Pittsburgh Public Schools
Racial Equity Audit
September 2023
Our Project Team

**Krystal O’Leary, M.Ed.**
Director
17 years of DEI experience

**Heather Curry, Ph.D.**
Senior Consultant
5 years of DEI experience

**Areas of Expertise:**
- Organizational Culture
- Project Management
- Training Development and Facilitation
- Program Design
- Non-Profit Leadership
- K-12 Teacher and Education Management
- Partner Engagement
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Organizational Analysis
- Training Design & Facilitation
- Project Management
- Public Sector Leadership
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Gender Studies
- Curriculum Design & Delivery
- Adult Learning
- Community Engagement
Our Project Team

Stephanie Intal
Senior Consultant
5 years of DEI experience

Areas of Expertise:
Organizational Analysis
Facilitation
Project and Program Management
Quantitative Data Analysis
Education Practice

Juan Osuna, MA
Senior Consultant
10 years of DEI experience

Areas of Expertise:
Project Management
Policy Analysis
Organizational Culture
Quantitative Data Analysis
Stakeholder Engagement
Best Practice Recommendations

Jaime Hoffman, LLMSW
Consultant
5 years of DEI experience

Areas of Expertise:
Program Evaluation
Stakeholder Engagement
Policy Review
Data Analysis
Quality Improvement
Social Impact of Programs
Our Project Team

David Bushnell, MA
Senior Consultant

6 Years of DEI experience

Areas of Expertise:
- Assessment Design
- Policy Analysis
- Organizational Improvement
- Quantitative Data Analysis
- Community Landscape Analysis
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Best Practice Recommendations

Lamont Browne, EdD
Senior Technical Advisor

20 years of DEI experience

Areas of Expertise:
- Program Design
- Leadership Development
- Training and Facilitation
- Quality Assurance
- Project Management
- Organizational Culture
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Public Sector and Non-Profit Leadership
- K-12 School and Student Performance
Overview of Policy Analysis
Policy Analysis: Overall Insights

**Academic Performance**

Gendered language ("his/her") is present throughout several documents.
Data on academic performance weights factors tied to systems of inequity (e.g., attendance).
Language and accessibility are key considerations for updates.

**Discipline & Behavior**

PPS has centered restorative practices reinforcement for positive behavior.
PPS needs a clear framework for restorative practices resolution processes.
PPS policies around intent to distribute are problematic.

**Community and Family Engagement**

PPS appears to be doing significant work to ensure that families and caregivers are informed and can be involved.
The Parent School Community Council provides clear role definition for Community Councils and indicates that the District is trying to be responsive to parent and caregiver needs.
Data Analysis Findings
Data Analysis

We analyzed **45,737 students** that attended PPS within the last 5 school years.

### Gender Student Breakdown
- Female: 48%
- Male: 52%

### ELL Student Breakdown
- ELL: 7%
- Not in ELL: 93%

### Gifted and IEP Student Breakdown
- Gifted: 7%
- IEP: 24%
- Not IEP or Gifted: 69%

Average Student Score Card

Based off student data from the last 5 school years, the average PPS Student is a..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL Status</td>
<td>Not ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP Status</td>
<td>Not IEP or Gifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing Homelessness</td>
<td>Not Experiencing Homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Foster Care</td>
<td>Not in Foster care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Name**

Allderdice High School
Data Analysis

Magnet Programs

With the largest programs being Science and Technology and Obama, No Language Experience, around 9,000 students have participated in the magnet program. About 5% of participants withdraw from the programs with most attending Obama and Montessori.

Racial demographics of the magnet programs mimic the overall population of the district.

AP Programs

Like the district’s Magnet program, PPS’s AP program participation reflects their population with about 2.1K high schoolers participating.

About 55% of students score high enough in their AP exam to be eligible for college credit. Of those students, 78% of students were white, with only 6% being African American.

Performance

On average, a PPS student GPA is 2.58, with the school district's graduation rate at 78%. Ultimately, Asian and White students perform significantly higher than their peers, with African American students performing the lowest.
Data Analysis

Suspensions
Predominately, White schools average about 0.2 suspensions over the last 5 years, while predominately Black schools have averaged about 1.06.

