



# AMPLIFYING BLACK VOICES ON EDUCATION EQUITY IN EVANSTON

## OVERVIEW

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## BACKGROUND

### History

Our study is the first investigation specifically conducted to learn how Black Evanston residents experience education inequity, from the closing of Foster School to current realities.

### Situation

Too often, decisions are made and actions are enacted without meaningful input from the impacted community. There is a growing awareness of the need to place marginalized voices at the forefront of education equity and redress.

### Goals

We sought to amplify the voices of Black Evanston residents by listening to, documenting and sharing their input on how to effectively impact education equity, to guide authentic community-driven actions.

## RESEARCH TEAM

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## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Over the course of three months in 2022, the research team developed a survey, with both online and paper options available, to solicit input from a large set of Black respondents. The survey gathered information about respondents' demographics and explored topics including:

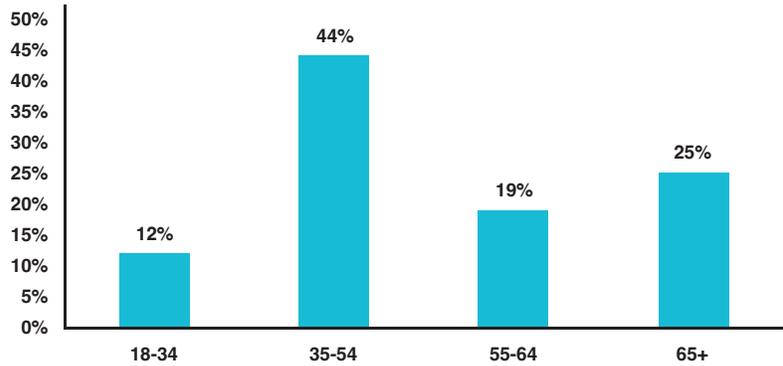
- **Respondents' perceptions of their own K-12 education**
- **Respondents' perceptions of Evanston public education**
- **Respondents' ratings of aspects of children's educational experiences in Evanston**
- **Respondents' opinions on general and Evanston-specific education resource needs**

Outreach efforts to ensure a significant pool of survey participants included going to community members' homes, participating in Block parties, canvassing door-to-door throughout the 5th Ward, attending Sunday church services, meeting seniors at Gibbs Morrison, soliciting parents at the D65 Back to School Jam, and partnering with Advocates for Action youth members. 371 surveys were appropriately completed and submitted. Responses to the 371 surveys were tabulated and percentages were computed based on the number of respondents who answered each question. Some subgroups were examined, in addition to the total sample. This report focuses on results using basic descriptive statistics; Z-tests were used to compare subgroups.

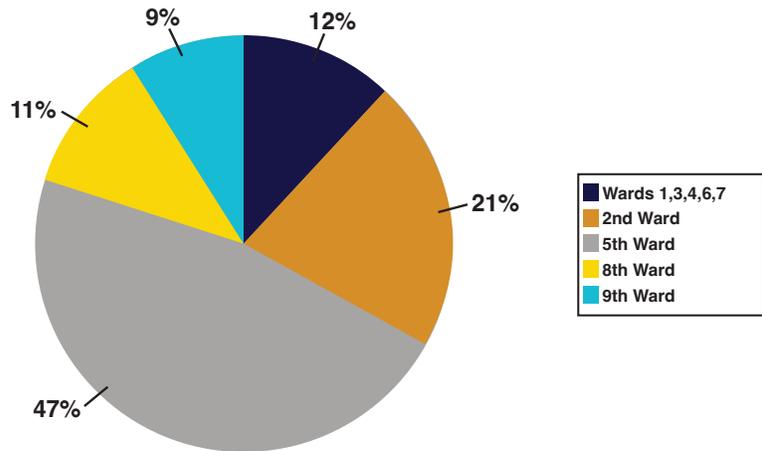
An emphasis, as aligned with the project objectives, was placed on differentiating respondents who self-identified as living in the 5th Ward, from those who self-identified as living elsewhere.

A cursory examination of some other subgroups included looking at responses by age group, whether the respondent had a child in the Evanston schools, and whether the respondent attended Evanston schools. Differences noted in the report indicate a 95% level of confidence in detection.

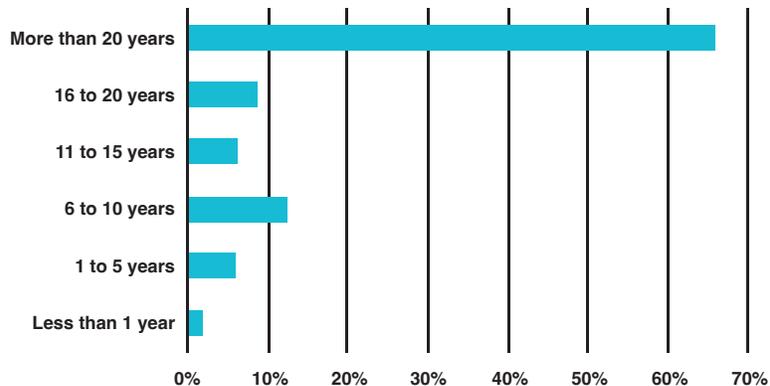
### RESPONDENTS BY AGE



### RESPONDENTS BY WARD



### LENGTH OF EVANSTON RESIDENCY



- **Two-thirds of survey participants are long-term Evanston residents.**
- **75% of survey respondents identified as women.**
- **44% of respondents are the parent or primary caregiver of a child aged 18 or under, who does, did, or will go to any school in Evanston, while 56% are not.**
- **61% of respondents attended school in Evanston at any point themselves.**

