

Excellence with Equity: The Schools Our Children Deserve

A report researched and compiled for
the Chapel Hill Carrboro City School Administration and Board of Education
by *The Campaign for Racial Equity in Our Schools*,
a coalition of concerned citizens and local organizations.

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Table of Contents

Contributors to the Campaign for Racial Equity Report	2
Executive Summary	5
I. Introduction & Background.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Background.....	9
II. CHCCS: Racial Inequities by the Numbers	11
End of Grade Results	11
End of Course Results.....	13
Access to Gifted Education.....	14
ACT Test Results.....	15
Discipline	15
Graduation Rates.....	16
Differential Performance By Schools	16
III. Resource Allocation and Accountability in the District	18
IV. The Lived Experience of Stakeholders: Data from Listening Sessions	19
Method	19
Results.....	20
Table 1. Listening Session Results – Staff and Faculty.....	20
Table 2. Listening Session Results – Parents.....	28
Table 3. Listening Session Results – High School Students of Color	31
Themes from listening sessions	34
V. How Has the District Tried to Address Inequities?	35
Programs Focusing on Individual Students	35
District-wide Programs	39

Student Programs	41
VI. What Can We Learn From Others?	43
Models of Equitable Schools	43
Curriculum Design and Delivery that Promotes Equity	62
VII. Our Analysis: What Do We Make of What We've Learned?	67
VIII. Recommendations.....	71
EQUITY GOAL 1. Access and Inclusion.....	71
EQUITY GOAL 2. Personnel and Climate	72
EQUITY GOAL 3. Racially Literate Curriculum and Instruction	73
EQUITY GOAL 4. Disciplinary Policies and Practices.....	73
EQUITY GOAL 5. Resource Allocation and Distribution.....	73
EQUITY GOAL 6. Broad-based Community Participation in Equity Plans	74
EQUITY GOAL 7. Clear Equity Plan with Explicit Thoughtful Racial Equity Goals	74
EQUITY GOAL 8. Accountability.....	75
IX. Bibliography	76
X. Appendices.....	80
APPENDIX 1. Change in CHCCS District Racial Composition Over 25 Year Period	81
APPENDIX 2. Listening Sessions Protocol	82
APPENDIX 3. Listening Sessions: Questions for Parents	85
APPENDIX 4. Listening Sessions: Questions for Staff/Faculty	86
APPENDIX 5. Listening Sessions: Questions for Students	87

Executive Summary

Our school system is in crisis.

The mission of Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS) is “to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes to achieve their learning potential.” Though our school district is often lauded for its high scores and graduation rates, these figures obscure the reality of racial inequity, a reality that for most black and Latino students means a substantial and persistent chasm between educational goals and results.

Despite 25 years of initiatives meant to address the “achievement gap,” all outcomes within CHCCS can still be predicted by race, with white students’ outcomes in every area always above those of black and brown students. Across a number of metrics, we observe white students succeeding while students of color do not. To choose just two of many, only 20-30% of African American children meet standard achievement requirements for their grade level. Recent data reveal that 85% of black male students in 8th grade were unable to pass the end-of-grade reading test. We regard this as a critical failure of our local education system that requires an urgent response.

We believe that ideas promulgated hundreds of years ago about the inherent superiority of white people have kept us complacent about these significant and persistent inequities. We have failed to serve our students of color for many years, and that failure has at times been reasoned away by the idea that young black and brown children are less capable of success. Differences in outcomes have nothing to do with the ability or intelligence of young children of color and everything to do with a school system that privileges white ways of learning, teaching, thinking, and acting. In order to allow all children to thrive and learn, we must first understand and acknowledge the ways that schools benefit white students and disadvantage students and families of color and then make radical changes across the system to transform the schools. We cannot solve a race-based problem with race neutral solutions. We must address the root causes of racial inequities in order for all students to achieve. Only then will we see outcomes that are truly racially equitable.

We further believe that our school district can be a national leader in racially equitable K-12 education. The resources exist to direct changes in all aspects of the school district, from curriculum and pedagogy to gifted education and disciplinary approaches. All we require is the will to lead.

In this report, we compile and present quantitative data that documents educational inequities in our district. We also share qualitative data from listening sessions conducted over the last three months. The responses that we received from key stakeholders in the district – students, parents, and staff/faculty – reflect the lived experience of engagement with an inequitable system. Their responses illuminate the characteristics, culture, and practices of institutional and structural racism that are at the root of the District’s racially disparate outcomes.

Both kinds of data are deeply disturbing and both give us valuable information as we choose a path forward. They reveal a school district with:

- ✓ Disparities in test scores, graduation rates, disciplinary actions, representation in gifted programs, etcetera, between white students and students of color with white students achieving at higher levels across all measures;
- ✓ access and power differentials between white families, staff/faculty and students, and those of color (particularly black families) including tracking into gifted, honors and AP that disproportionately advantages white students;
- ✓ widespread racial stereotyping that plays a role in lowered academic expectations, fewer advanced academic and other non-academic opportunities, and disproportionately harsh discipline for students of color;
- ✓ in-school segregation by race that emanates from tracking and other differential opportunities;
- ✓ inadequate and disrespectful treatment of black, Latino, and immigrant parents;
- ✓ unequal power between white staff and faculty vs. staff and faculty of color.
- ✓ curriculum with inadequate recognition and instruction regarding racial history and diverse cultural norms and values;
- ✓ advising by guidance counselors that limits post-graduation opportunities for students of color;
- ✓ inadequate and ineffective efforts to address inequities;
- ✓ lack of leadership and accountability for equity goals; and
- ✓ lack of knowledge and understanding of institutional and structural racism.

These inequities hurt children and families of color in substantive, life-altering ways. They also damage white children and families. While white children may benefit in many ways from an inequitable education, they also learn to accept a system that de-values the lives of people of color and benefits their own. For all our sakes we must question and transform these inequities.

A Call for Response to Racial Inequities

Current and past responses to the “achievement gap” in CHCCS have most often focused on addressing what we perceive as deficits in children of color and their families. What we need to see clearly is the system that is too narrowly tuned to the interests and preferences of white stakeholders.

Our Campaign for Racial Equity reflects the frustration and urgency felt by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community regarding the inadequate response of the District to provide black and Latino children with the education they deserve. Time and again parents and other community members have been accused of “complaining” and told not to bring their concerns to the district unless they are ready with a solution. We believe we have made great strides towards researching solid solutions and look forward to working together with the school district to not only making significant changes in the lives of all students but also becoming a nation-wide leader in racially equitable K-12 education. Renowned educator Gloria Ladson-Billings writes that we are responsible not for addressing an “achievement gap” but for paying an “educational debt.” We would like to accomplish this together.

Equity Goals and Recommendations

Our campaign group has reviewed hundreds, if not thousands, of pages of research on best practices to achieve racial equity. After considering the problems the district faces as well as the resources available to us, we have created eight overarching equity goals that we believe will lead to a public school system characterized by true excellence. By excellence, we mean a system where all children thrive in a supportive learning environment, growing in the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful. Success may include post-secondary education, a good job, and/or becoming change agents in their communities.

