

A thick dark blue vertical bar runs down the left side of the page. A blue arrow-shaped graphic points to the right, overlapping the bar, and contains the date.

April 18, 2024

Fundamental 5 – Full Governance Progress Monitoring

Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Equity

Several thin, curved lines in shades of blue and grey originate from the bottom left and sweep upwards and to the right, creating a sense of movement and design.

Mercer Island School District #400
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Fundamental 5

Foster and embrace diversity, inclusiveness, and equity with a focus on respect and acceptance of every student.

As we reflect on the past year, our commitment to creating a vibrant and inclusive educational environment remains unwavering. In alignment with our Board Policy 1800 Operational Expectation 01, Fundamental 5—previously known as Fundamental 7 prior to the 2020-2021 school year—we continue to foster and embrace diversity, inclusiveness, and equity with a steadfast focus on respect and acceptance of every student.

This annual monitoring report, as outlined in our Board's annual planning calendar found in Policy 1008P, delves into both the qualitative and quantitative indicators pertinent to Fundamental 5. Through these indicators, we assess our efforts in nurturing a culture where diversity is seen as an asset, inclusiveness as a necessity, and equity as our guiding principle.

Our approach is holistic; recognizing that students come from diverse backgrounds which contribute uniquely to our community's fabric. This year, we have enhanced our educational practices to ensure that all students, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, or socio-economic status, receive the opportunities necessary to reach their full potential. We prioritize not only academic achievement but also the social and emotional well-being of our students, viewing these elements through a racial equity lens as essential to educating the whole child.

We have strengthened our resolve in creating inclusive learning communities where every individual feels a sense of belonging and respect. Our staff continues to undergo training to better recognize and address biases and stereotypes, paving the way for more equitable learning environments.

This report underscores our dedication to a school culture where every student is valued, supported, and inspired to excel. We are proud of the progress we have made and are committed to continuing our journey towards true educational equity.

The Students We Serve

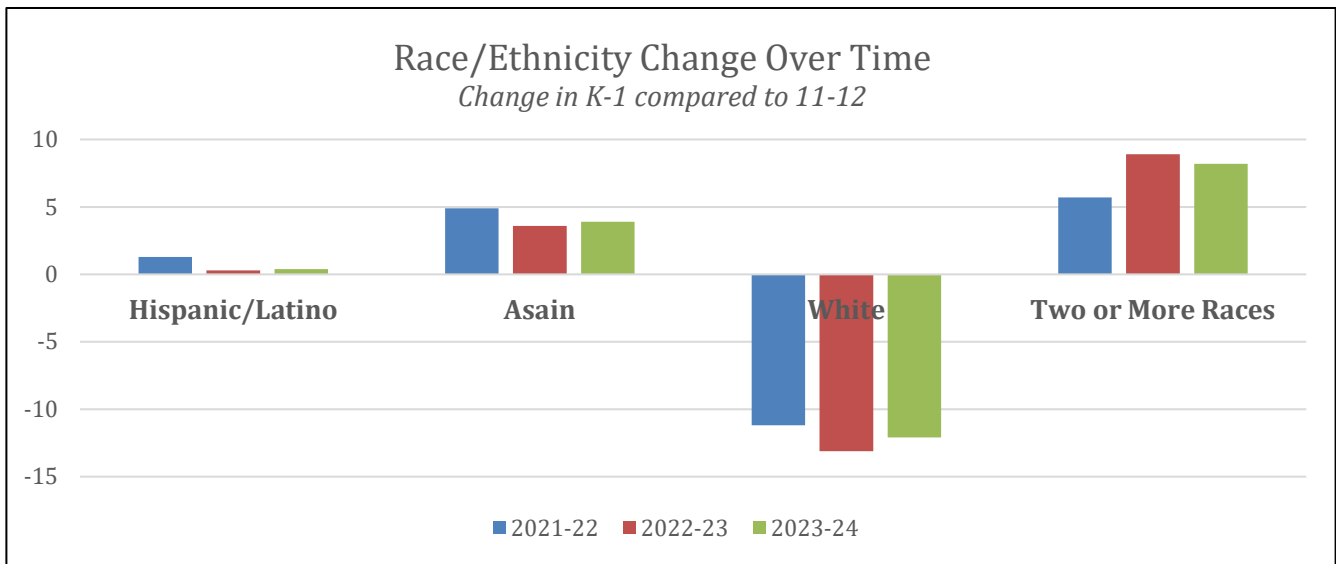
In recent years, our district has experienced significant shifts in its racial and ethnic makeup, which are captured in our data over the past six years. Notably, there has been a 12.4% decrease in the population of students identified as "white," while the numbers of students identified as Asian, Hispanic, and those of Two or More Races have shown consistent growth. This demographic evolution is clearly illustrated in our data, emphasizing an increasing diversity, especially among the younger cohorts in kindergarten and first grade compared to those in grades 11 and 12, as detailed in Tables 1 and 2.

3,942

Table 1. Race/Ethnicity Overview by Year

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hispanic/Latino	4.8%	4.9%	5.2%	6.6%	7.0%	7.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Asian	21.9%	23.0%	23.7%	25.8%	27.0%	27.6%
Black/African American	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
White	61.6%	59.6%	58.0%	53.2%	50.9%	49.2%
Two or More Races	10.6%	11.6%	12.0%	12.7%	13.8%	14.5%

This trend of diversifying student demographics not only enriches our school district by bringing a variety of perspectives and insights but also highlights the essential need for our ongoing efforts to foster inclusiveness and equity. As our student and family demographics evolve, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that our educational environment promotes a sense of belonging, affirming each student's identity, enhancing visibility for all cultural backgrounds, and actively removing barriers to educational success.



Furthermore, the demographic differences between our elementary and high school students underline the transformative journey our district is undergoing. This ongoing change supports our expectation that the racial and ethnic composition of older student populations will soon reflect that of the younger students, reinforcing the importance of adapting our educational strategies to meet the needs of an ever more diverse student body.