### Majority White Campuses with the Highest Mean Suspension Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mean Suspensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colfax K-8</td>
<td>M=0.2(SD±0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord K-5</td>
<td>M=0.2(SD±0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPA 6-12</td>
<td>M=0.2 (SD±0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brookline PreK-8</td>
<td>M=0.21(SD±0.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Majority Black Campuses with the Highest Mean Suspension Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mean Suspensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King PreK-8</td>
<td>M=1.8(SD±3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milliones 6-12</td>
<td>M=1.6(SD±2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry HS</td>
<td>M=1.2(SD±2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westinghouse Academy 6-12</td>
<td>M=1.2(SD±2.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Alternative Campuses with the Highest Mean Suspension Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mean Suspensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clayton Academy</td>
<td>M=3.3(SD±3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver Citywide Academy</td>
<td>M=3.1(SD±3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement Center</td>
<td>M=1.8(SD±2.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data showed a statistically significant difference in number of days suspended between African Americans and Non-African American Students.

Of the 6,794 African American Students who received suspensions, data showed significantly higher likelihood of suspension and a statistically significant difference in the number of days suspended between African American and Non-African American students at a 95% confidence level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Mean Days Suspended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-African American</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommendation:** MGT recommends looking into the alignment of school disciplinary practices throughout the district to ensure equity amongst students.
Survey Responses: Faculty and Staff Parents and Caregivers
Engagement Demographic Overview

**Staff Survey Count**
- 195 Staff completed the survey
  - 59% of respondents are white
  - 23% identified as other
  - 18% are Black or African American
  - 86% of teachers in PPS are white
  - 53% of students in PPS are Black or African American

**Voluntary Responses**
- Survey responses with less than 10 respondents were grouped in the next highest level of organization

**Parent & Caregiver Survey Count**
- 375 Parents & Caregivers completed the survey
  - Black and African-American: 54%
  - White: 10%
  - Other: 8%
  - Hispanic: 6%
  - Asian 6%

**Voluntary Responses**
- Survey responses with less than 10 respondents were grouped in the next highest level of organization
Staff and Faculty Survey Results by Race: Academic Achievement

State assessments are designed equitably for Black, African, and African American students.

PPS has sufficient resources for struggling learners.

State Assessments

Supports for Struggling Learners
Parent and Caregiver Survey Results by Race: Academic Achievement

State tests, like Keystone and the PSSA, are designed fairly for Black, African, and African American students.

- **State Assessments**
  - Other: 47% Favorable, 23% Neutral, 20% Unfavorable
  - Black or African American: 56% Favorable, 21% Neutral, 23% Unfavorable
  - Asian: 73% Favorable
  - Hispanic or Latino/a/x: 42% Favorable
  - White: 54% Favorable
  - Prefer not to disclose: 58% Favorable

- **Supports for Struggling Learners**
  - Other: 27% Favorable
  - Black or African American: 24% Favorable
  - Asian: 0% Favorable
  - Hispanic or Latino/a/x: 12% Favorable
  - White: 13% Favorable
  - Prefer not to disclose: 8% Favorable
Staff and Faculty Survey Results by Race: Special Programs

Black, African, and African American students have equitable access to gifted, advanced placement, magnet, and IB programming.

**Access**

- Other: 69% Favorable, 25% Black or African American, 8% White
- Black or African American: 69% Favorable, 20% Black or African American, 4% White
- White: 69% Favorable, 44% Black or African American, 37% White

Black, African, and African American students are supported for academic success in gifted, advanced placement, magnet, and IB programs.

**Support**

- Other: 72% Favorable, 16% Black or African American, 22% White
- Black or African American: 72% Favorable, 28% Black or African American, 22% White
- White: 72% Favorable, 56% Black or African American, 44% White
Parent and Caregiver Survey Results by Race:
Special Programs

Black, African, and African American students have fair and equal access to gifted, advanced placement, magnet, and IB programming.

