Burlington Area School District Equity Evaluation Integrated Comprehensive Systems for Equity

1

Table of Contents

I.   Introduction

This evaluation is by request of the Burlington Area School District based on a requirement of a Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Our goal in this evaluation includes an overview of the equity audit data, followed by a summation of the focus group data identifying what is working well and what are the challenges for all learners. We analyzed qualitative (focus group data) and quantitative data (equity audit data) and compared that to best practices and research, in order to identify critical next steps for the Burlington Area School District.

II.   District Equity Data Relative to Wisconsin Pupil Nondiscrimination Law

We provided the District with the ICS Equity Audit form, and the District then collected the data for the form. These equity audit data are integrated throughout the sections of this evaluation.

As a Wisconsin public school district, the Burlington Area School District remains legally bound to be in compliance with Wisconsin Chapter 118:13 Pupil Nondiscrimination Law and PI-9 Wisconsin Administrative Code. Under s. 118.13, no pupil may be excluded from a public school, or from any school activities or programs, or be denied any benefits or treated in a different manner because of: sex, race, religion, national origin (including a student whose primary language is not English), ancestry, creed, pregnancy, parental status, marital status, sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability, emotional disability, and learning disability. The law requires each school district to submit an annual compliance report to the Department of Public Instruction and periodically conduct a self-evaluation of the status of pupil nondiscrimination and equality of educational opportunity. The policy must apply to all areas of school operations, including school sponsored programs and activities. Section PI 9.03, Wis. Admin. Code illustrates the scope and breadth of the required district policies by identifying many of the areas subject to the nondiscrimination policy. They include admission to classes or programs, rules of conduct and discipline, selection of instructional and library media materials, and facilities, among others. However, the pupil nondiscrimination statute applies to all aspects of district operations and programs. What the law requires is that the pupil nondiscrimination policy or policies that the District adopts apply to all areas.

The Burlington Area School District Equity Statement

The Burlington Area School District rejects all forms of racism, discrimination, and harassment of students, families, staff members, and/or visitors in school or within the community. Such behaviors will be treated as being destructive to the District's mission, vision, values, and goals. The District pledges and is committed to providing a physically and psychologically safe, secure, and respectful environment, free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender, race, national origin, color, religion, disability, socio-economic status, and age.

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In each section of this evaluation, we provide any additional relevant demographic data followed by key equity audit data. We then describe our understanding of how students with specific identifiers are currently served in the District. We rely on the equity audit data provided by the District as one way to evaluate the effectiveness of how students with this identity area are currently educated in the District.

Of the 3268 students in the District, 534 (16.6%) are identified with a disability, 138 (4.2%) receive English language services, 65 (2%) receive 504 services, 61 (1.9%) attend an alternative setting, 148(4.5%) receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions, and 243 (7.4%) are identified as gifted. Thus, in total, more than one-third of the students in the District (1133 students, 34.7%) are labeled under one or more educational identifier, such as but not limited to, gifted, Tier 2 and 3, Section 504, identified with a disability, linguistically diverse, or attending an alternative school.

Figure 1: Students Labeled in the District
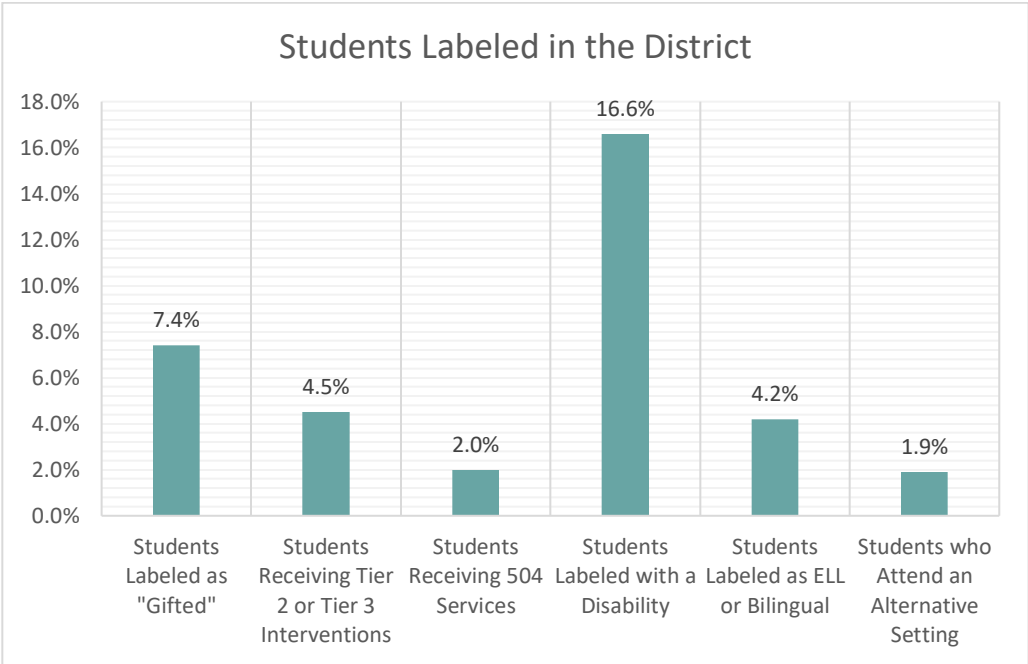
A.   Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch

Of the 3268 students in the District, 1185 (36.3%) receive free/reduced price lunch. Students who receive free/reduce priced lunch are over-identified for special education by nearly 11%, given that 47.2% of students labeled for special education receive free/reduced price lunch.

Similarly, students who receive free/reduced lunch are over-identified for Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions by nearly 20%, given that 82 of 148 students receiving interventions (55.4%) are students who receive free/reduced priced lunch.

At the same time, students who receive free/reduced price lunch are under-identified as gifted by nearly 16%, given that 50 of the 243 students labeled as gifted (20.6%) receive free/reduced price lunch. Moreover, of the students participating in Advanced Placement courses at the high school or advanced courses at the middle school, 24.3% represent students receiving free/reduced priced lunch, thus students who receive free/reduced price lunch are under-identified by nearly 12% for advanced or Advanced Placement courses.

Likewise, only 11.3% of Advanced Placement exams were completed by students receiving free/reduced price lunch, and of those, only 11.3% scored a 3 or above, compared to 88.7% of middle/upper class students who did so. Students receiving free/reduced priced lunch are over-identified for placement in the alternative school setting with 48 of the 61 students (78.7%) receiving free/reduced priced lunch.

Figure 2: Representation of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch
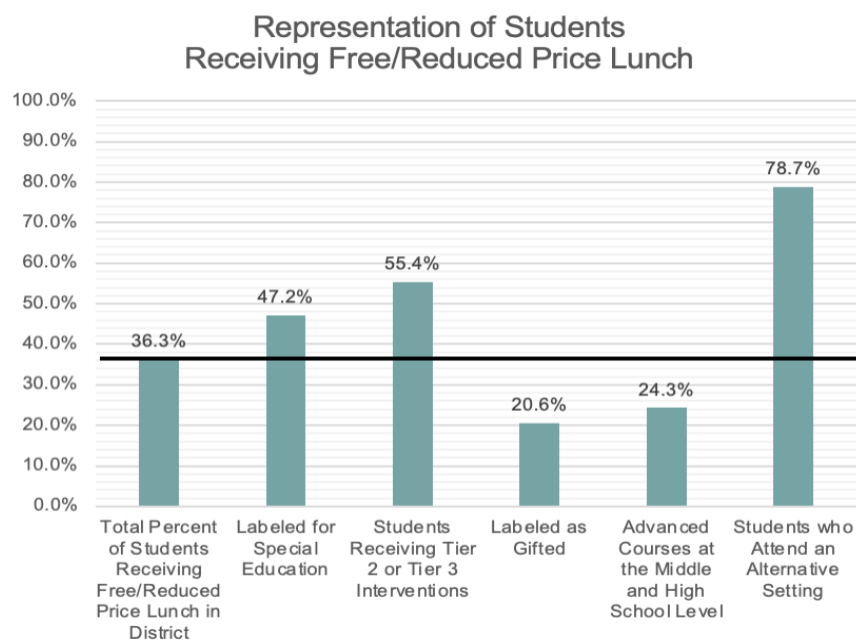
Students receiving free/reduced priced are over-identified in disciplinary actions with 32 of 42 students (76.2%) receiving in-school suspensions and 35 of 61 students (57.4%) of students receiving out of school suspensions all receiving free/reduced price lunch. The one student that the District reported was expelled received free/reduced price lunch.

Students who receive free/reduced price lunch are over-identified in having low attendance or truancy with 55.5% (157/283) of students who are also receiving free/reduced priced lunch.

Figure 3: Students Receiving Free/Reduced Priced Lunch, Disciplinary Actions, and Attendance
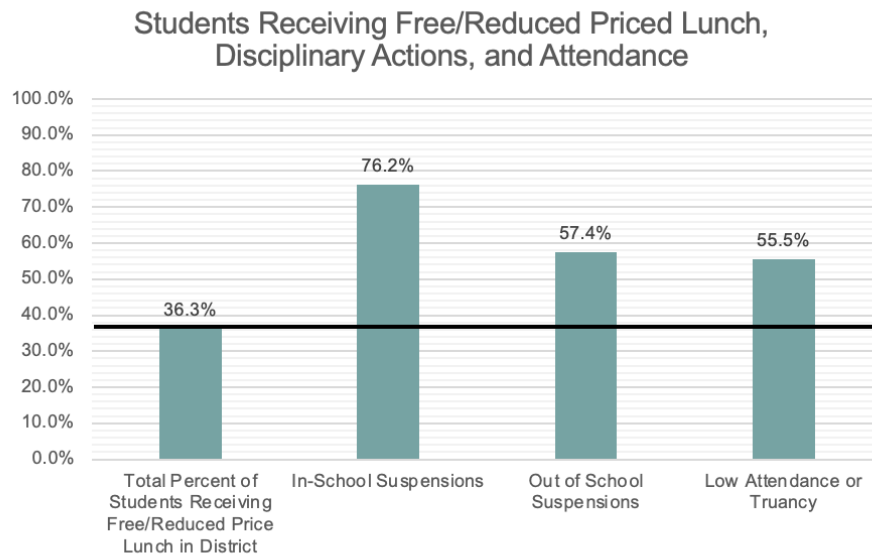
Taken together, all of the above equity audit data depict to what extent the District provides students receiving free/reduced price lunch the maximum opportunity for high quality teaching and learning within Tier 1 or the core of teaching and learning.

Further, students automatically do not have access to high quality teaching and learning when they are removed from instruction for discipline or have high absentee rates.

Next, we address achievement data for students receiving free/reduced priced lunch. This data will provide evidence as to the effectiveness of the efforts to educate students described within the previous paragraphs of equity data.

Achievement and Social Class

The District provided reading data based on the Wisconsin Forward Exam Grades 3-8 and ACT Aspire (9-10). For students who receive free/reduced priced lunch, 63.2% scored basic or below basic compared to 36.5% of students not receiving free/reduced price lunch scoring basic or below basic in reading. Likewise, 31.5% of students receiving free/reduced priced lunch scored proficient or advanced compared to 60.2% of students not receiving free/reduced lunch scored proficient or advanced in reading.

Figure 4: District Reading Achievement and Social Class

District Reading Achievement and Social Class

- Basic or Below Basic: Students who are Middle to Upper Class 36.5%, Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch 63.2%
- Advanced or Proficient: Students who are Middle to Upper Class 60.2%, Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch 31.5%

■ Students who are Middle to Upper Class
■ Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch
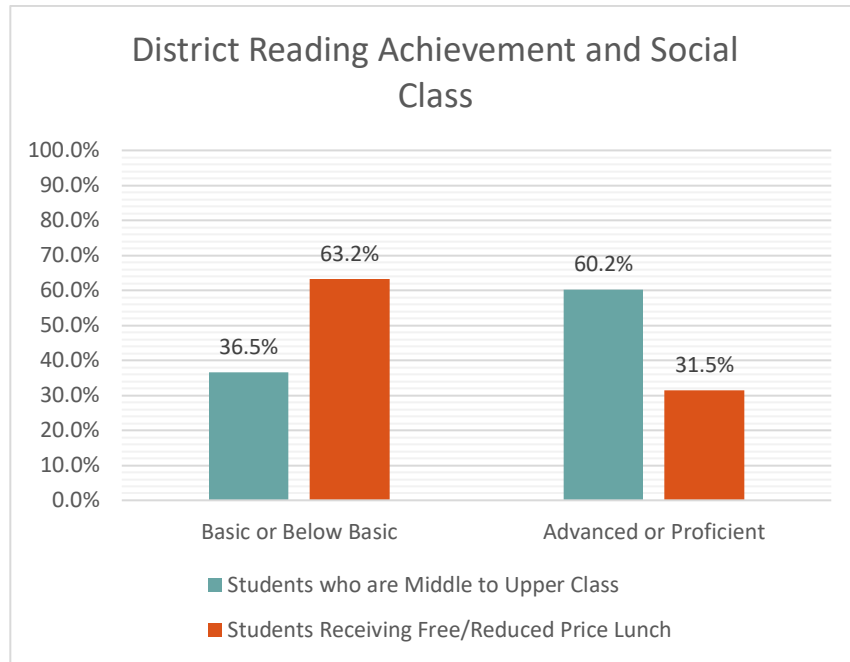
Despite all of the programs in place at the elementary level (e.g., Title 1 reading, Response to Intervention, 504 plans, special education, etc.), English/language arts/reading scores did not improve as students matriculate through the grades. At the 11th grade level, the District reported English Language Arts data based on the ACT. For students receiving free/reduced priced lunch, 72.2% scored "Not Ready" and 27.8% "Ready" for college compared to 47% of middle class/affluent students scoring "Not Ready" and 52.9% scoring "Ready."

Figure 5: District Language Arts, College Readiness, and Social Class
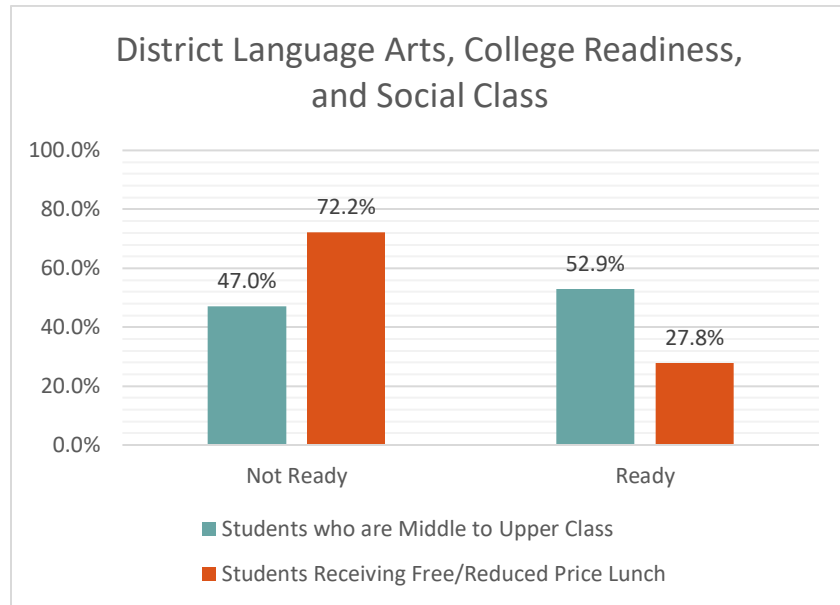
The District reported math achievement based on the Wisconsin Forward Exam for students in grades 3-8 and the ACT Aspire test for grades 9-10. For students receiving free/reduced priced lunch, 66.1% scored basic or below basic in math compared to 41.0% of students not receiving free/reduced price lunch who scored basic or below basic. Importantly, three times the number of students receiving free/reduced priced lunch scored below basic compared to their middle class/affluent peers.

Figure 6: District Math Achievement and Social Class

District Math Achievement and Social Class

Basic or Below Basic: Students who are Middle to Upper Class 40.9%, Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch 66.1%

Advanced or Proficient: Students who are Middle to Upper Class 56.7%, Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch 31.9%

- Students who are Middle to Upper Class
- Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch
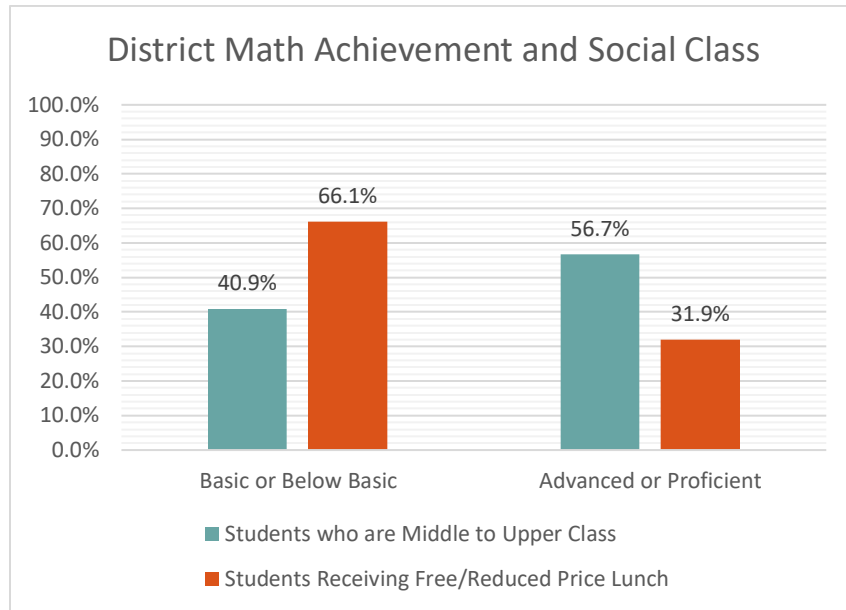
The District also reported Math ACT scores for 11th grade that determined that 90.3% of students receiving free/reduced price lunch were not college ready compared to 64.2% of middle to upper class students.

Figure 7: District Math College Readiness and Social Class

District Math College Readiness and Social Class

Not Ready: Students who are Middle to Upper Class 64.2%, Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch 90.3%

Ready: Students who are Middle to Upper Class 35.8%, Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch 9.7%

- Students who are Middle to Upper Class
- Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch

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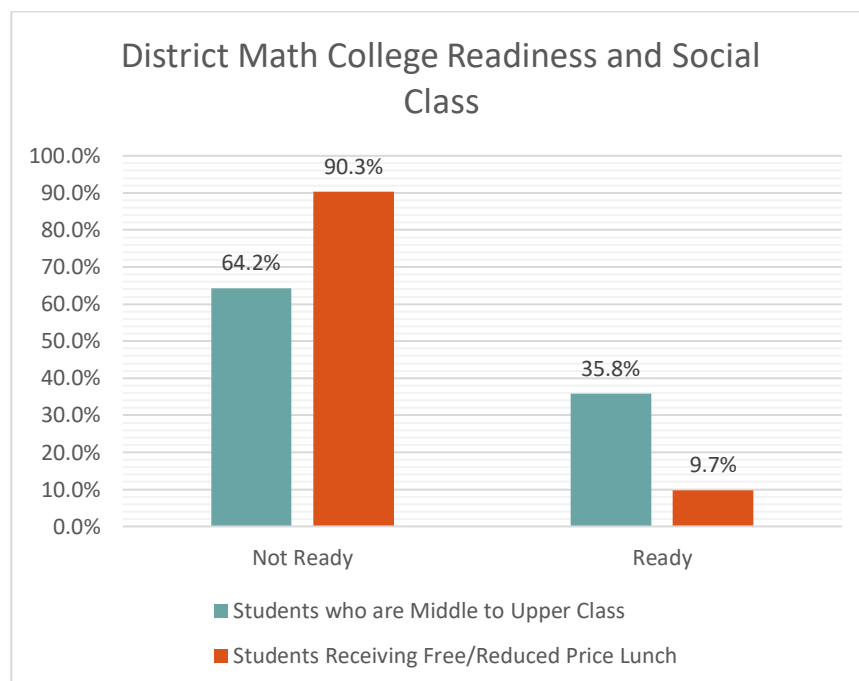
B.   Race/Ethnicity Data

The District reported that the District enrolls 20.7% students of color, including 14.3% students who identify as Hispanic, 3.7% multi-racial, 1.6% Black, 1% Asian, .12% Native American, and less than 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, with 79.2% of the District comprised of White students.

Yet, 97.4% of staff in the District identify as White and all school board members identify as White. Of certified staff (e.g., teachers and administrators), only 5 are people of color (1.2%) (3 Black, 2 Asian). The District does not employ anyone who identifies as Hispanic, certified, or uncertified, even though Hispanic students are the largest ethnic group in the District, and community members who identify as Hispanic represent the second largest racial/ethnicity demographic (about 12%) after White, of the Burlington wider community. Of Burlington community members who hold bachelor's degrees, community members who identify as Hispanic are second after Whites who hold such degrees (2020 Census).

Figure 8: District Student and Staff Racial Demographics

Figure 8: District Student and Staff Racial Demographics

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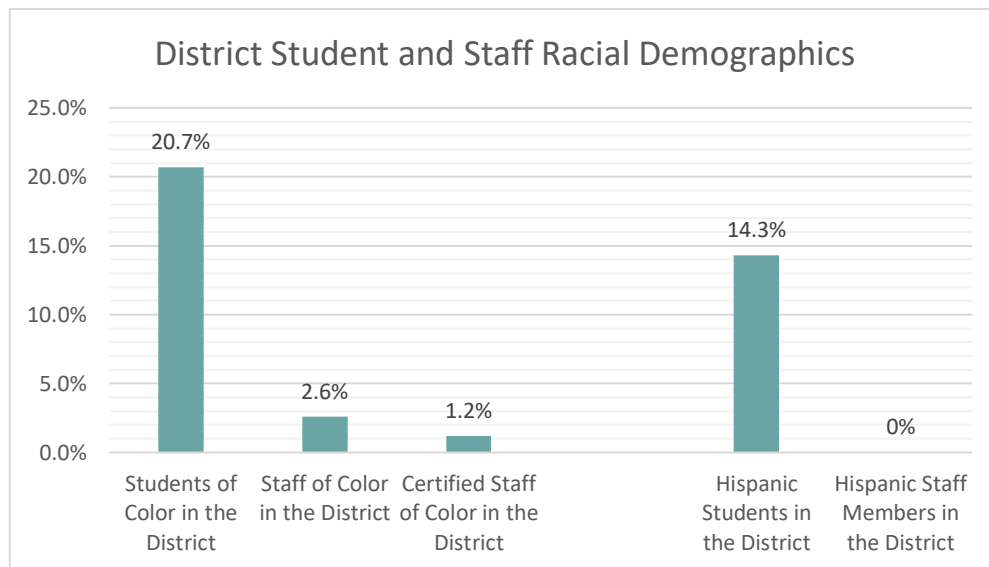
Students of color are over-identified for special education (20.7% in the District, 25.8% students of color labeled for special education) with Black students over-identified for special education more than any other racial group. Though Black students comprise 1.6% of the student body, they are more than twice as likely to be labeled for special education (2.8%). Hispanic students who represent 14.3% of the District are also over-identified for special education (17.1%). Students who identify as multi-racial in the District (3.7%) are also over-identified for special education at 4.8%.