## **FOCUS ON 5<sup>TH</sup> WARD RESPONSES**

Throughout this report we highlight data from 5th Ward respondents that reveal important differences in comparison to respondents who live in other wards. We apply this distinction because the 5th Ward has a particular historical educational context that may inform the ways 5th Ward residents respond to the statements and questions in this survey. Until 1967, the Foster School was the de facto segregated neighborhood K-8 school in the 5th Ward. Foster School was closed in 1967 in order to facilitate school integration; the school's closure forced hundreds of Black families to have their children bused to majority white schools located in other wards of the city. For over five decades, many in the 5th Ward have lamented the loss of an institution which elders have described as the "jewel of the community." Black folks have expressed anger, frustration, and sadness that their children have borne the entire burden of desegregation, sparking a decades-long fight to reopen Foster School. While many residents support the idea of integration, they are patently clear that Foster School was special, that its closing decimated the community, and that it is unfair that in 2023, Black children in Evanston remain disproportionately less likely to be able to walk to school or to attend the same schools as other children in their neighborhood.

A series of tables and graphs below show particular differences at the elementary, middle, and/or high school level. Graphs and tables are used to highlight notable differences between 5th Ward respondents and respondents from all other wards.

## **WHAT DID WE ASK?**

### **Experiences**

In the first section of the survey, we asked respondents to reflect on their own educational experiences in elementary, middle, and high school. We asked respondents to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements using any point along the scale (a "5" meant strongly agree and a "1" meant strongly disagree). Percentages reported represent respondents who chose either a "4" or a "5" for each statement.

There was at least a 10 percentage point difference between 5th Ward respondents and all other wards for the bolded boxes/questions below.

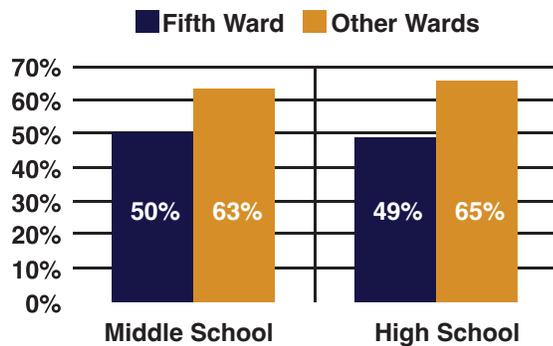
	Elementary	Middle	High
Overall, I liked elementary/middle/high school	82%	71%	73%
I learned a lot	81%	70%	76%
I felt like I was a part of the school community	71%	61%	65%
I felt valued as a person	69%	58%	61%
<b>Overall, my teachers had high expectations of me</b>	67%	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Overall, my teachers had confidence in my ability</b>	66%	<b>56%</b>	<b>59%</b>
My teachers made an effort to get to know me	60%	52%	48%
<b>Overall, teachers wanted Black students to succeed</b>	50%	<b>50%</b>	48%
<b>Students were treated differently based on their race</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>32%</b>	39%
<b>Students were disciplined differently based on their race</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>37%</b>	44%
There were enough Black teachers and administrators in the school	28%	26%	29%
Curriculum meaningfully included Black history and culture throughout the year	26%	22%	29%
Black students were provided access to rigorous classes (i.e. AP & honors)			41%
Black students were encouraged to enroll in rigorous classes (i.e. AP & honors)			32%
Black students were provided support for success in rigorous classes (i.e. AP & honors)			28%
Black students felt welcome in rigorous classes (i.e. AP & honors)			32%

In the case of the first three bolded statements, 5th Ward respondents agreed less with each of the following statements: *Overall, my teachers had high expectations of me; Overall, my teachers had confidence in my ability; Overall, teachers wanted Black students to succeed.*

5th Ward respondents agreed more with the last two bolded statements, *Students were treated differently based on their race; Students were disciplined differently based on their race.*

The following five graphs show the percentage of 5th Ward respondents who agreed or strongly agreed in comparison to respondents in all other wards.

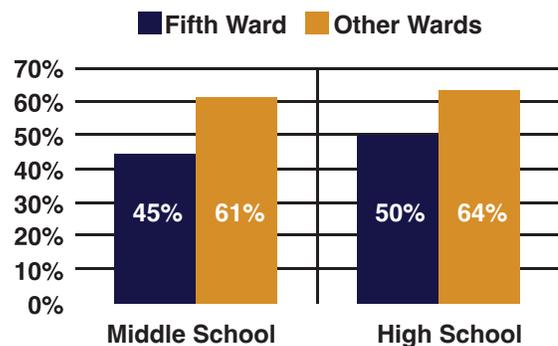
## HIGH EXPECTATIONS



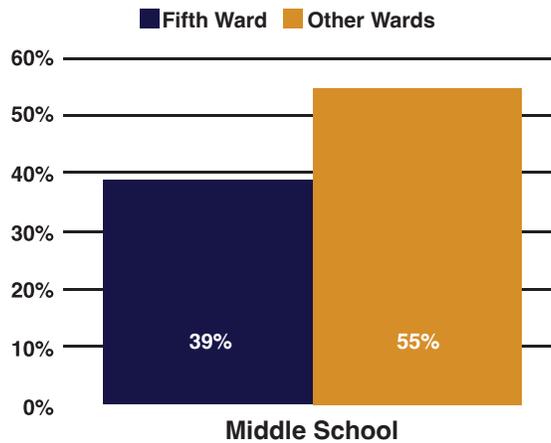
Fewer 5th Ward respondents agreed that their teachers had high expectations of them at the middle and high school levels, compared to respondents from other wards.