Our equity goals are as follows. In Section VIII, we present concrete recommendations that we believe will help lead to the achievement of these goals.

EQUITY GOAL 1. Access and Inclusion. *All students have access and are included in rigorous and relevant coursework, extracurricular, college & career prep, other social and leadership opportunities.*

EQUITY GOAL 2. Personnel and Climate. *District leadership builds consensus within the district and across the community that there is no excellence without equity, and that a racially just school system is in the best interest of all students and community members.*

EQUITY GOAL 3. Racially Literate Curriculum and Instruction. *Racial literacy and equity is promoted and achieved in terms of district expectations, curriculum, and teaching methods.*

EQUITY GOAL 4. Disciplinary Policies and Practices. *Discipline policies and practices are in the best interest of supporting the student's educational experience and are applied equitably across race.*

EQUITY GOAL 5. Resource Allocation and Distribution. *Resource allocation and distribution is transparent to the citizens of the District and reflects values of excellence and equity.*

EQUITY GOAL 6. Broad-based Community Participation in Equity Plans. *The input and engagement of all family and community members is sought, valued and responded to with respect.*

EQUITY GOAL 7. Clear Equity Plan with Explicit Thoughtful Racial Equity Goals. *The district embraces and leads on an equity plan that includes an implementation timeline, specific goals and tasks for all school district personnel and accountability mechanisms.*

EQUITY GOAL 8. Accountability. *There is a clear mandate for accountability for equitable outcomes, as listed above, from the Board of Education, District leadership, faculty and staff.*

Former secretary of education, Arne Duncan, said, "Education is the great equalizer. It should be used to level the playing field, not to grow inequality. "Our nation has yet to realize its self-proclaimed value of equality for all."

We believe that this progressive community, rich in resources for education, will be able to rise to the challenge of creating bright futures for *all* our young people. Coming to understand and face our racial past is the key to repairing the breach that still exists and looking forward to a future of

I. Introduction & Background

Introduction

Education is one of the most important predictors of success in life. The ability to read, write, comprehend, and act from this knowledge leads to opportunities and achievement that not only impact one's own life but the lives of one's children and one's children's children.

Access and opportunity to education was not a right equally given to all people in our country. From the beginning of our nation access to public education was reserved for whites only and was forbidden for enslaved and free blacks. After Emancipation, when some public and private schooling was made available to African Americans, black children were segregated into under-resourced schools. Due to circumstances that kept most African American families in abject poverty, masses of black children encountered structural barriers that prevented them from gaining a complete formal education.

When desegregation was mandated by *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, white school boards and administrators resisted for years. Many boards of education had to be forced by lawsuits to allow access of black school children into white schools. It was not until the late 1960s that Chapel Hill schools caved in to pressure to desegregate its white schools in appreciable numbers. This was a process of desegregation, not integration; integration requires melding two or more things into one whole. What happened in our community and across the nation was school boards begrudgingly allowing black children to attend school with white children while at the same time erasing the heritage and traditions that black children had known in their own segregated schools (Okun, 2010; Waugh, 2012).

By law and lawsuits, we started on a journey that leads us up today and our present problem: an overwhelming achievement gap between black and white students in our school system. Why is this true despite the fact that no one in the school system wants this to be so? In order to propose and implement solutions to this inequity we must begin by understanding the root cause.

In this report we attempt to both reveal the root of racial inequity and offer solutions to address the achievement gap between white students and students of color. Robert Louis Stevenson is quoted as saying, "To do things today exactly the way you did them yesterday saves thinking." But more thinking is what we need. We are alarmed by the disparate outcomes for white children and children of color and want to encourage thinking, strategizing, learning, and raising our consciousness so that we can alter the outcomes and experience of all students in a positive way.

Our goal in this report is to propel our school system forward on a path of transformational institutional change. We can achieve this only by focusing on the structural and cultural barriers that exist in our school system that prevent all students from learning.

That which we tolerate, we cannot change. *Our school district has maintained an achievement gap for decades.* Our resources have fluctuated over the years; our administrators, teachers and students have changed over the years; and yet still the gap remains. We believe the lack of

change has to do with our inherent belief systems around race and that only through becoming aware of these belief systems and developing a race conscious approach to schooling can we make real change. We call this the lens of racial equity. With this lens, an authentic commitment to change, and ideas and recommendations like those in this report, we can finally begin to achieve equity for all students.

Background

Because this report will make frequent reference to race and racism, it seems necessary to begin by offering our understanding of these terms.

What is race?

In 1942 the well-known anthropologist, Ashley Montague, described “race” as man’s most dangerous myth. What did he mean?

Race is a social construct that has no biological basis or meaning, but has enormous and consequential political and social meaning. The idea of a white race was codified in the colony of Virginia in the 17th century (Higgenbotham, 1978) to set those who would be classified as white (European colonizers) over and above the indigenous people of this land, as well as the black indentured servants and the kidnapped and enslaved people they had brought from Africa. The “white race” would be given all the privileges of the colony including the right to own property, to be citizens, and to vote. People who had been identified primarily by place of origin (English, Dutch, French, African, “Indians”) became racialized according to the criteria set by the European colonizers across the land who sought to advantage and privilege themselves in the takeover of a new continent.

In the late 18th and early 19th century, when a growing number “white” Americans were questioning the morality of kidnapping, enslaving and brutalizing Africans and their descendants, “scientific” evidence was manufactured and disseminated to prove the superiority of the white race and the inferiority of people of those not deemed white (Montague, 1942, 1997). “Negroes” were classified as another species altogether (Blumenbach, 1865), a people who were seen as ignorant, lazy, liars, thieves, and savages who were incapable of grasping religious ideas. In addition, African-born slaves were described as being much happier in America than in Africa. Thus the institution of slavery and the debasement and mistreatment of Negroes could be justified.

Of course, all of the science that was brought to bear on the subject of racial classification has since been recognized as false (American Anthropological Association, 1998). Yet the belief systems it promulgated have had enormous consequences throughout modern history as exemplified in the United States (a country created by and for “white people”), Nazi Germany, and in South Africa. These belief systems have undergirded the story we have told for centuries about racial superiority and inferiority in this nation.

Belief systems and stories are powerful and are not easily transformed by changes in policy and law. This may partly explain why, 60 years after the Brown v. Board decision, and 50 years after the passage of significant civil rights legislation we still have a “race” problem in America.

Unfortunately – but perhaps given our history, not unexpectedly – racial issues tend to focus on the problems, the deficiencies, and the shortcomings of people of color. We rarely look at racial issues in terms of a specious classification of people called “white” who have perpetrated and greatly benefited from a lie about themselves and those they would disadvantage and oppress.