Table 2. Race/Ethnicity Change Over Time

	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Grades K & 1	Grades 11 & 12	Grades K & 1	Grades 11 & 12	Grades K & 1	Grades 11 & 12
Hispanic/Latino	7.2%	5.9%	6.4%	6.1%	7.2%	6.8%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian	25.7%	20.8%	27.2%	23.6%	27.7%	23.8%
Black/African American	1.4%	2.0%	1.6%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%
White	49.3%	60.5%	46.5%	59.6%	44.4%	56.5%
Two or More Races	16.0%	10.3%	18.3%	9.4%	19.6%	11.4%

English Language Learner (ELL) Parent Survey

Each ELL family was asked to participate in a survey in alternate years to provide feedback about their experience as a family in the District, as well as the support afforded to their child(ren). The District, in alignment with the Consolidated Review Process, uses the instrument designed and published by OSPI. The survey is offered in each family's home language as well as English. The ELL Parent Survey is administered every other year.

The percentage of parents who feel welcome when visiting the school has decreased from 92% in SY 19-20 to 86% in SY 23-24. This decline suggests a need for enhancing the welcoming atmosphere for ELL families. Awareness of the language development services their child is receiving has slightly improved from 74% in SY 21-22 to 77% in SY 23-24, although it remains below the SY 19-20 level of 81%. Understanding of how English language support helps their child has decreased slightly from 79% in SY 21-22 to 77% in SY 23-24. The percentage of parents who believe their child is learning necessary skills and knowledge has improved significantly from 79% in SY 21-22 to 86% in SY 23-24, indicating positive perceptions of educational outcomes. The perception of school staff providing extra help has increased markedly from 74% in SY 21-22 to 86% in SY 23-24, reflecting better support mechanisms for ELL students.

The recognition of academic and personal accomplishments by school staff has risen from 79% in SY 21-22 to 86% in SY 23-24. The value placed on families' culture by school staff has shown significant improvement from 84% in SY 21-22 to 95% in SY 23-24, highlighting enhanced cultural appreciation and inclusion. The ease of participating in their child's education has increased from 68% in SY 21-22 to 73% in SY 23-24, although it still lags behind the SY 19-20 level of 86%. Teachers' communication about child's progress has improved from 79% in SY 21-22 to 82% in SY 23-24, showing better engagement and information sharing. The use of parents' ideas to improve the language development program has seen a significant increase from 42% in SY 21-22 to 68% in SY 23-24, suggesting a more collaborative approach. Utilization of personal and academic information provided by parents to help their child has improved from 68% in SY 21-22 to 77% in SY 23-24.

The decline in parents feeling welcome at school from 92% to 86% is concerning. Although there have been improvements, the lower levels of parents feeling it is easy to participate in their child's education (73%) and understanding how support services help their child (77%) indicate areas needing further attention. Significant improvements in perceptions of support from school staff and recognition of students' accomplishments are promising indicators of progress in these areas. The substantial increase in parents feeling their culture is valued and their input is used to improve programs highlights positive strides in cultural responsiveness and parent engagement.

Table 3. English Language Learner Parent Survey

Indicator	Percent of Parents that Agree				
	SY 19-20	SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24
“I feel welcome when I visit the school.”	92	N/A	89	N/A	86
“I know what language development services my child is receiving.”	81	N/A	74	N/A	77
“I understand how the English language support is helping my child.”	80	N/A	79	N/A	77
“My child is learning the skills and knowledge necessary for success.”	88	N/A	79	N/A	86
“School staff provide extra help when my child needs it.”	90	N/A	74	N/A	86
“School staff recognize my child’s academic and personal accomplishments.”	86	N/A	79	N/A	86
“I understand the importance of helping my child learn our native language.”	93	N/A	95	N/A	91
“School staff value my family’s culture.”	93	N/A	84	N/A	95
“My child’s school makes it easy for me to participate in my child’s education.”	86	N/A	68	N/A	73
“School staff use my ideas to improve the school’s language development program.”	83	N/A	42	N/A	68
“School staff use the personal and academic information that I provide to help my child.”	74	N/A	68	N/A	77
“Teachers communicate with me about my child’s progress in language development and academic subjects.”	86	N/A	79	N/A	82

Highly Capable Demographic Distribution

The District has been monitoring the gender and race/ethnicity distribution within students accessing Highly Capable services. Aligned to Fundamental 5, the District is presently and has been committed to ensuring equitable access to this district program. Data includes students ranging from kindergarten to grade 12.

The gender distribution among students over the past two academic years shows a slight increase in the percentage of female students, rising from 47.2% to 47.6%, and a corresponding decrease in the percentage of male students from 52.5% to 51.8%. The representation of Gender X students, although small, has doubled from 0.3% to 0.6%. This data points to a gradually diversifying gender landscape within our student body (see Table 4).

Table 4. Gender Identity by School Year

Gender	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Male	56.1% (388)	56.0% (347)	54.5% (310)	52.9% (294)	50.7% (318)
Female	43.9% (304)	44.0% (273)	45.2% (257)	46.8% (260)	48.6% (305)
X			0.4% (2)	0.4% (2)	0.6% (4)

When analyzing the ethnic/race demographics the 2023-2024 data reveals that Asian students continue to be slightly overrepresented, while white students are slightly underrepresented. Students accessing HiCap services who identify with one or more of these races or ethnicities closely reflect the overall demographics in these federal categories to the overall percentage of students within the District (see Table 5).

Table 5. Highly Capable Race and Ethnicity Demographics

Ethnicity/Race	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Highly Capable	District	Highly Capable	District	Highly Capable	District
All other Races	19.0%	21.0%	20.1%	22.1%	23.3%	23.2%
Asian	33.2%	25.8%	36.2%	27.0%	37.8%	27.6%
White	47.8%	53.2%	43.7%	50.9%	38.9%	49.2%

Note. Data are combined because of the small numbers of students in student categories representing Hispanic/Latino; American Indian/Alaskan Native; Black/African American; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; Two or More Races.