Figure 9: Students of Color Over-Identified for Special Education
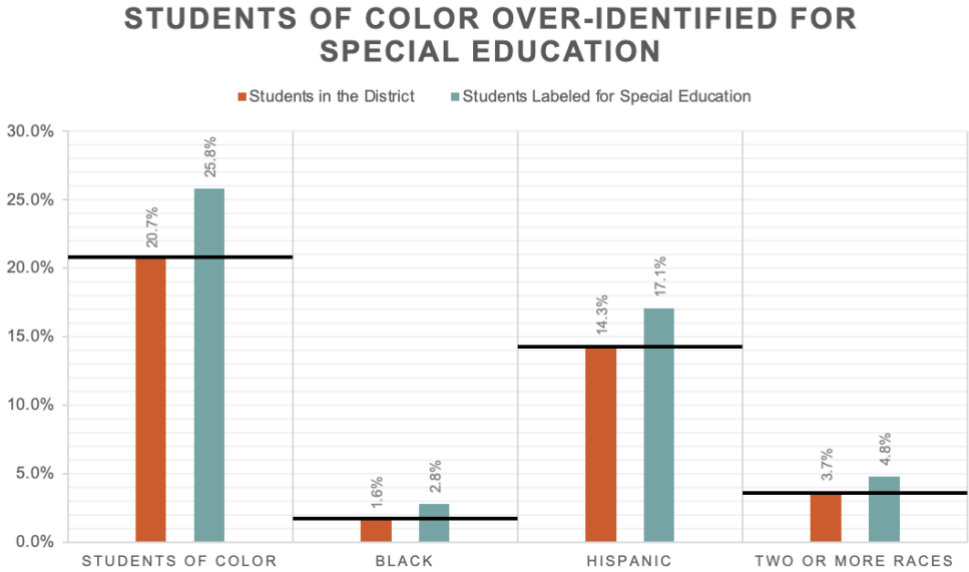
Though students of color comprise 20.7% of the District, students of color represent 27.9% of students who have low attendance or who are truant. Black students comprise 1.6% of the District, but 2.8% of students who have low attendance or who are truant. Hispanic students comprise 14.3% of the District, but 18.4% of students who have low attendance or who are truant, while multi-racial students comprise 3.7% of district students, but represent 5.7% of students who have low attendance or who are truant.

Figure 10: Students of Color Over-Identified as Having Low Attendance or Truant
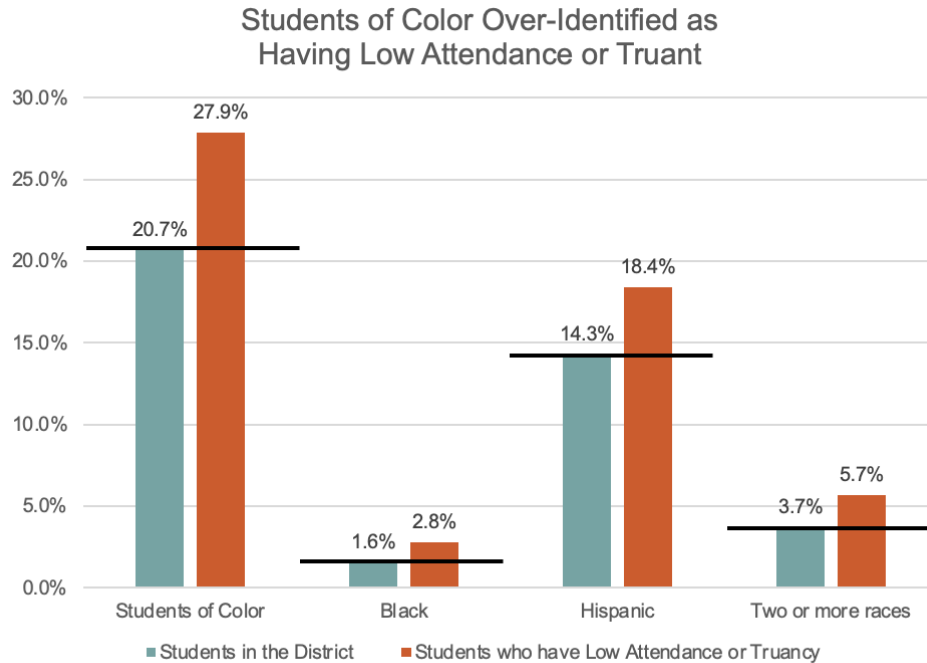
Race/Ethnicity and Gifted/Advanced Education

For students labeled as gifted, only 27 of 243 (11%) identify as students of color. Thus, in this District, if you are a student of color (20.7%), you are half as likely to be labeled for gifted education (11%) and more likely to be labeled for special education (25.8%). Though Hispanic students represent 14.3% of the District, they are half as likely to be labeled as gifted (7.8%). The District has not identified any multi-racial students for gifted education, while White students are over-identified as gifted (represent 79.2% in the District but 88.9% of students labeled as gifted).

At the middle and high school levels, 383 students participate in advanced courses or Advanced Placement courses. Black students are proportionally represented in these advanced courses (1.6% of the student population and 1.83% in advanced courses). Hispanic students represent 12.0% of the high school population but are under-represented in advanced courses (6.3%). Though 2.1% of the high school population includes students who identify as multi-racial, no multi-racial students are enrolled in advanced courses. White students are over-identified in advanced courses as they represent 82.7% of the high school population but 90.1% of the students in advanced courses.

Of the students who completed Advanced Placement exams, no Black students completed an exam, 4.4% of students who completed the exams were Hispanic students and 2% Asian students, whereas 92.3% of Advanced Placement exams were completed by White students (White students comprise 82.7% of the high school).

Figure 11: Race/Ethnicity and Gifted/Advanced Education
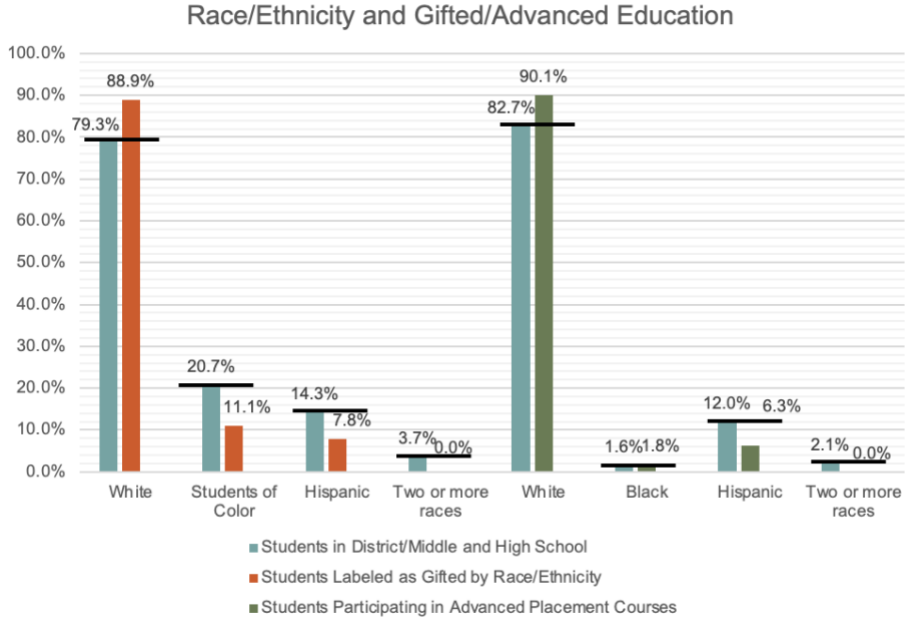
The District maintains an alternative education setting in which of the 61 students enrolled, nearly all are White (55 students or 90.2%), but Black students are over-identified for this setting (6.6% compared to 1.6% in the District).

Race/Ethnicity and Discipline

The District has over-identified students of color for in-school suspensions (ISS), as of the 42 students in that category, 13 (31.0%) are students of color (20.7% in the District). Of the 61 students identified for out of school suspensions (OSS) 19% are students of color, which is about equal to the District representation (20.7% in the District). Yet, students who identify as Hispanic are over-identified for out of school suspensions (19.7% versus 14.3% in the District) as are Black students (4.9% versus 1.6% in the District). The one student expelled in the District identified as Hispanic.

Figure 12: Students of Color Over-Identified for Suspensions

Students of Color Over-Identified for Suspensions
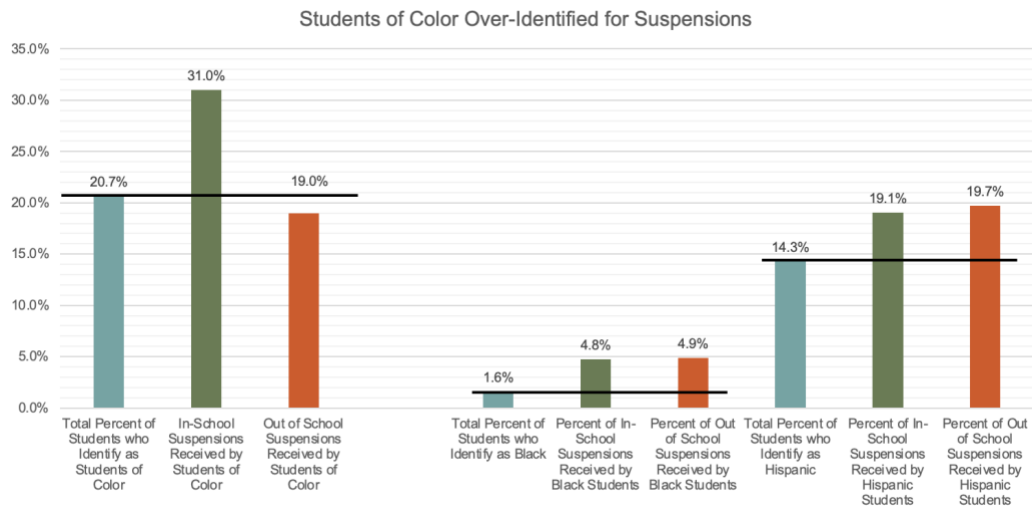
Race/Ethnicity and Achievement

We can determine, in part, the effectiveness of programs like special education and Response to Intervention by student achievement outcomes. The District reported the 2018-2019 reading achievement data based on the Wisconsin Forward Exam for grades 3-8, ACT Aspire grades 9-10, and 11th grade ACT English Language Arts (ELA) section.

For the combined Wisconsin Forward Exam for grades 3-8 and ACT Aspire grades 9-10, of all the racial/ethnic identities in the District, Hispanic students scored the lowest in reading achievement with 70.4% scoring basic or below basic with more than one-third (32.3%) scoring below basic. Black students scored the next lowest with more than half of all Black students (52.6%) scoring basic or below basic, followed by students who identify as multi-racial, 44.9% scored basic or below basic. Of the Asian students 38.9% scored basic or below basic and 41.4% of White students scored basic or below basic.

On the 11th grade ACT Reading assessment, only 2 Black students completed the assessment and both scored "Not Ready" for college. Of the 31 students who identify as Hispanic, 22 (71.0%) scored "Not Ready" for college. Of the 5 students who identify as multi-racial and completed the exam, 3 scored "Not Ready" for college and 2 scored "Ready for College." For White students, 112 out of 219 (51.1%) scored "Ready for College

Figure 13: District Reading Achievement by Race/Ethnicity

District Reading Achievement by Race/Ethnicity

	White Students	Black Students	Multi-Racial Students	Asian Students	Hispanic Students
Below Basic	13.1%	15.8%	18.4%	16.70%	32.3%
Basic	28.4%	36.8%	26.5%	22.2%	38.1%
Below Basic and Basic	41.5%	52.6%	44.9%	38.9%	70.4%

■ Below Basic   ■ Basic   ■ Below Basic and Basic
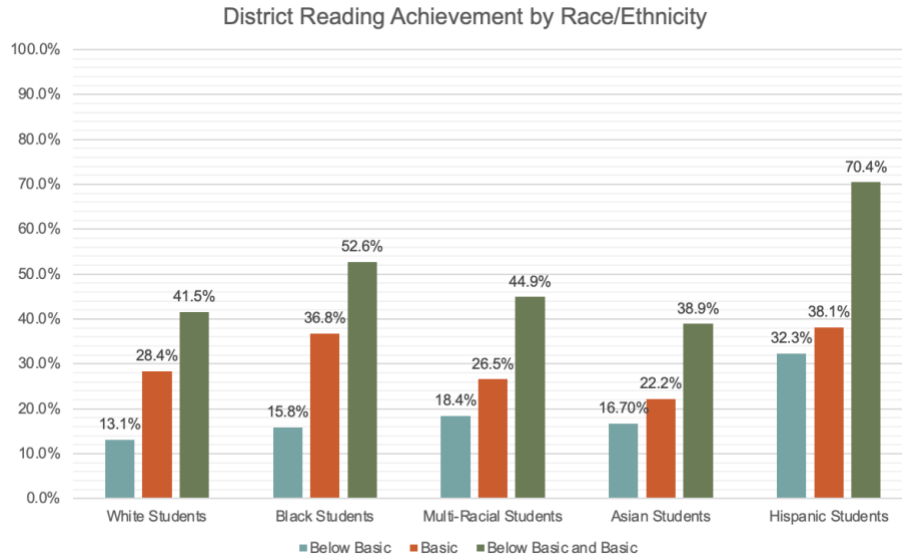
For District math achievement, Hispanic students scored the lowest among all students with 72% scoring basic/below basic and within that level, 38.1% scored below basic on the combined Wisconsin Forward Exam for grades 3-8 and the ACT Aspire for grades 9-10. Black students, 68.4% scored basic/below basic. No Black students scored advanced in Math. Students who identify as multi-racial, 59.2% scored basic/below basic and only one student scored advanced. For White students, 45.3% scored basic/below basic with 12.6% scoring advanced.

Figure 14: District Math Achievement by Race/Ethnicity

District Math Achievement by Race/Ethnicity
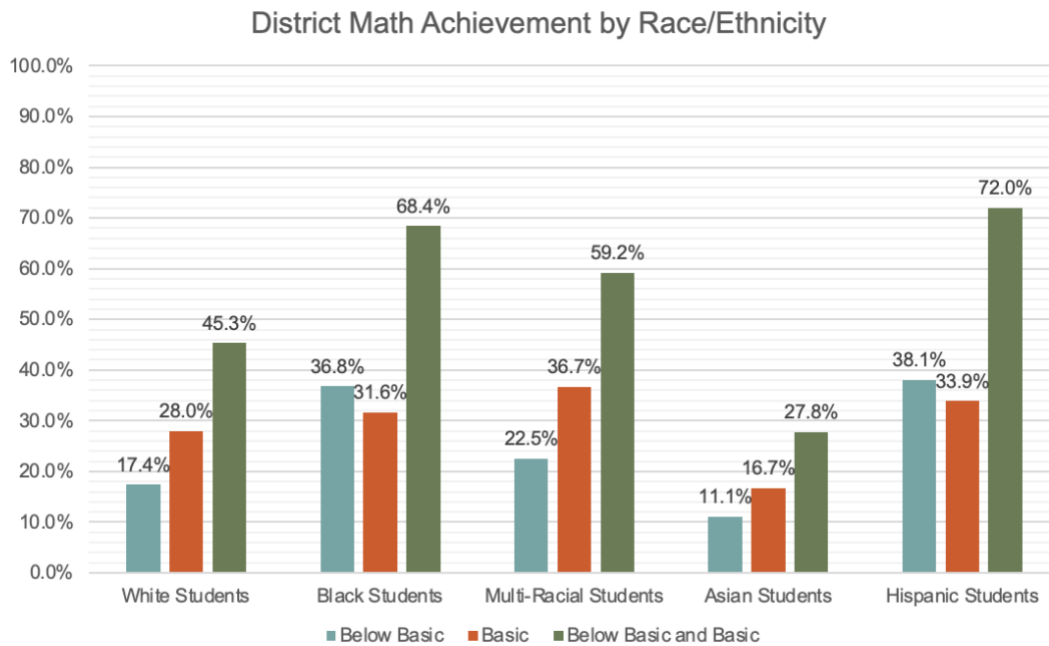
For the 2018-2019 ACT 11th grade math assessment, of the 31 students who identify as Hispanic, 28 scored "Not Ready" for college. Of the two Black students who took the assessment, both scored "Not Ready" for college. Of the five multi-racial students who completed the assessment, all five scored "Not Ready" for college. Among the White students, 68.0% scored "Not Ready" for college while 32.4% scored "Ready" for college.

C.   Students Receiving English Language Learning Services

Students receiving English Language Learning (ELL) services comprise 4.2% of students in the District (138/3268 students). Of the students identified for special education in the District, 7.6% are students labeled as ELL (English Language Learners) or linguistically diverse, thus students receiving ELL services are over-identified by 3.3%. Of the 148 students receiving response to intervention, 18 are receiving ELL services (12.2%) and thus students receiving ELL services are over-identified for response to intervention by 7.9%.

Of the 243 students in the District labeled as gifted, only 6 (2.5%) are receiving ELL services. Thus, students receiving ELL services are under-represented in the District gifted program by 1.8%. Of the 383 students enrolled in advanced courses at the middle/high school, 2.1% are students receiving ELL services. No students receiving ELL services completed an Advanced Placement exam compared to 522 students not receiving ELL services who did so. Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, all students receiving ELL services attend their home school.

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Figure 15: Students Receiving ELL Services
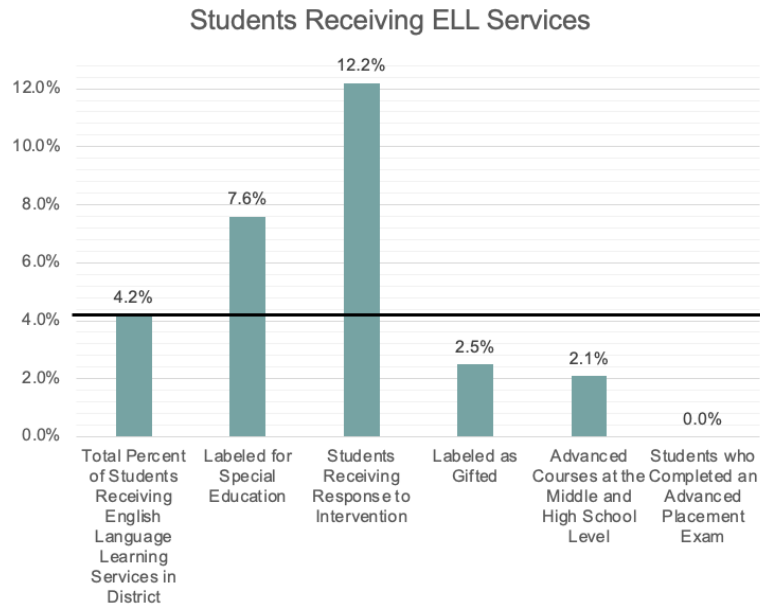
Students Receiving ELL Services

Category	Percent
Total Percent of Students Receiving English Language Learning Services in District	4.2%
Labeled for Special Education	7.6%
Students Receiving Response to Intervention	12.2%
Labeled as Gifted	2.5%
Advanced Courses at the Middle and High School Level	2.1%
Students who Completed an Advanced Placement Exam	0.0%

Students receiving ELL services are over-identified in in school and out of school suspensions, with 9.7% of in-school suspensions and 7.6% of out of school suspensions received by students eligible for ELL services.

No students receiving ELL services are placed in the District's alternative setting. Students receiving ELL services are over-identified as having low attendance/being truant as they comprise 6% of students who are identified as having low attendance/being truant.

Figure 16: Students Receiving ELL Services and Representation in Discipline, Alternative Placements, and Low Attendance/Truancy
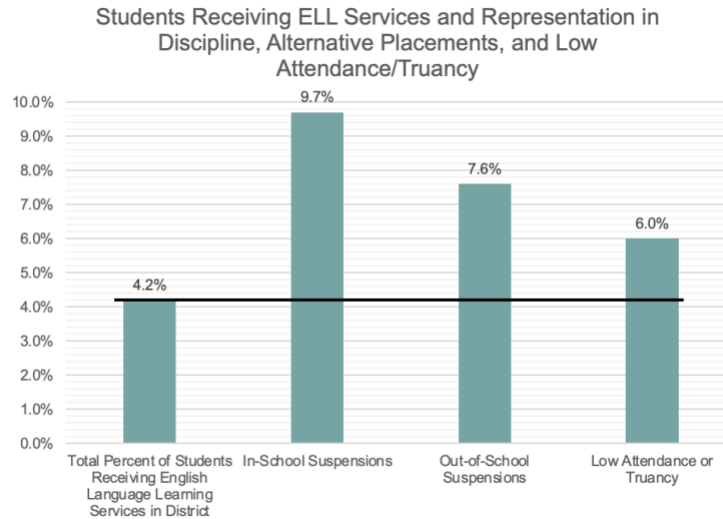
Please note that for the ELL achievement data provided by the District, the WI Forward and ACT Aspire data for students who are not receiving ELL services, was not accurate. For example, the District reported 1451 students who are not receiving ELL services completed the Math exams, and then reported a total of 1702 students who are not receiving ELL services who scored at various levels on the exam. The District reported similar data for reading for students who are not receiving ELL services. Thus, we did not compare students who are receiving and not receiving ELL services in math or reading related to these exams.

On the reading WI Forward Exam (grades 3-8) and the ACT Aspire (grades 9-10) in the 2018-2019 school year, only 3.6% of students receiving ELL services scored proficient in reading achievement, and no students scored advanced. In addition, 59.5% of students receiving ELL services scored below basic, and 32.1% scored basic.

On the reading portion of the ACT 11th grade exam, of the 9 students labeled as ELL who took the exam, all 9 scored "Not Ready" for college, compared to 50.4% of students not receiving ELL services who scored "Ready" for college, and 49.6% who scored "Not Ready."

Figure 17: Students Receiving ELL Services and Reading Achievement
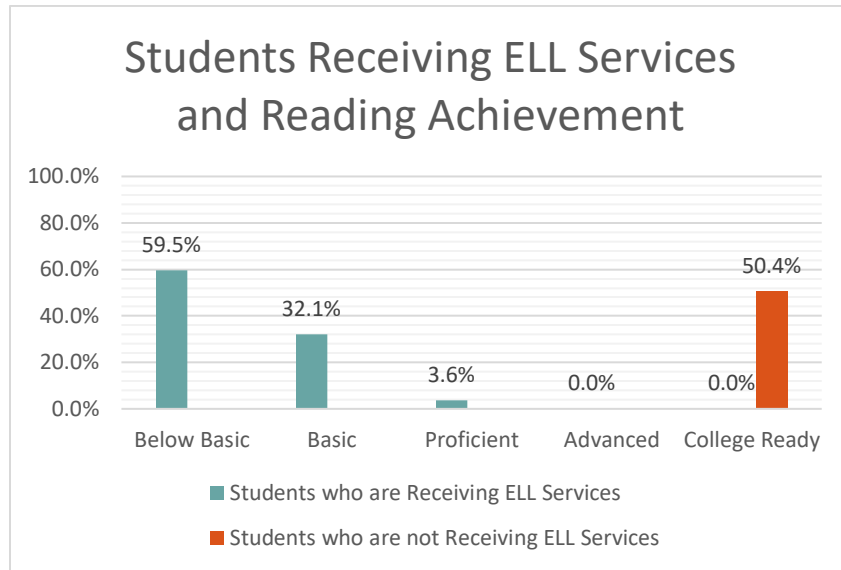
Math achievement for students receiving ELL services reflects a similar trend as reading. No students receiving ELL services scored advanced and 7.1% scored proficient. In addition, 62% of students receiving ELL services scored below basic.