Black, African, and African American students are supported for academic success in gifted, advanced placement, magnet, and IB programs.

Access

Support
Staff and Faculty Survey Results by Race: Special Education

Students with disabilities are equitably supported in their education.

- Other: 59% Favorable, 25% Neutral, 16% Unfavorable
- Black or African American: 56% Favorable, 28% Neutral, 16% Unfavorable
- White: 40% Favorable, 14% Neutral, 47% Unfavorable
Parent and Caregivers Survey Results by Race: Special Education

Students with disabilities are fairly and equally supported for academic success.

- Other: 33% Favorable, 20% Neutral, 47% Unfavorable
- Black or African American: 32% Favorable, 36% Neutral, 33% Unfavorable
- Asian: 64% Favorable, 18% Neutral, 18% Unfavorable
- Hispanic or Latino/a/x: 50% Favorable, 50% Neutral, 0% Unfavorable
- White: 40% Favorable, 35% Neutral, 38% Unfavorable
- Prefer not to disclose: 58% Favorable, 4% Neutral, 38% Unfavorable

Legend: Favorable, Neutral, Unfavorable
Staff and Faculty Survey Results by Race: Equity in Discipline

Disciplinary practices are equitable for all students.

- Other: 50% Favorable, 19% Neutral, 31% Unfavorable
- Black or African American: 64% Favorable, 16% Neutral, 20% Unfavorable
- White: 31% Favorable, 14% Neutral, 56% Unfavorable
Parent and Caregiver Results by Race: Equity in Discipline

School rules are fair and equitable for all students.

- Other: 47% Favorable, 13% Neutral, 40% Unfavorable
- Black or African American: 40% Favorable, 17% Neutral, 35% Unfavorable
- Asian: 40% Favorable, 27% Neutral, 36% Unfavorable
- Hispanic or Latino/a/x: 50% Favorable, 25% Neutral, 25% Unfavorable
- White: 42% Favorable, 17% Neutral, 40% Unfavorable
- Prefer not to disclose: 58% Favorable, 13% Neutral, 29% Unfavorable
Parents and Caregivers Experience Racism within PPS

- “My children have been called racial slurs by other children, the "N" word and a few others. Along with being physically hit. The school did nothing to the bullies.”

- “Our children are taught and guided and treated from a place of fear. My child has been in situations where the FIRST reaction was to punish him with no regard to resolving his issues. I don’t believe that this is for any other reason than he is black.”

- “One of the teachers made a distinction between students of color and Caucasian students. She has refused to help students of color...always redirects to ask other students. But would assist Caucasian students with no problem.”

Parents Have Observed Disparities in District and School Practices

- “The fact that PPS has a vast number of Black students who live through trauma, yet there are no resources, processes, or systems in place to assist these students, is an [alleged] act of gross negligence on the part of PPS.

- “[I hope] PPS sees the disparity in the proportion of students in CAS/AP courses who are not white. They have experienced racially insensitive comments made by teachers. This question is about Racial Equity, but they have also experienced sexist comments made by teachers.”

- “It was very difficult to have my African American child examined for an IEP. I was ignored when I sent emails to principals, school counselors and staff when I requested support for my child.”
❖ Staff and Faculty Have Seen or Experienced Racism in PPS

➢ “Handling microaggressions is difficult for me. I tend to let them pass but tuck them in my soul and then learn to distance myself from that person. When someone states a microaggression towards me, I need to be better, braver, and more vocal.”

➢ “Microaggressions from white staff and administration. Black students are not valued and placed in advanced placement classes when they do have a proficient/advanced score and Black students are purposely overlooked for being referred to as gifted.”

❖ Staff and Faculty want more Equality, Fairness, and Safety

➢ “Schools will be treated fairly in respect to capital improvements instead of neglecting schools in majority minority neighborhoods and enrollment.”

➢ “Safety of staff and students needs to be a priority. Mandatory harassment and equity training. Enforcement of equity policies and practices. More of a focus and emphasis on closing the achievement gap. More counseling and support services for students including mental health, vision, dental etc...”