## CONFIDENCE

Fewer 5th Ward respondents agreed that their teachers had confidence in their abilities at the middle and high school levels, compared to respondents from other wards.

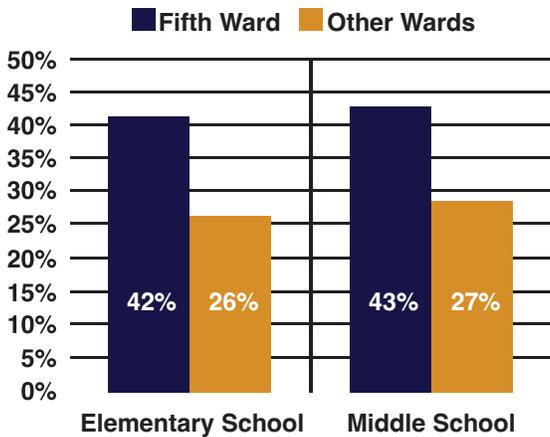


## TEACHERS WANT BLACK CHILDREN TO SUCCEED



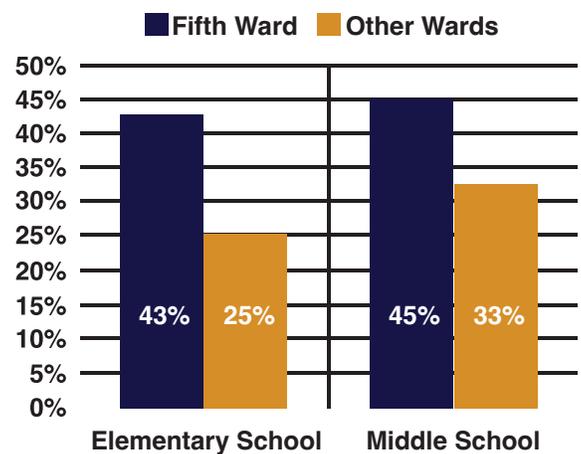
Fewer 5th Ward respondents agreed that teachers want Black children to succeed, compared to respondents from other wards.

## TREATED DIFFERENTLY



5th Ward respondents were more likely to agree that Black children were treated differently based on their race, compared to respondents from other wards.

## DISCIPLINED DIFFERENTLY



5th Ward respondents were more likely to agree that Black children were disciplined differently based on their race, compared to respondents from other wards.

### Current Perceptions

In the second section of the survey, we asked respondents to reflect on their current perceptions of public education in Evanston. We asked respondents to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with a set of statements using any point along the scale (“5” meant strongly agree and a “1” meant strongly disagree). Percentages reported represent respondents who chose either a “4” or a “5” for each statement.

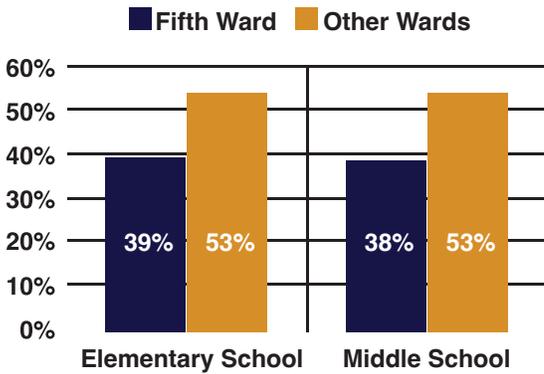
**Bolded boxes/questions indicate a notable distinction of at least 10 percentage points between 5th Ward respondents and respondents from all other wards.**

	Elementary	Middle	High
Students are disciplined differently based on their race	48%	51%	46%
Students are treated differently based on their race	46%	48%	41%
<b>Provides the opportunity for all students to have a great education</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>48%</b>	60%
<b>Overall, teachers want Black students to succeed</b>	37%	34%	43%
I trust District 65/202 leaders to make decisions that will meet the needs of black students	35%	34%	37%
<b>I trust the District 65/202 teachers to make decisions that will meet the needs of Black students</b>	30%	27%	33%
<b>Black students are offered just as many opportunities as non-Black students</b>	28%	29%	38%
Curriculum meaningfully includes Black history and culture throughout the year	26%	25%	32%
There are enough Black teachers and administrators in the school	22%	22%	27%
<b>Black students are provided access to rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors)</b>			37%
<b>Black students are encouraged to enroll in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors)</b>			33%
Black students are provided support for success in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors)			38%
Black students feel welcome in rigorous classes (i.e. AP & honors)			27%

In the six bolded statements above, 5th Ward respondents agreed less with each statement: *Provides the opportunity for all students to have a great education; Overall, teachers want Black students to succeed; I trust District 65/202 teachers to make decisions that will meet the needs of Black students; Black students are offered just as many opportunities as non-Black students; Black students are provided access to rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors); Black students are encouraged to enroll in rigorous classes (i.e. AP courses and honors).*

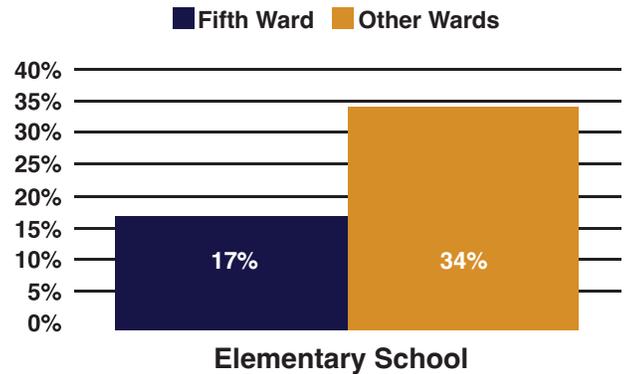
The six graphs below show the percentage of 5th Ward respondents who agreed or strongly agreed in comparison to respondents in all other wards.