On the math portion of the ACT 11th grade exam, of the 9 students receiving ELL services who took the exam, 8 out of 9 scored "Not Ready", compared to 37.8% of students not receiving ELL services who scored "Ready" and 62.2% who scored "Not Ready" for college.

Figure 18: Students Receiving ELL Services and Math Achievement
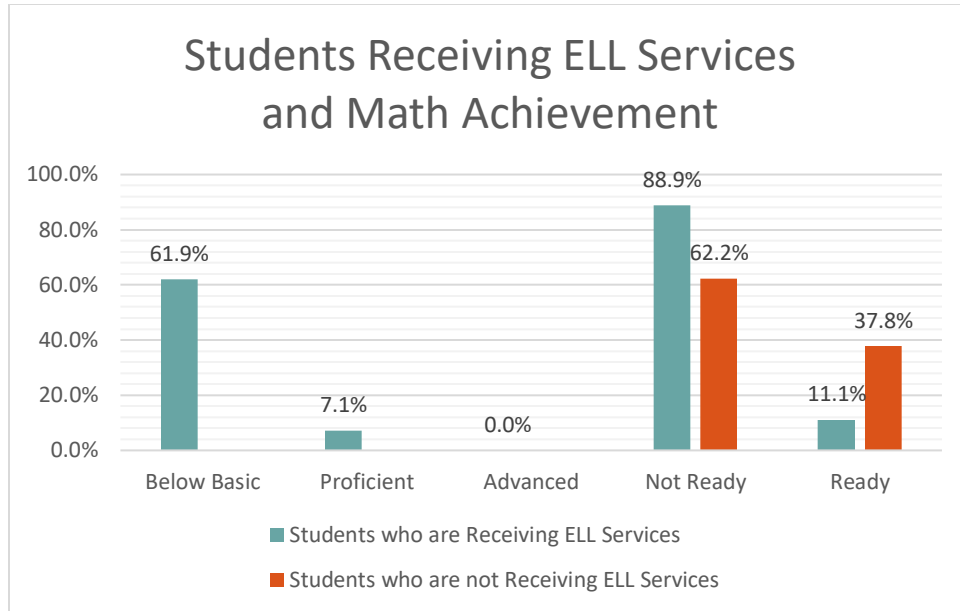
D.   Students Receiving Special Education Services

Of the 3268 students in the District, 534 (16.6%) are receiving special education services. Of the 150 special education referrals in 2018-2019, 92 were identified for special education (61%). Not all students receiving special education services attend their home or neighborhood school. The District owns a home in the community for placement of students with intellectual disabilities who are 18-21 years old and they also accept students with a similar label from other districts at this site.

Students with disabilities are over-identified for in-school and out of school suspensions with 32.3% of in-school suspensions and 36.4% of out of school suspensions represented by students with disabilities.

Students receiving special education services are also over-identified at the alternative school, as of the 61 students placed in the alternative setting, 35 are students receiving special education services (57.4%). Students receiving special education services are also over-identified as having low attendance or being truant with 21.9% of students identified as having low attendance or being truant receiving special education services.

Figure 19: Students Receiving Special Education Services and Representation in Alternative Setting, Attendance, and Discipline

Students Receiving Special Education Services and Representation in Alternative Setting, Attendance, and Discipline

Students with Disabilities: 16.6%; Students Placed in an Alternative Setting: 57.4%; Students Identified as Low Attendance or Truant: 21.9%; In-School Suspensions: 32.3%; Out-of-School Suspensions: 36.4%
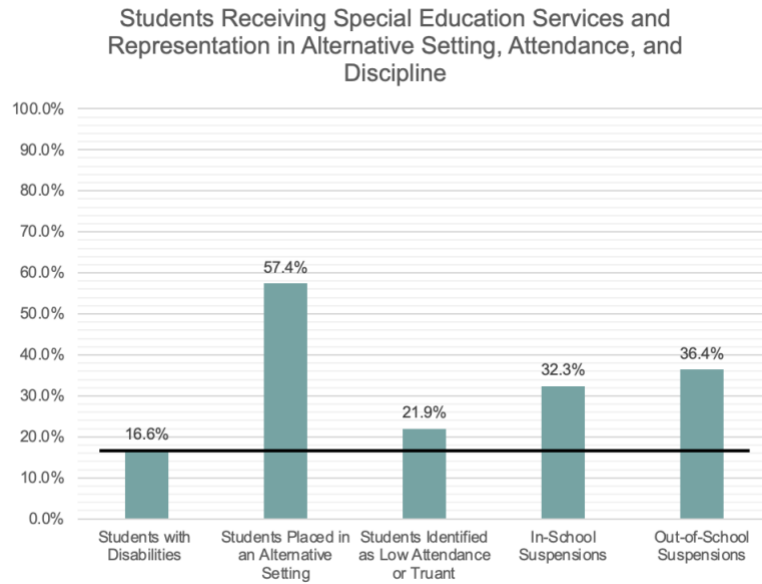
<u>Students Receiving Special Education Services and Achievement</u>

We were not able to obtain accurate data for reading achievement for students receiving special education services. For example, the District reported 269 students receiving special education services completed the Wisconsin Forward or ACT Aspire exams in 2018-2019, but only reported scores for 154 of these students. Thus, we limit the reading data included to students who completed the ACT 11th grade reading exam.

For students receiving special education services 2 out of 33 (6.1%) scored college ready on the ACT 11th grade reading exam. Of the 226 students without a disability who completed the ACT 11th grade reading exam, 59.3% scored college ready.

Figure 20: Students Receiving Special Education Services and Reading Achievement
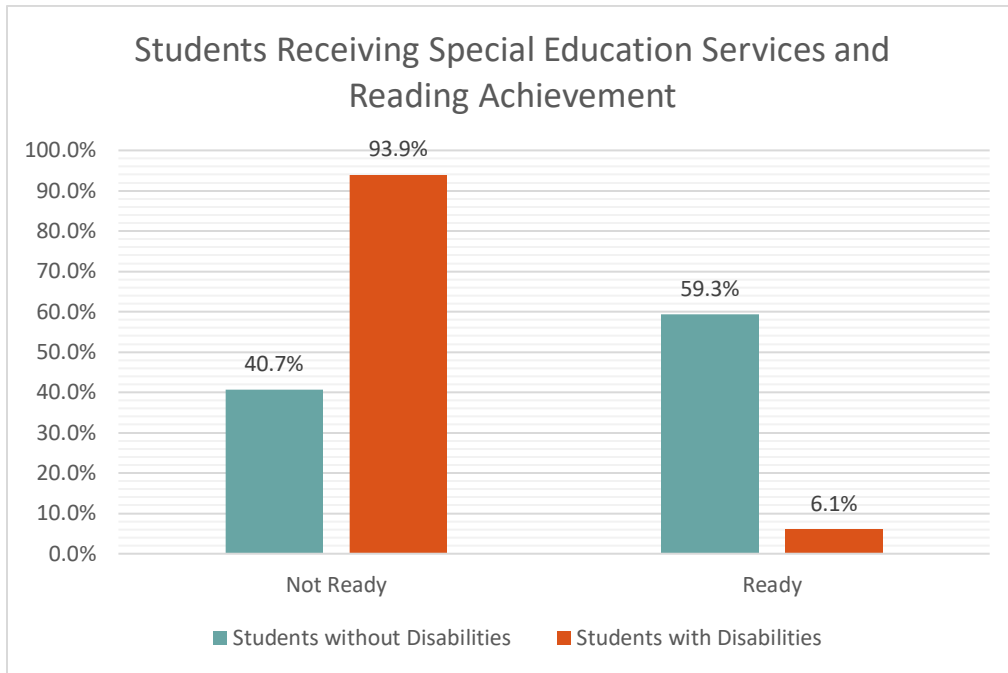
In math achievement from the Forward (grades 3-8) and ACT Aspire (grades 9-10) exam, 11.6% of students receiving special education services scored proficient/advanced compared to 54.7% of students without disabilities, while 58% of students with disabilities score below basic compared to 13.9% of students without disabilities.

On the ACT 11th grade exam, 31 of 33 (67.3%) of students without disabilities scored "Not Ready" for college in math, while 40.7% of students without disabilities scored "Not Ready" for college in math.

Figure 21: Students Receiving Special Education Services and Math Achievement

Students Receiving Special Education Services and Math Achievement

	Basic or Below Basic	Advanced or Proficient
Students without Disabilities	13.9%	54.7%
Students with Disabilities	58.0%	11.6%
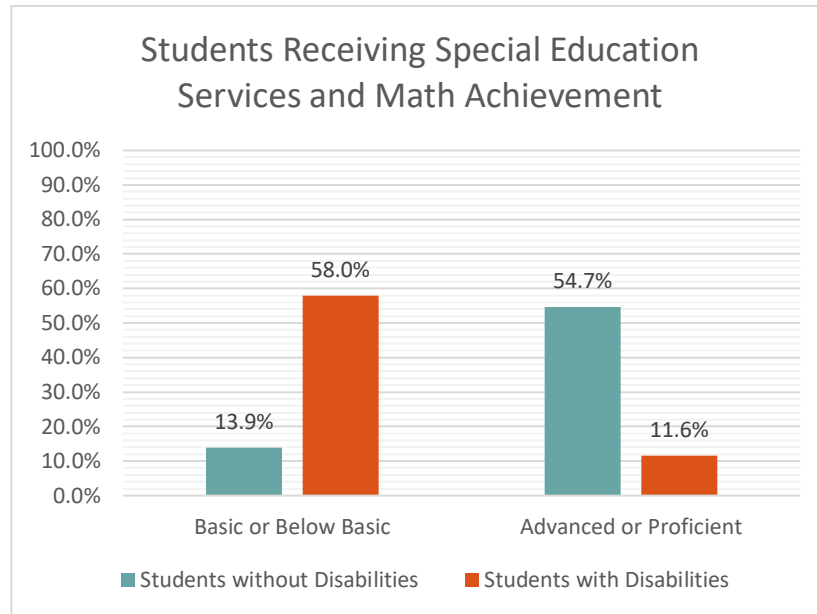
Of the 383 students identified for Advanced Placement courses at the high school or advanced courses at the middle school, 19.3% are students receiving special education services compared to 16.6% of students identified as having disabilities in the District. Yet, only two students with disabilities took Advanced Placement exams.

Figure 22: Students Receiving Special Education Services in Advanced Courses

Students Receiving Special Education Services in Advanced Courses

Total Percent of Students Receiving Special Education Services in District	High School Advanced Placement Courses
16.6%	19.3%

23
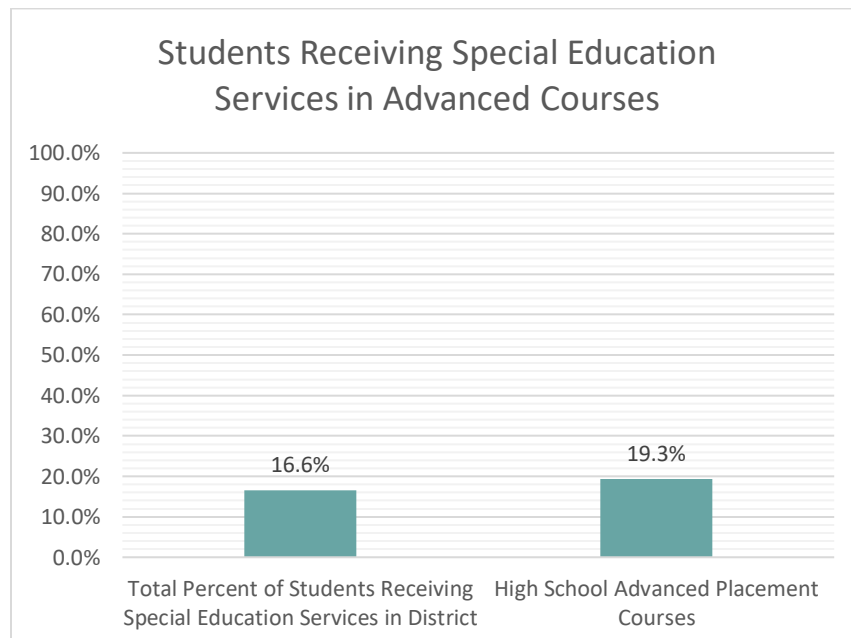
E.   Gender

Female teachers teaching math and science at the middle school are well represented with females comprising 5 of 6 middle school math teachers, 7 of 10 high school math teachers, and 4 of 5 middle school science teachers. At the high school, 3 of 10 teachers of science are female. For English and history related courses, females are well represented except for high school history courses where only 1 of 9 teachers are female. Likewise, at the high school, 7 of 10 of the highest math courses and 6 of 15 Advanced Placement include teachers who are female.

On the District administrative team of 19 members, 9 are female. Of the 9-member core District administrative team, 5 are female. For school principals, females comprise ¾ of elementary principals, ½ of middle school principals, but no members at the high school administrative team are females at the time this data was collected. For the 2021-2022 school year at the high school, we did interview several female assistant principals.

Male students are over-identified with emotional disabilities at 74.5% compared to females at 25.5%. Among student suspensions, males comprised 80.6% of in-school and 67.2% of out of school suspensions. In the alternative setting, 59% (36 of 61 are male). Among the 283 students identified as having low attendance or truant, 43.5% are male.

Figure 23: Gender Representation in Emotional Disabilities, Suspensions, Alternative Settings, and Truancy

Gender Representation in Emotional Disabilities, Suspensions, Alternative Settings, and Truancy

**BURLINGTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
EQUITY EVALUATION
INTEGRATED COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS FOR EQUITY**

INTEGRATED
COMPREHENSIVE
SYSTEMS FOR EQUITY™
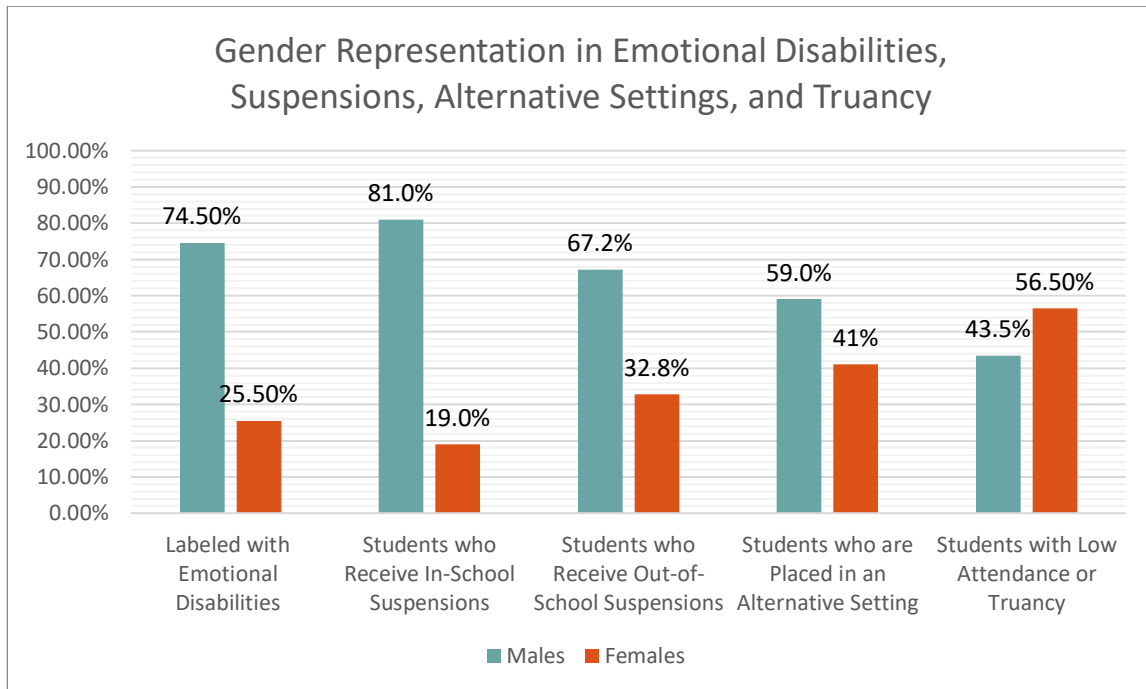
Within reading achievement, 56.5% of female students scored proficient/advanced compared to 45.2% of males, including 15.7% of females scoring advanced in reading compared to 10.8% of males. In addition, 11.8% of females scored at the below basic level compared to 19.9% of males. On the 11th grade ACT reading portion, 55.7% of females scored college ready compared to 50% of males.

Figure 24: Gender and Reading Achievement

Gender and Reading Achievement

Basic or Below Basic: Males 51.5%, Females 39.2%
Advanced or Proficient: Males 45.2%, Females 56.4%
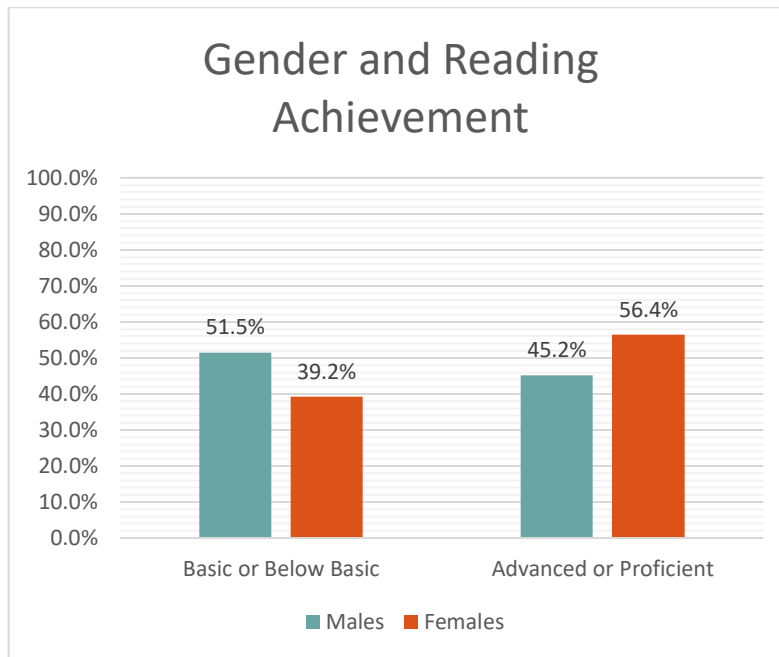
In math achievement, 37.4% of males scored proficient/advanced compared to 48.6% of females. Within this data, 13.9% of males scored advanced compared to 8.1% of females. Likewise, 19.9% of females scored below basic in math compared to 21.6% of males. On the ACT 11th grade math portion, 31.3% of females scored college ready compared to 26.4% of males.

Figure 25: Gender and Math Achievement
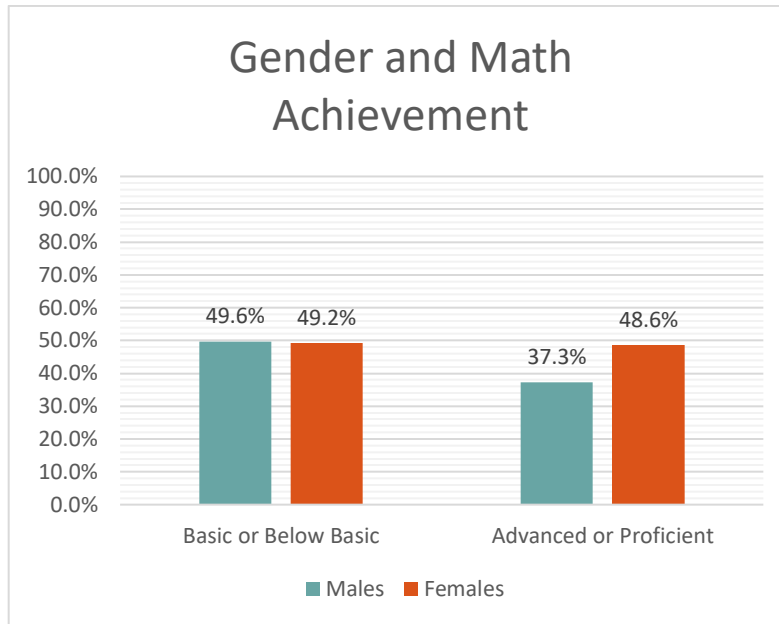
Of the 383 students participating in Advanced Placement courses, 54.3% are female compared to 45.7% male. Of the 522 students completing Advanced Placement exams, 48.9% were female compared to 51.2% male.

Figure 26: Gender and Advanced Placement Courses and Exams
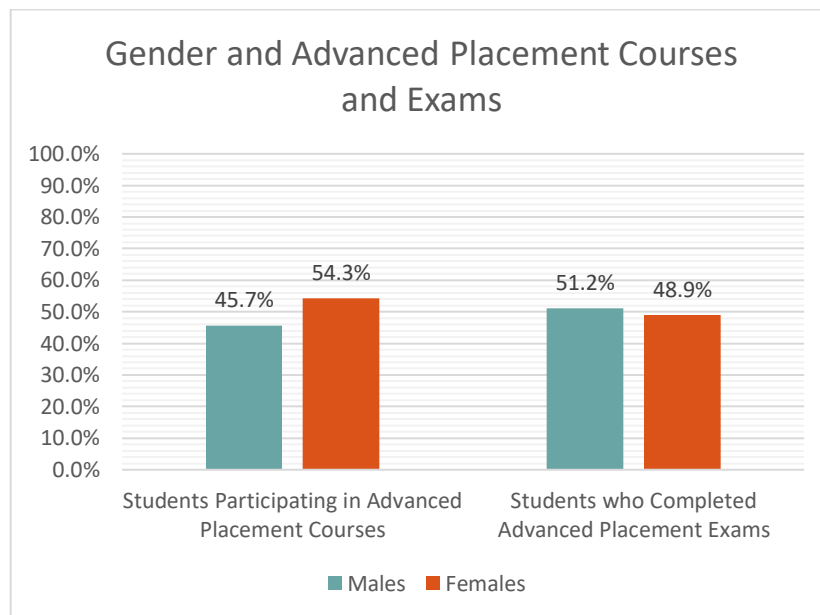
F.   Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Significantly, the District's Equity Statement, quoted on page 3 of this evaluation, excludes sexual orientation and gender identity. The District's anti-harassment policy includes sex (including gender status, change of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity). District enrollments forms and hiring forms do not include sexual orientation/gender identity options, nor do enrollment forms recognize a range of families. The District does not have a formal bathroom policy related to gender though each of the schools have plans for students and families who request gender neutral accommodations.

The District has not provided any professional learning related to LGBTIQ+ identities. For invitations to school functions, staff gatherings, and so forth, the District tries to use the word "families" more than parent/guardians and/or Mr./Mrs. The District does not require a specific dress code by gender.

In addition, the District does not collect data on student harassment related to sexual or gender identity. LGBTIQ+ identities are not integrated into the District curriculum. LGBTIQ+ identities are not included in the list of identities and intersections that the District addresses related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The high school has a Gay/Straight Alliance student club. The Karcher Middle School's social issues book list includes a variety of topics including sexual orientation and gender identity.

Secondary educators discussed their procedures for students who transition from the gender they are assigned at birth to one that defines them. The staff were proud of their flow chart procedures for students identifying as transitioning, transgender, gender non-binary, gender neutral, and other specific gender identifiers.