➢ “Better resources and safer buildings. I would like to see teachers more supported by having more interventionists interacting with kids in the halls and in classrooms. “
PPS Staff and Faculty | Open Ended Responses

❖ Envisioning more Diversity in Staff and Faculty:
   Where would you like PPS to be in 3-5 years?

➢ “PPS has repositioned its faculty, staff, and administration, in addition to recruiting more diverse individuals into the PPS family, to ensure a more diverse body of individuals serving the PPS students, families, and communities.”

➢ “I'd like PPS to be true about working on behalf of students. That includes developing a trained staff that is reflective of the student body and engaging with the community in order to bring more diverse experiences to students.”

➢ “More intentional about hiring diverse staff and leadership. Potentially working closely with Pittsburgh Promise to cultivate their students/graduates to obtain jobs at PPS.”

❖ Staff and Faculty need more Educational and Training Opportunities that are Appropriately, Professionally Supported

➢ “…the Quetzal Anti-Racist math workshop series that SciTech and Obama participated in was so incredibly helpful-I would love if the district purchased the ‘year two’ series for Quetzal to lead/for SciTech and Obama teachers to participate in and then purchase ‘year one’ for other district math teachers.”

➢ “Equity training… was short, inconsistent, and done by people who…weren't equipped to do it…Race equity training needs to be done very carefully and must be done by people who have no previous relationships with the staff, as everyone has to trust the trainers for it to work. We also need TIME...The PDs that are worth it are those that are at least 1 week long and done by the professionals who aren't connected to the school district.”
Focus Group and Interview Key Themes
MGT Conducted Focus Groups and Interviews with:

- Families and Caregivers
- Students
- Community Members
- Equity Advisory Panel
- Staff and Faculty
- Administration (Principals and APs)
- Superintendent and Executive Cabinet
- Board of Directors
Key Themes: Shared Language; Trust; Resource Inequities

❖ **PPS Needs to Establish Shared Language**

➢ “Clear communication to help all stakeholders understand what PPS means when we say diversity and inclusion.”

❖ **PPS Needs to Establish Trust**

➢ “There is generational hurt present in the space with our colleagues. It is retriggering some trauma that we have experienced personally and professionally in PPS. There has to be a sense of acknowledgement that there was hurt that happened. There has to be a culture shift to acknowledge the hurt/trauma and respond to all things not just some things in certain places”

❖ **PPS Needs to Address Resource Inequities**

➢ “Black schools not getting resources.”

➢ “Resources are listed but not explained, you must be educated and dig for resources which is why some have access but many do not.”

➢ “Sometimes our families and students are not aware of the resources available to them... There is a lack of trust because they bring up the issues and they don’t give solutions or the solutions they give are not appropriate or they are completely ignored.”
Key Themes: Safety; Mental Health

❖ PPS Needs to Assess and Address Safety

➢ “[Safety concerns are] magnified when there are Black, brown, gay, any diverse staff don’t feel safe.”

➢ “I don’t think they feel safe in showing up as themselves. There are adults that roll their eyes. For example, Black girls feel like they are seen as loud and disruptive.”

➢ “Many are still taught to be seen and not heard; to keep your mouth shut; don’t cause ruckus; and don’t be an agitator. As long as these are mindsets that exist, we are not safe.”

❖ PPS Needs to Provide Support for Mental Health

➢ “Children are not appropriately support when their community has had a violent incident. more has to be offered to help meet them at the schools when they arrive to school.”