We recommend that all District personnel take time to watch and study “Race: The Power of an Illusion,” an excellent 3-part series, first shown on PBS, to better understand the story of a specious concept called “race” and the shameful ways that this construct has shaped the fates of human beings for centuries. We need to be able to ask, how has the story of race shaped advantage and disadvantage in Chapel Hill and Carrboro? How has it shaped our ideas about educational services and expected outcomes in our schools today? Our low expectations for black children come from a deep place in American history and socialization. We are unlikely to change our expectations until we engage deeply in a study of race and its meaning in America.

Institutional and structural racism

Most of us grew up thinking about racism in terms of racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism in America was exemplified by the Ku Klux Klan terrorizing and lynching American blacks, Bull Connor turning fire hoses on black children, and George Wallace barring black children from entering the door of their school.

We also tend to think of racism in terms of personal bias and stereotypes that we harbor, consciously or unconsciously, about racial groups.

Implicit racial bias derives from our socialization, and affects nearly all of us who have grown up in the United States. Implicit bias, discussed later in this report, is implicated in the racial inequities we observe in our schools, indeed in all institutions. But implicit bias is rooted in historical, cultural and institutional norms regarding race. In this report we will focus on institutional and structural racism for we believe that it is this kind of racism that may undergird the racial inequities we seek to remedy. This kind of racism reflects the history of one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the major institutions of society, including educational systems.

Institutional racism refers to norms, practices and policies within an institution that promote and maintain a racial hierarchy that continues to advantage the white race, while disadvantaging and discriminating against other racialized groups. Institutional racism will place the blame for racial disparities on the character, behavior and deficiencies of people of color, and devise programs to try to address their deficiencies, while ignoring the institutional factors that produce disparities.

As described by Blaisdell (2015), “Structural racism is a condition that affects and is perpetuated by social institutions such as schools... A structural view of racism is important because it helps explain how factors outside the school affect students of color both in and out of school contexts. Furthermore, this view necessitates taking into consideration how particular instances of racial disparity (i.e., specific situations where people of color are not as successful as whites, do not have the same resources as whites, or suffer from social ills more than whites) are a result of both historical and ongoing social and political policies rooted in white supremacy.”

II. CHCCS: Racial Inequities by the Numbers

The stated mission of Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools is “to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes to achieve their learning potential.” While the district is known to be one in which many students excel, for most African American and Latino students, the district has not lived up to its mission of ensuring that all students achieve their learning potential. For the majority of students of color, there is a substantial and persistent chasm between educational goals and results.

This situation of disproportionate equity and excellence along racial and economic lines is not news. Addressing this challenge has been stated as a priority for the district since at least 1992, when the School Board established a Blue Ribbon Task Force to develop strategies to close minority achievement gaps. Most recently, the District’s 2013-18 Long Range plan established as a key goal that: “Achievement Gaps will be Eliminated with All Students Experiencing a Minimum of One Year of Learning Growth Each Year and a Minimum of 1.5 Years of Learning Growth for Students Scoring in the Lowest (quartile/quintile)”. In this section we will examine the extent to which the district is meeting its objectives of accelerating the path toward excellence for students of color and low income that the district has historically failed to reach effectively in disproportionate numbers.

There are many metrics that could be used to assess the extent to which our schools are enabling our students to achieve their learning potential. Here we will focus on several metrics that are readily available:

- End of grade (for elementary and middle school students) state standardized test scores
- End of course (for high school level classes) state standardized test scores
- Access to Gifted Education
- ACT Test Results
- Discipline
- Graduation Rates

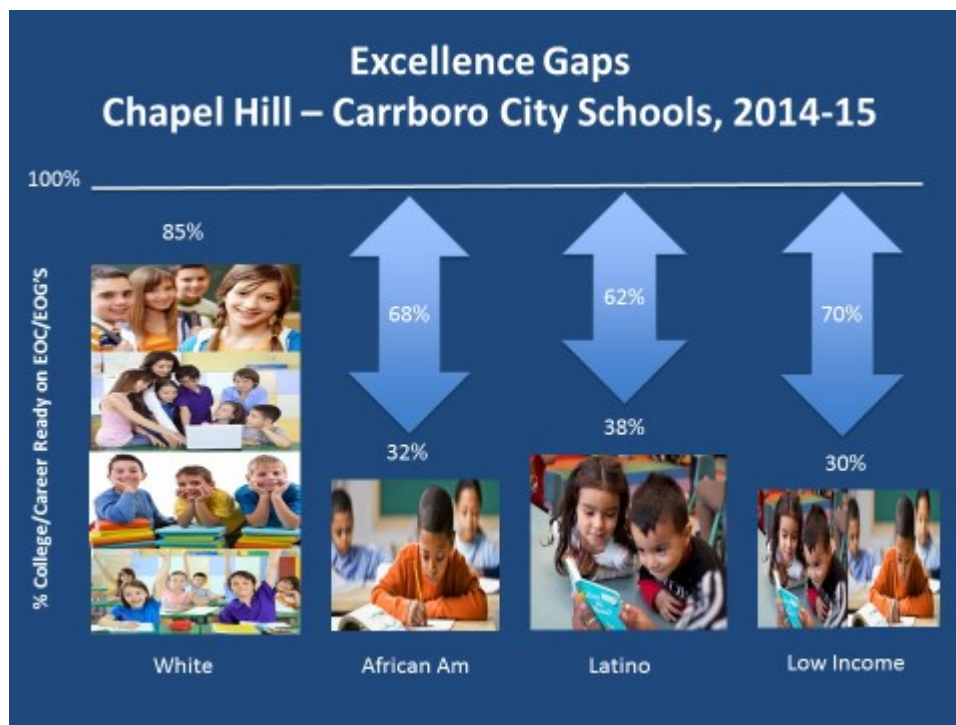
It should be noted that test results are known to be very imperfect windows to view the extent to which children are learning, and doing well on tests should not be considered the ultimate objective of a student’s education. Also, passing end of course or end of grade tests is not required to pass the course. Nevertheless, comparative test results do provide an indication of the extent to which our district is achieving its mission of helping all of our children achieve at their potential.

End of Grade Results

As Chart 1 indicates, in the 2014-15 school year, across all End of Grade and End of Course test results, only 42% of our African American students and 47% of our Latino students had achieved even the bare minimum performance of grade level proficiency. While these proportions were

slightly above state averages, they are well short of the excellence we know is possible, as indicated by the 90% proficiency of white students.

Chart 1. Overall Excellence Gaps



As Charts 2 and 3 show (for grades 3-8), it appeared that progress had been made in past years in closing gaps of excellence and equity in academic performance. The percentage of African-American students who were proficient on end of grade reading and math tests rose from 40-45% in 1994 to approximately 80% in 2004. However, as end of grade testing standards have become more rigorous, gaps have deepened significantly between the excellence we expect and the outcomes that have been achieved. For white and Asian students, those for whom our district works most effectively, the fundamental understanding of topics is sufficiently strong that when tests became more challenging in 2013, 75%-85% of students continued to do well. However, it is apparent that the district's instructional environment has not resulted in our African-American and Latino students reaching comparable levels of deep understanding. Thus, when tests were changed in 2013 to reflect common core standards, the percentage of African American and Latino students who met the standard dropped precipitously, by 40 – 50 percentage points. In the period 2013-15 only 25% - 35% of students of color were considered on track to be college/career ready.