Even with these policies in place, educators also reported that some teachers refused to follow the procedures and continued calling a student by their "dead" name [a birth name of a person who is transitioning or transgender and has changed their name] as some teachers reported that being transgender is against their religious beliefs. Even with this understanding of gender, some staff continued to segregate students by gender, for example, when staff created gender specific physical education classes. One administrator acknowledged, "we need to do a better job across all diversity, be it race, gender, sexuality and even ability."

III.   Burlington Area School District Equity Focus Group and Related Equity Audit Data by Strengths and Growth Themes

We conducted over 55 focus groups comprised of student service providers, general educators, principals, students, District Office administrators, board members, and community members. Some focus group participants also requested individual interviews and we also conducted over 20 individual interviews either by phone or Zoom, following the focus groups.

We asked the following questions during the focus groups and 1:1 interviews:

1. What is working well in the District for every student?
2. What could be improved in the District for every student?
3. When you think about the current structure for educating students with disabilities, what are the challenges to that structure?
4. When you think about the current structure for educating students labeled as ELL, what are the challenges to that structure?
5. When you think about the current structure for educating students labeled as gifted, what are the challenges to that structure?
6. What does staff collaboration look like at the school?
7. What district policies support the achievement of all students in the District?
8. What district policies can get in the way of all students achieving in the District?
9. Is there anything else you want to add about advancing the learning of literally all students in the District?

Focus groups are particularly effective in obtaining a breadth of information relative to a specific issue,[1] enabling participants to express themselves in an open and flexible process.[2] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and state and CDC guidelines, we conducted the focus groups via a video call Zoom meeting. When requested, we also conducted individual interviews. We did not record the focus groups or individual interviews and instead took detailed notes. We followed each focus group session with time to analyze the information collected at that particular session searching for themes "…regularities… patterns, as well as for topics."[3]

According to Lincoln and Guba, "[S]teps should be taken to validate each [piece of information] against at least one other source."[4] Steps might include a follow-up email from the participant for clarification and/or a second method (i.e., review of policy and procedures, or demographic data)." As such, we compared the focus group data to the equity audit data and to District documents that we requested. Participants in the focus group sessions often discussed their views with one another as they responded to focus group questions. Doing so helped participants recall details or if they disagreed with another participant's perspective, allowed for differing perspectives to surface.

[1] Madriz, E. (2000). Focus groups in feminist research. In N. Y. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 835–850). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. McLeskey J., & Waldron, N. L. (2000). *Inclusive schools in action: Making differences ordinary.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Curriculum Development.
[2] Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
[3] Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to theory and methods* (p. 161). Needam, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
[4] Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (p. 283). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

A.   Burlington Area School District Equity Focus Group by Strengths

Across the focus group and individual interviews, participants identified five strengths of the Burlington Area Schools: (1) hope and optimism for the District from the equity audit, (2) caring educators, (3) access to all environments, (4) tiered systems of support, and (5) diversity training.

Hope and Optimism for the District from the Equity Audit

Many participants expressed hope and optimism regarding the District being required to complete an equity audit. As one community member stated, "Hearing everyone's feedback about how great their experience has been and how there are so many great things about this community, I realized that not everyone has the same experience that I do. Therefore, I want from the report to address, if there is something going on that creates obstacles or prevents people from having the same experience as my family and I have had, we need to fix it." Others shared the importance of hope, that this outside evaluation will assist the District in correcting any inequities. More specifically, "I hope this report is balanced. That you look at all aspects in a balanced way, well would be phenomenal. Basically, tell us what is great – this is where the concerns are – here is where we are not doing what we need to do."

Other participants agreed, "Excited that we are committed as a district equity – diversity and inclusion." Another shared, "We are very excited to be on this journey – our number one priority." One participant referred to students of color sharing about their school experiences at a school board meeting shared, that they were "impressed at how brave the students were to come forward around racist acts. In the back of your mind – you know there is racism in every city and district. I am happy we are committed in doing what we can."

Another focus group participant stated that, "I believe there is a disparity – systemic racism is real – as an organization I am looking forward to learn more about structural marginalization." Others brought up the *Burlington Coalition for Dismantling Racism* (https://www.bcdracism.org/) and discussed the importance of the group and how their website was filled with resources that could be beneficial to the Burlington community and schools.

Caring Educators

One focus group participant shared what many participants also referred to having "… a community of educators who care about all students." Another focus group participant agreed, "We have a staff that care about the kids – willing to go over and beyond. I feel like our district puts resources in teachers' hands. They have spent a lot of time researching curriculum that is top notch with great resources."

Many stated that the greatest strength of the District is, "our teaching staff. The staff see all students as their students." Another focus group participant shared, "Our strength is our

passionate educators who take ownership." As well as "Everyone has the needs of every student they work with." One parent agreed, "I am proud of our district as a parent that we value social emotional learning and classroom guidance lessons, and I am happy kids are learning more around equity."

Participants also felt pride in that gaps in student achievement in Burlington were perceived to be less than neighboring districts. As one focus group participant stated, "Most things are working very well. Every child – every day."

Others stated that, "we have a great community. It is a small town and there is a lot of support and help for anyone needing it… Basically, we are a small community definitely willing to support each other." And another shared that, "it is a good district overall" and "Since COVID, we have free breakfast and lunch for all students."

Educators provided examples of how they are able to provide care, such as but not limited to students who are lacking appropriate clothing, "we can give students resources such as school supplies, masks, or help cleaning clothes (had washing machine), snow gear, sending home extra food, knowing our students well. Knowing which kids need extra assistance, we do our best to provide it." Another agreed, "We care – if I knew that something was going on with a student in my class – I would prepare differently."

Other educators identified the placement of school counselors at each school as a district strength and the social emotional learning that the school counselors provide. Elementary staff spoke of all staff reaching out to students in the mornings and welcoming them to school and many schools feeling like a family to staff and many students. The administrative support staff at each school along with buildings and grounds staff emerged as unsung district heroes. The former serving as the welcoming front face of the District to students, families, and the community as they entered the schools and providing essential support to school principals and the glue that keeps the schools together. Buildings and grounds also have recently completed a plethora of school renovations and also provide incredible structural support to keep the District moving forward. Students and staff also identified the high school advisory times as positive, providing opportunities for students to connect with teachers and engage in additional learning.

At the same time, one educator summed up the conversation, "No matter how good something is – we can make it better…"

Access to All Environments

Focus group participants agreed that at the secondary level students had access to clubs, sports, and a range of courses including different electives and career paths. Specifically, if the student does not do well with a traditional school setting, students have other opportunities. As one member shared, "We do not pigeonhole any student by gender and race into specific pathways –

we want to provide opportunities and different pathways to get there." Participants agreed that the District does a great job of marketing for every student for trade school or a 4-year option. Others agreed, "Every student has access to universal instruction… quality interventions in terms of reading and math." Students with disabilities are "included as much as they possibly can be."

Tiered System of Supports

Many educators stated that "We are able to reach kids at their level through our skills groups. There is a culture in every building with a desire to provide high quality instruction to every student. It's a belief of every staff member. We all work really hard to meet the needs of all of our students. A lot of people work hard to identify the needs of our students, take them as individuals." Educators also discussed screening procedures to assist in determining individual supports.

Diversity Trainings

Educators believed that the previous equity trainings hosted within the District were helpful. At the same time, educators believed that "we don't think the public sees all that we do specific to equity practices." At the same time, many believed, "It never feels fast enough. We get committees to support the work, but it is hard to see the action from the committee."

Some educators agreed that "we try to have various cultural activities, but I am unsure if there is a system in place." For example, one school invited students to share their experiences of aggression in school via letters and these letters were displayed on a wall during one training session, and staff were invited to walk by and read the letters. Many participants discussed that this activity was "eye-opening" for many staff.

B.   Burlington Area School District Equity Focus Group Areas for Improvement

Participants identified five interrelated areas for District improvement 1) bullying, teasing, and harassment, 2) teaching and learning, 3) district culture, 4) community, and 5) educational structures. Though we discuss each of them separately, all five are interrelated and influence each other. For example, the way the schools are structured impacts the degree to which students feel included and in turn impacts student behavior and the degree of bullying, teasing, and harassment. Within each of these five areas participants identified subthemes for the District to improve (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Focus Group Findings

Bullying, Teasing, Harassment	Teaching and Learning	District Culture	Community	Educational Structures
Rampant Occurrence	Identity Relevant Curriculum	Communication	Parental Involvement	Special Education
Students Retaliated Against for Reporting Incidents	Collaboration	Follow-Through	Public Relations	English Language Learners
Lack of District/School Response	Instruction	District Policy		Multi-Level Systems of Support
Lack of District/School Communicating Response	Professional Development			Advanced Learners
Lack of Staff Training	Discipline			Social Emotional Learning
				Secondary Programs

A. Bullying, Teasing, and Harassment

Participants (educators, community members, parents, and students) across races, ages, and with various amounts of time that they have lived in the District/community identified rampant, unaddressed, bullying, teasing, and harassment at all grade levels (student to student and in some cases staff to student) that has been occurring for decades through the present in the District. Participants agreed that students fear reporting incidents because of retaliation students have received for reporting, as one participant explained a widely held view among students: "snitches get stitches." Participants (students, educators, community members) were not able to identify any aspects of the District's anti-bullying or anti-harassment policy or what the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and federal law require related to such policies and practices. Students reported that staff talked about the policy the first day of school but the staff "don't do much about it."

<u>Rampant Occurrence</u>

Students discussed the extensive bullying, acts of intimidation, and teasing across students perceived as popular and those who perceived as not popular, across race, sexuality, and gender, that happens in the cafeteria, hallways, and classrooms, in front of teachers and behind their backs. Students discussed French fries covered with ketchup being thrown at them, called the "N" word as well as "gay", "faggot", "retard", etc. Educators shared that "We know there is racism in the school." Another educator explained that "From what I read about… we have had a student report being bullied who is transgender – not saying that it [bullying] doesn't exist." As one student shared, "I think that people could do more to help students who are bullied at school related incidents." Another student agreed, "I was bullied the entire school year, and it would be nice if more consequences were given to help us feel safer."

Other students reported that students would be kind to other students, like students with disabilities, or to students who are Hispanic to get them to do things that they could then make fun of them for and mock them. Another student shared, "It sucks at our school, that everyone's got to insult others… Color of your skin is some sort of joke. Not everyone but a good amount of people. They use the "N" word all the time, since elementary school. The high school has never done anything. Just `We don't say that here' and left it. [I've] hard the "n" word since third grade."

Participants agreed that incidents happen in front of staff but reported that staff do not intervene. For example, in a class that included African American students, students began making racist comments and the teacher did not intervene. Another class, students shared that students "say extremely racist, homosexual [comments] in front of [the teacher] and [the teacher] doesn't care. Doesn't care what you say or do. No effort whatsoever."

Another student reported negative notes that students put in their locker that said "I don't like you because you are Black. I don't like Black people."

A parent agreed, "there are amazing teachers in Burlington, but when it comes to race and sexuality, my experiences have not been good."

Other community members reported their own experiences and experiences with extensive teasing, harassment, and bullying when they attended schools within the District in the 1990's.

A student summed up the negative, harassing climate of the high school and how it began in middle school:

"There's massive social pressure to be 'normal' like the popular students. If you don't fit the mold of popular athletic kids, you are not doing the correct high school experience… It starts with middle school… kids saying rude things racially and about sexuality. It carried over to high school. It needs to stop in middle school long before it is an issue."

Students shared that sometimes after saying offensive things to degrade another student, the student offending will say "no offense" and then "nobody thinks what they say is a problem. But it is."

Educators agreed that there are more persistent and overt acts of bullying, harassment, assault, deficit-based and disparaging language at the secondary level, though parents also shared experiences of their elementary aged students being teased and harassed. Educators shared that teacher either try to respond individually, or the majority of teachers do not know how to respond, minimize the act, or choose to ignore the behavior as to not to get involved, or sadly may not believe that the behaviors of bullying and harassment are harmful. As one parent stated, "I have white children, and they are friends with kids who are people of color, and they have witnessed countless times racial harassment, bullying, and micro aggressions. So, I just want to know how staff and administrators are being equipped to resolve these issues of racism and bigotry?" Another shared, "I want the District to prioritize people over politics, and to not be afraid to make all of our kids feel safe and heard" and that "Staff have mentioned to parents that they are scared to speak out against harm that is being committed to kids by other staff." In summary, "too often, the victim becomes the accused."

Families of color described their experiences as feeling devalued, and experiencing harassment, intimidation, physical and sexual assaults, bullying, being spoken down to, assumed that they did not speak English, minimum expectations for graduation, reinforcing historical trauma, and as well as causing emotional and psychological trauma. Another parent discussed the work of consultants to the District describing "I think the District will hire whoever they think will make them look good. I want to know where is the follow- through? Are they being active in preventing and stopping the trauma – are they doing anything for the students who said they have been traumatized?"

Students Retaliated Against for Reporting Incidents

Educators, community members, and students agreed that students fear reporting incidents of harassment, teasing, and bullying because there is a universal understanding that students retaliate against students who report and that this retaliation remains unaddressed by the District. As one educator shared, "kids need to find a way to report things to us. It is really a challenge. We want to support them, but it is a real struggle for kids to report and give specifics." Another educator shared, "there is a disconnect from what goes on and how it will be handled, maybe [students] have tried [reporting] and have not experience[d] a response." Across focus groups, students and teachers stated that, "sometimes kids get scared."

Community members agreed. One parent believed that:

1. "Kids have to feel safe reporting it. Who they can talk to. Not negatively reflect on the student."

2. [The District/school] has to "foster an environment [that kids] just know how to treat each other with respect. The school is failing on that. Somehow, the school needs to be able to step in."

Another community member agreed: "Some of the things my kids have told me has happened is unacceptable. There's a fear of reporting. If Burlington is anti-bullying, then they have to be anti-bullying… and mediation is not always the way to go about it."

Some staff blamed students for not reporting incidents, despite the negative student ramifications for reporting, and negating the responsibility of the District and each school to create an environment that proactively includes and supports each and every learner.

Lack of School/District Response to Incidents

Students reported that when they reported incidents, no one responded, and educators reported feeling unsure of what to do. Staff tell students to keep reporting [the incident] if they do not get the answer they want or need, yet, this is in opposition to state and federal law, as students should not have to report multiple times to get a school or district response.

Lack of School/District Communicating Their Response to Incidents

Across students, community members, board members, and parents, participants shared that the school or District administration failed to communicate if they addressed an incident and if so, how they addressed the incident. As one Board member stated, "No one knows how [teasing, harassment, and bullying are] being addressed – which makes it seem like we are not taking care of it." As an example, a parent of an elementary student shared how their child continued to be relentlessly teased by another student and how their child then acted out in response. The parent shared how the school did not communicate the extent of the issue nor how they responded to the child who is doing the teasing.

Lack of Staff Training, School and District Support, and Resources for Addressing Incidents

Some educators shared that "they need to know what to say and have resources in classroom." Educators also discussed their concerns that if they are supportive and become engaged in conversations with students specific to their questions or interrupt name calling and bullying by explaining why it is inappropriate, that they "do not feel like the admin will have their back."

Teachers sense fear in administration in responding to teasing, harassment, bullying, or students or identities being made fun of. As one stated, "there is no black and white answer – leaves teachers without an idea what to do." As one teacher shared, "such a little thing: Valentine's Day – game with hearts – find the matching hearts. Two boys found broken hearts. One student stated that it looks like the two students are gay " Nevertheless, teachers reported not knowing

what to say in incidents. Teachers do not feel like the administration will have their back. "Even if we have the diverse resources we do not know if we should be reading them, do we need approval. We are frustrated that we cannot talk with students from our authentic selves."

One educator summed up the work they need to do, "Students can't perform well if they are not feeling safe and comfortable."

B.   Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning emerged as a second category for district improvement including identity relevant curriculum, teacher collaboration, instruction, professional development, and discipline.

Identity Relevant Curriculum

Students shared a desire to be taught about social and current events which is also required as part of the Wisconsin State standards for Social Studies at the Middle and High School level. Students shared that some teachers "do a good job of talking about race... If you start the conversation with them, you can have the conversation with them. There are other teachers that are not comfortable with it at all... The majority of teachers don't know how to talk about it."

Other students shared, "We need to learn so much more about history. There's a lot we don't know. We only hear certain parts of history."

Yet, participants disagreed on how identities should be addressed in school curriculum and school policy. Some participants believed that addressing inequities is about lifting one person at the expense of the other, "maybe I am naïve – equity in general is a double edge sword – could end in reverse discrimination. Anytime we lift one group over another... we cause discrimination." Another community member stated, "How it is dealt with – matters. We need to raise the level of opportunity for all without talking about race... a constant focus on race creates more racial tension."

A community member commented on a teacher who had a Black Lives Matter sticker on her computer and a resist sticker by saying "I don't support Black Lives Matter. As soon as we can look at each other and not see race things will be fine. I do not believe any of that belongs in the classroom – we will not progress until we do not see color." Another educator commented on the current state of racial unrest as, "we want to take care of everyone – but there are people in the community that I am literally afraid of – I have been in the District for 32 years, but I have never been so afraid... if we do not get a handle on what is happening – well, I am afraid for our children."

Many talked about the Burlington Coalition for Dismantling Racism (https://www.bcdracism.org/) and that many resources were available for the community, teachers, and students. Parents asked, "a lot happening all the time. Do teachers have what they need to navigate the questions? Basically, my kids have tough questions all the time that stump

me." Many reported that the curriculum it did not represent all learners and their families. In addition, the books that the schools had in their Library Media Centers (LMCs) also did not represent all learners. The books that did support a range of diversity, teachers reported feeling "so unsure if we should use, now." Teachers had questions of what resources they should be using and what they do and do not require approval to share.

Collaboration

Many discussed that collaboration opportunities with other teachers were unique to each school within the District, as some weeks they meet as a department and grade level, and other weeks as Professional Learning Communities (PLC). In addition to PLC meetings, many discussed the need for common planning time for grade level teachers. Others discussed that much of the "collaboration is pre-planned and predicated on, 'here is an article – please read and do the following.' Time is managed by administration."

As one teacher summarized it, "We know that not all of our students are the exact same and they don't need all of the same things. The same could go for teachers too, some initiatives are important, essential skills work, but sometimes feel when we focus on that too much, we take away from other things that we could be learning. Other District initiatives, after 3-4 years, it's time to update it again. Much more beneficial to sit in a meeting where you have some voice and choice."

Instruction

At the elementary level, educators discussed the need to maintain core instruction for all learners, "I think we worked to develop schedules that value and keep core instruction sacred. We do not have any skill groups, pull-out groups, or interventions at that time. Another stated the District policy was problematic, "Our District is required to set aside so many minutes for math and reading. That policy hurts our students. We are not able to get into what might interest our students even more. Science and social studies and social emotional part, to get outside and play… The minutes are so strict, it's very difficult to meet the needs of our students." Most importantly, "sometimes students miss out on time with their peers in the general ed setting because they have a difficult time learning in the classroom, so they need to be pulled out." As, one student stated, "I'm not sure, but I think teachers need to build better relationships with us, and not give up on us if we are struggling."

At the secondary level, the conversation turned to programs. "We have partnerships with Gateway, we have Hero Campus, project-based, and alternative high school for different learners." "We have the ACE Academy for those students interested in the trades." Basically, at the secondary level, "if you are a four-year student, we can meet their needs through Advanced Placement classes, start college now, the Vanguard program. We have a plethora of programs to

meet every child where they are." In addition, "We also have an EMT and certified nursing program as well as the Arrow program."

Professional Development

Teachers were supportive of the range of professional development the District has provided but felt that there was little to no follow through, and shared that they desired a more systematic approach to both instruction, curriculum, and assessment. Many reported that they sit on committees where conversations specific to grading or curriculum occur, and then after the meeting the District makes decisions without them.

Others were very specific regarding the professional development that they desired, for example, "specifically for the listening library– we could use training for teachers and aides – we need more training that is continuous."

Discipline

Though we discuss discipline in this section, many discipline issues arose in relation to harassment, teasing, and bullying discussed in the previous section. Educators shared that the District needs to do a better of having a uniform discipline policy across the District because with the transition of principals and principal sharing between schools, discipline issues were not handled uniformly and often were not followed up on.

Teachers reported that they were unsure of their schools' behavior data, but that they were attempting to track minor and major offenses. In this way teachers can better understand if consequences are consistent across students. They thought the discipline audit would shine much light in this area.

"Are kids being disciplined differently? We do not know the answer – as we have stopped collecting the data."

The equity audit data revealed that students receiving free/reduced priced lunch, students of color, and students receiving ELL services are over-identified in in school and out of school discipline practices.

Though students receiving free/reduced priced lunch represent 36.3% of the District, 76.2% of in-school suspensions and 57.4% of out of school suspensions are received by students receiving free/reduced priced lunch. The District has over-identified students of color for in-school suspensions (ISS), as of the 42 students in that category, 13 (31.0%) are students of color (students of color make up 20.7% of students in the District). Of the 61 students identified for out of school suspensions (OSS), 19% are students of color which is about equal to the District representation of students of color (20.7%). Yet, students who identify as Hispanic are over-

identified for out of school suspensions (19.7% versus 14.3% in the District) as are Black students (4.9% versus 1.6% in the District). The one student who was expelled identified as Hispanic.

Students eligible for ELL services are over-identified within in-school and out of school suspensions, with 7.1% of in-school suspensions and 4.9% of out of school suspensions represented by students receiving ELL services.

Figure 27: Representation in Discipline

REPRESENTATION IN DISCIPLINE

■ Students in the District   ■ In-School Suspensions   ■ Out of School Suspensions

Category	Students in the District	In-School Suspensions	Out of School Suspensions
STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH	36.3%	76.2%	57.4%
STUDENTS OF COLOR	20.7%	31.0%	19.0%
STUDENTS RECEIVING ELL SERVICES	4.2%	9.7%	7.6%
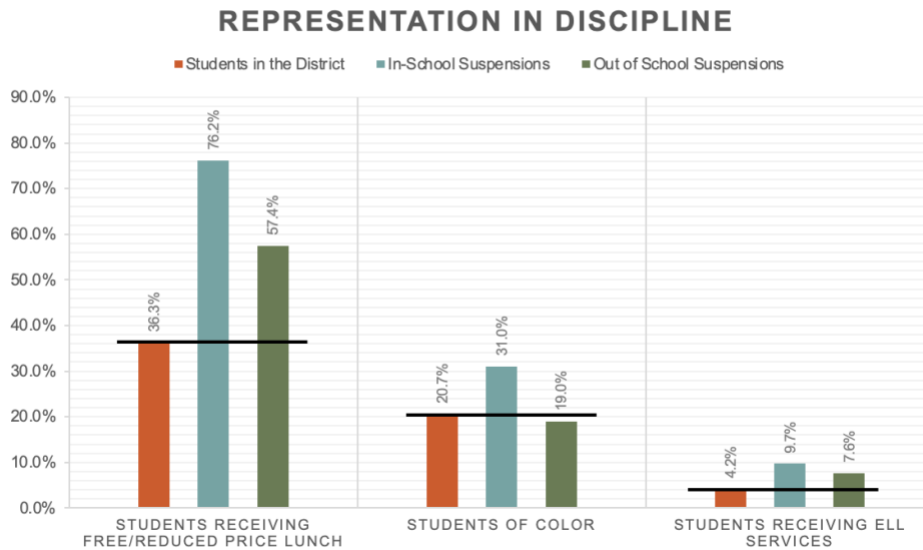
C.   District Culture

Participants identified District culture as a third interrelated area of improvement, including a) communication, b) follow-through, and c) District policy.