Academic Course Accessibility

Academic course access was investigated with the use of proportionality metrics for a variety of student groups. The proportionality index compares the percent enrollment in a specific course with the overall percent of that ethnicity/race, gender or special population in the school. A value of one (1.0) means that the proportion of students in a specific course matches the overall proportion of the students in the general population. Numbers above or below one (1.0) represent over representation and under representation respectively. The following proportionality indices are based on a sample set of all Honors classes together or all AP classes together.

Our analysis of course proportionality, which measures the representation of various student groups in specific academic courses relative to their overall school population, reveals several key trends. Female students were initially overrepresented in Honors and AP courses in 2021-2022 with indices of 1.1, female representation adjusted to match the general population proportion by 2023-2024, with indices leveling at 1.0. Male students were initially underrepresented with proportionality indices of 0.9, male representation in these courses corrected to 1.0 by 2023-2024, aligning with their overall population.

Table 6. Proportionality Index by Gender

Gender	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Honors	AP	Honors	AP	Honors	AP
Female	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0
Male	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0

In a review of Ethnicity/Race Proportionality Asian students showed a peak in overrepresentation in 2022-2023, especially in Honors courses, before returning closer to proportional representation in 2023-2024. Black/African American students consistently remained underrepresented, with slight increases in AP courses by 2023-2024. Hispanic students have shown signs of approaching proportional representation, particularly in Honors courses by 2023-2024. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and American Indian/Native Alaskan students had sporadic or no representation, indicating a need for targeted recruitment and support strategies.

Table 7. Proportionality Index by Ethnicity/Race

Ethnicity/Race	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Honors	AP	Honors	AP	Honors	AP
Asian	0.9	1	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.1
Black/African American	n < 10	n < 10	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7
Hispanic	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.8
American Indian/Native Alaskan	0	0	0	0	1.0	0
Two or more races	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.9
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	n < 10	0	1.0	0	0
White	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0

Note. Data suppressed when the sample has less than 10 students ($n < 10$). A value of 0 reflects an absence of any records or data for that category.

Students receiving 504 services saw significant gains in AP course enrollment, indicating effective accommodation and inclusion strategies. Students in Bilingual and Special Education services remained markedly underrepresented, especially in AP courses, reflecting critical areas for intervention to enhance access and equity (see Table 8).

Table 8. Proportionality Index by Specialized Services

Special Services	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Honors	AP	Honors	AP	Honors	AP
504 services	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.3	1.6
Bilingual Education services	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1
Special Education services	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2

This data underscores ongoing challenges and progress in achieving equitable access to advanced academic courses. While some groups have seen improvements in representation, notably in gender balance and some ethnic/race categories, other groups, particularly those receiving specialized educational services and some racial minorities, continue to be underrepresented. These trends provide critical insights that will guide our strategies for fostering inclusiveness and removing barriers to access, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to engage in rigorous academic experiences. This analysis will serve as a foundation for targeted initiatives to support underrepresented students and ensure equitable educational opportunities for all.

Athletic Participation by Gender

The district has been vigilant in monitoring and fostering gender equity in athletic participation across our schools, guided by the principles of Title IX. The Title IX Committee meets at least twice each year to review the sports and activities offered to the students as well as students taking advantage of these opportunities. The athletic offerings and student participation rates have been carefully reviewed to ensure that both boys and girls have equal opportunities to engage in sports. The WIAA classifies athletic categories into two gender categories: girls and boys.

Over the past four years, the number of sports available for boys at MIHS and IMS has remained consistent.

Table 9. Number of Sports by Gender

Gender	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	MIHS	IMS^a	MIHS	IMS	MIHS	IMS	MIHS	IMS
Boys	12	2	12	3	12	3	12	3
Girls	14	3	14	4	14	4	14	4
Total	26	5	26	7	26	7	26	7

^aDue to the pandemic, athletic offerings were reduced at IMS for 2020-2021.

Table 10. Student Participation in Athletics by Gender

Gender	2020-2021 ^a		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	MIHS % (n)	IMS % (n)	MIHS % (n)	IMS % (n)	MIHS % (n)	IMS % (n)	MIHS % (n)	IMS % (n)
Boys	56.1% (235)	39% (37)	59.6% (378)	49.4% (125)	64.9% (438)	45.3% (110)	53.9% (446)	46.3% (222)
Girls	43.9% (184)	61% (59)	40.4% (256)	50.6% (128)	35.1% (237)	54.7% (133)	46.1% (381)	53.7% (257)
Total	100% (419)	100% (96)	100% (634)	100% (253)	100% (675)	100% (243)	100% (827)	100% (479)

^aDue to the pandemic, IMS only had two sports offered for 20-21. MIHS sports were not all offered as of March 15, 2021, when this data was pulled.

Participation in activities like drill and cheer has seen fluctuations over the years. Notably, the Drill team's participation dropped to 16 in 2022-2023 from 33 in 2021-2022. Cheer participation for girls decreased slightly over the years, while there has been no participation in Cheer/Stuntmen for boys across the observed periods. Unified Sports, which integrates athletes with and without disabilities, has shown an encouraging trend with increasing participation. The division now reports separately on athletes and partners to enhance clarity and avoid duplication of data.

Table 11. Students Participating in Drill, Cheer, Cheer/Stuntmen, and Unified Athletics

Activity	Participants			
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Drill	30	33	16	22
Cheer (Girls)	34	31	23	23
Cheer/Stuntmen (Boys)	0	0	0	0
Unified Sports ^a	6 Athletes 20 Participants (Duplicated)	6 Athletes 12 Partners	8 Athletes 16 Partners	

Note. Competitions and Athletics Offered: Robotics, Basketball, Flag Football, and Soccer.

^aParticipants, as reported in earlier years, included athletes and partners. This figure was updated beginning with the 2021-2022 school year to avoid any duplication.

These findings demonstrate our district’s continuous effort to not only comply with Title IX requirements but also to actively promote a balanced and inclusive athletic environment. The increased opportunities for girls and the active management of participation rates are central to ensuring fairness and fostering a supportive atmosphere for all student athletes. This data will guide further enhancements in our athletic programs to meet the evolving needs of our students.