Chart 2. End of Grade Reading Trends

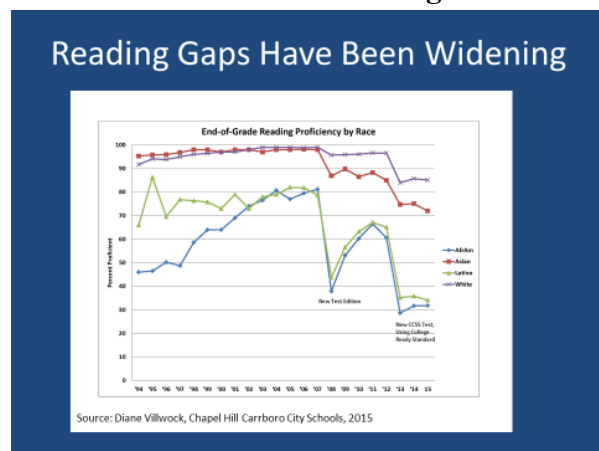
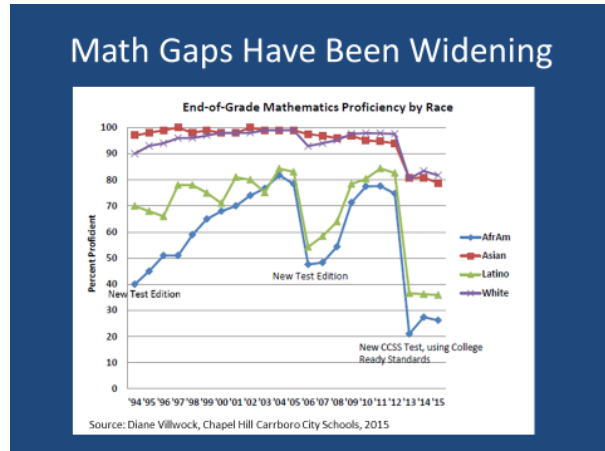


Chart 3. End of Grade Math Trends



End of Course Results

Three End of Course (EOC) tests are required of middle/high school students: Math 1 (Algebra I), Biology, and English II. As with End of Grade results for elementary school children, the gap between expectations and achievement is great for African American, Latino, and economically disadvantaged students. Only 20% - 40% of African American and Latino pass these EOC tests, compared to 90% of their white peers. There were gains in 2015 in Latino Math I scores, but otherwise the level of student performance is not improving.

Chart 4. Biology EOC Results

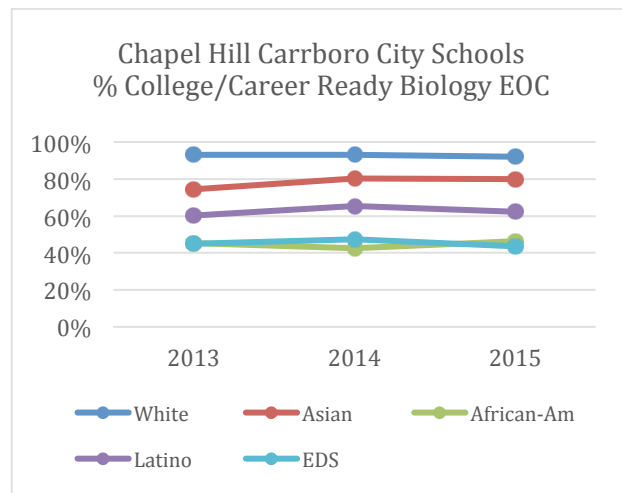


Chart 5. English II EOC Test Results

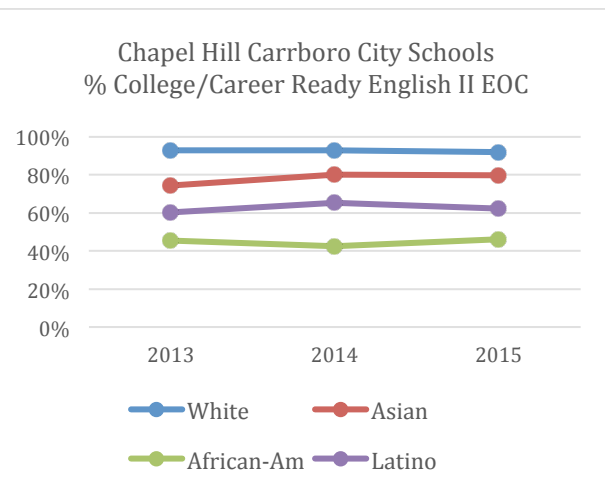
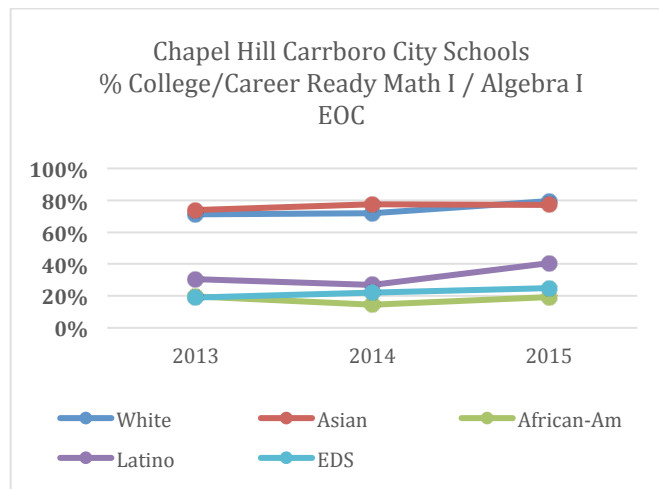