<u>Proactive Communication from the District Office to the Board, Community, and Schools</u>

Many participants discussed the need for improved communication from District Office, not after an equity incident, but proactively, to the School Board, community, and schools. As one member stated, "the biggest challenge is communication when something does not go as expected." For example, some participants shared those students reported ongoing racial incidents at the high school to staff members, but that the school board nor the community were made aware of these concerns, until a parent report in June of 2018. Another community member shared, "I hear more about what is happening through the news versus the school district. If there are these issues happening related to race, people need to be held accountable. I still don't know everything that's happened. If my kid comes home, how do I respond when I don't know what is happening?"

Some participants believed that Board members were often blind-sighted and needing to respond to situations that had already moved from a "small bush fire to igniting the forest or community." Other participants believed that the Board does not receive information about the "big picture" of what is going on in the schools relative to equity work. Nevertheless, many participants believed the Board needed to be "apprised of situation(s) that could mushroom… not to micro-manage, but to problem solve and move to proactive work."

Other participants expressed the view that they know the administration is working hard, but that it was important that the community and Board "be part of the solution, that all interested parties should be part of the conversation, rather than information being held tight at the District Office." These participants asked for increased transparency and accountability from the District Office.

In addition to proactive District Office communication, others discussed the earnestness of the communication. Basically, "messaging does not feel like they [the District] are serious about the matters." To others, "this feels like a cover up or aligning to a small vocal majority and Vote Yes Committee." Many reported "feeling placated in the community and that the District leans toward appeasing those who are the perceived majority." Feelings were expressed specific to wondering whether the District Office was just being perfunctory in hopes that, "this issue just goes away." A parent explained, "we need to address racism, achievement, discipline, rigor, and other areas of education as a larger community and the District must lead the work, as they are the community." Basically, "they [the District] say they want to change but do they?" Another parent shared, "I think the District needs to work on communication and try to stop making everyone happy. They often say they agree with something – but cannot do it – because it will upset other people."

In summary, as one participant shared, "The climate in Burlington and in the community isn't very positive regarding education, or the trust of our system." From heated board meetings about parents feeling one way or another, many expressed how disheartened they are with the District's decisions that are being made and the lack of proactive District communication and transparency. Others stated that until the District begins to hire people from outside the community, that the traditional "home grown hiring practices will continue the communication and leadership issues currently presented, no matter what your perspectives are."

District Office Follow-Through

Along with the lack of proactive District communication, others discussed the need for clear and consistent follow-through from the District Office, specifically related to the development, application, and follow-through of goals and professional development, from implementing policy to reinforcing and building on previous professional development. For example, many educators discussed the importance of receiving professional development but believed there

was no follow-through, a lack of direction and leadership: "we begin to feel like we don't want to get invested in anything else."

From educators' perspectives, many discussed a top-down District decision making process followed by the expectation of "buy-in." Yet, educators did not feel supported by the District Office administrators and therefore, expressed a lack trust in the District's ability to support them and lead toward equity. One educator reported that they were asked to reinforce and support students' identities, but then told they could not ask students to complete identity portraits or use picture books representing racial, gender, and sexual diversity. Others stated and reflected about this quote, "a lot of inconsistencies – feels like they are talking out of both sides of their mouth. Leads to confusion and the feeling of not being supported." Or "any supporting of Black Lives Matter from educators that receives push-back from the community, teachers are asked to just stop, parents are told they will take care of it, and overall feels really disingenuous." As stated earlier in this evaluation, staff found the gallery walk of student letters about the students' experiences of aggression to be valuable, but others stated, that there was no "follow through, to provide us with skills and training to actually change things – that would help us."

In addition to equity, others discussed that, "we have had training in the past on how we service students – or grouped – but feel like the ball has been dropped and no support. We have gone to great trauma trainings – then never follow-through or support given to teachers." As one educator stated, "overall, this feels like a disservice to our students in the community. Sometimes – things that are highlighted – we only did once – sustainability is a hiccup."

Another educator summed up the conversation, "For two school years the District had professional development about equity. I felt that it was quality professional development and that the District was heading in the right direction. But there does not seem to be follow-through. The question was… so now what? The follow through was not there. I want to do the right things – but I am scared that I am going to make a mistake – and end up on someone's social media account. That forces me to not approach certain things. We need differentiating across levels moving forward. We tend to take a neutral path. If we say one thing – one group will be angry – and vice versa – no one wants their name out there." Another participant shared "we have pieces of equity; things get started but do not come to fruition. We have these good ideas and then we do not deal with it. We need a strong systematic approach. We know we are all nervous about those conversations. We want to say the right thing. Our fear holds us back, as we are afraid. We need a systemic approach to help this happen." Finally, another educator stated, "we have had 4 days of in-service – I am stung – by how little time dedicated to such a large issue. We have 700 things going on, but the most important thing [equity] is getting very little attention."

Relatedly, participants identified many areas of District inefficiencies where the District would expend resources for a program or new initiative, only to abandon the program in a year or two. The lack of communication and coordination among the District, schools, administration, and

support staff resulted in inefficiencies in completing building projects efficiently and timely. Other educators identified the essential skills work in the District as a committee that is in Year 5, yet many staff felt there was nothing to show for it. Other staff identified ways that the District tried to be more efficient, such as mandating the same school supply list for all schools, yet not all schools and classrooms required the same supplies with wastage and lack of supplies occurring.

District Policy

We asked participants what district policies supported or interfered with instruction for all learners. The Board discussed the revision of the District policies through an outside firm NEOLA (https://neola.com/) during the Summer of 2020. However, staff were unfamiliar with District policies from non-discrimination to discipline. As educator stated, "I cannot think of one [policy]- off hand, without taking the policy book out…"

The District Is required by the Department of Public Instruction to create an anti-racism policy and involve individuals who have filed the racial complaints. However, Board members reported, "that some members did not want 'these individuals' as part of the team developing such policy." Educators reported that they have not had any specific training on any district anti-racism and non-discrimination polices.

D.   Community

A fourth major theme that participants identified as needing improvement related to parent involvement and community public relations.

Parent Involvement

Many participants discussed the variability in parents advocating for their children and parents who knew how to advocate within the District's system were able to secure more benefits for their children compared to parents who may have been less knowledgeable about how to advocate for their children. For example, one educator shared, "parents who are more willing to advocate for their students get more. From dropping a class to requesting different opportunities. If they are more creative, they get those opportunities. Students who start from 3rd base with all support from home, that works for them." Or, as another added, "certain parents are savvier, and they can manipulate the system." As another educator reflected, "I wish all parents knew what they needed to do so they could advocate for their child."

Other educators discussed the balance between parent advocacy and parents who perhaps extended that advocacy too far: "Some parents are negative and pushy. They draw a lot attention to things they do not understand or know facts about and then they portray the District in a bad light." Another participant shared, "we have had people shut down Board

meetings." Another shared that, "students are seeing volatile board meetings and now we are seeing more disrespect from students." Another focus group participant stated that the "biggest challenge [in the District] is trust, and it goes both directions. For some time, people have been talking past each other, we are more interested in being right than finding a solution."

Public Relations and the Community

Many community members and board members discussed the lack of effectiveness of the District's public relations. As one example, participants referred to a response from the District to an incident at a high school football game in October 2021. The District's response is provided below:

> "It is disheartening to us that we even need to conduct an investigation. The district alone can't control the individual actions of over 3000 students. Instead of directing anger at the district, share frustration with the parents who allow their kids to use racial slurs. Be angry at what kids get exposed to on social media and through pop culture. The school district will hold students accountable, and the community needs parents to hold their kids accountable, too.
>
> It is time for everyone - parents, students, community members, leaders to step up and do the right work to ensure every person feels a sense of belonging."

Others stated that over the past 12 to 18 months, the District has been under a microscope, leading to higher levels of District defensiveness. Focus group members expressed a "disconnect with our community… with a fraction of the community." Other participants positively reported that alumni were returning to Burlington after college to raise their families and open businesses. They believed such endeavors will help "bridge this gap."

Others described the community as "racially hostile" from the perspective both of people of color and those who identify as white. Many stated that the teachers are trying but this "pain" is bigger than the schools. And, yet others discussed the importance of working with the city council as a united effort of moving the work of equity forward. In one focus group, this discussion was met with concerns from others that this is not a city issue. Yet another participant stated, "It is a racially hostile environment, and it is not coming from within the schools. However, we also know that most parents are trying to teach kids – to accept all students. But others do not."

Focus group participants also were concerned about Critical Race Theory, both supportive and against it. Focus group participants saw it as a "political ball to use to privilege some kids by manipulating privilege." Educators reported feeling concerned about the many misconceptions.

As one concluded, "I hope your report can help us change such a volatile environment, but I am not counting on it." They discussed that "over the past two years community members have blind-sighted the District administration, resulting in defensiveness and frustration. Other participants discussed the work of the Mayor's taskforce and wondered how this work would be connected. Another community member stated, "At the end of the day, the District was caught off guard. I have more forgiveness as there are a few loud voices, while everyone else is reasonable and we want to figure this out. In this new reality we need to keep in mind that it is not just about race but [also] gender and sexuality."

E.   Educational Structures

Participants identified educational structures as a fifth area in need of District improvement, including program structures for students eligible for special education, students who are linguistically diverse, and students who have been identified as advanced learners, as well as the range of programs at the high school.

Special Education

Many elementary educators discussed that the pace within the general education classrooms, requires them to remove students who are, "much lower functioning, have a hard time with the noise, and the fast pace of the classroom." As one teacher stated, "As the special educator, our focus is on their individual goals, it's a lot of pressure to catch them up. Feel like you're on a hamster wheel. The amount of testing that is required is a challenge. It takes a lot of time because you have to do it individually."

Another educator shared that, "finding the balance between [students with disabilities] being with their peers and a place where they can learn. Some students have to be pulled out of the LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) because that is where they learn best. Being away from their peers is a challenge, but it's hard for them to learn in that environment [the LRE]. It's hard sometimes there are not enough resources or people to meet the needs of all students, not just the ones with disabilities, but with everybody."

Elementary teachers discussed that their perception was that "push-in services" will not count for minutes of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI). Others reported that there is "just not enough hands." They continued that, "Sometimes family support is an issue, if we could give them more resources, the way we do things, PT conferences are within this hour, we create structures that might be hard for families to navigate. They [parents] might need more support."

A board member questioned special education, "there have always been challenges. What is the one best model that works? Is inclusion the one best model? Are kids struggling because they cannot keep up or is the class altered that holds back other kids? Some students need one to one and very small group instruction. Other students do very well when they are

mainstreamed." Nevertheless, educators believed that achievement scores for students eligible for special education increased rather than decreased. "We are not ignoring that – we want to improve."

Representation in Special Education

Of the 3268 students in the District, 16.6% are identified for special education services. Of these students, 47.2% receive free/reduced priced lunch compared to 36.3% in the District who receive free/reduced priced lunch.

Students of color represent 20.7% of the District, but 25.8% of students receiving special education services are students of color. Though Black students represent 1.6% of the student body, 2.8% of students in special education are Black. Hispanic students represent 14.3% of the District and represent 17.1% of students in special education. Students who identify as multi-racial in the District (3.7%) represent 4.8% of the students receiving special education services. Students receiving ELL services comprise 4.2% of the District and 7.6% of the students labeled for special education.

Male students are over-identified for emotional disabilities 74.5% compared to females at 25.5%.

Figure 28: Representation in Special Education

REPRESENTATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Legend: ■ Students in the District ■ Students Labeled for Special Education

- Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 36.3% / 47.2%
- Students of Color: 20.7% / 25.8%
- Students Receiving ELL Services: 4.2% / 7.6%
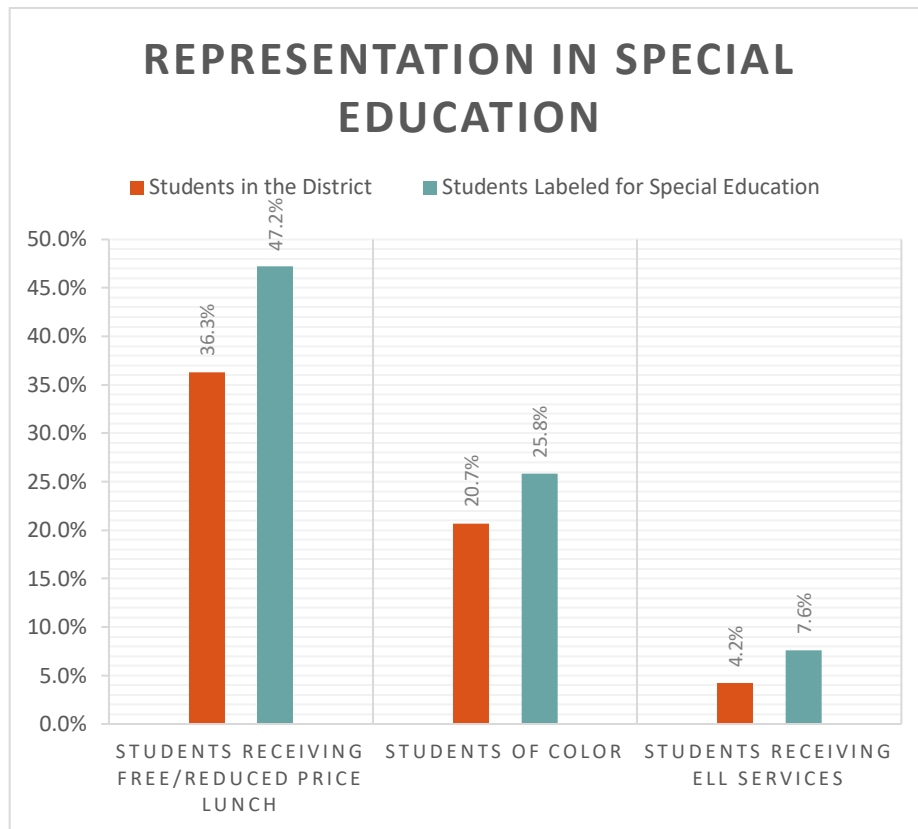
Other educators discussed the need for more segregated classes to allow for more equity, through concentrated support and to work with specific learners. Others responded that clustering students is useful, especially those students with intellectual disabilities, in this way, teachers are better able to co-teach. Teachers discussed how beneficial co-teaching was and that even when they are not co-teaching, they are better able to serve a range of learners due to the skills they learned while co-teaching. Another participant discussed that they were unsure why they were no longer co-teaching, "I had co-taught with special education teacher over the years, I am unsure why that delivery method has gone away. It feels like we have taken a step back." Educators discussed a "lack of training for co-teachers as well." And thought that, "maybe due to the loss of training, then we don't do [co-teach] anymore. We lost its fidelity?"

At the secondary level, many discussed that they wanted to see more inclusion across all of the programs offered at the secondary level. They stated that they did not see such programs as tracking, "but wonderful options for the range of learners." Another secondary educator stated, that, "we want inclusivity – we always have to be looking at that… How do we do that – I don't know – that is part of the mystery."

For students, with intellectual disabilities, requiring functional skill development, the District bought a house in the community that they previously rented for students with significant disabilities 18-21. Other districts also send students to this program and this year includes 24 students.

English Language Learners

Many elementary educators discussed that in the past, students identified as English Language Learners were all sent to one elementary school, and that that practice raised concerns about staffing related to teacher travel and dual language teachers. In the past however, even with such supports concentrated at an individual school, teachers reported an overidentification of students who were English Language Learners for special education or retention. As one teacher stated, "a lot of our ELL students' families trust the teacher and go with their recommendation that their [child] should be retained or referred for special education." In the end, teachers stated that, "The fact that we did have ELL go to one building it created a very segregated population."

Others discussed that it is a "challenge for teachers that only know one language, need help and support to reach that population as well." Or "we might have bilingual staff; we only have a monolingual curriculum which can be a challenge. Can those teachers that are working with those students have more engaging texts that can best meet the needs? Build better scaffolding and training to specifically meet those needs. We have been growing in that area, but there isn't a standard expectation or protocols."

Multi-Level Systems of Support

Staff also discussed the District multi-level systems of support. They reported that "classroom teachers provide interventions but need better and stronger universal screeners so we can catch more students earlier – and get the resources in the places that they need." "We continue to be hampered by logistics and setup; we have been hampered by [logistics] for a long time."

Others stated that, "We follow a protocol, and we have staffing's and work through and try to get data to determine Significant Learning Disabilities (SLD). We had a very strategic approach." "We use a universal screener to determine how students performing below a specific percentile – below the 15th percentile for pullout intervention." Educators were concerned that a different schedule will not allow staff to continue to provide interventions. "Now we have a different schedule with less time to provide interventions, sometimes the interventions cannot happen because some of us are across different schools."

Another educator shared that, "interventions have taken on a new role for Tier 2, where teachers are doing the small group." For example, "Now we have a block of time for reading and math yet, additional time is required for more targeted for skill group." An educator at the secondary level discussed using data to "look at that equity piece – specific to the number of students involved in specific programming. Trying to increase involvement in those areas as well."

Representation in Response to Intervention

Students who receive free/reduced price lunch in the District (36.3%) are over-identified for response to intervention (55.4%). The District did not provide clarified data on the percent of students of color receiving response to intervention. Students receiving ELL services in the District (4.2%) are also over-identified for response to intervention (12.2%).

Figure 29: Representation in Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions
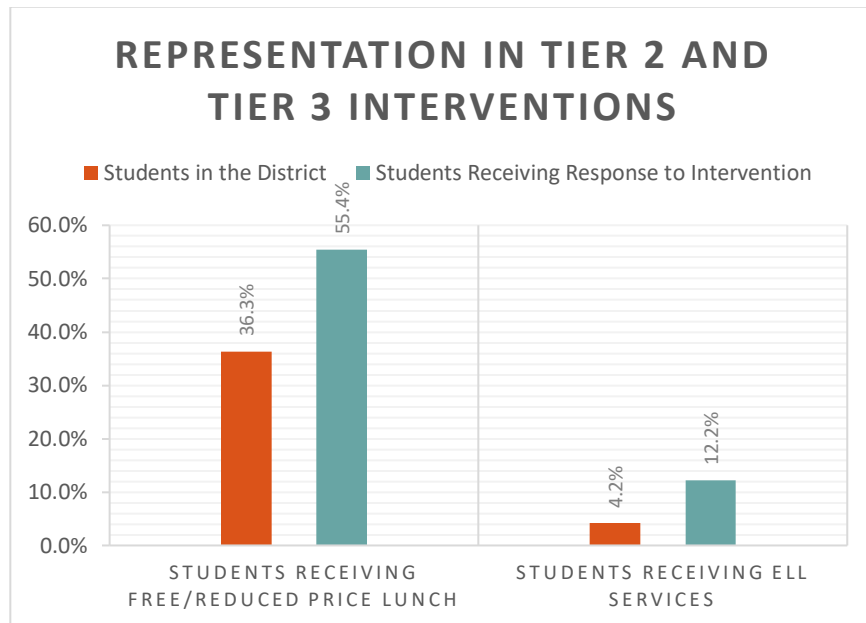
Advanced Learners

Related to advanced learners, educators shared that, "We don't have a Gifted and Talented structure, each building has a designated teacher to provide those supports. It looks different from building to building. It's more like an enrichment program, not a specific curriculum or not a specific guideline to meet the needs of those students. They also don't work with very many students." Others discussed that this group of students, "does not always get what they need in the Elementary School. In the High School there are diverse classes and AP." In summary, "gifted

is kind of iffy in Burlington. It depends on when you identify the child… some kids level off to be an average student by 5th grade."

<u>Representation in Gifted Advanced Courses at the Middle/High School</u>

Students receiving free/reduced priced lunch in the District (36.3%) are under-represented in gifted (20.6%) and advanced courses at the high school (24.3%).

Students of color comprise 20.7% of the District, but are under-represented as gifted (11%). Hispanic students represent 14.3% of the District, but only 7.8% of students identified as gifted. Though multi-racial students represent 3.7% of the District, zero students identified as gifted are multi-racial.

At the middle and high school levels, 383 students participate in advanced courses or Advanced Placement courses. Black students are proportionally represented in these advanced courses (1.6% of the student population and 1.83% in advanced courses). Hispanic students represent 12.0% of the high school population but are under-represented in advanced courses (6.3%). Though 2.1% of the high school population includes students who identify as multi-racial, no multi-racial students are enrolled in advanced courses. White students are over-identified in advanced courses as they represent 82.7% of the high school population but 90.1% of the students in advanced courses.

Though students receiving ELL services comprise 4.2% of the District, only 2.5% of students labeled as gifted are students receiving ELL services. Of the students enrolled in advanced courses at the middle/high school, only 2.1% are students receiving ELL services.

Figure 30: Representation in Advanced Courses at the Middle/High School

REPRESENTATION IN ADVANCED COURSES AT THE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

■ Students in the District ■ Students Labeled as Gifted ■ Students Participating in Advanced Courses at the Middle/High School
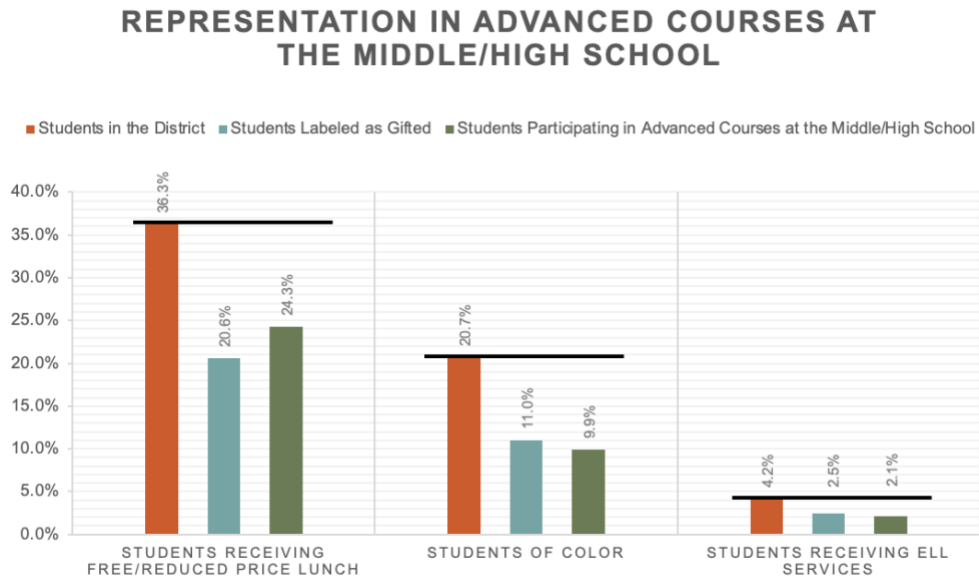
Social Emotional Learning

Others discussed the work of the District specific to social and emotional needs of students. Many teachers expressed their support of the professional development the District provided related to social and emotional learning as one stated, "We have been a focused on compassion and the social-emotional piece. I appreciate that from the District." Another stated, "we are right in the middle of where we want to go – we know where we want to go – we are not there yet." Other educators expressed frustration about the District's balance between academic and social and emotional learning. One teacher summed up the situation: "I have been in the District [for] 21 years, things wing back and forth. From academics to social-emotional to academics. We need a focus and help from top down. Specific plan from top down – but we also need some say in what we do from the bottom up."