➢ “We expect too much from our student. We have students who might not be eating or tired or have a lot going on at home and we expect them to cater to our ideals. We are doing all these things but not once did we do a wellness check to see where their mind is at before we get to the educational part...We need aim to teach but we need to reach.”
Key Themes: Systemic Racism

❖ **PPS Needs to Address Systemic Racism**

- “The ones who are least able and least advantaged remain disadvantaged by the way we create the systems.”
- “The idea of systemic racism permeates the schools—presumption of prejudice in the schools; feeling that you are less than...”
- “Black families know that they have to attend school where white students are attending to get the best opportunities.”
- “DEI must be intentional. It doesn’t happen just because it’s good. It has to be a high priority. It has to be intentional and driven, even to the point of unpopularity. If people dislike us, even hate us, because we are pushing a DEI platform, so be it. We didn’t come to this non-paying job to be liked. We came to serve the kids. If that’s the priority, we’re in the wrong business.”
Overview of Emerging Practices
Nationwide School District Racial Equity Emerging Practices

- **Ongoing Assessment:**
  - **District-wide Progress Monitoring:** Gauges the success of equity initiatives to ensure a level of transparency for the community as it offers a broad overview or a snapshot of demographics and district data through an equity lens.
  - **Equity Report Card for Schools:** Offers a dashboard that drills down into a school-specific Equity Report Card focuses on key demographic groups most impacted by equity initiatives.

- **Cultural Competency Assessment of all Faculty and Staff:** Helps schools and districts identify knowledge and competency gaps, tailor training to meet those needs, and create learning environments for students and faculty alike.

- **Cultural Competency Training Opportunities:** Ensures ongoing learning opportunities for staff is critical to creating an inclusive school community.

- **Conduct work with a Diverse Team:** Ensures a diversity of people have input on developing racial equity initiatives within the district through key elements such as instructional, curriculum and programming development, family and community engagement and support, and equity in discipline is crucial to creating district-wide buy-in.

- **Collaborate with Other Districts:** Allows educators and staff across multiple districts to communicate around effective models for addressing racial equity

- **Staff Dedicated to Racial Equity:** Creates staff dedicated to measuring, tracking, and implementing policies related to specific racial equity mandates.
Recommendations & Next Steps
Based on the directives from the MOU, suggestions listed above in parent and caregiver and staff and faculty insights, MGT’s experience with similar municipalities and general emerging practices regarding racial equity initiatives, MGT would like to present the following recommendations that PPS should consider implementing and including in their Racial Equity Action Plan.
## Key Recommendations: MOU (V. Instructional Support)

### MOU Item: V. Instructional Support

| • Commit to and provide Administration and Faculty ongoing professional development and training opportunities focused on racial equity, cultural competency, and culturally responsive strategies. |
| • Provide mental health training and support for students, staff, and faculty that is proactive, preventative, trauma-responsive and healing-centered. |
| • Provide ongoing review of course offerings to ensure Culturally Responsive Instructional Practices. Crosswalk with grade-specific academic achievement goals to ensure alignment with improvements in the academic achievement gap. |
| • Design the classroom so that diverse, positive cultural values are reflected and embedded in instructional materials and curricula. |
| • Collaborate with local invested partners to infuse and inform curriculum with local knowledge, talent and expertise across knowledge bases, including academic and trades practitioners. This creates a classroom oriented toward future success and enriches the relationship between PPS and its communities of impact. |
| • Increase in-classroom support for all classrooms, but in particular those are experiencing acute academic achievement challenges, as defined by the MOU, section V (5). |
## MOU Item: VI. Equity in Discipline

- Prioritize and communicate a clearly outlined Restorative Practices policy and process to include:
  - Specific logic model for infractions corresponding with severity
  - Specific ways Restorative Practices avoid retributive penalties and seek to make aggrieved parties whole
  - Specific ways Restorative Practices ensure that all students have equitable access to the process

- Compare policies between schools with exceptionally high and low discipline averages, and identify differences in school cultures that may be contributing to racial inequities in disciplinary practices and outcomes.

- Ensure that live translation services are available to students and parents of students who are involved in a disciplinary process.

- Ensure that Restorative Practices act as the guiding principle for disciplinary collaborations (known elsewhere as “staffings” that bring together, among other participants, students, caregivers, teachers, case managers, any legal representatives, and specialists).

- Compare and contrast policies and practices between schools that have a suspension average over one and under 0.3. Adapt best practices from schools with low suspension averages.

- MGT would suggest a deep legal analysis of the District’s discipline policies.
### MOU Item: VII. Reducing the Achievement Gap

- Offer learning support for technology to parents and caregivers so that they can support their students’ learning objectives, with special attention to grades 3-8.