Discipline Data

The discipline data for our district is analyzed using proportionality metrics across different racial and ethnic subgroups, which helps us to ensure fairness and equity in our disciplinary actions. The proportionality index is designed such that a value of 1.0 indicates exact proportionality with the student population; values less than 1.0 indicate underrepresentation, and values greater than 1.0 indicate overrepresentation.

Key Findings from the Recent Discipline Data (2022-2023):

- There were a total of 21 suspensions and expulsions, involving 16 students.
- Historically, white students have been slightly overrepresented in discipline cases. This trend seems to persist, although exact numbers for the 2022-2023 year are suppressed due to small sample sizes.
- Other racial and ethnic groups show a range of representation:
- Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black/African American, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander groups show no recorded instances or very underrepresented figures in disciplinary actions.
- Asian students and students of Two or More Races have insufficient data for some years due to small numbers.
- In instances where data could be reported, there has generally been a historical underrepresentation or proportional representation of minority groups compared to their population percentages.

Table 12. Discipline Data Proportionality Index by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Hispanic/Latino	0.0	0.0	n < 10	n < 10
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Asian	0.0	n < 10	n < 10	n < 10
Black/African American	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
White	n < 10	1.6	1.4	n < 10
Two or More Races	n < 10	0.0	n < 10	n < 10

Note. Data suppressed for samples smaller than 10.

The district began more rigorously monitoring and tracking discipline data in 2015-16, focusing on in-school and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions. Legislative changes starting with 4SHB 1541 in 2019-2020, which was fully implemented during this period, introduced significant shifts in disciplinary practices, moving away from traditional suspensions and expulsions. The unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic affected disciplinary trends, especially with the transition to remote learning during the fall/winter of 2020-2021. This disruption is expected to influence disciplinary trends and data interpretation in the coming years.

The district remains committed to equitable disciplinary practices. Continued monitoring and analysis are essential to understand and address the root causes of disparities. These efforts are critical in maintaining a supportive and fair educational environment, ensuring that disciplinary measures are justly administered and reflective of our dedication to equity and inclusion for all students.

Educational Effectiveness Annual Survey

The Educational Effectiveness Annual Survey (EES) offers critical perceptual data about our district's performance in meeting its values, vision, and mission, particularly focusing on equity, access, and inclusion. Below, I summarize the significant insights from the survey across several school years, focusing on the key indicators related to diversity, inclusiveness, and the effectiveness of cultural responsiveness within our schools.

The Educational Effectiveness Annual Survey highlights significant insights into our district's initiatives related to diversity and inclusion. While there has been fluctuation in the perception of how well the curriculum reflects community diversity, there was a noticeable decline from 64% in the 2018-2019 school year to 57% in 2019-2020. Celebrations of different cultures were highly rated by certain ethnic groups initially, though this varied considerably in subsequent years. The respect for student differences remains strong, with most groups reporting over 70% satisfaction in the latest survey. Staff training on diversity needs saw a dip in approval, highlighting an area for potential improvement. Overall, the survey data underscores the ongoing need for targeted efforts to enhance the educational environment's responsiveness to and celebration of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Indicator	SY 18-19	SY 19-20	SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24
“The curriculum we teach reflects the diversity of the community we serve.”	64	57	N/A	**	**	**
“This school has activities to celebrate different cultures, including mine.”	NR	67	N/A	**	**	**
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	100	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
American Indian/Alaskan Native	100	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asian	69	73	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
White	70	69	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic/Latino of any Race	69	76	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Two or More Races	60	52	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Black/African American	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
“This school has activities to celebrate the diversity of this community.”	69	71	N/A	**	**	**
“This school has activities to celebrate different cultures.”	51	55	N/A	**	**	**
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	40	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
American Indian/Alaskan Native	42	20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asian	54	54	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
White	53	58	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic/Latino of any Race	40	58	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Two or More Races	49	51	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Black/African American	42	35	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
“The school respects student differences.”	82	86	N/A	84	82	85
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	73	0	N/A	67	70	N/A
American Indian/Alaskan Native	63	69	N/A	78	79	N/A
Asian	83	86	N/A	87	84	N/A
White	82	87	N/A	84	82	N/A
Hispanic/Latino of any Race	70	87	N/A	76	66	N/A
Two or More Races	79	82	N/A	84	82	N/A
Black/African American	72	95	N/A	45	75	N/A
“We are provided training to meet the needs of a diverse student population in our school.”	65	70	N/A	59	60	67
“The school addresses issues of diversity (cultural responsiveness) in a timely and effective manner.”	73	80	N/A	**	**	**

Note. ** Question was not included in the 2021-22, the 2022-23, or the 2023-24 EES survey.

The data from the EES underscores the importance of continual reflection and action to ensure our educational environment not only respects but actively celebrates and incorporates the diverse cultural backgrounds of all students. While there have been positive trends in some areas, the inconsistencies in data collection and fluctuations in satisfaction highlight areas where targeted efforts can be made to enhance our educational practices. This information is crucial as we plan future initiatives to ensure our schools remain inclusive and responsive to all students' needs.

Fine Arts Enrollment

In our ongoing commitment to provide equitable access to diverse educational opportunities, we have closely monitored the enrollment trends within our Fine Arts programs. The data not only reflects our students' interests and participation rates but also provides crucial insights into how well these programs represent and serve our diverse student body. Using the proportionality metrics, enrollments are as follows for the current year and previous 3 years.

The Fine Arts program at both MIHS and IMS has shown varied participation across different racial and ethnic groups over the past four years, as outlined in our recent review of enrollment data. Notably, the proportionality metrics indicate fluctuations in enrollment that raise important considerations about accessibility and inclusiveness.