### GREAT EDUCATION



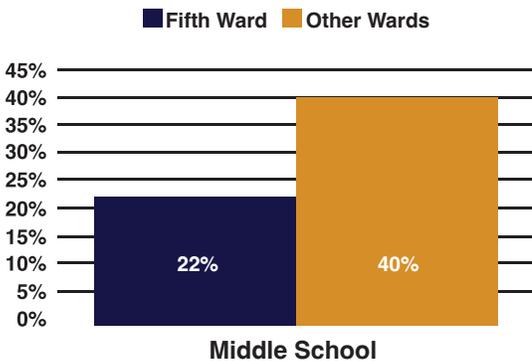
Fewer 5th Ward respondents believe that Evanston schools provide the opportunity for all students to have a great education compared to respondents from other wards.

### OPPORTUNITIES



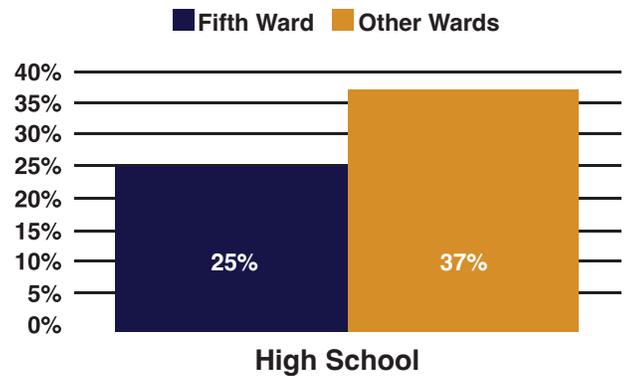
5th Ward respondents were 50% less likely to agree with the statement, "Black students are offered just as many opportunities as non-Black students" regarding elementary school.

### TEACHERS WANT BLACK CHILDREN TO SUCCEED



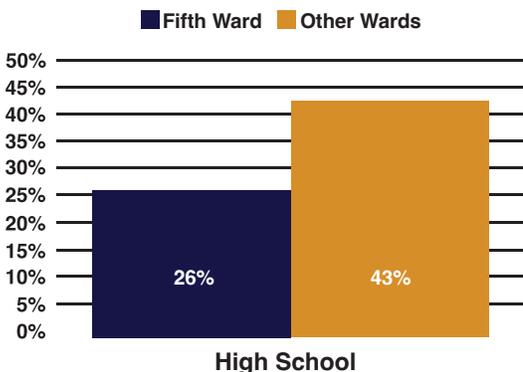
For middle school, 5th Ward respondents were almost half as likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement, "Overall, teachers want Black children to succeed."

### TRUST



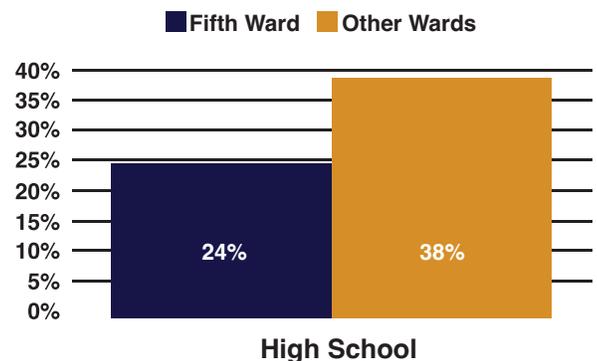
At the high school, 5th Ward respondents indicated notably lower agreement with the statement, "I trust District 202 leaders to make decisions that will meet the needs of Black students." Only 25% of 5th Ward respondents indicated trust.

### ACCESS TO RIGOROUS CLASSES



With respect to Black students having access to rigorous classes, 5th Ward respondents agreed less than respondents from other wards.

### ENCOURAGED TO ENROLL IN RIGOROUS CLASSES



Fewer 5th ward respondents agreed that Black students are encouraged to enroll in rigorous classes, compared to respondents from other wards.

## THINKING TOGETHER:

### HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES AND CURRENT PERCEPTIONS

After reviewing the data for respondents' own educational experiences, as well as their perceptions of current Evanston public schools, we compiled the data to ascertain any meaningful similarities or differences.

OWN EXPERIENCE	Elementary	Middle	High	CURRENT PERCEPTIONS	Elementary	Middle	High
Overall, teachers wanted Black students to succeed	50%	50%	48%	Overall, teachers wanted Black students to succeed	37%	34%	43%
Students were disciplined differently based on their race	30%	37%	44%	Students were disciplined differently based on their race	48%	51%	46%
Students were treated differently based on their race	31%	32%	39%	Students were treated differently based on their race	46%	48%	41%
There were enough Black teachers and administrators in the school	28%	26%	29%	There were enough Black teachers and administrators in the school	22%	22%	27%
Curriculum meaningfully included Black history and culture throughout the year	26%	22%	29%	Curriculum meaningfully included Black history and culture throughout the year	26%	25%	32%

OWN EXPERIENCE*	HIGH	CURRENT PERCEPTIONS*	HIGH
Black students were provided access to rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	41%	Black students are provided access to rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	37%
Black students were encouraged to enroll in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	32%	Black students are encouraged to enroll in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	33%
Black students were provided support for success in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	28%	Black students are provided support for success in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	38%
Black students felt welcome in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	32%	Black students feel welcome in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	27%

\*The questions in the table directly above were only asked in the high school segment of the survey.

