued growth and learning in their professional journey.

Awards were intended to recognize and encourage the contributions of those who have demonstrated initiative and leadership skills within their school community.



Recipient Quotes of Appreciation

“I look forward to my continued growth with the support of NPS and their commitment to educators of color. Again, thank you for your confidence in me - and this thoughtful, generous gift!”

“Thank you very much. I've actually just applied for the Aspiring Principals Fellowship and am looking forward to many more fulfilling years in NPS.”

“I would like to extend a special thank you to my building principal... for her recognizing my initiative and leadership in our school community! It's amazing to be part of a district that is committed to onboarding and retaining educators of color.”

“Thank you all for choosing me for this opportunity. I appreciate the work we do together in this district to support learning for all students.”

“I am truly blessed to be surrounded by those that care and have recognized my efforts over the years as an educator.”



Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education

As a member district with the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity and Education (MPDE) our staff can take advantage of MTEL reimbursement and course reimbursement (max \$1,000) for BIPOC staff pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in education. These perks are exclusive to our members and aim to alleviate some financial burdens associated with furthering BIPOC educators' obtaining licensure.





HIRING & RETENTION

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The Teachers' Lounge Educator Prom

As recipients of the Teacher Diversification Grant, we raffled 10 tickets to the 3rd annual Teachers' Lounge Educator Prom. 10 NPS educators and staff of color, representing grades and buildings across the district, joined 400+ educators of color across the Greater Boston area for a night of celebration, dance and recognition.



“The educators' prom was an incredible and powerful night. As a Black woman, it was so inspiring to see other educators and all they are doing... and on this night I felt so proud. Events like this give Black educators like myself the motivation to keep dreaming. It is a reminder to keep going as an educator and continue to empower the youth around us. We are a part of a bigger picture. ~ NPS Educator”



BIPOC Staff Affinity Gatherings

Staff of Color in NPS represent a small percentage of the overall school population. This may present challenges of isolation, exclusion and lack of community. Affinity spaces offer a place for support and safety which will positively impact experiences in NPS and increase retention. With support from Newton Schools Foundation, we have launched district-wide affinity groups for all NPS staff who identify as BIPOC and meet throughout the year for social gatherings.



BIPOC Winter Social



End-of-Year BIPOC Cookout



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Goal 2: Provide Culturally Responsive, High Quality, Rigorous Instruction for All

Ensure all students engage in grade-level work that is culturally relevant, real-world connected, interactive, and guided by high expectations.



Elementary & IT CRI Training

The DEI Department has continued to hold summer training for equity teams at the elementary school level across the district, in addition to supporting middle and high school administrators in their yearlong equity planning. Due to the work-to-rule, the number of participants varied from past years but as needed, school administrators attended and brought the work back to their buildings. This year, the focus was on practice and application of culturally responsive 'teacher moves.'

Later in the year, the IT Department participated in a CRI training with Instructional Tech Specialists, who play a vital role in support culturally-responsive instruction through technological tools design.



Elementary CRI Training - August 2024



Middle School Leadership Seminar

In preparation for the 2023-24 school year, the DEI Dept. facilitated a leadership seminar for middle school principals and assistant principals to support cohesion of priorities and practices across all four buildings. The training consisted of continued focus on self-reflection of racial identity and leadership styles, as well as enhancing communication and cultural practices in response to student experiences'.



Unit C PLC Partnership

This year the LEP co-leaders, Naomi Austin (Assistant Director of DEI) and Kristen Conrad (Literacy Interventionist) partnered with the Unit C staff at Angier Elementary school to develop a professional development for their professional learning community (PLC). This series featured a variety of district personnel who came to share their expertise around learning goals identified by the PLC group.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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As the selected COSEBOC Vanguard District, we kicked off our partnership with NPS staff and admin participating in two professional development courses this school year: Standards and Footprints & Footsteps. In both courses, participants reflected on identity, the state of affairs for boys of color in the education system and the work needed to create larger impact for belonging, equity and excellence for student in NPS.



Standards Course



Footprints and Footsteps

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- **94%** of participants rated the quality of the course as very high and reported that they were very likely to recommend the course to a colleague.
- **All** participants agreed and **81%** strongly agreed that the course increased their commitment to transforming education for students of color in the district, particularly male students of color.
- **94%** of participants reported that they were very likely to develop and implement an action plan to apply what they learned in the course.

“The course was most valuable to me as a white woman for continuing to reinforce and expand upon previous learning about white supremacy culture and the harm our unexamined (whether on purpose or not) systems and structures have on BIPOC folks and in particular BOC.”

“This course was structured in such a way that deep, authentic connections were able to be built and fostered throughout the course of the year together. I have tangible next steps and have built lasting relationships with colleagues to join in this work.”

“Incredibly valuable—all of it. Best Professional Development I’ve ever had.”