Table 13. MIHS Fine Arts Enrollment District Race/Ethnicity Breakdown

	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23			2023-24		
	Drama	Music	Visual Arts	Drama	Music	Visual Arts	Drama	Music	Visual Arts	Drama	Music	Visual Arts
Hispanic/Latino	**	0.7	1.4	1.3	1	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.4	0.8	1.2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	**	**	**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**	**
Asian	**	1.3	1.0	0.8	1.3	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.2	0.8
Black/African American	**	**	**	**	**	1.5	**	1.3	**	**	**	**
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	**	**	**	**	**	**	0	0	**	0	**	0
White	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.8	1	1.2	0.8	1.1	1.3	0.8	1.1
Two or More Races	**	1.2	0.9	0.8	1.5	1.1	0.8	1.2	0.7	**	1.2	0.9

Note. ** N is less than 10 students

From 2020 to 2024, Fine Arts enrollment trends at MIHS and IMS demonstrated varied participation across racial and ethnic groups. At MIHS, Hispanic/Latino students experienced a slight decrease in music and visual arts, while Asian students maintained stable participation in music but saw a slight decrease in drama and visual arts. Enrollment figures for Black/African American and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students were often too low to report, suggesting a need for targeted outreach. White students and those identifying as Two or More Races showed consistent participation across all disciplines. Similarly, at IMS, Hispanic/Latino students had more stable enrollment in visual arts, Asian students preferred music, and like at MIHS, the representation of Black/African American and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students was notably low. White students increased their participation in drama and visual arts by 2023-24, though their involvement in music decreased slightly. These trends underscore the importance of enhancing accessibility and engagement for underrepresented groups in both schools' Fine Arts programs.

Table 14. IMS Fine Arts Enrollment District Race/Ethnicity Breakdown

	2020-2021			2021-2022			2022-2023			2023-2024		
	Drama	Music	Visual Arts	Drama	Music	Visual Arts	Drama	Music	Visual Arts	Drama	Music	Visual Arts
Hispanic/Latino	1.6	0.8	1.2	1.5	0.5	1.5	1.1	0.7	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	**	**	**	0	**	0	**	**	**	0	**	0
Asian	0.7	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.4	0.7	0.8	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.5	0.7
Black/African American	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	0	**	**
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	**	**	**	**	0	**	**	**	**	0	0	0
White	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.3	0.7	1.3
Two or More Races	0.8	1.3	0.9	1	1.2	1	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.7

Note. ** N is less than 10 students

The data reveals a need for strategies that not only promote Fine Arts programs to underrepresented groups but also address any barriers these students may face in accessing these opportunities. Enhancing outreach efforts, adjusting program offerings to reflect the interests of diverse student groups, and continually assessing our approaches to inclusivity are essential steps toward fostering a more equitable Fine Arts education environment.

Through continuous dialogue, action, and reflection, we are building an educational framework that not only addresses the present challenges but also sets a robust foundation for the future generations. This is our pledge to every student, staff member, and community associate: a commitment to a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse educational journey.

Superintendent Equity Advisory Council: Embracing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness

In our continuous journey toward creating a vibrant educational environment, the Superintendent Equity Advisory Council (SEAC) remains a cornerstone of our commitment. Meeting throughout the academic year, the SEAC is guided by a dedicated charter affirming our district's pledge to a diverse educational setting that fosters the social identity and academic success of every student.

Theme 1: Diversity. Our commitment to diversity is evident in every SEAC meeting where the focus is not just on representation but on celebrating and understanding the varied experiences and perspectives that enrich our community. The Council's foundational purpose is a testament to our resolve: "We afford each student the opportunity to participate in inclusive environments and engage as their whole authentic self: socially, emotionally, and academically." This purpose is a direct reflection of our ongoing efforts to acknowledge and address racial inequalities and all forms of discrimination, ensuring no child feels excluded because of their background or identity.

Theme 2: Inclusiveness. Inclusiveness is interwoven with our core values and is a critical aspect of our approach to education. It's about more than just ensuring doors are open; it's about making sure that every student finds a space where they are heard, valued, and supported. The Council champions this through initiatives aimed at dismantling barriers and enhancing the school environment so every student can thrive. Our actions are focused on raising awareness of systemic inequities and actively participating in the transformation needed to create truly inclusive educational spaces.

Theme 3: Equity. Equity is at the heart of the Council's values. Alongside respect, integrity, empathy, and opportunity, equity is a guiding principle that informs our policies and practices. This commitment is seen in our proactive stance on creating equitable learning opportunities and addressing the inherent biases within our systems. The SEAC's work helps to ensure that equity is not just a goal, but a reality reflected in the lived experiences of our students.

ELEMENTARY SPOTLIGHT

Fostering Belonging through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



In the heart of our educational mission lies the foundational concept of belonging – a sense that every student is an integral part of our school community. This sense of belonging is woven through the three themes of diversity, equity, and inclusion, which guide our buildings initiatives. By embracing these themes, we ensure that our students not only see themselves reflected in their curriculum and surroundings but also feel valued and understood. Our efforts across all elementary schools are dedicated to creating an environment where every child feels secure, respected, and connected to their peers and teachers. The journey toward a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational environment is evident in the comprehensive and collaborative efforts across all four elementary schools. These efforts are embodied in the dedication of our Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), PTA Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) board members, librarians, teachers, and staff. Together, we are creating educational spaces where every student feels seen, valued, and connected.

Throughout the year, our PTAs and PTA DEI leaders have been pivotal in fostering an inclusive educational landscape (Theme 2: Inclusiveness). From participating in the Superintendent’s Equity Advisory Committee to working with Hackman Consulting on developing a racial equity lens, our community's commitment goes beyond mere discussion. Evening critical conversation groups delve into racial equity books and articles, facilitating important dialogues that resonate through our schools and beyond (Theme 1: Diversity).

Our school libraries have become gateways to diverse worlds, with librarians diligently curating books and resources that not only reflect our students' lives but also open windows to new cultures and experiences (Theme 1: Diversity). These efforts are augmented by intentional collaborations with school-based Equity Teams, ensuring that our educational materials teach and celebrate diversity throughout the academic year (Theme 3: Equity).