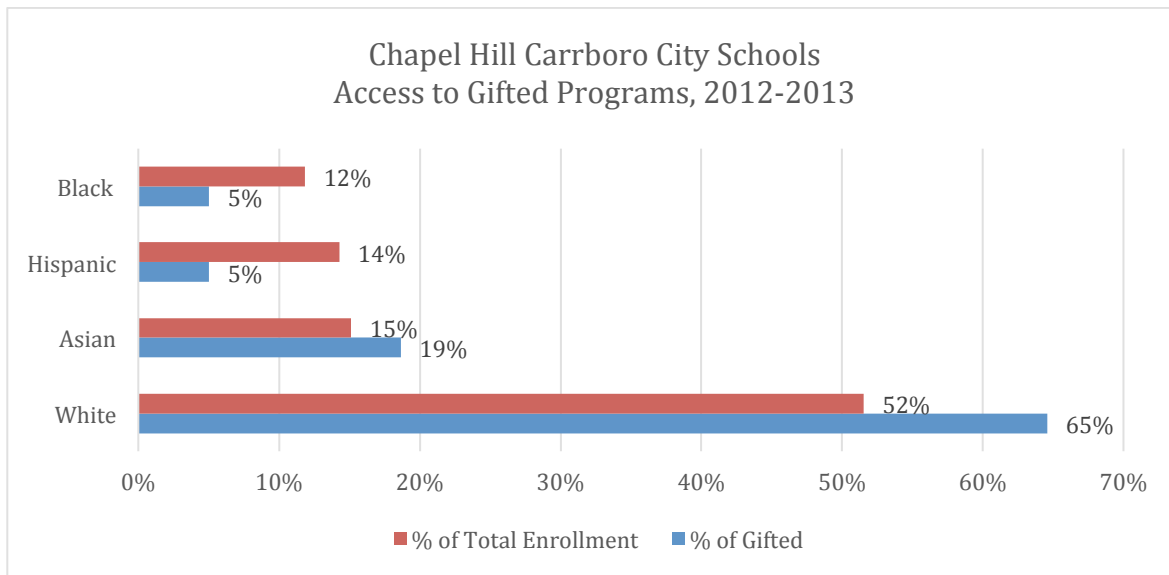
Chart 6. Math EOC Test Results



Access to Gifted Education

The state of North Carolina requires that students identified as gifted learners receive challenging, differentiated instruction that is developmentally appropriate and makes funds available specifically for this purpose. The state also notes that gifted learners from under-represented populations are often overlooked in gifted programming, and as such require purposeful and intentional support to ensure that their potential is recognized, developed, and served. The state's published guidelines note that efforts should be taken to include historically underserved students who are culturally/ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, highly gifted, and twice-exceptional in gifted programs.

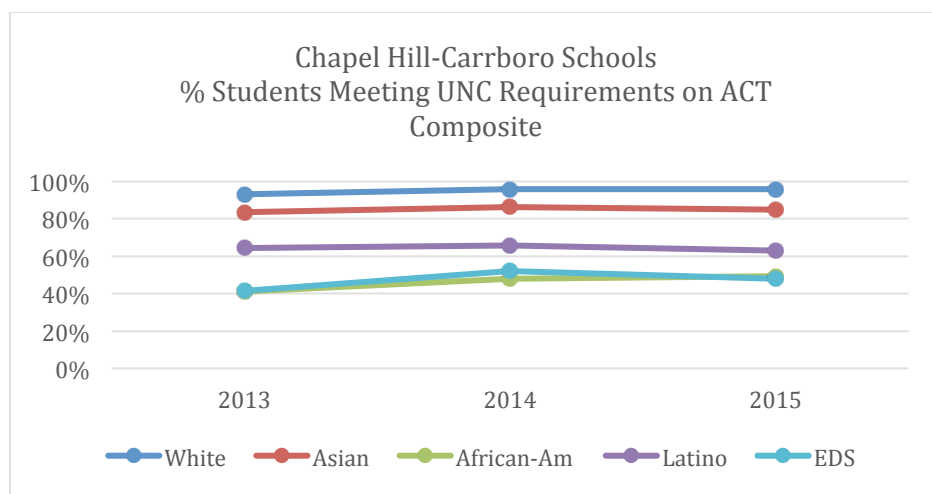
In Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools access of black and Latino students to gifted programming is limited. As of 2012-13, African American and Latino students represented 12%-14% of students but only 5% of students participating in gifted programming.



ACT Test Results

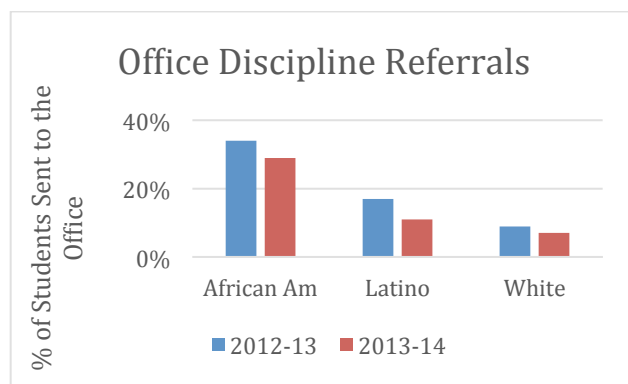
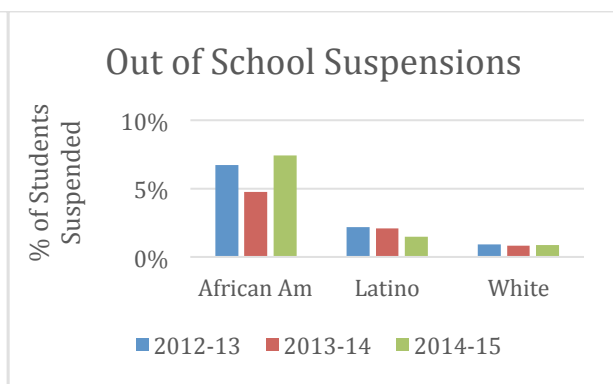
All 11th grade North Carolina high school students who are able are required to take the ACT College Entrance Exam to provide another indicator of how well our schools are doing in preparing students for the future. The score considered passing is the minimum score required by the North Carolina legislature to be admitted to a UNC school, which is a composite score of 17 out of a maximum possible of 36. The national average composite score is 21. Approximately 50% of the district's African American students met the UNC requirement, compared to 60% for Latinos and over 95% for white students. The implication is that for 40% - 50% of African Americans and Latinos, enrolling in a UNC 4-year university may not be an option immediately after graduating from high school. While there are other paths to college for those who so desire (such as through community college transfers), those paths should be something that students choose to do for their own reasons, not something they are forced to do because we have failed to provide them with the appropriate academic preparation.