Representation in Low Attendance/Truancy

Students who receive free/reduced priced lunch in the District (36.3%) represent 55.5% of students who are identified as having low attendance or being truant. Though students of color comprise 20.7% of the District, students of color represent 27.9% of students who have low attendance or who are truant. Black students comprise 1.6% of the District, but 2.8% of students who have low attendance or who are truant. Hispanic students comprise 14.3% of the District, but 18.4% of students who have low attendance or who are truant, while multi-racial students comprise 3.7% of district students, but represent 5.7% of students who have low attendance or

who are truant. Students receiving ELL services represent 4.2% of the District and 6% of students who have low attendance or truant.

Figure 31: Representation in Low Attendance/Truancy

REPRESENTATION IN LOW ATTENDANCE/TRUANCY
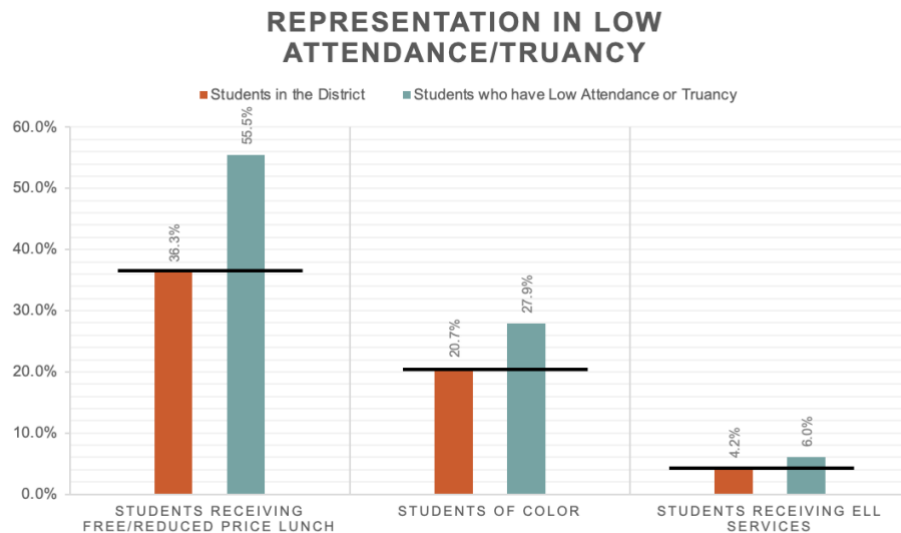
Secondary Programs

Across the focus groups, school personnel at the secondary level and community members, discussed the many opportunities and programs for student choice, such as but not limited to special education, ACE Academy, Early College Credits, AP classes, elementary reading interventions, the segregated program for students 18 to 21 with more significant disabilities.

Table 2 reflects the different High School programs by race, socio-economic status, and disability. Those highlighted in light grey represent students who are under-represented by the specific identifier for each program area. Those highlighted in dark grey represent students who are over-represented by the specific identifier for each program area.

Table 2: High School Program Options by Student Demographics

High School Programs	Student Percentage by Race District 20.7 Non-White	Student Percentage by SES District 36.3% Experiencing Poverty	Student Percentage by Disability District 16.6 % Students with Disabilities
Transcripted Credit	Black: 1% Hispanic: 4% Asian: 2% White: 93%	11% Experiencing Poverty	5% Students with Disabilities
Start College Now	Hispanic:17% White: 83%	10% Experiencing Poverty	17% Students with Disabilities
Early College Credit	Asian: 9% Hispanic: 18% White: 73%	0% Experiencing Poverty	0% students with disabilities
CAPP/PIE	Hispanic: 5% Asian: 1% White: 94%	0% Experiencing Poverty	0% Students with Disabilities
Vanguard	Hispanic: 8% Black: 3% White: 89%	24% Experiencing Poverty	2% students with disabilities
FRC	Black: 10% White: 90%	40% Experiencing Poverty	20% Students with Disabilities
Advanced Placement	Hispanic: 4% Asian: 1% White: 95%	8% Experiencing Poverty	0% Students with Disabilities
GPS	White:100%	27% Experiencing Poverty	27% Students with Disabilities
School To Work	Hispanic: 2% White: 98%	22% Experiencing Poverty	27% Students with Disabilities

Overall Representation in Alternative Setting

Of the District's students, 36.3% receive free/reduced priced lunch, but of the 61 students in the alternative setting, 78.7% receive free/reduced priced lunch. Nearly all students in the alternative setting are White (55/61), but Black students are over-identified for this setting (6.6% compared to 1.6% in the District). No students receiving ELL services are in the District's alternative setting.

Figure 32: Overall Representation in Alternative Setting

REPRESENTATION IN ALTERNATIVE SETTING

■ Students in the District   ■ Students who are Placed in an Alternative Setting

- STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH: 36.3% / 78.7%
- BLACK STUDENTS: 1.6% / 6.6%
- STUDENTS RECEIVING ELL SERVICES: 4.2% / 0.0%
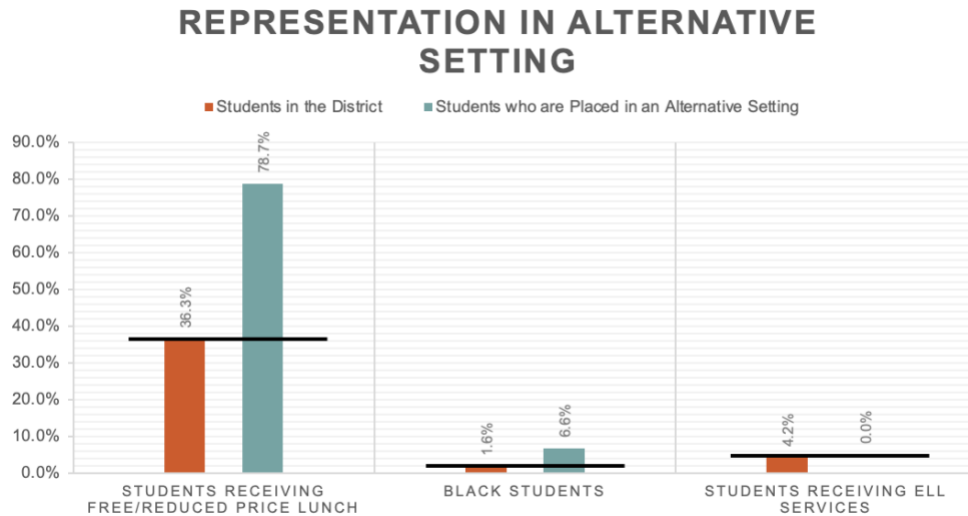
IV.   Best Practices Analysis and Essential Next Steps

We identify below, the best practices and essential next steps under four cornerstones of effective educational equity development[5], which is defined as high quality teaching and learning for all students, all under the umbrella of a safe and inclusive learning environment.

As stated in a previous section, the harassment, teasing, and bullying in the District must be immediately addressed, but addressing this as a separate entity will not be sufficient. All four cornerstones contribute to a safe and inclusive learning environment. The lack of attention to all four cornerstones will not ameliorate teasing, harassment, and bullying in the long-term.

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[5] ICS Equity.org

Table 3: Framework for High Quality Teaching and Learning

Focus on Equity	Align Staff and Students	Transform Teaching and Learning	Leverage Policy and Funding
Institute and Sustain a Comprehensive Anti-Bullying/Anti-Harassment Policy and Practices			
Know the History of Public Education	Construct Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) Teams	Design Identity Relevant Teaching for All Learners	Align Human Resource Systems
Shift from Deficit to Assets-Based Thinking, Language	Re-Align Staff and Students	Design Identity Relevant Learning and Curriculum for All Learners	Leverage Funding
Engage in Identity Development		Discipline and Behavior	Cross-Check Policy and Procedures
Apply Research		Students with Significant Disabilities	
Develop Principles of Excellence			
Conduct Equity Audit			

Institute and Sustain a Comprehensive Anti-Bullying/Anti-Harassment Policy and Practice

Participants across races, ages, and amount of time they have lived in the District/community identified rampant, unaddressed, bullying, teasing, and harassment at all grade levels (student to student and in some cases staff to student) that has been occurring for decades through the present in the District. Participants agreed that students fear reporting incidents because of retaliation students have received for reporting. Participants were not able to identify any aspects of the District's harassment or anti-harassment policy or what the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and federal law require related to such policies and practices.

Essential Next Steps

Prior to any other essential next steps, the District must
   a. immediately adopt a District Anti-Bullying/Anti-Harassment policy that includes reporting requirements, a robust system for tracking complaints and resolutions, and a strong system in place that protects individuals who report in alignment with requirements from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and relevant federal law,
   b. inform all students, families, and community members about the policy,
   c. provide intensive training to all staff and Board members about the policy,
   d. develop a robust data system that tracks in detail the complaints and their resolutions,

e. the policy includes measures to inform parents, students, and the community about resolutions to the maximum extent allowable by law.

A.   Focus on Equity

<u>Know the History of Educational Marginalization</u>

Many students, staff, and families shared concerns regarding unaddressed incidents of teasing, bullying, and harassment throughout the District. Yet, there is an underlying theme from a minority, yet vocal, community members who believe that if the District and community of Burlington stop talking about their differences that everything can "go back to the way it was." Basically, the small minority is asking for everyone to assimilate to a white, middle class, English speaking, able bodied, cisgender, straight, normative. The perception from some members of the community is that equity is a zero-sum game. If students who have been traditionally marginalized are able to flourish in schools, then students who have historically done well in school will lose out. However, equity is about high-quality teaching and learning for all students, furthermore all students across all identities learn more. The more proactive the system, the more every child achieves.

All staff and community members should learn about the history of public education. In this manner, educators, families, and community members have a better understanding of the institutional history of education that has perpetuated, if not created Inequities. Through this common understanding, the District can begin to build create pragmatic and systemic change to move from blaming the students and families to holding the District accountable for creating a District culture where all students and families are seen, heard, understood, and educated.

Essential Next Steps:

1. All educators and board members complete professional development on the educational history of marginalization to better understand current structures and practices to lay the groundwork to begin a systematic and pragmatic journey to impact systems and policy at the core, verses expecting students and families to report occurrences of harm in order to correct systems of inequities.

2. All educators and board members complete professional development through an analysis of current educational structures and practices in relation to historical marginalization and how it relates to the District's current over and under-representation within the equity audit.

<u>Shift from Deficit to Assets-Based Thinking, Language</u>

Throughout the focus groups participants discussed their experiences of acts of bullying and violence, name calling, the use of the "N" word, especially at the secondary level and in the community and Board meetings.

What we mean by *deficit language* is based on the work of Valencia who first described a deficit ideology (1997)[6]. Gorski (2011) defines deficit ideology as "... a worldview that explains and justifies outcome inequalities - standardized test scores or levels of educational attainment, for example - by pointing to supposed deficiencies within disenfranchised individuals and communities" (p. 153). Deficit thinking focuses on what is "wrong" with the student/family/community, what is not working, what is lacking, what they cannot do, or what they do not have. A deficit ideology blames students and families for low student achievement rather than examining the systemic and structural inequalities that perpetuate low performance (Gorski, 2011, 2013).[7]

In contrast, *assets-based thinking* focuses on what the student/family/community can do, what skills, gifts, and knowledge they do have. Instead of blaming students and families, we consider the structural and systemic inequities in schools that educators have control over, that can impact students and families in negative ways. Luis Moll and colleagues (1992, 2005)[8] developed the phrase "funds of knowledge" to describe the household and cultural knowledge and skills within families — all strengths that they bring to school, that may be in contrast to White, middle-class norms.

Essential Next Steps

1. All educators and board members, participate in activities to reflect and better understand stereotypes, myths, and assumptions to interrupt deficit-based language, thinking and practices for adults and students within the District and Burlington community.

2. All educators and board members must model a shift from deficit-based language and practices to asset-based language and practices and set consistent expectations of all students within the school and educational community venues, including social media.

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[6] Valencia, R. R. (1997) (Ed). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. London: Falmer.
[7] Gorski, P. C. (2011). Unlearning deficit ideology and the scornful gaze: Thoughts on authenticating the class discourse in education. *Counterpoints*, 402, 152-173 and Gorski, P. C. (2016) Poverty and the ideological imperative: A call to unhook from deficit and grit ideology and to strive for structural ideology in teacher education, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 42:4, 378-386
[8] Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.

<u>Engage in Identity Development</u>

Across the focus groups, teachers discussed their concerns of not knowing what to say, how to respond to student questions, what books are allowable and what books are not. At the secondary level teachers stated that they continue to encourage students to bring their concerns to them so that they can respond. This places the responsibility of an identity relevant school climate and culture on the students, as it is the responsibility of the students to report, versus the responsibility of the school to create a culture of understanding across identities and their intersections. Other staff discussed a need for pragmatic professional development for all educators and community members who are interested to better develop a culture of understanding and support for all learners and families. That being said, such professional development will require a systematic and systemic approach.

Essential Next Steps

1. All educators and board members complete consistent and authentic professional development specific to identity development and its impact on high quality teaching and learning for all students.

2. All educators and board members should participate in opportunities of their choice to increase their understanding of identities different from their own.

<u>Apply Equity Research</u>

Teachers believed that they were doing the best they could, educating students based on their presumed need, but also realized that this caused more segregated practices for students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL) or linguistically diverse, advanced learners, and students receiving Tier 2 interventions. The research is clear that a heterogeneous classroom promotes learning outcomes, better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and better prepares students as professionals (American Educational Research Association, 2016, p. 25).[9] In addition, diverse classrooms provide "improved cognitive skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving, because students' experience with individuals different from themselves, as well as to the novel ideas and situations that such experience brings, challenges their thinking and leads to cognitive growth" (American Educational Research Association, 2016, p. 25).

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[9] AERA Amicus Brief (2016)

Students having difficulty at school, especially those experiencing poverty learn more when they are working in heterogeneous rather than in homogenous ability groups (Oakes, 2005)[10]. Relatively high expectations for learning, a faster pace of instruction, peer models of effective learning and curricula that are more challenging are among the reasons offered for this advantage. (Leithwood, Lois, Anderson, & Wahlston, 2004)[11].

Students labeled with disabilities reach more IEP goals in proportionally represented environments than in segregated settings (Brinker & Thorpe, 1984; Hunt, Goetz, & Anderson, 1986; Westling & Fox, 2009)[12].

The research on the inclusion of students labeled with disabilities originated in the early 1980's, shortly after the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 that mandated a free, appropriate, public education for all students regardless of disability. That research unequivocally suggests that when students labeled with disabilities are proportionally assigned to general education environments, they make greater academic and social gains than when segregated. Furthermore, students without disability labels also benefit more academically and socially when they are educated alongside students labeled with disabilities than when not. And, for students with moderate to significant intellectual disabilities, achievement is enhanced or at least equivalent in integrated versus segregated settings (Cole & Meyer, 1991; Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993; National Center for Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995; Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline, & Morrison, 1995; Saint-Laurent & Lessard, 1991)[13].

The research suggests that students of all abilities learn more in heterogeneous versus homogenous ability groups. The students who are isolated the most in ability groupings often are the furthest behind (Hnushek, Klin, Markman, & Rivkin, 2003). Ability grouping has an effect

[10] Oakes, J. (2005). Keeping track: How schools structure inequality. New Haven, CT. Yale University Press. Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S. & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). Review of research: How leadership influences student learning. New York: The Wallace Foundation. http://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/
[11] Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S. & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). Review of research: How leadership influences student learning. New York: The Wallace Foundation.
[12] Brinker, R. P., & Thorpe, M. E. (1984). Integration of severely handicapped students and the proportion of IEP objectives achieved. *Exceptional Children 51(*2), 168-175.
Hunt, P., Goetz, L., & Anderson, J. (1986). The quality of IEP objectives associated with placement in integrated versus segregated school sites. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 11*(2) 125- 130.
Giangreco, M. F., Dennis, R., Cloninger, C., & Edelman, S., & Schattman, R. (1993). "I've counted Jon": Transformational experiences of teachers educating students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 54,* 415-425.
[13] Cole, D., & Meyer, L. H. (1991). *Educating everybody's children: Diverse teaching strategies for diverse learners: What research and practice say about improving achievement.* Alexandria, VA: Association for supervision and curriculum development.
National Center for Educational Restructuring and Inclusion. (1995). *National Study of Inclusion.* New York: Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Saint-Laurent L. & Lessard, J. C. (1991). Comparison of three educational programs for students with moderate or severe disabilities. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation, 26*(4), 370-380.
Ryndak, D. L., Downing, J. E., Jacqueline, L. R., & Morrison, A. P. (1995). Parents' perceptions after inclusion of their children with moderate or severe disabilities. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 10*(2), 147-157.

size of .12 (effect size needs to be .40 or above to impact learning, Hattie, 2013)[14]. The two most common forms of ability grouping are

1. Within-class grouping, where students of similar ability are placed into small groups usually for reading or math instruction.

2. Between-class grouping where students are separated into different classes, courses, or course sequences (curricular tracks) based on their academic achievement, otherwise referred to as tracking.

Boaler (2019)[15] also reports that "Tracked groups are often more limiting for students, as they allow teachers to presume they know what students need and provide narrow questions that do not allow students to achieve highly and do not encourage students to engage in complex, interesting thinking." Boaler (2019) interviewed ninth graders in two different school districts, one group who had experienced a tracked math middle school and the other group who attended schools without tracking but with highly rigorous math teaching and learning across all students. Compared to the students in tracked math, students with the heterogeneous math experience held more positive expectations of themselves and their math potential.

The National Center for Research on Gifted Education conducted a 2019 study of gifted education across 3 states and 2000 students. They learned that "third-grade students in gifted programs were not making significant learning gains in comparison with their peers in general education. . . . [and that] pull-out programs or self-contained classrooms [for students labeled as gifted], were, on average, not helping to boost academic achievement" (cited in Potter & Burris, 2019).

Potter & Burris (2019[16]) summarizes their review of the research:

"...identification for gifted programs is a problem but fixing the entrance criteria for a system still based on separating children into differently tracked classrooms is not enough to promote equity. This very practice of separation is not supported by research."

Students labeled as gifted who are homogeneously grouped also have limited opportunities to learn across difference. Some studies suggest that such groupings increase student test anxiety, lower self-esteem as students are in an environment that increases comparison among students

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[14] Hattie, J. (2011). *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning*. London: Routledge

[15] Boaler, J. (2019). *Separating 'gifted' children hasn't led to better achievement: The inherent dangers in telling students that their abilities are fixed.* The Hechinger Report. Hechingerreport.org. https://hechingerreport.org/opinion-separating-gifted-children-hasnt-led-to-better-achievement/

[16] Potter, H. & Burris, M. (2019). *Should gifted students be in separate classrooms?* The Century Foundation, NY. https://tcf.org/content/commentary/gifted-students-separate-classrooms/?session=1

and can negatively impact raw course grades and class rankings. (Bui, Craig, & Imberman, 2011; Ireson, Haliam & Plewis, 2010; Preckel, Gotz & Frenzel, 2010; Zeidner & Schleyer,1999)[17].

When students labeled as English Language Learners or linguistically diverse are proportionally represented in classrooms/courses versus placed in sheltered English or segregated in particular classrooms or courses, they learn more academic English, make greater achievement gains, have more peer models of English, experience higher teacher expectations, and teachers in the heterogeneous settings model a higher level of English, paired with higher levels of discussion and discourse (Brisk, 2006; Scanlan & Lopez, 2013; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Further, students labeled as ELL in heterogeneous settings become bilingual language role models for students whose English is their home language.

A 2015 national study funded by the Institute for Education Sciences examined RTI implementation in 13 states, 146 schools, and 20,000 first grade students. Assignment to RTI interventions across Tiers 1, 2, and 3 not only did not improve reading outcomes but decreased reading achievement. "For those students just below the school-determined eligibility cut point in Grade 1, assignment to receive reading interventions did not improve reading outcomes; it produced negative impacts" (American Educational Research Association, p. 1).

Figure 33 below reflects the RtI model of continuous improvement for instruction in the core of teaching and learning.

Figure 33: Wisconsin's RtI Continuous Improvement Model

Such a model is premised on research-based practices of high-quality teaching and learning. The model is premised on equity at its core through the following tenants:

- Become self-aware: Staying alert to the ways that **identity** and culture affect who

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[17] Bui, S. A., Steven, G., Imberman, S. A. (2014). Is gifted education a bright idea? Assessing the impact of gifted and talented programs on students. American Economic Journal: Economic Policy. 6(3), 30-62.

we are and how we interact with learners and families;

- Examine the impact of systems, structures, policies, and practices on learners and families: Analyzing who the system serves and underserves;
- Believe all learners can and will achieve at high levels: Examining and intentionally pushing back on societal **biases** and **stereotypes**;
- Understand all learners have a unique world view: Recognizing each adult and learner represents a complex blend of cultures, identities, and roles, with singular differences;
- Know and respect the communities: Understanding and valuing the behaviors, beliefs, and historical experiences of families and community members served by the school;
- Lead, model, and advocate for equity:
  Challenging **prejudice** and **discrimination** as barriers to equity and giving voice to those inequitably impacted by school and district decisions, policies, and practices;
- Accept the responsibility for learner success: Recognizing that equitable outcomes depend on changing the school's and district's beliefs and practices, rather than fixing learners and families; and
- Use practices, curriculum, and policies that respect the identities and cultures of learners and families served by schools.

According the RtI Center of Wisconsin, such a multi-tiered design is not necessary:

> Schools provide a continuum or multi-level system of proactive and responsive supports built to match the range of learners' developmental, academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs. Supports are equitable and appropriate for the learners being served, validating their knowledge and experiences, and acknowledging their diverse identities. Staff, learners, families, and the community are engaged in the selection and implementation of these supports.
>
> *Though not required, many schools develop a three-level system of supports to ensure the success of every learner.* (Emphasis added by evaluation authors.)

It is not clear through the focus groups the exact model for RtI in the District. Therefore, we would recommend that the District parallel the work of the Department of Public Instruction and align the work of the District to Figure 39, The Wisconsin's RtI Continuous Improvement Model

Essential Next Steps:

1. All educators and board members should know and understand the research on equity and best practices across all student identifiers, such as but not limited to, special education, ELL, advanced Learners, RtI, relative to current practices.

Develop Principles of Excellence

The equity audit data across the District represents systemic inequities. The District is aware that this is contrary to who they want to be, defined by the District's vision as Compassionate, Comprehensive, Commitment. The important aspect of this vision is in its application. Much of the conversation within the focus groups was related to follow-through, consistency, and authentic commitment by the District.

More specifically, what does compassion, comprehensive, and commitment look like in practice? We define equity as high-quality teaching and learning, holding both goals —achievement and belonging for all learners—in high priority and as essential for the achievement of all students in the District. However, without a delineation of Principles of Excellence that can provide a road map to assist in making such goals and aspirations operational, school leaders continue to perpetuate a program model and achievement/opportunity/access gaps for all students.

Therefore, the following Principles of Excellence are offered as examples to challenges within the current system:

1. Eliminating inequities begins with ourselves

2. The system is responsible for student failure

3. All staff are aligned to Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Teams (C3) to support cohesive instruction

4. Students are proportionally represented in the core of teaching and learning

5. Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) Teams intentionally develop each other's capacity

6. Instruction is based on Identity Relevant Teaching and Learning (IRTL) and created for each learner the first time the concept/skill is taught

7. Policies and funding are aligned to these principles.

Once created and vetted out through all aspects of the educational community, the Principles of Excellence become Board policy of how to meet the vision by aligning the strategic plan. It will be important to rely on the Principles of Excellence to create a pragmatic path forward for the District. In this way, all decisions are made in alignment to the e District's Principles of Excellence.