At Island Park, the celebration of diversity is woven through the curriculum with resources that highlight significant cultural observances and histories, such as Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Asian culture awareness, and Holocaust Remembrance. These initiatives are supported through partnerships with local high schools and community organizations, enriching our students' educational experiences (Theme 1: Diversity).

Northwood’s commitment to diversity includes a focus on disability inclusion and ableism, ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities, feel integrated within the school community (Theme 2: Inclusiveness). Initiatives such as inclusive lunches and the integration of special services classrooms into general education spaces are testament to Northwood’s dedication to fostering a truly inclusive environment. Additionally, the school embraces various cultural representations, enhancing the

educational material with resources that reflect a wide array of backgrounds and experiences (Theme 1: Diversity and Theme 3: Equity).

Lakeridge’s approach to celebrating diversity includes monthly themes that explore and honor different cultures, identities, and abilities. From recognizing significant cultural holidays across various religions and ethnicities to engaging with projects like The Daffodil Project for Holocaust remembrance, Lakeridge’s programs ensure students appreciate the broad spectrum of human experience (Theme 1: Diversity).

West Mercer complements these efforts with its diverse learning opportunities, such as guest speakers and themed educational activities that align with the recognition of various cultural months. The annual PTA-sponsored Culture/Heritage Night is a highlight, offering a festive occasion that brings together food, music, and performances from around the region, showcasing the rich tapestry of cultures that make up our community (Theme 1: Diversity).

Collectively, these initiatives across our elementary schools demonstrate a robust commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. By continuously aligning our educational practices with our community-based efforts, we ensure that every student not only learns about diversity but lives it every day in our schools, fostering a districtwide culture where every child belongs and thrives (Theme 2: Inclusiveness and Theme 3: Equity).

Building Bridges: How Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness Shape Our School Communities

Diversity, equity, and inclusiveness are embodied across various innovative programs initiated by our elementary schools, ensuring that every student, regardless of their background or abilities, feels a profound sense of belonging and engagement.



Lunar New Year Celebration
with Staff and Students

Connecting Generations and Cultures

At West Mercer, a pioneering collaboration with the Mercer Island High School Black Student Union (BSU) and the PTA has enabled students to engage across age groups and cultural backgrounds (Theme 1: Diversity). This partnership involves mentoring, shared learning experiences, and event planning, providing a platform for students and families who identify as Black or African American to forge meaningful connections across the district.

Simultaneously, the West Mercer Weekly Wrap-Up Series offers weekly insights into diverse cultures and experiences through selected words of the week, read-aloud texts, and video messages from the principal and guest speakers, further highlighting the school’s commitment to diversity (Theme 1: Diversity).

Social Emotional Learning and Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness is central to our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives, where all elementary schools utilize the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework to foster an inclusive atmosphere through Second Step lessons (Theme 2: Inclusiveness). These initiatives are designed to acknowledge and celebrate students for their unique contributions to the school community, enhancing their social connections and emotional well-being.

The Buddy Classes at Island Park and West Mercer are prime examples of this approach. These programs pair younger students with older mentors, facilitating academic and social-emotional activities that not only enhance learning but also build a vibrant, interconnected community (Theme 2: Inclusiveness).

Empowering through Equity

Our commitment to equity is demonstrated through comprehensive programs that address various needs and challenges within our schools. The Northwood Equity Team, for instance, has focused on integrating disability awareness and tackling ableism, moving special services classrooms to more central locations and adopting inclusive educational resources like the film “Crip Camp” and the NORA Project (Theme 3: Equity).

Similarly, the Island Park Equity Team has developed a rich repository of resources and a DEI calendar to support continuous learning and recognition of diverse cultures and abilities throughout the year. Their efforts, including participation in The Daffodil Project and recognition of key cultural holidays, reinforce our commitment to a holistic educational experience that respects and celebrates diversity (Theme 3: Equity).

Sustained Learning and Growth

Through the West Mercer Equity Book Studies and other similar initiatives, our staff engage in ongoing professional development to deepen their understanding and practice of equity. These studies enable educators to explore culturally relevant content and apply their insights directly to classroom teaching, ensuring that equity is not just a policy but a lived experience within our schools (Theme 3: Equity).

By weaving these themes of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness into every aspect of our educational and community activities, we are not just teaching students about the world; we are preparing them to lead in it. These initiatives underscore our dedication to fostering environments where every student is empowered to thrive and contribute to a diverse global society.

Mercer Island High School

HIGHLIGHT

Championing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness at Mercer Island High School

At Mercer Island High School (MIHS), the commitment to fostering an environment that champions diversity, equity, and inclusiveness is evident through the vibrant activities of various student clubs and organizations. These groups, supported by dedicated teachers and administrators, play a crucial role in promoting a school culture where every student feels valued and empowered.

Empowering Student Voices and Leadership

MIHS hosts a variety of student-led clubs that are at the forefront of promoting inclusiveness and active engagement within the school community. Notable among these are the Black Student Union (BSU) and the Asian Collective & Education Coalition for Asian Representation (ECAAR), which focus on amplifying the voices of BIPOC and Asian students, respectively (Theme 2: Inclusiveness). These groups work closely with school administration and leadership to ensure that their perspectives are integrated into the school's daily routines and long-term policies.

Furthermore, clubs like the Queer Student Alliance, Gender Equality Club, International Club, and Model United Nations provide platforms for students from diverse backgrounds and identities to express themselves and advocate for inclusiveness and equity. The National Chinese Honor Society and the Student Group on Race Relations also contribute to this rich tapestry by fostering cross-cultural understanding and cooperation (Theme 2: Inclusiveness).

The Athletic Leadership Team at MIHS, with its subgroups focused on community service, social justice through athletics, and school pride, exemplifies how extracurricular activities can be leveraged to promote a more inclusive and equitable school environment. These initiatives not only enhance the school's culture but also ensure that all students feel a sense of belonging and recognition (Theme 3: Equity).

Student-Led Initiatives and Celebrations

The MIHS Student Voices for Change group is a testament to the school's dedication to creating an open and empathetic school environment. This group leads student-driven initiatives that encourage open dialogues and foster a safe, inclusive atmosphere where every student has the opportunity to thrive (Theme 1: Diversity).