Chart 7. ACT Test Results



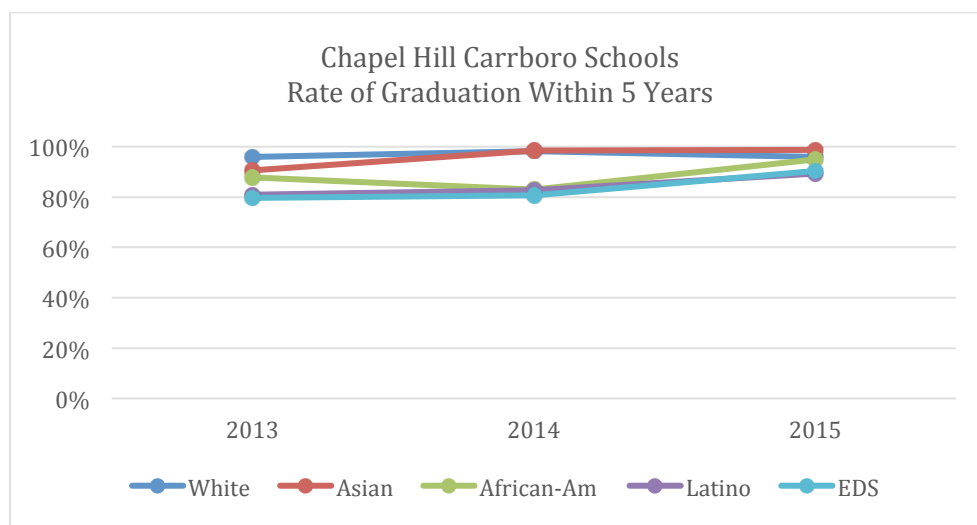
Discipline

There is a strong correlation between the level of positive teacher support a student feels and that student's level of academic and social performance in school. In the Chapel Hill-Carrboro District, there is evidence that these positive relationships do not occur as frequently with African American students as with their classmates. As of the 2013-14 school year, African American students were sent to the office 3 times more frequently than their white peers, and were suspended about 8 times more often. This is an indication that the level of student engagement and mutual respect and understanding between student and teacher necessary for success is not present to the extent it could be.

Chart 8. Office Discipline Referrals**Chart 9. Out of School Suspensions**

Graduation Rates

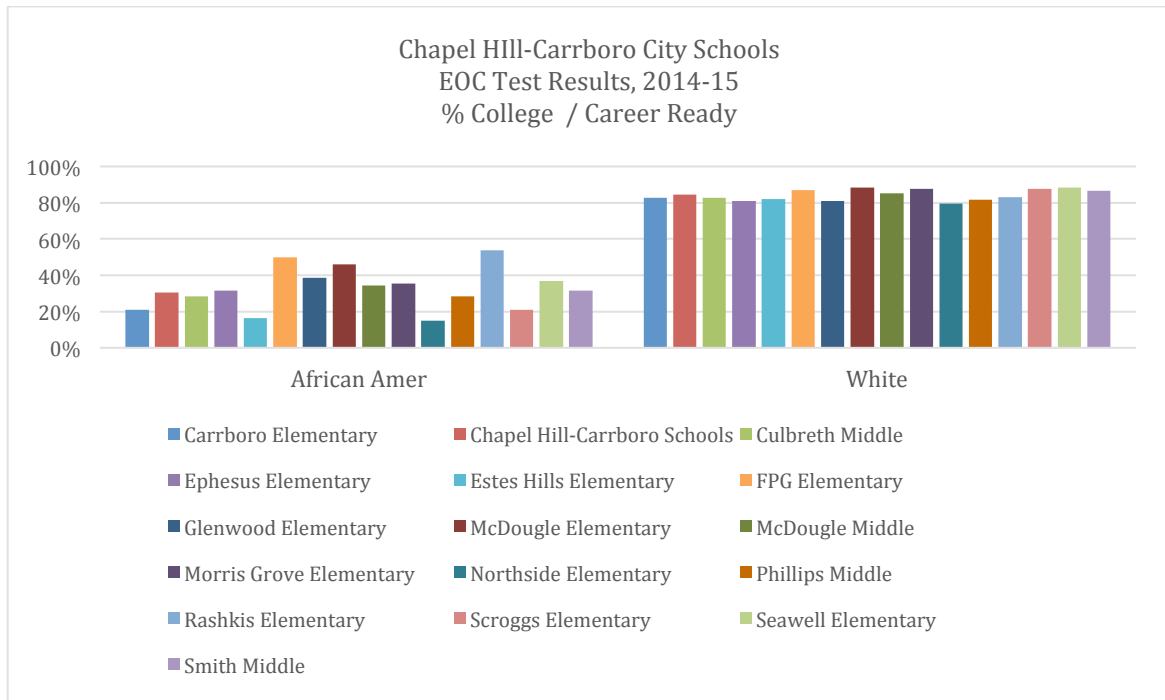
Significant effort has been placed on improving graduation rates, resulting in Chapel Hill Carrboro Schools being among the best in the state of North Carolina for graduation rates across all demographic groups. Currently 90%+ of African American, Latino, white and Asian students are graduating within 5 years.

Chart 10. Graduation Rates

Differential Performance By Schools

District averages on EOC/EOG test results mask the fact that some schools within the district have been able to reach a broader cross section of students in a modestly more effective manner. For example, among elementary schools, at Rashkis and Frank Porter Graham, 50% of African American children are on track to be college/career ready, compared to a district average of 31%. We suggest that where initiatives have met with success, they should be systematically shared and replicated.

Chart 11. EOC Test Results



III. Resource Allocation and Accountability in the District

The district provides volumes of reports about budgets, strategies and programs, but we were unable to find metrics or performance targets that align to the stated goals of closing the achievement gap. It's unclear how district and/or school leaders are measured and held accountable for results.

In addition, online reports do not show how resources are allocated to schools. We were unable to assess whether the district relies on an "equality approach" where resources are allocated equally to each school, or an "equity approach" where resources are allocated based on need. The district needs to provide much more information about the students at each school and how resources are allocated and used.

According to the NC Department of Public Instruction, CHCCS spends roughly \$11,000 per student, which makes the district one of the most generously funded school districts in North Carolina. Roughly half of those funds come from local sources, giving the district discretion about how funds can be reallocated as equity goals and needs are clarified.

IV. The Lived Experience of Stakeholders: Data from Listening Sessions

In Section II we presented quantitative data that show how achievement and discipline outcomes in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools differ according to race.

These data do not, of course, give us any understanding of how these differences are perceived and experienced by the key stakeholders who are most directly involved and engaged in school life, i.e., the students, their parents, and district staff, and faculty. They also do not give us any understanding about the root cause of these persistent and consequential inequities.

To address this gap in understanding, we conducted listening sessions during the summer with these particular key stakeholders. Because candid discussions about race are notoriously difficult to conduct in racially mixed groups, we decided to conduct our listening sessions in groups segregated by race.

Method

Protocol and training. We developed a listening session protocol that consisted of a standardized procedure (Appendix 2) and sets of questions (Appendices 3-5). We conducted two training sessions (one on June 23, and one on June 30) for those from our group who volunteered to be facilitators and scribes.

In general, sessions were conducted by leaders who demographically matched their group (e.g., current or retired white staff facilitated the session for white staff, African American parents facilitated the group for African-American parents). The Burmese and Karen parent groups were conducted by the Program Coordinator for the Refugee Community Partnership. She worked with community leaders who assisted with translation of questions for cultural understanding. We had only one student session of high schoolers that was led by an adult who had experience working with high school students.

Participants. Participants were recruited through natural networks (neighborhoods, churches, organizations and listservs). We realize that the responses they provided do not represent a random sample of districts stakeholders, which would of course be majority white. But given that the experience of every child, parent, and staff member in the district – especially those from groups that have been historically marginalized – is important, we believe that the data we collected in these sessions represent voices that need to be heard.