“The course was truly life altering.”

“The course was extremely productive, thoughtful and interactive. The presenters were amazing. The content is powerful, educational and meaningful. This work must now be carried on in the system.”

SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS

Goal 2: Provide Culturally Responsive, High Quality, Rigorous Instruction for All

Ensure all students engage in grade-level work that is culturally relevant, real-world connected, interactive, and guided by high expectations.

“*Our education agenda should not be about what adults want, but what students need.*
~ *Our Turn’s Student Engagement Report, 2024*”

Literacy Equity Project

This year the Literacy Equity Project was co-led by the DEI Department’s Assistant Director, Naomi Austin, and Literacy Interventionist, Kristen Conrad. LEP ran another cohort for classroom teachers and literacy specialists as well as led the Unit C professional learning community (PLC) at Angier Elementary through a series of professional development, facilitated by various district leaders.

High School Human Rights Councils

Newton South Human Rights Council (SHRC)

In the face of injustices that impact our school, the South Human Rights Council promotes a safe, supportive, and celebratory community at Newton South. Through incident response, event planning, and advocacy, the South Human Rights Council fosters acceptance for human differences. This year, SHRC hosted amazing speakers for LGBTQ+ Day, Disability Awareness, Black Culture Day, and AAPI Heritage Day and participated in the Walk for Unity Rally.

Newton North Office of Human Rights (HRC)

This year, the students of the NNHS Human Rights Council collaborated together and with other student groups to help carry out NNHS’s mission statement: “We celebrate the dignity of all people, teach and learn to the depth and distance of our abilities, take responsibility for our actions and conduct ourselves with integrity and civility.” Together, they created spaces for respectful and thoughtful conversations, worked on projects that centered college admissions equity, created ways to enhance the school library’s diversity and inclusivity, and put together posters and student panels in honor of women’s history month. Additionally, they presented at this year’s Sutton High School Conference, as well as hosted the No Place for Hate Rally.



SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS

Goal 2: Provide Culturally Responsive, High Quality, Rigorous Instruction for All

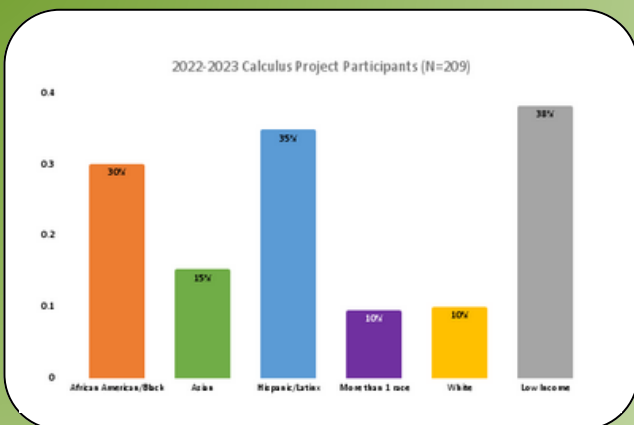
Ensure all students engage in grade-level work that is culturally relevant, real-world connected, interactive, and guided by high expectations.

Calculus Project



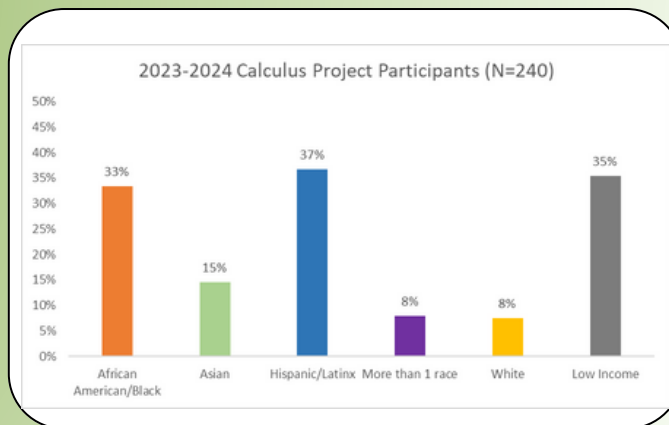
The Calculus Project is focused on narrowing the achievement gap in math for African American, Hispanic, and low income students. For the last several years, the DEI Department participated in the recruitment and hiring process, as well as supported staffs' summer professional development and continued reflection about how their own and students' identities engage with the project. The DEI Department supports the Calculus Project through the selection process, hiring process and professional development for summer educators.