Black History Month at MIHS is celebrated with a variety of activities that engage both staff and students, including lessons on Martin Luther King Jr., Black History, and racial justice, which are

integrated throughout the school's curriculum and extracurricular activities. Live music representing Black culture and community dinners highlight the celebrations, making Black History Month a significant event that honors and educates the school community about the rich history and contributions of Black individuals (Theme 1: Diversity).

The ECAAR Night Market is another highlight, providing a venue for the community to engage with and appreciate the richness of Asian culture. This event, which features cultural performances and educational booths, is a significant effort by the student-led ECAAR to ensure that Asian voices are heard and represented within the school curriculum and community events (Theme 1: Diversity).

A Model of Diversity and Inclusion

Through these diverse initiatives, MIHS stands as a model of how schools can integrate diversity, equity, and inclusiveness into every aspect of the educational experience. By supporting these student-led groups and initiatives, MIHS not only enriches the educational journey of its students but also prepares them to be thoughtful, inclusive leaders in a diverse world. This holistic approach ensures that every student, regardless of their background or identity, feels a genuine sense of belonging and the confidence to express their unique perspectives and talents.

Advancing Equity, Inclusiveness, and Diversity: A Comprehensive Approach at Mercer Island High School

Mercer Island High School (MIHS) is committed to fostering a culture where diversity is celebrated, equity is pursued, and every individual feels an integral sense of belonging. Through a series of targeted initiatives and educational programs, MIHS ensures that all students and staff feel seen, heard, and connected within the school community.

Focused Professional Development on Equity and Inclusiveness

MIHS has undertaken significant efforts in professional development to enhance understanding and effective engagement on issues of equity and inclusiveness:

Equity and Courageous Conversations Training: Staff participated in professional development sessions led by Cultures Connecting, focusing on fostering awareness and facilitating impactful discussions about race and equity (Theme 3: Equity).

Culturally Responsive Education: A select group of staff underwent a Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) residency aimed at creating more inclusive classroom environments that reflect and respect diverse cultural backgrounds (Theme 3: Equity).

Restorative Justice Training: Ongoing training for staff on Restorative Justice practices emphasizes fair and respectful treatment of all students, promoting an inclusive school culture (Theme 2: Inclusiveness).

Student Engagement and Community Involvement

Several initiatives at MIHS engage students directly, promoting diversity and inclusiveness through educational and community-focused events:

Diverse Representation Events: Events such as the movie showing of "Take Me Home" and the visit by Georgia Hunter highlighted important narratives around Asian representation, disability awareness, and Holocaust survival, broadening students' perspectives on diverse histories and experiences (Theme 1: Diversity).

Inclusive Assemblies and Discussions: Assemblies like the one led by Mickey Rowe focus on fostering a sense of belonging for all students, particularly highlighting inclusivity for those with different abilities (Theme 2: Inclusiveness).

Support Systems and Advocacy for Student Needs

MIHS has developed robust support systems to advocate for and assist students facing academic and personal challenges:

CARES and Student Support Teams (SST): These teams work to identify and address systemic barriers to student success, ensuring that support systems are equitable and responsive to the diverse needs of all students (Theme 3: Equity).

Sexual Assault Awareness: The Sexual Assault Survivor Speaker event educates students on serious social issues, promoting a safer, more inclusive school environment as students prepare for life beyond high school (Theme 2: Inclusiveness).

Educational Courses Promoting Diversity and Social Justice

Courses and programs at MIHS directly address themes of diversity and social justice, enriching students' academic and personal growth:

Islander Hour: This program is designed to ensure that every student has meaningful relationships within the school, with a focus on discussions around social and racial justice, reinforcing inclusiveness and equity (Theme 1: Diversity & Theme 3: Equity).

English 12 - Comparative Literature: Analyzing themes of race, identity, and representation through diverse literary works, this course equips students with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for diverse voices and stories (Theme 1: Diversity).

As MIHS looks forward to expanding these efforts through a long-term plan with Cultures Connecting, the school remains dedicated to deepening the impact of its programs on equity, diversity, and inclusiveness. These initiatives not only cultivate a welcoming environment but also prepare students to actively participate in and contribute to a diverse and inclusive world.

Celebrating a Decade of Inclusion: Mercer Island High School's Unified Sports Program

Mercer Island High School's Unified Sports program, merging high school athletics with the Special Olympics, exemplifies inclusiveness, celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. Started by a group of visionary students, the program has grown significantly—from just a few participants to now involving over 50 students and five staff members. Offering sports such as Robotics, Flag Football, Soccer, and Basketball, Unified Sports provides an equal playing field for students with and without intellectual disabilities.

This program not only fosters athletic engagement but also promotes social inclusion, respect, and teamwork, which are crucial for community and personal development. As it continues to grow, MIHS is committed to expanding this vital initiative, ensuring it remains an integral part of the school's commitment to inclusiveness and athletic diversity.

Islander Middle School Showcase

Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness in Academics at IMS

Islander Middle School (IMS) is deeply committed to fostering an educational environment where diversity is celebrated, equity is achieved, and inclusiveness is practiced across all aspects of our academic programming. By integrating these themes throughout our curriculum, IMS ensures that every student feels valued and supported in their learning journey.

Detailed Academic Initiatives Across Disciplines

Language Arts & Social Studies Integration:

6th Grade Language Arts: Students begin their middle school journey by exploring a curated selection of literature that acts as both "windows" and "mirrors." This approach helps them understand diverse perspectives and see their own experiences reflected in the texts. A highlight of the year is the study of "March: Book One" by John Lewis. This graphic novel introduces students to significant historical events through the engaging medium of graphic storytelling, fostering a deeper understanding of the Civil Rights Movement beyond the elementary narratives of figures like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Discussions are guided to confront the harsh realities of segregation and the power of nonviolent protest, enriching students' historical perspective and empathy (Theme 1: Diversity).