Participants in listening sessions were promised anonymity as to their identities and responses. They were told that the responses would be grouped and summarized and reported as such.

Conduct of sessions and data handling. Listening sessions were conducted during a period that ranged from June 27 to September 20. The sessions were led by trained facilitators. Scribes did not participate in the sessions other than to record responses to the questions. Scribes recorded all responses to the questions and after reviewing notes for completeness and accuracy, submitted them for analysis. While the session leaders knew the identity of participants, no identifying information was connected to any response and no identifying information was transmitted for

data analysis. After all session responses were submitted, the data were combined, tabulated, and examined for common themes.

Results

Summer is a hard time to bring people together in groups, but facilitators were successful in scheduling almost all targeted groups. Eleven sessions were conducted with nine demographic groups (white staff and faculty met over three different sessions) comprising 103 participants. We were able to meet separately with white, black, and Latino staff and faculty; white, black, Latino, Burmese and Karen parents; and students of color (black and Latino). We were most successful in recruiting staff and faculty and least in recruiting students. The only planned session that failed to meet was the one for white students and we are still hopeful that such a session will be possible in the future. The qualitative data gathered from these listening sessions was rich and informative, and we encourage that this strategy be used on a regular basis to gather important input from the people most impacted by involvement with our school system.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 display the responses from CHCCS staff and faculty, parents, and students, respectively. Responses are grouped by question and disaggregated by racial identity group. Shaded responses indicate commonality in response across more than one racial group. We thought this was worth noting, although we do not mean to imply that responses from one racial group only are less significant. To aid in the review and interpretation of the data, common responses were grouped into themes. Common themes are described following the tables.

Table 1. Listening Session Results – Staff and Faculty

QUESTION -Theme Responses	STAFF/FACULTY	
	Black; Latino	White
1. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE ROOTS OF INEQUITIES IN THE DISTRICT?		
<i>-History of advantage, privilege, resources for whites; enslavement, oppression, subjugation for African Americans and other people of color</i>		
History of race and racism in our country. Particularly the history of white privilege in Chapel Hill with generations of black people providing labor/service for the white people.	✓	✓
White families have resources and access that many black and brown families do not have.	✓	
Some students come to school with a tremendous set of advantages (including wealth, access to books, understanding of how schools operate) and we do little to systematically address the needs of children who do not have these advantages.	✓	
It starts with segregation and how de-segregation occurred in Chapel Hill/Carrboro schools. These issues have never been addressed.	✓	✓
We still have segregated neighborhoods and that has something to do with it.		✓
Many people of color in our area are poor and families did not go to college.		✓
<i>-Institutionalized racism</i>	✓	
<i>-Lack of engaging the issues of race and racism</i>		
Lack of discussion and communication among faculty, students and staff about race and racism. Belief may be that if we don't talk about it, it is not there—but that is not true.	✓	✓
Lack of training among school personnel on issues on race and culture	✓	✓

<i>-Power of white parents</i>		
Schools are afraid to take bold steps for fear of getting pushback from elite parents who fear that changes will threaten their children's access to best teachers, classes and experiences.	✓	
White parents have a voice that supercedes all others in the district.	✓	
<i>-Personnel issues related to race</i>		
White teachers do not always acknowledge white privilege, preferring to think of themselves as non-racist.	✓	✓
Staff/faculty is not diverse; people of color tend to predominate in security, cafeteria, custodial and secretarial roles.	✓	✓
There are not enough African-American or people of color in authority positions who understand that racism/implicit bias exists and needs to be addressed directly.	✓	
Many staff of color were hired under the current administration and they don't want to "rock the boat." They believe they will be retaliated against if they speak out about inequities.	✓	
<i>-Academic issues</i>		
Tracking in the schools--promotes racial segregation within school, relegating students of color to "standard" classes.	✓	✓
There is pressure to pass students even when they have not achieved the level of learning expected. We are pushing them through without accountability for their education.	✓	✓
Academics are overemphasized and that robs students of total high school experience by not endorsing or celebrating other achievements.		✓
<i>-Discipline issues</i>		
The way we discipline: students of color receive stiffer penalties	✓	
<i>-Peer pressure</i>		
Peer pressure among males students of color--"not cool to achieve"		✓
2. HOW DOES RACE SHAPE THE CULTURE, CLIMATE AND PRACTICES OF CHCCS?		
<i>-Racial disparities, disproportionality and segregation</i>		
No boys of color in Honors and AP classes and we operate as though this is not a crisis.	✓	
Participation in honors and AP classes is strongly associated with race, with white and Asian children over-identified for participation and A-A and Latino children under-identified.	✓	✓
Students of Color (SOC) are not well represented in student government.		✓
Clubs and sports tend to be segregated by race.		✓
White students are more likely to have the resources to go off campus at lunch. Another white privilege.		✓
There are enormous racial disparities and we have become fatalistic about ability to do anything about it. This harms all of us.	✓	
<i>-Implicit bias and stereotypes</i>		
black and brown students are negatively stereotyped (in terms of intelligence, capacity, home lives, etc.); we are not strengths-focused with students and families.	✓	
Low expectations for black and Latino students	✓	✓
<i>-Racial issues related to school personnel and accountability</i>		
Where do we go for accountability around these issues? No one is accountable.	✓	

Dr. Forcella tiptoes around issues.	✓	
There are no meaningful discussions about how race affects students in our district causing students of color to feel ostracized, hopeless and less willing to invest in the school culture.	✓	✓
Tully does whatever she wants to. If she were black she'd be out the door. Multiple bad incidents have occurred at her school and under her leadership. Even people outside the state know about her. But she is not the only administrator with issues of race. Others have been pointed out to leadership with seemingly no actions.	✓	
SOC don't feel safe going to white teachers and there is not much diversity in the faculties.		✓
It seems that when we say race or racism, we put the onus on black and brown staff to do something about it.	✓	
There is a district culture that discourages blacks from speaking up. When they do they are seen as "angry." Whites saying the same thing are seen as "passionate."	✓	
3. WHAT PRACTICES IN YOUR SCHOOL, OR IN THE DISTRICT, EMPHASIZE RACIAL INEQUITIES? CAN YOU GIVE SOME EXAMPLES?		
<i>-Inadequate attention given to impact of race and inequitable outcomes</i>		
We are encouraged to have "courageous conversations" about race, but there is no emphasis on actually doing something about racial inequities.	✓	
Equity work is weak and watered down.	✓	
If administrators could spend more time in classrooms, rather than being pulled in so many directions, they would likely be both inspired and horrified about what is, and is not, being done regarding differences in education that relate specifically to race.	✓	
<i>-Examples related to administration, staff and faculty</i>		
Most of the classified staff is black or other people of color and the staff/faculty is not diverse. What we see are black/brown custodians cleaning up after white privileged children, serving food, cutting grass. Students see workers of color talked down to and disrespected by their peers and employers. (Recent example: A black custodian was corrected on how to clean the floor in front of a group of white kids. The kids laughed. If there was a problem this should have been discussed privately leaving the custodian with some dignity and respect.)	✓	✓
Lead teachers are almost always white and the principals' "yes" people. In some schools there are no academic core teachers of color. Therefore our black students see teachers of color mainly in PE, AVID, drama and chorus.	✓	
Students are distributed to teachers based on race. A black teacher will get more SOC than a white teacher. Black teachers get more challenging students. White teachers (especially the principals' favorites) get the "country club" classrooms.	✓	✓
Faculty of color rarely teach honors or AP. (However..."One black AP teacher is self-proclaimed "untouchable" and is not doing an adequate job—needs a courageous administrator.")	✓	✓
We don't put "action plans" on white teachers whose test scores are consistently low, whereas we implement those plans for many teachers of color <i>the first time</i> their scores are low, with the end result of pushing them out of the district.	✓	
Administration does not listen well to faculty of color.	✓	✓
We don't highlight the places where students of color are being successful, i.e., certain classrooms where all students are showing good growth. These teachers (who in many instances are teachers of color) are not highlighted and recognized.	✓	
<i>-Examples related to students</i>		
There are inequities pertaining to student absences; white parents lie for their children to get their absences excused (e.g., "educational opportunity"), while students of color (SOC) are taking their consequences.		✓
The consequences for infractions are inequitably applied. SOC feel that white students get off easy and that SOC are always under suspicion.	✓	✓