Essential Next Steps

1.   The District and Board should create District Principles of Excellence to operationalize the District's mission and vision.

Conduct Equity Audit

An equity audit should be completed annually at the school and District level. The data is not intended to blame and label more students, but to truly assess the effectiveness of current practices and set clear benchmarks and goals for success of all students. The equity audit is not about "fixing" students but instead about creating a proactive system.

The District completed an exceptional District-level equity audit for this evaluation that will set the stage for annual equity audits. As the District moves forward, the equity audit should be completed annually at each school and across the District. Once these equity audits are completed the District can determine which data points they want to see move in a positive direction, which data points they are most proud of, and this becomes their accountability guide.

Essential Next Steps

1.   The District should complete a District and per school equity audit annually to measure the District's and individual school's progress.

B.   Align Staff and Students

High achieving school districts align staff and students in the core of teaching and learning. As mentioned earlier in this evaluation, equity is not a zero-sum game. Therefore, where students are physically placed to learn impacts the learning of all students. Student location for learning distinguishes between reactive or deficit-based practices resulting in segregated (including pull-out) programs and that of integrated, comprehensive, proactive practices resulting in all students learning more in the core of instruction.

In deficit-based practices all students learn less. Such practices hold back the system. Under a segregated program model, educators believe that the primary reason for student failure is the student. There are five primary practices in the District that support this assumption that works in opposition of equitable structural practices and overidentifies and limits access to core instruction for all students:

1. District placement of a child in a **specialized school** other than the one they would typically attend as their home school, or school of choice.

   Clustering students in specific schools (within or outside of the District) by an identifier, such as, but not limited to, Special Education or At-risk, discussed as center-based programs.

2. Removal of a child to **segregated rooms for pull-out instruction**, often defined as a Resource or Self-Contained classroom, for 10 minutes (for Special Education, RtI interventions, at- Risk, ELL, Gifted and Talented, etc.) a day to all day within the schools they would typically attend as their home school, or school of choice.

3. Providing **lower class tracks and programs** for students, especially students with disabilities or those perceived as not prepared for a more accelerated course – predominately at the middle and high school level (such placements are referred to by the National Education Association as *Between-class grouping – a school's practice of separating students into different classes, courses, or course sequences (curricular tracks) based on their academic achievement or even student choice*).

4. **Ability grouping** within the core of teaching and learning (such placements are referred to by the National Education Association as *Within-class grouping – a teacher's practice of putting students of similar ability into small groups usually for reading or math instruction*).

Concomitantly, a proactive or asset-based approach requires the formation of Co-Plan to Co-Learn to Co-Serve Teams (C3 Teams) at each grade-level and content specific at the secondary level and the proportional representation of all students in the core of teaching and learning, or Tier 1.

Construct Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) Teams

Teachers throughout the District reported experiences and opportunities to increase the access to support all learners in the core of teaching and learning through goals of co-teaching. Some educators in the focus groups recalled the usefulness of co-teaching but believe it is no longer supported through professional development. However, co-teaching does not reflect achievement gains for students with disabilities in the District's equity audit or in John Hattie's research (.19 using an effect size of .40 and above). A co-teaching model is often defined as an

instructional arrangement where one special educator and one general educator are assigned to teach a specific group of students with disabilities who have been clustered into one classroom or a course section. A co-teaching model usually requires one general educator and one special educator to focus on the same group of students all day at the elementary and middle school levels and with a course section at the secondary level.

Research has confirmed that a co-teaching model (Hattie, 2012), does not positively impact student achievement. Below are the differences between a co-teaching model and a C3 structure:

1. Co-teaching or team-taught classrooms often host an unnatural proportion of students who struggle academically or behaviorally or who are eligible for special education. With a C3 Team, all students are naturally proportioned.

2. Co-teaching or team-taught classrooms are supported classroom by classroom, whereas the C3 Team plans across all classrooms at the grade level or multiple sections of a specific course at the secondary level.

3. Little co-planning often occurs in a co-teaching or team-taught model in the way we expect C3 Teams to co-create a lesson. Specifically, within-in co-teaching the lesson is often developed by the general educator and the special educator adapts and modifies the lesson – often limited to instruction for students with disabilities.

4. Special education teachers tend to do more turn-taking as compared to the general educator who remains the content expert and the special educator often functions as a support to the general education teacher. With a C3 Team, all team members facilitate learning.

5. At the secondary level, co-teaching or team-taught classrooms are low-tracked classrooms. With a C3 Team, all course sections are at grade level or above.

6. Co-teaching or team-taught classrooms often become a teacher dependent model – with the special education teacher and general education teacher dependent on each other. With a C3 Team, all teachers share expertise to intentionally develop each other's capacity.

Within Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) teams, educators purposely develop each other's *Collective Equity Capacity.* According to John Hattie, that collective equity capacity is supported through *Collective Teacher* Efficacy, which has an impact on student learning at 1.57 relative to an effect size of .40 and above, far higher impact that Co-teaching at a .19. C3 teams work together to determine how a child learns best and the teachers incorporate those understandings into their co-plan. In so doing, the C3 team can more effectively co-serve all students within heterogeneous large and small groups, one to one within Tier 1, or within the core of teaching and learning.

The first time a district places a student in a remediation or intervention group, low ability group, skill-specific group, or a group based on their disability, also becomes the first step to institutional marginalization that denies students access to high expectations and high-quality teaching and learning. These practices result in students falling further behind as described in the Cycle of Student Failure (see Figure 34 below).

Figure 34: Cycle of Student Failure
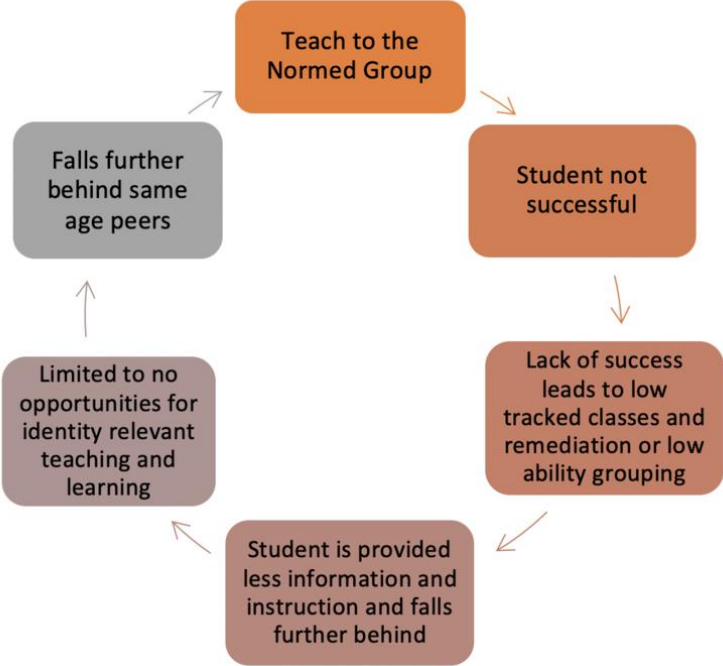
To intentionally interrupt this deficit-based, reactive cycle, rigorous, identity relevant core instruction must be paired with common formative and summative assessments. When Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) teams design instruction based on each learner, the amount of fragmented and non-instructional time decreases, while instructional time and continuity increase. Thus, the RtI process should be completed in the core of teaching and learning. In so doing, C3 Teams will need to complete the following agenda when they meet:

> a. Confirm meeting times and the C3 Team's agenda
> b. Develop a Skills at a Glance template
> c. Develop the Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn template
> d. Define the role of team members
> e. Provide a step-by-step process to co-create a lesson
> f. Determine how the lesson will be staffed or facilitated

Most educators in the focus groups reported that only teachers with specific certifications may work with those students who have specific diagnoses. For example, many educators referred to the special educator as the only professional who can provide the Specially Designed Instruction (SDI). Such a misperception perpetuates a pull-out model, even though most teachers agree that students who need the most continuity in instruction receive the most fragmented education. In addition, such practices require the student to synthesize information from several different experts and environments, and often generalize what is taught in a pull-out environment back to the general education classroom in which they have missed significant instructional content.

Co-plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) teams work together to determine how a child learns best. The team of teachers incorporate those understandings into their co-plan to better co-serve all students through heterogeneous-based small group, and 1:1 learning groupings in Tier 1 or the core of teaching and learning. Educators are then better able to move from a pull-out and self-contained model to a proactive education where teachers are aligned to each grade and students may be involved in large group, small group, and 1:1 instruction based on their individual interest and how each child brings in information and shares what they know the most often.

Essential Next Steps

1. All Educators must understand the role and function of Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Teams to create equitable practices for all learners.

2. The District should develop C3 Teams to proactively support a diverse normative in the core of teaching and learning.

3. All educators will facilitate learning through heterogeneous grouping practices for all learners, while supporting 1:1 instruction based on interest and student need in the core of teaching and learning.

Re-Align Staff and Students

Proportional representation of students within the core of teaching and learning is essential. In this manner, there is a true representation of all learners within each classroom that is natural to the student demographics of the school. Specifically, proportional representation means that the demographic of the school is reflected in every classroom, course, activity, setting, and experience within the school. For example, if 16.6% of students are labeled with a disability, then no more than 16.6% of students in any classroom, course, activity, setting, or experience are students labeled with a disability. Proportional representation applies to grade levels when assigning students labeled with disabilities, students who are linguistically diverse, and students labeled as gifted. That is, if 16.6% of the students in the school are labeled with a disability and

25% of the students in the school are linguistically diverse, and there are six third grade classrooms, then no more than 16.6% of students in each third-grade classroom have a disability and no more than 25% of students in each classroom are linguistically diverse. Students who are linguistically diverse and students who have disabilities are equally assigned across these six classrooms.

In the District, the students who experience poverty are over-identified for special education (47.2% of students identified for special education receive free/reduced priced lunch compared to 36.3% in the District who receive free/reduced priced lunch). Students of color are also over-identified for special education (20.7% of the District, but 25.8% of students receiving special education services are students of color and though Black students represent 1.6% of the student body, 2.8% of students in special education are Black). Students who are linguistically diverse are over-identified for special education (students receiving ELL services comprise 4.2% of the District and 7.6% of the students labeled for special education). Such overidentification is inherent in a reactionary or deficit-based system.

In addition, as stated earlier in the report, students who receive free/reduced priced lunch represent 36.3% of the District, however the students also represent 55.4% of students receiving response to intervention. The District did not provide data on the percent of students of color receiving response to intervention. Students receiving ELL services comprise 4.2% of the District and 12.2% of students receiving response to intervention. Such practices reinforce the stereotype lift and stereotype threat research by Claude Steele in, "Whistling Vivaldi and Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us" (Steele, 2010)[18].

The District spends just $90,000 per year on out of District placements. Although this is relatively minimal, the Code of Federal Regulations and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction make clear the importance of students attending the schools they would attend if not eligible for special education. Therefore, the District should determine if any child can be returned to the school and classroom they would attend if not disabled. Such expenditures could then be reallocated to better support students in the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled and to advance the District's strategic plan.

Most staff across elementary, middle, and high schools reported practices that did not support proportional representation. Much of the practices reported, reflected more of a clustering, segregated rooms for pull-out instruction, co-teaching, tracking, and ability grouping. Students who are linguistically diverse are now attending the schools they would attend if not linguistically diverse but may be clustered in specific schools. Teachers were concerned about disproportional placement as well as feeling conflicted with believing that they did not have the ability to meet IEP minutes in any other model.

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[18] Steele, C. (2010). "Whistling Vivaldi and Other Clues to How Stereotypes Affect Us"

Table 4: FTE For Special Education, Paraprofessionals, Interventionist, ELL Teachers and Speech and Language Specialist

School	# of SPED Teachers	# of Paras (Reg Ed)	# of Paras (SPED)	# of Interventionists	# of EL	# of Speech
Cooper	3	2.64	14.7	2.86		2
Dyer	5	3.98	11.36	1.5	0.09	0.6
Lyons	0.5	0.72	0.53	0.6		0.2
Waller	5	1.88	20.38	5.75	1	2.8
Winkler	1	0.91	3.08	0.6		0.7
Karcher	6.5	2.36	6.5	1.5	0.5	0.4
Burlington HS	10	5.03	7.49		0.5	0.6
District	2					
WIN	2		2.81			
Total	35	17.52	66.85	12.81	2.09	7.3

In Tables 5 through 11, each school is represented by grade and the number of students within in grade, followed by the number of students with disabilities, eligible for Speech and Language, linguistically diverse, students receiving Tier 2 intervention and the number of students who are advanced learners. Data from the schools reflects language is specific to a primary disability only. Caseloads are higher when including students who receive speech and language as a secondary disability. Special education paraprofessionals are designated as well. Students who are advanced learners are supported through general education.

At Waller, the ratio of special education teachers to students at 1.9 is appropriate for a proactive service. At the same time, the District employs 20.3 special education paraprofessionals, which is excessive and often a sure sign of a reactive system. Students who are linguistically diverse are at one teacher to 65 students, which will make proactive services through Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Teams (C3 Teams) virtually impossible. Support for students identified for Tier 2 or 3 is 1:24. Students who are advanced learners are supported through general education. However, teachers expressed concerns about the level of support students received.

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Table 5: Staffing Percentages and Ratios Relative to Students Identified for Special Education, Speech and Language, English Language Learners or linguistically diverse, Tier 2, and Advanced Learners for Waller

Waller (4K-4)	Number of Students	Number of SwD by Grade	Number of Students Speech & Language Only	Number of Students ELL	Number of Students Eligible Tier 2 & 3	Number of students Gifted and/or Advanced
4K	68	4	9	0	0	0
5K	84	9	14	9	8	0
1	98	10	6	12	17	0
2	85	11	3	15	13	1
3	92	10	3	14	16	0
4	86	11	5	15	14	3
Total	513	45	40	65	68	4
Staffing		5	2.8	1	2.8	Gen. Ed.
Ratio		1:9**	1:14 (plus)*	1:65	1:24	

*Plus speech as a secondary disability
** 20.3 special education paraprofessionals
*** Data reflects student numbers of students prior to District attendance/boundary changes

At Winkler, the ratio of special education teachers to students at 1 to 20, which is high for proactive services. In addition, there are 3.8 special education paraprofessionals. There are no students who are linguistically diverse, or students identified for Tier 2 or 3. Students who are advanced learners are supported through general education

Table 6: Staffing Percentages and Ratios Relative to Students Identified for Special Education, Speech and Language, English Language Learners or linguistically diverse, Tier 2, and Advanced Learners for Winkler

Winkler (4K-4)	Number of Students	Number of SwD by Grade	Number of Students Speech & Language	Number of Students ELL	Number of Students Eligible Tier 2 & 3	Number of students Gifted and/or Advanced
4K	20	5	3	0	0	0
5K	23	1	3	0	0	0
1	21	2	0	0	0	0
2	25	3	2	0	0	0
3	24	2	3	0	0	0
4	26	7	0	0	0	0
Total	139	20	11	N/A	N/A	N/A
Staffing		1	.7			Gen. Ed.

Ratio		1:20**	.7:11(Plus)*	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Plus speech as a secondary disability
** 3.8 special education paraprofessionals
*** Data reflects student numbers of students prior to District attendance/boundary changes

At Lyons, as a very small school, the ratio of special education teachers to students at .5 teacher to 5 students as well as a .53 special education paraprofessional. Students who are linguistically diverse have no ELL teacher. Support for students identified for Tier 2 or 3 is .6; however, no students are identified. Students who are advanced learners are supported through general education.

Table 7: Staffing Percentages and Ratios Relative to Students Identified for Special Education, Speech and Language, English Language Learners or linguistically diverse, Tier 2, and Advanced Learners for Lyons

Lyons (4K-4)	Number of Students	Number of SwD by Grade	Number of Students Speech & Language	Number of Students ELL	Number of Students Eligible Tier 2 & 3	Number of students Gifted and/or Advanced
4K	0	0	0	0	0	0
5K	16	1	1	0	0	1
1	21	1	2	0	0	0
2	25	0	0	0	0	0
3	11	1	0	0	0	0
4	18	2	0	1	0	1
Total	91	5	3	1	0	2
Staffing		.5	.2	0	.6	Gen. Ed.
Ratio		.5:5**	.2:3			

*Plus speech as a secondary disability
** .53 special education paraprofessionals
*** Data reflects student numbers of students prior to District attendance/boundary changes

At Cooper, the ratio of special education teachers to students are at 1 teacher to 18 students (much higher ratio than Waller), which is also too high for proactive service. At the same time, the District employs 14.7 special education paraprofessionals at Cooper, which is high and often as in Waller, supports a reactive system. There are 2 students who are linguistically diverse, with no ELL teacher. Support for students identified for Tier 2 or 3 is 1:18. Four students are identified as advanced learners and are supported through general education.

BURLINGTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
EQUITY EVALUATION
INTEGRATED COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS FOR EQUITY

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Table 8: Staffing Percentages and Ratios Relative to Students Identified for Special Education, Speech and Language, English Language Learners or linguistically diverse, Tier 2, and Advanced Learners for Cooper

Cooper (4K-4)	Number of Students	Number of SwD by Grade	Number of Students Speech & Language	Number of Students ELL	Number of Students Eligible Tier 2 & 3	Number of students Gifted and/or Advanced
4K	55	6	4	0	0	0
5K	77	10	10	1	10	0
1	67	6	1	0	12	0
2	66	11	2	0	18	1
3	85	11	2	1	7	0
4	59	11	2	0	6	3
Total	409	55	21	2	51	4
Staffing		3	2	0	2.8	Gen. Ed.
Ratio		1:18**	1:10.5		1:18	

*Plus, speech as a secondary disability
** 14.7 special education paraprofessionals
*** Data reflects student numbers of students prior to District attendance/boundary changes

At Dyer, the ratio of special education teachers to students at 1 to 13.5 and is appropriate for a proactive service, though the District employs 11.36 special education paraprofessionals at Dyer. Students who are linguistically diverse are at almost one teacher to 30 students, which is much lower of a ratio than Waller. Support for students identified for Tier 2 or 3 is 1:24. Four students are identified as advanced learners and are supported through general education.

Table 9: Staffing Percentages and Ratios Relative to Students Identified for Special Education, Speech and Language, English Language Learners or linguistically diverse, Tier 2, and Advanced Learners for Dyer

Dyer (5-6)	Number of Students	Number of SwD by Grade	Number of Students Speech & Language	Number of Students ELL	Number of Students Eligible Tier 2 & 3	Number of students Gifted and/or Advanced
4	22	0	1	0	1	1
5	214	30	5	19	20	0
6	212	37	0	11	15	3
Total	448	67	6	30	36	4
Staffing		5	.6	.9	1.5	Gen. Ed.

Ratio		1:13.4	.6:6	.9:30	1:24	

*Plus, speech as a secondary disability
** 11.36 special education paraprofessionals
*** Data reflects student numbers of students prior to District attendance/boundary changes

At Karcher, the ratio of special education teachers to students at 1.9, similar to Waller's staffing with 6.5 special education paraprofessionals. Students who are linguistically diverse are at .5 to 26 students, which is similarly high as Waller. Support for students identified for Tier 2 or 3 is 1:4. Students who are advanced learners are supported through general education.

Table 10: Staffing Percentages and Ratios Relative to Students Identified for Special Education, Speech and Language, English Language Learners or linguistically diverse, Tier 2, and Advanced Learners for Karcher

Karcher (7-8)	Number of Students	Number of SwD by Grade	Number of Students Speech & Language	Number of Students ELL	Number of Students Eligible Tier 2 & 3	Number of students Gifted and/or Advanced
7	248	39	2	15	6	60
8	203	25	0	11	0	57
Total	451	64	2	26	6	117
Staffing		6.5	.4	.5	1.5	Gen.Ed.
Ratio		1:9.8	.4:2	.5:26	1:4	

*Plus, speech as a secondary disability
** 6.5 special education paraprofessionals
*** Data reflects student numbers of students prior to District attendance/boundary changes

At BHS, the ratio of special education teachers to students at 1.14, which is appropriate for a proactive service, with e 7.49 special education paraprofessionals. Students who are linguistically diverse are at .5 teacher to 35 students, which will make proactive services through Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Teams (C3 Teams) virtually impossible. No students were identified for Tier 2 or 3. Students who are advanced learners are supported through AP classes and other program options

Table 11: Staffing Percentages and Ratios Relative to Students Identified for Special Education, Speech and Language, English Language Learners or linguistically diverse, Tier 2, and Advanced Learners for BHS

BHS (9-12)	Number of Students	Number of SwD by Grade	Number of Students Speech & Language	Number of Students ELL	Number of Students Eligible Tier 2 & 3	Number of students Gifted and/or Advanced
9	282	45	1	4	0	65
10	262	27	0	8	0	73
11	270	36	0	14	0	165
12	267	41	0	9	0	362
Total	1081	149	1	35	0	
Staffing		10	.6	.5	0	AP
Ratio		1:14.9	.6:1	.5:35	N/A	N/A

*Plus, speech as a secondary disability
** 7.49 special education paraprofessionals
*** Data reflects student numbers of students prior to District attendance/boundary changes

The current ratio of specialists, [including special education, speech and language, ELL, advanced learner, and Tier 1) is clearly inconsistent throughout the BASD schools. If students with disabilities, students who are linguistically diverse and students receiving Tier 2 and 3 as well as advance learners are attending the schools they would attend if not disabled, it will be important to have a more consistent staffing model. For example, for special education we often support a 1:10 students at the elementary, 1:12 at intermediate, and 1:15 at the high school. In this case to get to these ratios it may be important to shift the use of special education paraprofessionals to teachers (often shifting 3 paraprofessionals for one teacher) to better support C3 teams. The same would be true for students who are linguistically diverse, students receiving Tier 2 and 3 support, to better align to C3 Teams.

At the elementary level, C3 teams are created by grade level. All students are aligned to the chronological age-appropriate grade and then classroom. In this manner, each classroom mirrors the school's student demographics. Special educators are assigned cross-categorical by caseloads to better function on a single grade level team or at the most two grade level teams. ELL, Speech and Advance learning staff are also assigned to a C3 Team based on the number of students they are serving at each grade level and based on the expertise of the core teaching staff at each grade level.

In addition, any self-contained or resource rooms would be phased out over time to place students back in the schools they would attend if not disabled to support natural proportions of students across identifiers (ELL, special education, Tier 2) in the core of teaching and learning.

See Table 12 for an Elementary example.