## KEY LEARNINGS: EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS

### Key Learning #1

**When asked about whether teachers want Black students to succeed, racialized treatment, and racialized discipline disparities, respondents' responses regarding their own educational experiences were more positive than their perceptions of Evanston public schools currently.**

When reflecting on their own educational experiences, at the elementary and middle school levels, 50% of respondents indicated they felt that teachers wanted Black students to succeed, and 48% of respondents agreed with this statement at the high school level. However, when asked about their current perceptions, these numbers fall to 37%, 34%, and 43% respectively. We see a similar trend when respondents were asked whether Black students were treated differently or disciplined differently based on race. Less people agreed with this statement when asked about their own educational experiences than when asked about their current perceptions.

Notably, these differences are much smaller at the high school level. Respondents had a less favorable view of their own high school experiences (as compared to their elementary and middle school experiences), and their ratings of their own high school experiences are more closely aligned with their current perceptions of Evanston Township High School (ETHS), the only public high school in the city. For example, while only 30% of respondents agreed that students were disciplined differently based on race in their own elementary school experience, 44% of respondents believed students were disciplined differently based on race in their own high school experience. When asked whether they perceive this to be the case currently in Evanston public schools, at the elementary level, this number increases significantly (from 30% to 48%) but only changes two percentage points (from 44% to 46%) at the high school level.

When asked about AP and advanced courses more broadly, the responses are mixed. More respondents agreed that Black students were provided access to rigorous courses and felt welcome in those courses while reflecting on their own educational experiences. On the other hand, more respondents agreed that Black students are provided more support currently than respondents were in their own educational experiences.

### Key Learning #2

**In both their own educational experiences and current perceptions of Evanston public schools, respondents overwhelmingly do not agree that teachers were/are invested in Black student success or that curriculum meaningfully included/includes Black history and culture.**

When asked whether there were enough Black teachers and administrators in their own elementary, middle, and high schools, only 28%, 26%, and 29% of respondents agreed respectively. Similarly, when asked whether they agree with this statement in their current perception of Evanston schools, only 22% of people agreed for elementary and middle school and only 27% of people agreed with this statement for high school. Thus, while we see a decrease in agreement in current perceptions, the numbers are strikingly low across both experiences and perceptions. In addition, when asked whether the curriculum meaningfully included Black history and culture throughout the year in their own elementary, middle, and high schools, only 26%, 22%, and 29% of respondents agreed respectively. Likewise, when asked whether they agree with this statement in their current perception of Evanston schools only 26% agreed for elementary school, 25% for middle school, and 32% for ETHS.

## Key Learning #3

**Most respondents do not trust D65 or D202 leaders or teachers to make decisions that will meet the needs of Black students, and most respondents do not believe Black students are offered the same opportunities as non-Black students.**

When asked whether they trusted District 65 or District 202 leaders to make decisions that will meet the needs of Black students, 35% agreed with this statement at the elementary school level, 34% at the middle school level, and 37% at the high school level. When asked the same question about District 65/202 teachers, these numbers drop to 30%, 27%, and 33% respectively. Thus, while there is less trust in district teachers than leaders, the level of distrust overall is noteworthy.

Further compounding this distrust is the fact that respondents do not agree that Black students are offered the same opportunities as non-Black students. Only 28% of people agreed with this statement at the elementary school level, 29% at the middle school level, and 38% at the high school level. While more people believe that Black students are provided more equitable opportunities at the high school level, the results still indicate that the majority of respondents believe inequitable educational experiences characterize the K-12 educational landscape in Evanston.

## WHAT MATTERS?

The graphic below represents data from the table on page 13. The larger the word or phrase, the more respondents indicated importance.



In the third section of the survey, we asked respondents to reflect on what matters to them for Black children’s educational experiences. We asked respondents to indicate how important each item or statement is with “5” meaning very important and “1” meaning not at all important. Percentages reported represent respondents who chose a “5” for each statement. 5th Ward respondents indicated higher importance levels for the bolded statements below.

Black students are provided support for success in rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	79%
Black students are provided access to rigorous classes (i.e. AP and honors courses)	78%
Black students are encouraged to enroll in rigorous classes (i.e. AP courses and honors courses)	78%
Having enough Black teachers and administrators in the school	73%
Having a curriculum that meaningfully includes Black history and culture throughout the year	72%
Having a school help create a sense of community	69%
<b>Taking part in extracurricular activities</b>	<b>68%</b>
Being in a racially diverse classroom	58%
<b>Going to a school with a curriculum focus (i.e. arts, language immersion, science-focused, etc.)</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Being able to walk to recreation sites and facilities</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Going to school with children from their own neighborhood</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Being able to walk to school</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Being able to walk to friends’ homes</b>	<b>44%</b>

For 5th Ward residents, it was more important for their children to take part in extracurricular activities, go to a school with a curriculum focus, be able to walk to recreation, attend school with children from their own neighborhood, and walk both to school and to friends’ homes.