- Conduct ongoing analyses of differences in grade distribution across Black and African American students vs. other racial and ethnic students and address instructional strategies (c.f. Flipped Classroom and CRP) to engage, in particular, diverse student learners.

- Revisit previous teacher pipeline recruitment and hiring strategies and examine other emerging strategies to attract and hire racially diverse teachers (e.g., assessing bias in standardized requirements for incoming teachers and offering alternative entry requirements, such as GPA) (Holloway et al., 2021).

- Assess retention rates and address retention strategies for racially diverse teachers and support staff. Black and African American males, in particular, are far underrepresented in the District.

- Provide weekly course-specific tutoring services and office hours to all students; require attendance for those with a C+ or below and provide progress reports.
Key Recommendations: MOU (VIII. Equity in Special Education and Special Programs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOU Item: VIII. Equity in Special Education and Special Programs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reconsider attendance weights for Magnet program matriculation. Attendance does impact student success, but truancy is often the result of other life conditions and constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that AP and CAS students all have access to similar supports including school-supported versus independent coursework support (e.g., current PPS example: Tutor.com).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide ongoing professional development opportunities to teachers of AP and CAS classes and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide adequate time for teachers to create differentiated learning plans to accommodate students with exceptionality, neurodivergences, and learning disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide teachers with resources in order to maintain up-to-date practices (e.g. differentiated learning to accommodate different learning styles in the same classroom).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure opportunities for collaboration between caregivers, teachers, students, and specialists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure ongoing communication between teachers, caregivers, and specialists to address concerns, questions, and successes for students with exceptionalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide ongoing professional development for teachers relevant to special education strategies.</td>
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## MOU Item: IX. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Determine Racial Equity accountability metrics and transparent recommended, actionable, research-based practices led by the Administration and the Executive Committee, the Office of Equity, and the School Board.

- Establish priorities and urgency in managing tasks associated with recommendations during MGT’s Action and Implementation Planning sessions to begin in October. Review for fidelity at a frequency determined by the District. Updates to be reported to the EAP and the PHRC.

- Create Equity Report Cards, *accessible and available to the community* that summarize achievement, discipline, and special program data. Report cards are offered both for the District and for Schools.

- Develop school-specific Equity Action groups to maintain fidelity to the Racial Equity Action Plan, review initiatives, and ensure equity in instructional support and programming, special education and special programs support, and disciplinary practices.

- Use MGT’s PPS Progress Assessment Tool for ongoing evaluation.

- Use School Averages Cards (Appendix 1 in report) to track progress over time with regard to the disproportionate suspension rates between schools with predominately Black and African American students and schools with predominately white students. These can be generated annually.
### Additional Recommendations

#### Family and Community Engagement Recommendations

- Meet families, caregivers, and community members where they are, for example, resource learning sessions in libraries, grocery stores, churches, or at community events.
- Make live translation services available to students and parents of students (especially those involved in a disciplinary process).
- Consistently add translation services at the beginning of all community-facing documents.
- Consider including policies that require accommodating families and caregivers working non-fixed schedules to take part in PSCC meetings.
- Creating multiple modes of communicating district initiatives to families, faculty, staff, students, and the community.

#### Revisiting Prior Action Items from 2019 On Track to Equity

Increase Initiative Action Group (IAG) membership to include think-tank members from Universities, EAP representatives, parents and caregivers, school representatives and appropriate student representatives.

Succession plans for IAGs—proxy membership for Initiative Action Groups to ensure ongoing commitment to each initiative.

Standing meetings that engage all members and are oriented toward alignment and progress assessment.

Update On-Track to Equity Implementation Plan
- Gaps and Opportunities
- Progress in the last four years
- Regression in the last four years

### Policy Recommendations

- Modify language where possible to ensure gender-neutral language.
- Revise PPS Offerings and Options Guide to include non-resident guideline.
- PPS Parent and Family Engagement policies should define what constitutes “timely communication.”
Thank You

Action Planning to begin within next few weeks!