Table 12: Elementary Example of Realignment by Grade Level

Grade Level/ 3 Sections/ Grade	Number of Students	Number of Students with Disabilities/ Someplace Else	Linguistically Diverse/Identified as Tier 2	Recommended Staff	Certification	SL & BRS in Class Support
5K	84	9	10	1 Intervention Specialist	EC OT	Speech
Sec. 1	28	3	4			
Sec. 2	28	3	3			
Sec. 3	28	3	3			
1st Grade (2 Teachers with Sp.Ed. Cert)	87	12	9	.5 Intervention Specialist .5 Reading Teacher	K-8 Cross-Categorical Reading Specialist PT	Speech
Sec. 1	29	4	3			
Sec. 2	29	4	3			
Sec. 3	29	4	3			
2nd Grade	86	14	6/1	1 Intervention Specialist .10 Psych	K-8 LD Reading Specialist Psych	BRS
Sec. 1	28	5	2			
Sec. 2	29	4	3			
Sec. 3	29	5	2			
3rd Grade	91	12/1	6	1 Intervention Specialist .5 Reading Teacher 1 Para .2 Gifted	k-8 Cross Categorical Reading Specialist Gifted	BRS
Sec. 1	30	4	2			
Sec. 2	30	4	2			
Sec. 3	31	5	2			
4th Grade	89	14	10	1 Intervention Specialist .5 Reading Teacher	K-8 CD Reading Specialist PT	Speech
Sec. 1	30	5	3			
Sec. 2	30	4	3			
Sec. 3	29	5	4			
5th Grade	78	13/1	12	1 Intervention Specialist .5 Reading Teacher 1 Para .2 Gifted	K-12 EBD .5 Reading Specialist Gifted	Speech
Sec. 1	26	5	4			
Sec. 2	26	5	4			
Sec. 3	26	4	4			

* BRS = Bilingual Resource Specialist

Secondary schools would align in the same manner, by grade and then by content or specific courses. Most importantly, program options would be integrated into the core of teaching and learning to work against segregation by student choice.

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Essential Next Steps

1. The District must begin by consistent staffing for special education, ELL, Tier 2 and 3, across all elementary schools and secondary. Based on differences in students and individual needs, additional paraprofessionals may be added.

2. The District Office and schools should begin a process to realign staff for Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Teams (C3 Teams) and create all environments in the core of teaching and learning and extra-curricular that are proportionally represented upon completing the work under the Essential Next Steps under the Focus on Equity

3. The District must support all students with disabilities attending the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled.

4. The District should consider ways to reallocate resources from tuitioned out placements (although minimal).   The secondary educators must review the demographics of the programs at the High School and phase out those programs that marginalize students by race, ability, class, and language by shifting to C3 Teams for required courses to develop the success of all learners in the core of teaching and learning.

C.   Transform Teaching and Learning

Design Identity Relevant Teaching for All Learners

C3 Teams must consistently rely on strategies and instructional practices that have the greatest impact on student achievement 100% of the time. These practices should occur in heterogeneous small groups that represent the diverse normative of students. In so doing, C3 Teams are better able to create lessons that lift all learners academically, emotionally, and behaviorally.

Hattie provides a list of practices that support those strategies that have the greatest impact on student learning in his 2018 publication, *10 Mindframes for Visible Learning: Teaching for Success*. Certainly, other researchers and practices can be included such as Max Teaching and Cooperative Learning. Below are just a few of those practices and their associated strategies that have the greatest impact on student learning from (Hattie & Zierer, 2018). The following practices are examples of opportunities to engage in high impact strategies for student learning:

- Worked examples (.67)
- Meta Cognitive Strategies (.69)

- Questioning (.48)

- Study Skills (.63)

- Dialogue vs Monologue (.82)

- Peer Tutoring (.55)

- Summarization (.74)

- Highlighting (.44)

- Small-Group Learning (.49)

- Reciprocal Learning (.74)

- Self-Reporting Grades (1.33)

More specifically, when educators use every minute of a student's educational time to intentionally prevent stereotype threats (.-33) and engage in collective teacher efficacy (1.33) through Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) Teams that are orchestrated within heterogenous (Peer influence .53) small groups (.47), while not labeling students (.61), educators support all students in positive self-esteem (.47) and learning more. In this way, literally all students in the district learn more.

Essential Next Steps:

1. The District will provide professional development in support of instructional practices and strategies that have the greatest impact on student achievement.

2. The District will evaluate current curriculum relative to the identities in the Wisconsin Pupil Nondiscrimination law and aligned with the intent of the law.

3. All educators will complete lesson development in support of all learners the first time the skill or concept is taught.

Design Identity Relevant Learning and Curriculum for All Learners

Educators were consistent about the lack of resources and materials that represent all learners. In addition, confusion of what materials they can and cannot use to proactively serve a diverse normative came up throughout the focus groups. The District Leadership Team must complete an analysis and provide professional development for Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) Teams in support of a diverse normative through:

1. Curriculum and books reflecting a diverse normative in pictures, language, and examples

2. Authors of books reflecting a diverse normative

3. Curricular content that reflects a diverse normative

Essential Next Steps

1.   The District Leadership Team must complete an analysis of all curriculum and resources 4k-12, specifically books/resources, authors, curriculum, and content to affirm that it reflects a diverse normative.

2.   The District must provide professional development specific to the usage of books/resources, authors, content that represents a diverse normative.

<u>Discipline and Behavior</u>

Student behavior and thus discipline are directly related to the culture of the district and school. As such, educators have a choice to create school cultures that are cohesive rather than fragmented, comprehensive rather than not synthesized in the core of teaching and learning and provide access to high quality teaching.

An individualized student support plan provides both staff and the student continuity to proactively support a child and specifically teach how to navigate school through appropriate behavior. That is, the student knows that regardless of the environment they are in—whether it is the lunchroom, the school bus, the hall, or a particular class, that the proactive adult response will be consistent across all these environments. In addition, the process of developing the plan will help the adults who come in contact with the student to have a shared understanding of the situations that trigger the student's inappropriate behavior(s) and the strategies that can help mitigate such behavior. In addition, a student support plan also allows for a layer of objectivity, which will help elicit clearer, more consistent staff responses. It is important to remember that student support plans must be written individually for each student. Using PBIS strategies, is useful across the District, but does not address individual student behaviors.

Supporting a student with high behavior needs is never easy. It is important that students experience the district and school climate as supportive, that the C3 Teams work together with the student support plan developed by those individuals who are directly involved with the students, and that they never give up. We must approach every situation believing that we can prevail.

The work at the District level must begin by setting the standards of proactive behavioral supports for all learners. The following are 3 standards that are necessary for District Leadership Teams to support such a proactive culture.

Standard 1: Develop a district culture of respect for and value of all learners through the Principles of Excellence.

Standard 2: Collect district and school equity audit data - drill deeper into the District discipline data.

Standard 3: Create Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA's) and Student Support Plans (SSP's) to support consistency across all staff for the small percent of the students who require such a plan

When the staff brainstorms proactive supports, keep in mind the importance of communication needs, instructional needs, proactive sensory support needs (provided through a daily sensory diet), and a consistent schedule (e.g., picture, written, auditory, etc.). In Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Teams, the range of expertise can be found with the speech and language clinician in the area of communication, occupational therapist in the areas of sensory integration, general and special educators attending to Identity Relevant Teaching and Learning, and the special educator attending to the appropriate sensory schedule.

The C3 Teams must then analyze their results as a team and determine the top three behaviors to move on to use the information collected in the FBA to create a proactive Student Support Plan (SSP). See Appendix D for example forms.

Essential Next Steps:

1.   The District will provide professional development specific to how to develop Proactive Student Behavioral plans that are equitable and identity relevant.

2.   The District needs to involve building engineers in all aspects of middle and high school safety policies and practices in partnership with the school resource officers and school administrators.

Students with Significant Disabilities

The Burlington Area School District provides educational services for students with significant intellectual disabilities in centered-based programs and schools. Over thirty years of research confirms that students with significant disabilities should receive instruction in the natural environment (the environment the activity naturally occurs within for individuals without disabilities) or setting (Brown, 1988).

First, many educators continue to believe that students with significant disabilities need to be isolated in the special room down the hall. Often directors of student services and

special education wait until they have enough students with a particular label for example, students with autism, that they can then segregate in one classroom in a school that often has extra classroom space versus the schools and classrooms the child would attend if not disabled.

Second, educators often point with pride at their special classrooms. However, we know from research that students with significant disabilities often do not generalize skills learned in segregated environments, like these classrooms, but are better able to generalize skills learned in natural environments (Brown et al., 1983).

Third, schools continue to provide separate buses or transportation for students with disabilities and use such practices for large group field trips for functional skill development in the community. What we know is that when we place people with disabilities in groups with others who are only like themselves, we take away their individual identities and dignity, and deprive students without disability labels the opportunity to learn with and develop friendships with students of all abilities.

Fourth, because it is sometimes difficult to plan individual employment opportunities for students with significant disabilities, schools are resorting to teaching vocational skills to students as a segregated group within their buildings. These practices are in contradiction to the District's inclusive aspirations. Moreover, these students are often asked to complete vocational tasks that would be demeaning for a peer without a disability to complete. In so doing, we elicit pity for students with significant disabilities which in turn undermines their dignity and self-respect.

Finally, if a student with significant challenges is included in the general education classroom, they are often assigned an individual teaching assistant, and then the child's education becomes the responsibility of the teaching assistant and general education classroom teacher, neither of whom may have seen the child's individualized educational plan or may not be able to implement that plan. These ineffective practices are initiated and continue in absence of setting district-wide Equity Non-Negotiables, that are inclusive of all students and of realigning staff in support of co-planning and co-serving teams to best support all learners in natural proportions in the core of teaching and learning.

Research and practice have shown that it is possible to educate children with significant disabilities in the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled. Brown identifies eight principles and practices educators must consider supporting an integrated and comprehensive education for students who experience significant disabilities:

1. Neighborhood Schools
2. Age-Appropriate General Education Classrooms and Instructional Practices

3. Proportional Representation

4. Functional Skill Development

5. Non-School Community Environments

6. Principle of Partial Participation

7. Student/Family Preferences

8. Opportunities for Real Work

Essential Next Steps

1.   The District will complete professional development in support of proactively supporting students with significant needs in proportionally represented school and community environments.

D.   Leveraging Policy and Funding

<u>Align Human Resource Systems</u>

Often within a deficit-based system, the roles of educators are reactionary and many feel that they cannot meet the needs of all the students. Special educators discussed how they are aligned to student IEP's, rather than co-planning teams. Teachers in the area of advanced learning and English Language Learners believed that they had no alternative but to remove students due to their caseloads. Most specialist teachers move from classroom to classroom "helping out," or "pulling-out" but are not organized to Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3).

When the system is inverted to an asset-based system; one in which students are proportionally represented across all identities in the core of teaching and learning, staff roles transform from responding to student performance to facilitating student learning. Teachers are responsible for intentionally developing each other's capacity to better meet the needs of all students the first time the concept is taught, thus requiring the need to re-think those practices associated with traditional roles. When those traditional practices are inverted from reactionary to proactive or asset-based, teachers are better able to co-plan to co-serve and move to a co-learning paradigm. At that time, position descriptions, evaluation practices, and interview posting should be aligned to the District's Principles of Excellence.

In addition, a focus group theme across staff, community, and students included the need to hire staff who represent the diversity of the state or region. One focus group member identified key local universities who regularly graduate highly effective educators of color.

Essential Next Steps

1. All educators (teachers and administrators) are responsible for equitable structures and practices that shift the District culture of inequities through identity relevant, high-quality teaching and learning for all student's vs hiring one administrator to be responsible for equity in the District, such as an Equity Director.

2. The District and Board must create all position descriptions and interview questions for all District positions in alignment to the District's Equity Principles of Excellence.

3. The District and Board must create strategic partnerships with local universities and local organizations, and develop a district "grow your own program" in partnership with community members and local organizations to increase the number of high quality, diverse educational staff.

4. The District and Board must create strategic partnerships with local universities and local community organizations to increase the number of diverse educational staff. Hiring and retaining more diverse staff are predicated on the District being serious about their equity efforts as no staff of color will want to work or stay in the District if that is not so. In addition, given the large Hispanic population in the District and in the community, and the large Hispanic population with bachelor's degrees in the community, the District should invest in grow your own teacher and administrator programs to attract and retain Hispanic staff members who go on to receive their education degrees and teach and lead in the District.

5. The District needs to create concrete, routine mechanisms to ensure uncertified staff in the District, feel valued and their input is routinely sought on related decisions in the District, and the District establishes a clear communication system that thoroughly informs support staff of information that is crucial to their work effectiveness.

Leverage Funding

Staff believed that resources across the District were well managed. It will be important to create a system where expenditures can be re-evaluated by cross checking with the District's Equity Principles for Excellence. How a district spends money defines their priorities. When money is spent in alignment to the District's Equity Principles of Excellence, the priorities of what matters to the District are clear. This can include professional development, the increase or decrease of specific positions, determining that financially supporting alternative

education programs through segregated practices are not in alignment to the Principles for Excellence, etc.

As the District confirms their Equity Principles for Excellence, all policy and funding decisions can be cross-checked to consistently operationalizes and defines high quality teaching and learning for all students.

Essential Next Steps:

1. The District and Board will, upon the development of the District Principles of Equity and Excellence or District Equity Non-Negotiables, complete an analysis of District expenditure practices and eliminate those expenses that do not align to them.

2. The District will conduct an equity audit of student demographic representation in all extra and co-curricular activities for example in drama, football, music program, student council, etc.

3. The District and Schools will increase options and access (late bus) for those students who may have limited access to student activities and athletics and provide financial support to students and families (in a way that does not demean) to ensure students have the equipment and materials needed to fully participate.

4. The District needs to create concrete, routine mechanisms to ensure uncertified staff in the District, feel valued and their input is routinely sought on related decisions in the District, and the District establishes a clear communication system that thoroughly informs support staff of information that is crucial to their work effectiveness.

Cross-Check Policy and Procedures

The District should cross-check District policies and procedures against the District's Equity Principles for Excellence as well as person first and asset-based language. Often districts choose to do this work as part of their policy revision cycle. Some policies are more pertinent than others, therefore rather than continue with a current policy, despite its contradictions to the Equity Principles for Excellence, it should be revised as soon as possible. That is, policies related to the implementation of curriculum and instruction, discipline, Title 1 supports, special education, gifted and talented, English as a Second Language or linguistically diverse, and so forth should be revised after the District's Equity Principles of Excellence are solidified.

In addition, all policies should be reviewed for person first and asset-based language. Any deficit-based language or non-person first language should be edited and changed to asset-based language that support proactive practices. The District Leadership Team can often determine the policies most essential to revise in this way. The list of policies selected for immediate revisions are then forwarded to the School Board Policy and Procedure Committee. The most appropriate time to continue the dialogue of the importance of the Equity Principles of Excellence and how to operationalize such Equity Principles is when the information is presented to the School Board. Based on the analysis, the District will need to create a plan for revisions and a timeline for any procedural changes.

Most importantly, all staff need professional development in non-discrimination policies and procedures.

Essential Next Steps

1. Upon the development of the District's Equity Principles of Excellence, complete a cross check of policies and procedures relative to the Equity Principles of Excellence and person first and asset-based language to better leverage high quality teaching and learning for all and its sustainability

2. All staff should receive professional development in non-discrimination policies and procedures.

V.   Summary of Essential Next Steps

<u>Institute and Sustain a Comprehensive Anti-Bullying/Anti-Harassment Policy and Practice</u>

Participants across races, ages, and amount of time they have lived in the District/community identified rampant, unaddressed, bullying, teasing, and harassment at all grade levels (student to student and in some cases staff to student) that has been occurring for decades through the present in the District. Participants agreed that students fear reporting incidents because of retaliation students have received for reporting. Participants were not able to identify any aspects of the District's harassment or anti-harassment policy or what the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and federal law require related to such policies and practices.

1.   Prior to any other essential next steps, the District must:

   a. immediately adopt a District Anti-Bullying/Anti-Harassment policy that includes reporting requirements, a robust system for tracking complaints and resolutions, and a strong system in place that protects individuals who report in alignment with requirements from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and relevant federal law,
   b. inform all students, families, and community members about the policy,
   c. provide intensive training to all staff and Board members about the policy,
   d. develop a robust data system that tracks in detail the complaints and their resolutions,
   e. the policy includes measures to inform parents, students, and the community about resolutions to the maximum extent allowable by law.

<u>Know the History of Educational Marginalization</u>

2. All educators and board members complete professional development on the educational history of marginalization to better understand current structures and practices to lay the groundwork to begin a systematic and pragmatic journey to impact systems and policy at the core, verses expecting students and families to report occurrences of harm in order to correct systems of inequities.

3. All educators and board members complete professional development through an analysis of current educational structures and practices in relation to historical marginalization and how it relates to the District's current over and under-representation within the equity audit.

Shift from Deficit to Assets-Based Thinking, Language

4. All educators and board members, participate in activities to reflect and better understand stereotypes, myths, and assumptions to interrupt deficit-based language, thinking and practices for adults and students within the District and Burlington community.

5. All educators and board members must model a shift from deficit-based language and practices to asset-based language and practices and set consistent expectations of all students within the school and educational community venues, including social media.

Engage in Identity Development

6. All educators and board members complete consistent and authentic professional development specific to identity development and its impact on high quality teaching and learning for all students.

7. All educators and board members should participate in opportunities of their choice to increase their understanding of identities different from their own.

Apply Equity Research

8. All educators and board members should know and understand the research on equity and best practices across all student identifiers, such as but not limited to special education, ELL, advanced Learners, RtI, relative to current practices.

Develop Equity Principles of Excellence

9. The District and Board should create District Principles of Excellence to operationalize the District's mission and vision.

Conduct Equity Audit

10. The District should complete a District and per school equity audit annually to measure the District's and individual school's progress.

Construct Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn (C3) Teams

11. All Educators must understand the role and function of Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Teams to create equitable practices for all learners.

12. The District should develop C3 Teams to proactively support a diverse normative in the core of teaching and learning

13. All educators will facilitate learning through heterogeneous grouping practices for all learners, while supporting 1:1 instruction based on interest and student need in the core of teaching and learning.

Re-Align Staff and Students

14. The District must begin by consistent staffing for special education, ELL, Tier 2 and 3, across all elementary schools and secondary. Based on differences in students and individual needs, additional paraprofessionals may be added.

15. The District Office and schools should begin a process to realign staff for Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Teams (C3 Teams) and create all environments in the core of teaching and learning and extra-curricular that are proportionally represented upon completing the work under the Essential Next Steps under the Focus on Equity.

16. The District must support all students with disabilities attending the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled.

17. The District should consider ways to reallocate resources from tuitioned out placements (although minimal).

18. The secondary educators must review the demographics of the programs at the High School and phase out those programs that marginalize students by race, ability, class, and language by shifting to C3 Teams for required courses to develop the success of all learners in the core of teaching and learning.

Design Identity Relevant Teaching for All Learners

19. The District will provide professional development in support of instructional practices and strategies that have the greatest impact on student achievement.

20. The District will evaluate current curriculum relative to the identities in the Wisconsin Pupil Nondiscrimination law and aligned with the intent of the law.

21. All educators will complete lesson development in support of all learners the first time the skill or concept is taught.

Design Identity Relevant Learning and Curriculum for All Learners

22. The District Leadership Team must complete an analysis of all curriculum and resources 4k-12, specifically books/resources, authors, curriculum, and content to affirm that it reflects a diverse normative.

23. The District must provide professional development specific to the usage of books/resources, authors, content that represents a diverse normative.

Discipline and Behavior

24. The District will provide professional development specific to how to develop Proactive Student Behavioral plans that are equitable and identity relevant.

25. The District needs to involve building engineers in all aspects of middle and high school safety policies and practices in partnership with the school resource officers and school administrators.

Students with Significant Disabilities

26. The District will complete professional development in support of proactively supporting students with significant needs in proportionally represented school and community environments.

Align Human Resource Systems

27. All educators (teachers and administrators) are responsible for equitable structures and practices that shift the District culture of inequities through identity relevant, high-quality teaching and learning for all student's vs hiring one administrator to be responsible for equity in the District, such as an Equity Director.

28. The District and Board must create all position descriptions and interview questions for all District positions in alignment to the District's Equity Principles of Excellence.

29. The District and Board must create strategic partnerships with local universities and local community organizations to increase the number of diverse educational staff. Hiring and retaining more diverse staff are predicated on the District being serious about their equity efforts as no staff of color will want to work or stay in the District if that is not so.

    a. In addition, given the large Hispanic population in the District and in the community, and the large Hispanic population with bachelor's degrees in the community, the District should invest in grow your own teacher and administrator programs to attract and retain Hispanic staff members who go on to receive their education degrees and teach and lead in the District.

30. The District needs to create concrete, routine mechanisms to ensure uncertified staff in the District, feel valued and their input is routinely sought on related decisions in the District, and the District establishes a clear communication system that thoroughly informs support staff of information that is crucial to their work effectiveness.

Leverage Funding

31. The District and Board will, upon the development of the District Principles of Equity and Excellence or District Equity Non-Negotiables, complete an analysis of District expenditure practices and eliminate those expenses that do not align to them.

32. The District will conduct an equity audit of student demographic representation in all extra and co-curricular activities for example in drama, football, music program, student council, etc.

33. The District and Schools will increase options and access (late bus) for those students who may have limited access to student activities and athletics and provide financial support to students and families (in a way that does not demean) to ensure students have the equipment and materials needed to fully participate.

Cross-Check Policy and Procedures

34. Upon the development of the District's Equity Principles of Excellence, complete a cross check of policies and procedures relative to the Equity Principles of Excellence and person first and asset-based language to better leverage high quality teaching and learning for all and its sustainability.

35. All staff should receive comprehensive professional development in non-discrimination policies and procedures.

VI.   Appendices

Appendix A
Skills at a Glance

Skills at a Glance (ISAAG) Template

Student Name_____

Grade_____

Students Areas of Engagement_____ Date ISAAG Created
_____

_____

Check those subjects that the skill will be focused on and the application of instructional strategies

	Skills/Goals in Priority Order	Specific Instructional Strategies	Math	English Language Arts	Science	Social Studies	Specials/Electives
1							
2							
3							
4							

BURLINGTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
EQUITY EVALUATION
INTEGRATED COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS FOR EQUITY

INTEGRATED
COMPREHENSIVE
SYSTEMS FOR EQUITY™

ICS

5						

Appendix B
Lesson Plan Template

Co-Plan to Co-Serve to Co-Learn Team (C3 Team) Lesson Plan

Standards/Learning Targets:

Unit/Lesson:

Large Group Instruction (10%):

Student Grouped By	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
Identity Relevant Engagement						
Identity Relevant Assessment and Expression						
Identity Relevant Instruction representation						
Staffing						

ISAAG Instructional Strategies					

Staff Completing Co-Planning

Signature   Title

_____   _____

_____   _____

Appendix C
Behavioral Support Plan Template
STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN (SSP)

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1. LIST THE PROACTIVE SYSTEM ASPECTS THAT ARE IN PLACE:
(INTEGRATED, PROPORTIONALLY REPRESENTED ENVIRONMENT (E.G., NO PULLOUT, ABILITY GROUPING OR TRACKING); ANTI-OPPRESSIVE TEACHER AND TEACHING)

2. LIST THE PROACTIVE SYSTEM ASPECTS THAT NEED TO BE DEVELOPED:
(INTEGRATED, PROPORTIONALLY REPRESENTED ENVIRONMENT (E.G., NO PULLOUT, ABILITY GROUPING OR TRACKING); ANTI-OPPRESSIVE TEACHER AND TEACHING)

3. LIST PROACTIVE STUDENT SUPPORTS THAT SHOULD BE PUT IN PLACE TO PREVENT CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR (e.g., morning swim, schedule, small heterogeneous grouping, sensory breaks, reinforcement, etc.),

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STUDENT BEHAVIOR	INTITIAL ADULT RESPONSE	FOLLOW-UP ADULT RESPONSE	RESOLUTION	Teachers Notes/Date

SIGNATURES OF SSP PARTICIPANTS
ROLE/RELATIONSHIP   DATE

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____