Calculus Project Participants



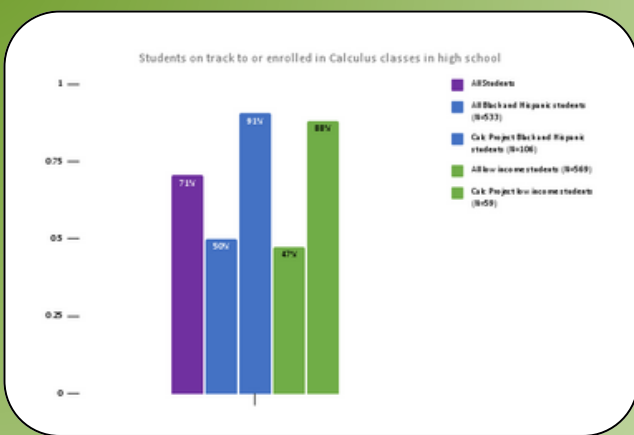
2022-23

Calculus Project Participants



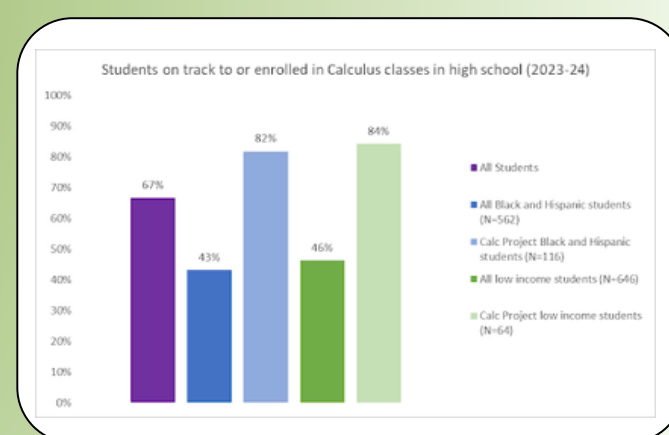
2023-24

Enrolled/On Track in Calculus



2022-23

Enrolled/On Track in Calculus



2023-24

All categories (Calculus Project participants and all students) decreased slightly from last year. However, students in the Calculus Project remain **more likely** to be on track/enrolled in Calculus than their peers in their grade level - a similar pattern to last year.



SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS

Goal 2: Provide Culturally Responsive, High Quality, Rigorous Instruction for All

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DEI Advisory

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory consists of a diverse group of members, ranging from classroom educators, building administrators and support specialists representing all levels. Members meet monthly and bring a broad perspective of DEI-related student and staff needs in NPS. The committee met several times this year to draft a gender-affirming guidance that is to be distributed across the district in the new school year.



Elementary Affinity Groups

One of the DEI Department's yearlong goals has been to support elementary affinity groups across the district. This year we were able to provide leadership stipends and a materials budget for schools, in an effort to support buildings in hosting groups.

In an effort to better support the creation and expansion of affinity groups at NPS elementary schools, we also brought together a team of leaders from a variety of roles and experiences to provide the district with feedback. The team consisted of current affinity group leaders and educators looking to start groups, helping us consider next steps for the 2024/2025 school year. We look forward to continuing this conversation as we roll out different initiatives in the new academic year.



Building Consultation & Support

The DEI Department continues to partner with school leaders and committees across the district to develop equitable school practices and community spaces. Serving as consultants, we are able to support professional development workshops, provide educational resources, and collaborate on ongoing needs.

The Department is utilized to support building principals to address issues that arise related to discrimination, building teacher capacity to address microaggressions, student lesson plans, crisis management, community engagement, etc.

**COMMUNITY AND CAREGIVER FORUMS
ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM LESSONS
PD PLANNING SUPPORT & FACILITATION
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
STUDENT PANELS & INTERVIEWS
ADDRESSING HARM & SAFETY PLANNING**

CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT & REVISIONS

Goal 2: Provide Culturally Responsive, High Quality, Rigorous Instruction for All

Ensure all students engage in grade-level work that is culturally relevant, real-world connected, interactive, and guided by high expectations.

Addressing Hate & Antisemitism

NPS was awarded \$50,000 (one of only 10 districts in the state) through DESE's Hate Crime Prevention grant program. This application reflects collaboration between Dr. Nolin, the DEI Office, the NPS Grants Office, the secondary principals, and other district leaders, to support the districts' commitment to anti-discrimination and anti-bullying and reflect research-based best practice to address antisemitism.

The competitive state-funded grant supported the implementation and enhancement of programs designed to prevent hate crimes and incidences of bias in our public schools. Funds will be distributed to support the following programming at our middle schools:

ADL Peer Leadership Program
Urban Improv's Rehearsal for Life
Middle School Holocaust Curriculum Revisions



6th Grade Urban Improv



F.A. Day Community Day

Unbound ED/CORE Learning

UnboundEd

NPS adopted Expeditionary Learning (EL) as its new elementary literacy curriculum this year. As the district phases roll out to all grade-levels, the DEI team has joined a larger team of district and school leaders in partnership with UnboundED/CORE Learning to reflect on EL's implementation process through a variety of lenses, including CRI. We will continue to ensure we are working to meet the needs of all students.

CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT & REVISIONS

Goal 2: Provide Culturally Responsive, High Quality, Rigorous Instruction for All

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Anti-Ableist Program Development

Since the summer 2023, the anti-ableist curriculum working group has been meeting regularly to develop curriculum for elementary schools. The working group, made up of educators and community members, has developed a thematic sequence of lessons for students in kindergarten through 5th grade.

Elementary Upstander Lessons

This year our department has gone into several elementary schools to provide lessons to upper elementary students around understanding hate speech and becoming anti-racist, upstanders within their school communities. Our department continues to be available for consultation in proactively educating students around use of harmful language, and restorative practices for reported incidents.

Cultural Education & Celebration Resources

This year, the heritage monthly resources were adopted by the Information Technology and Library Services Department. These resources are shared out in the Daily Voice and can also be found on the DEI website. These materials continue to serve as resources for educators to engage student learning in all grades on the diversity of cultures, contributions, and celebrations.

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER



FEBRUARY



JUNE



NOVEMBER



APRIL



DECEMBER



MAY





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

Goal 1: Foster Joyful and Supportive Learning Environments

Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued, connected, nourished, and prepared to learn.



No Place for Hate/Walk for Unity

For the 3rd consecutive year, NPS middle and high school students and staff came together for the 3rd annual No Place for Hate/Walk for Unity rally.

Students on the south side (Oak Hill and Brown) will walk together to meet at Newton South High, while students on the north side (Bigelow and Day) will meet at Newton North. At both locations, student volunteers will share their personal experiences and speak out to condemn all acts of hate and discrimination, calling for unity and continued action in order to make schools safe and inclusive communities.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

Goal 1: Foster Joyful and Supportive Learning Environments

Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued, connected, nourished, and prepared to learn.



Cabot Community Forum

In partnership with Newton METCO, the DEI Department co-hosted a community forum for families and educators of Cabot Elementary.

The presentation consisted of highlighting the impact of racial incidents in the current school year and providing strategies for all members of the community to participate in disrupting patterns of microaggressions and racial harm. Caregivers were encouraged to have conversations about race at home and help students develop skills to be upstanders. Educators were reminded to partner with families and to interrupt harm in the moment.

"Studies have shown that young kids notice race, try to make sense of it, and talk about it.

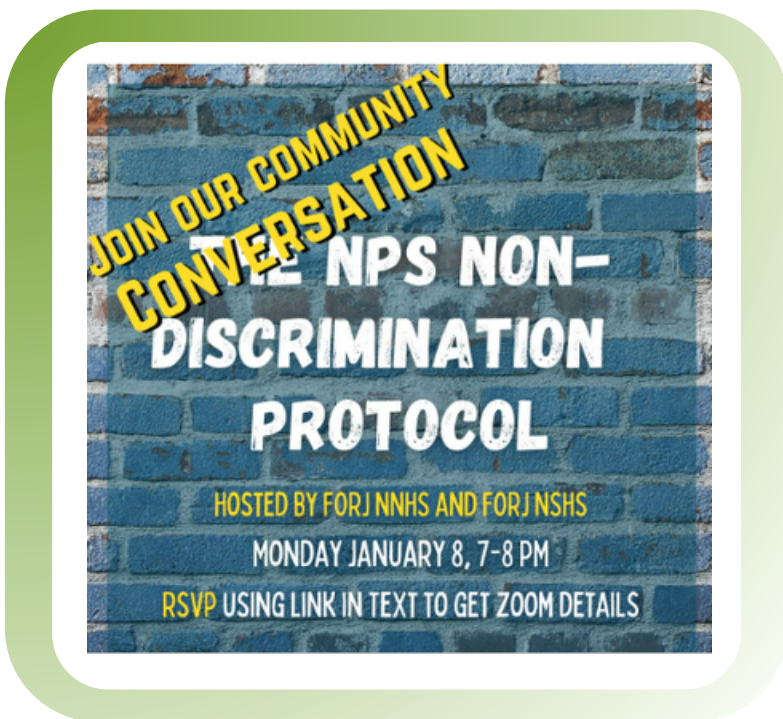
Babies use race to categorize faces before their first birthday. Preschool age children have already learned and internalized racial stereotypes... associating Black faces with negative traits."

~ National Library of Medicine, 2013



Community Conversation: Hosted by FORJ

The Families Organizing for Racial Justice (FORJ) chapters at Newton North and Newton South High Schools invited all staff and families in our school communities to an online hour of engagement and education with the Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Newton Public Schools to learn more about the NPS Non-Discrimination Protocol and how to support building a welcoming community for all.



DEI Department Projected Priorities 2024-25

**Ongoing
Staff
Development**

**Curriculum &
Programmatic
Support**

**Restorative
Practices**

**Educator &
Leadership
Diversity**

**Communication &
Engagement**

**Equitable Policies
& Protocols**