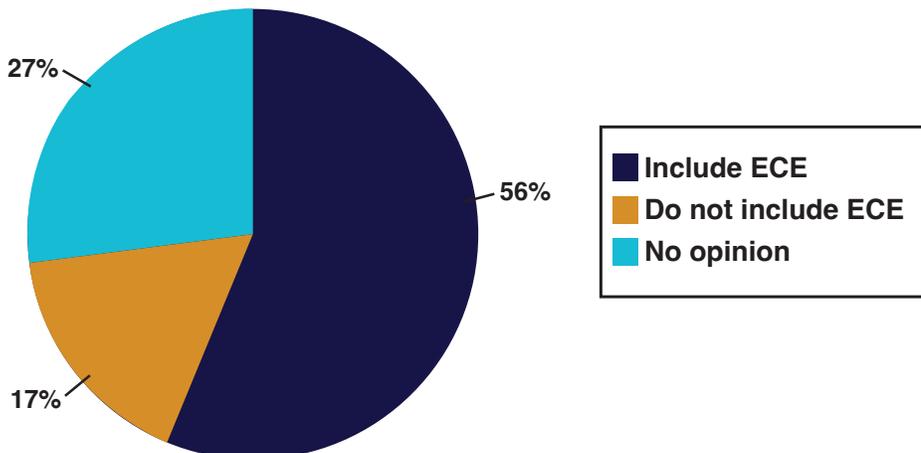
We also asked respondents about their perceptions of the African Centered Curriculum program at Oakton Elementary School and whether they believed early childhood education should exist within a school building.

Not familiar with it	65%
I like the current program	14%
I like the idea of program but feel it needs changes	18%
I do not like the program	2%



Feelings about the African Centered Curriculum (ACC) program at Oakton Elementary School

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



Opinions about whether early childhood care (ECE) and education should be included in a grade school building

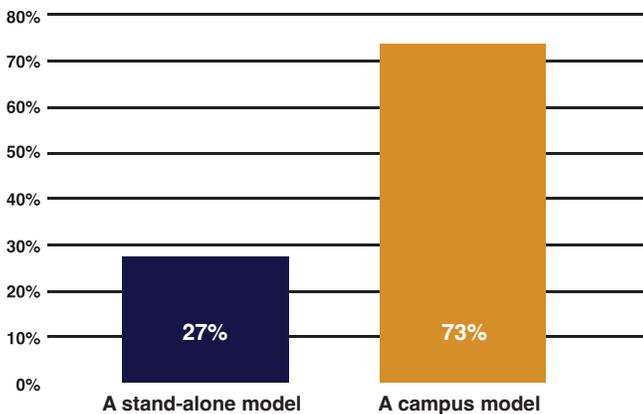
# POSSIBILITIES FOR A 5<sup>TH</sup> WARD SCHOOL

In this same section of the survey, we asked respondents for their opinions about various possibilities being considered for the new 5th Ward School. We invited people to select up to three resources that they deem important. Percentages represent respondents who selected the item.

Multipurpose space for STEAM*	81%
Library branch	58%
Outdoor recreational space	53%
Indoor recreational space	45%
Performance space	27%
Other - WRITE IN:	6%

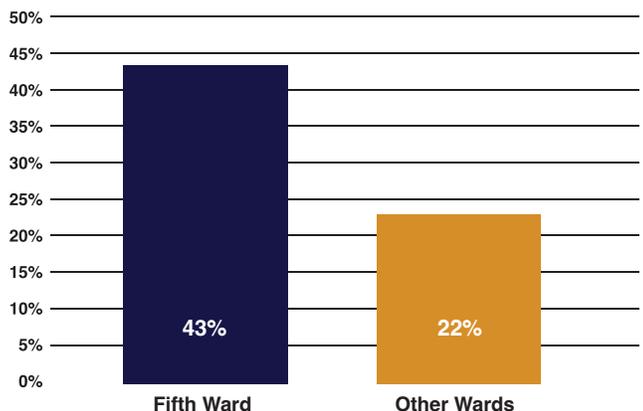
\*STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math

## PREFERRED MODEL FOR FIFTH WARD SCHOOL



We also informed respondents that in addition to resources under consideration such as those described above, the potential 5th Ward school could be established as a “campus model” that would encompass more than a single building (e.g., Fleetwood-Jourdain, Family Focus Evanston building). We asked respondents to indicate whether they would prefer a campus model or a stand-alone school if a new school were to open in the 5th Ward.

## PREFERENCE FOR K-8 SCHOOL



In addition, 5th Ward respondents indicated a stronger preference for a K-8 school, rather than a K-5 school. 43% of participants from the 5th Ward noted a K-8 school was preferable, compared to 22% of participants from all the other wards.

STEAM based Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math	79%
ACC African Centered Curriculum	53%
<b>Standard curriculum</b>	<b>37%</b>
Arts focused	29%
TWI Two-way Immersion : English/Spanish	29%
No opinion	6%
Others: WRITE IN:	5%

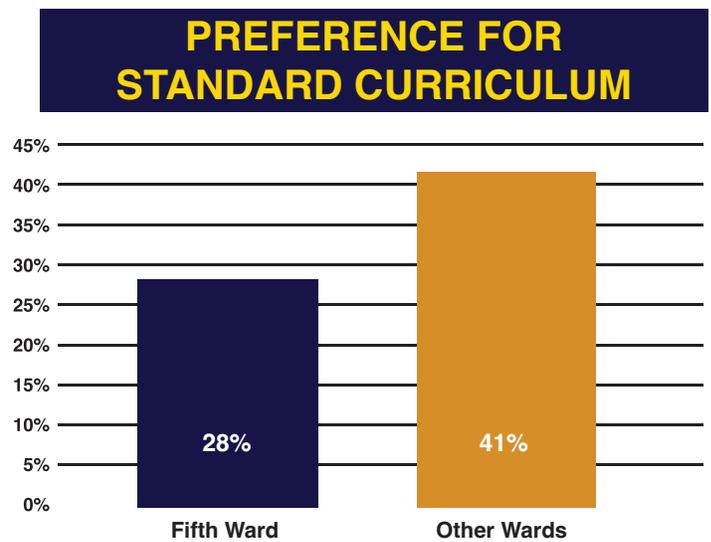


Relatedly, we asked respondents about their preferred curriculum focus for a new 5th Ward school. We invited people to select up to three curricula foci that they deem important. Percentages represent respondents who selected the item. In comparison to respondents from other wards, 5th Ward residents were less inclined to select a standard curriculum. The table to the left shows that the average across all respondents was 37% in favor of a standard curriculum, however only 28% of 5th Ward residents were in favor of a standard curriculum.