7th Grade "Identity in Multimedia Stories": This unit is crafted to help students explore and affirm their identities and those of their community members through diverse multimedia stories. The curriculum is designed to engage students in examining personal and collective identities using literature that celebrates diverse experiences and achievements, fostering a classroom environment of mutual respect and appreciation. Additionally, we wanted to practice restorative justice in our curriculum – namely, that teaching about diversity-centered issues should not revolve around trauma, but around celebration and progress (Theme 1: Diversity).

7th Grade Multiple Perspectives: The 7th-grade Language Arts curriculum takes a deep dive into exploring complex social justice themes through the novel "Ghost Boys" by Jewell Parker Rhodes. This poignant book provides a platform for students to examine the historical and sociopolitical layers that shape our understanding of race and justice in today's world. By engaging with "Ghost Boys", students are prompted to consider multiple perspectives and the broader implications of historical events on current societal issues.

Additionally, to enhance students' analytical skills and empower them with more autonomy in their learning, IMS has introduced a Multiple Perspectives unit. In this unit, students are given the freedom to select from various texts, including "Ghost Boys", that explore significant historical or social events

from diverse viewpoints. This approach not only enriches their understanding but also encourages them to express their thoughts and findings, fostering a classroom environment that values each student's voice and perspective. This method supports our commitment to diversity by allowing students to explore and discuss varied narratives and engage in meaningful, research-driven learning experiences (Theme 1: Diversity).

8th Grade Text Diversification: The 8th-grade language arts curriculum emphasizes student choice in novel selection to ensure engagement and reflection on diverse narratives. Transitioning from a uniform novel approach, the curriculum now includes options like "The House on Mango Street" and "Long Way Down," which offer diverse perspectives on community, resilience, and loss. This method respects and reflects the diverse backgrounds of our students, promoting an inclusive learning environment where every student's voice can be heard and valued (Theme 1: Diversity).

Science and Physical Education:

Science: Our science program is committed to diversity both in curriculum content and delivery. Students engage with modern scientific achievements through diverse examples, ensuring representation of scientists from various backgrounds. Instructional methods are varied to accommodate different learning styles and abilities, embodying our commitment to equitable education opportunities for all students (Theme 1: Diversity).

Physical Education: The PE program at IMS is designed around the "Fundamental 5" principles, which ensure comprehensive accessibility and inclusivity. These principles guide our approach to teaching physical education, from adapting equipment and exercises to individualizing curriculum goals based on student needs. Our program champions inclusiveness by providing varied and equitable physical education experiences to all students, including those with significant disabilities (Theme 2: Inclusiveness).

Inclusive Educational Practices:

Inclusive Practices and Universal Design for Learning (UDL): IMS employs UDL principles to create flexible learning environments that accommodate the needs of all students. Our educators use a variety of teaching methods, from visual aids to hands-on activities, ensuring that learning is accessible and engaging for everyone. The classroom environment encourages risk-taking and supports students in embracing challenges, fostering a culture where every student is prepared to succeed and contribute meaningfully to their community. (Theme 3: Equity).

These detailed initiatives at IMS reflect our ongoing commitment to integrating diversity, equity, and inclusiveness into every aspect of our educational practices. Through these efforts, IMS not only enhances academic outcomes but also nurtures a school culture that respects and values the diverse identities of each student, creating a truly inclusive community.

Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness at Islander Middle School

Islander Middle School (IMS) is dedicated to nurturing an educational environment where the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness are interwoven into the fabric of the school's culture. Through several key initiatives such as JUST (Justice & Understanding Support Team), various cultural programs, and focused staff training, IMS actively promotes these values, ensuring they resonate throughout the school community.

JUST: A Dual Approach to Systemic Change and Empowerment

IMS has established JUST, consisting of two branches: JUST Community and JUST Students, which exemplify the school's commitment to equity (Theme 3). The JUST Community branch, comprising IMS staff and local community members, focuses on larger systemic changes through data analysis and collaborations aimed at transforming IMS into an anti-racist and anti-bias institution. This group also facilitates educational opportunities that advance justice and understanding within the school.

On the other hand, JUST Students engages a dynamic group of informed and curious students committed to enhancing the school's culture. This student-led branch works to ensure that all voices at IMS are heard and valued, fostering a sense of empowerment, and belonging among students as they navigate complex cultural and social identities (Theme 2: Inclusiveness).

Sources of Strength: Celebrating Diversity and Creating Connections

The Sources of Strength program underscores inclusiveness by organizing inclusive, school-wide campaigns that promote positive connections among students (Theme 2). Notable campaigns include the "Gratitude" initiative, which visually celebrated what students are thankful for, and the "We Belong" campaign, which used a photo booth activity to celebrate the school's diversity. These efforts are crucial in building a supportive school environment where every student feels they belong.

Holocaust Remembrance Day: Educational Outreach and Empathy

Holocaust Remembrance Day at IMS involves educational activities that align with Theme 1: Diversity by offering students from various grades tailored learning experiences about the Holocaust, facilitated by partnerships with the Holocaust Center for Humanity. These activities, ranging from virtual field trips to in-person assemblies with Legacy Speakers, are designed to deepen students' understanding of historical events and cultivate empathy, ensuring that lessons from history are integrated into their moral and social consciousness.

Professional Development: Equipping Staff to Foster an Inclusive Environment

IMS invests in continuous professional development focusing on diversity and equity, helping staff to better meet the needs of a diverse student population (Theme 3: Equity). Training sessions have covered modern Anti-Semitism and the experiences of Asian Americans, providing staff with deeper insights and practical strategies to support an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Equity and Diversity Newsletter: Keeping the Community Engaged

The introduction of an equity and diversity newsletter at IMS keeps students and families informed about

the school's diversity and equity initiatives. This communication tool is key to maintaining transparency and engagement with the community, reinforcing the ongoing commitment to Theme 1: Diversity and Theme 3: Equity.

Through these robust programs and initiatives, IMS is making significant strides in creating a school culture that deeply values diversity, practices equity, and ensures inclusiveness. This comprehensive approach not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares students to engage positively with the diverse world around them.