The graphic below represents data from the table above. The larger the word or phrase, the more respondents indicated its importance.



While 41% of respondents from all other wards indicated a preference for a standard curriculum, only 28% of 5th Ward respondents indicated the same.



## KEY LEARNINGS: IMPORTANCE RATINGS AND 5<sup>TH</sup> WARD SCHOOL DESIRES

### Key Learning #4

Respondents are most concerned with Black students having support for success, access, and encouragement to enroll in rigorous classes, access to Black teachers and administrators, and a curriculum that meaningfully includes Black history and culture throughout the year.

Nearly 80% of respondents noted that it was important to them that Black students were provided support for success in rigorous classes; 78% of respondents indicated it was important that Black students are provided access to rigorous classes and encouraged to enroll in these courses. 73% of respondents felt that having enough Black teachers and administrators in the school was important and 72% said that having a curriculum that meaningfully includes Black history throughout the year was important.

## Key Learning #5

### Respondents want STEAM and African Centered Curriculum (ACC).

Respondents were clear about the curriculum they desire to see available for Black children in Evanston schools. The top two curricula choices were STEAM and the African-Centered Curriculum (ACC). STEAM was the overwhelming favorite with 79% of survey respondents choosing STEAM as one of their top choices and 81% of people indicating that a STEAM multipurpose space would be an important component of the potential new school. ACC was the second favorite with 53% of survey respondents choosing ACC as a curriculum choice.

## Key Learning #6

### Respondents prefer a campus model.

Respondents indicated a preference for the new 5th Ward School to incorporate existing community resources, and to provide a seamless relationship between the actual school building and these other community institutions. 73% of survey respondents prefer a campus model that incorporates multiple buildings (for instance, Fleetwood Jourdain and Family Focus) as opposed to a stand-alone school.

## Key Learning #7

### Data from 5<sup>TH</sup> Ward respondents reveal important differences.

When comparing 5th Ward responses to other wards, variance can be seen across grade levels for some statements/questions and at specific grade levels for other statements/questions. This finding is not surprising given the distinct historical and contemporary educational experiences of students and families who live in the 5th Ward, but they depict an important aspect of the story and deserve recognition. Most notably, at the middle school level, 5th Ward respondents were significantly less likely to agree with the notion that teachers want Black students to succeed, and 5th Ward respondents indicated a much higher preference for a K-8 school. The majority of Black students from the 5th Ward are currently bussed to Haven Middle School, an Evanston middle school located in a predominantly white and wealthy part of the city. Both historically and currently, Black residents have lamented racialized experiences at this school. Thus, when viewed in context, these responses indicate a stronger dissatisfaction with the middle school option for Black students in the 5th Ward, and a desire for an alternative that may facilitate a better educational experience.

## DISCUSSION

The data in this study indicate that Black respondents do not believe education is what it should be for Black children in Evanston. Both in their own educational experiences and in the ways they perceive the current educational landscape, respondents lamented the lack of Black teachers and administrators in schools and indicated that ameliorating this absence is extremely important. When paired with an overwhelming majority of respondents indicating that they do not believe teachers are invested in Black student success, this absence becomes even more significant. Likewise, a majority of respondents note that both historically and currently, Evanston schools have not implemented a curriculum that meaningfully includes Black history and culture. In our social climate, wherein debates on the inclusion of Critical Race Theory in schools may lead to the perception that there is an overwhelming amount of race-centered content and pedagogy occurring in schools, it is notable that what respondents are actually decrying is a curriculum that misrepresents or erases Black history entirely.

In addition to the absence of Black teachers and administrators, there is a notable dearth of Black students enrolled in rigorous classes such as Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and there are ongoing racialized disparities in Black student access to and support in these spaces. The majority of respondents were clear that they did not believe that Black students historically had adequate access to rigorous courses, nor were they encouraged to enroll, welcomed or supported if they were able to successfully gain entry. These beliefs remain virtually unchanged in the present. Moreover, among the racialized disparities respondents identified, the top three choices that mattered most to them were: Black students having access to these courses, being encouraged to enroll, and being supported for success.

Whereas respondents indicated that Black students are underrepresented in AP or advanced courses, roughly half of respondents believe Black students across grade levels are overrepresented in the implementation of school disciplinary policies and practices. This juxtaposition may contribute to why many respondents do not believe that Black students have the same opportunities as non-Black students. And this lack of opportunity continues to be a rallying cry in the broader, ongoing fight for Black education equity.

When viewed in their entirety, the concerns raised by respondents paint a grim picture of the current educational landscape for Black children, and may contribute to most respondents' expressed lack of trust in teachers and administrators in both Evanston school districts. Still, with an eye toward redress, respondents shared numerous ideas about what they do want, both for the new school in the 5th Ward, and for Black education across the city.

In addition to the structured survey questions, survey respondents were offered the opportunity to write in the resources that they want to see in schools. The most desired "write in" resource was an increase in Black support staff to attend to student mental health needs (i.e. school counselors, psychologists, social workers). Respondents were clear that Black students are navigating a lot, and respondents want Evanston school districts to respond to students' needs in a more holistic manner. When this expressed resource desire is paired with the fact that the majority of respondents indicated that they do not believe there are enough Black teachers or administrators in schools, the importance of increased Black representation and support for Black students in schools becomes increasingly clear.

When asked about the new 5th Ward school in particular, nearly 75% of respondents indicated that they want a campus model that incorporates existing community spaces and organizations such as the Fleetwood Jourdain Center and Family Focus. This signifies an interest in leveraging community resources to ensure that the school can support students in more holistic ways. This desire also signifies respondents' connection to these particular organizations, and their desire to ensure that the new school emerges as the community anchor that was lost with the closing of Foster School. Finally, the overwhelming interest in incorporating early childhood education as a component of the school further cements the request for the new school to be a resource for children of all ages, and for families with varying needs.

When asked about curricula preferences, nearly 80% of respondents were clear that they want a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) curriculum, while over 50% of respondents expressed an interest in an African Centered Curriculum (ACC). The fact that so many respondents chose ACC, despite 65% of respondents indicating that they are unfamiliar with the current program, suggests that Black respondents want curricular programming specific to Black students even if they are unclear or unsure about what currently exists. This is aligned with the majority of respondents' opinion that overall, the current curriculum does not meaningfully include Black history and culture throughout the year.

Respondents were also clear about the types of spaces that they want incorporated into the school. The four most important options indicated were a multipurpose STEAM space, a library branch, and outdoor and indoor recreational spaces. These choices indicate respondents' desire for opportunities for students to learn in different ways, to ensure that students have easy access to books and quiet space, and that there is room to play and explore in tandem with traditional academic activities.

## **NEXT STEPS & REFLECTIONS**

Respondents made clear both their concerns about the existing Black educational landscape in Evanston, as well as aspects of education that are important to them in existing schools, and in the school that will open in the 5th Ward. As a result of this research, the following are suggested action items that may serve to address people's expressed concerns, needs, and wants for Black children in Evanston public schools.

- While this data has been shared in part with community members and with District 65, it is important to also share this research with District 202. Research team members should connect with leaders and the D202 school board to share our findings and discuss potential immediate and long-term goals.
- Relatedly, based on this research, there are specific considerations that Evanston school districts should begin to address in a meaningful way. This is inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
  - District 65 and District 202 should consider how to increase the number of Black teachers, administrators, and staff who center Black children in Evanston schools and ensure that Black students have the support they need to thrive academically and socio-emotionally.
  - Districts should consider the specific reasons the majority of survey respondents do not believe teachers want Black students to succeed, and the specific paths Black Evanstonians understand as necessary to remedy this.
  - Districts should consider ways to restructure school curricula such that Black history and culture is not underrepresented, misrepresented, or erased.

▸ Districts should pursue a variety of changes to ensure Black students are not disproportionately disciplined in schools, including but not limited to, improving restorative justice programs and enacting or enhancing anti-racist professional development.

- Districts should investigate how to develop or enhance STEAM curriculum in schools, as well as the potential of expanding the current African Centered Curriculum program. Districts should consider how to support current and potential ACC programs to better serve the needs of Black students in Evanston. Districts should also consider the possibility of combining a STEAM and ACC focus such that participation in one program does not preclude participation in the other.

- Our research team shared portions of this data at a Community Talk Back event in May 2023. This event was open to the public, and roughly 75 community members attended. As opposed to a traditional presentation format, this event was interactive, with attendees' responses to the data solicited during the event. Still, we believe it is imperative to identify ways to share these results with a broader audience, and to ensure that a more comprehensive representation of the findings is made available.

- Our survey was open to adults who identified as Black (in its various forms), and we are clear that making traditionally marginalized voices heard was, and is, an incredibly important undertaking. Still, we are also clear that we need to conduct research that includes and centers student voices, especially given the fact that they are the ones currently attending Evanston schools. We know that District 65 has begun this work, and one of our research team members is in the midst of a study that will elicit student perceptions about their own educational experiences. We look forward to sharing this data when it is available.

- Finally, we recognize the importance of out-of-school spaces as a component of providing Black children with academic and extracurricular opportunities. At times, these spaces provide students with important resources often missing from schools, such as access to curricular material that centers Black history and culture, and the opportunity to interact with Black adults in an educational setting. We know that Professor Nichole Pinkard (Northwestern University) has mapped all of the existing out-of-school spaces in Evanston to develop an understanding of the types of services that they provide. We believe that students deserve to have direct access to these resources in their schools. Thus, we highlight the importance of continuing to study and learn from these out-of-school spaces so that school districts can determine how to implement existing successful practices at the school level.

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Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.  
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.  
Bethel AME Church  
Christ Temple Missionary Baptist Church  
City Council Member Bobby Burns  
City Council Member Devon Reid  
City of Evanston's Parks, Recreation and Community Services Dept.  
City of Evanston's Reparations Committee  
Connections For the Homeless  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.  
Ebenezer AME Church  
Evanston Community Foundation  
Evanston Cradle to Career's Advocates for Action Youth Volunteers  
Evanston Cricket & Social Club  
Evolve Giving Group  
Evanston Own It  
Evanston Public Library  
Evanston/Skokie School District 65  
Evanston/Skokie PTAs  
Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.  
Faith Temple Church Of God In Christ  
Family Focus Evanston  
Fifth Ward Block Clubs  
First Church of God Christian Life Center  
Fleetwood Jourdain Community Center  
Foster Senior Club  
Greater St. Peter Faith Tabernacle  
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