Tracking (gifted and honors) separates students racially and by socioeconomic status. (“It is essentially the white person’s way of “moving away.”	✓	✓
Giving quality points to AP and honors classes contributes to separation also.		✓
Emphasis on “getting through a class” – barely passing – means lowered standards and less learning. (Often this comes from administrative pressure).	✓	✓
Teachers don’t encourage or push students of color enough. A “pobrecito” (poor thing) attitude.	✓	
The emphasis on test scores to the detriment to class performance.		✓
When it comes to summer school, the kids notice and ask why are all the kids black and Latino? It seems that white parents just say no to summer school and get permission to do “other interventions.”	✓	
Students are expected to complete assignments online. There is an unreasonable assumption that all students have a device they can work on at home and access to the internet. Many families do not and these students will have to struggle to complete assignments, sitting on the porches of neighbors or friends who might have internet or trying to complete an assignment on a cell phone.	✓	
<i>-Examples related to parents</i>		
Outreach to parents of SOC is inadequate.		
District is not serious about summer school as a time for helping students. The staff is whoever volunteers. Why are some of the same teachers who have demonstrated lack of success with struggling students allowed to make additional money in the summer working with kids they didn’t have success with during the school year? They shouldn’t have the privilege to make money on the backs of children they didn’t serve during the school year.	✓	
4. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO ADDRESS INEQUITIES IN YOUR SCHOOL/DISTRICT? HAVE THESE BEEN EFFECTIVE?		
<i>-Inadequate, ineffective and misguided plans</i>		
We have had multiple initiatives, but not a purposeful plan. “If you have five plans, you don’t have a plan.”	✓	
There was a plan to get more students of color (SOC) to take Honors and AP classes, but we did very little to assure success of this plan. We were not purposeful in terms of assigning especially effective teachers to teach this class or providing the instructors with any training on how to alter their approach to reach a new audience. We didn’t think through whether these students might benefit from summer preparatory sessions. When the students struggled individual teachers were made to feel that they had done less than was needed and subjected to slogans about “growth mindset.”	✓	
So many equity “programs” and they are not successful because they are misguided.	✓	
It seems we will need white teachers in our district to “validate” the work of equity before it will be taken seriously	✓	
No one is having a “courageous conversation.” What we need is to be doing things differently for our students of color. They need expectations, exposure and experience to get them excited about learning.	✓	
Nothing will change until district leadership, starting with the superintendent, walks into the schools and says “Now this is what you are going to do...”	✓	
District-sponsored Staff of Color group could be useful in helping the District address inequities but apparently it is not designed to help enhance equity from the District’s standpoint. Folks not coming because they fear retaliation. Also thinking that nothing is going to change is embedded in district culture so people don’t attend. When you speak up or ask questions you are blackballed within this district or pushed out.	✓	
At least under Glenn Singleton’s work the E-teams would go into classes and look for specific things, e.g. culturally diverse materials on the wall, marginalization of black and brown students in seating arrangements. Where did that information go and what did they do, after making these observations? Lincoln Center used to redirect people to other	✓	

districts if they didn't want to be in a district doing equity work. We're losing ground.		
Equity meetings need to be more effective; they are not working as is.		✓
AVID transition needs to be improved.		✓
Need more training for Equal Opportunity Schools.		✓
<i>-Equity efforts that may have promise</i>		
Carrboro HS has students of color support groups. These have been good.		✓
Carrboro HS has good administrative support in an open environment.		✓
Carrboro HS has community dinners with free food and parent speakers. (They also have more parent involvement)		✓
Carrboro HS has "Smart Lunches" for peer tutoring.		✓
Small group conversations about race do work.		✓
"Wildcat Welcome" at ECHHS works.		✓
Homework Club works but needs better tutors.		✓
Academic Success classes are using blocked classes—too early to know if these work.		✓
Student 6 strategies seem good – need more training.		✓
5. WHAT BARRIERS ARE IN YOUR SCHOOL/DISTRICT THAT MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO ADDRESS INEQUITIES?		
<i>-Poor leadership and accountability for equity goals</i>		
The biggest barrier in the district is the refusal to recognize and admit that we have an issue around racial inequity.	✓	✓
Most people in the district just wish equity discussions away. You see it in the body language and demeanor of staff members.	✓	
The administration does not see itself as part of the problem.		✓
Leadership is weak sometimes. Not clear who is responsible for follow-through of initiatives.		✓
Administrators talk down to students and teachers instead of talking with them.		✓
You don't have anyone to go to that you can trust if you have a problem or a situation on the job.	✓	
Best and hardest working teachers don't feel that that their insights about race, class, and education matter – always on the receiving end of top-down dictums about the latest instructional panacea even when they have demonstrated success. Don't look at insights from students either about what works. Why are we not being more anthropological and actually asking teachers and students who have some expertise on these topics to share their thoughts?	✓	
Black administrators tend to be hired from outside the district, meaning they come in without any historical perspective or any accountability to others in the district (except to the ones that hired them). This happens even though well-qualified people staff members from within the district applied for some of the same positions –in fact were encouraged by LC staff to apply.	✓	
Some teachers and parts of the community don't want to admit inequities or do anything about them.		✓
There is fear of courageous conversations and no support or time for them. White teachers don't want to be viewed as racists.		✓
There were no equity meetings at ECCHS this year.		✓
At ECHHS Advocacy does not serve the purpose it should.		✓
<i>-White power and privilege</i>		
An inadequate understanding of whiteness and white privilege and how they impact teaching our students. Term "white privilege" gets thrown around, but district personnel have an inadequate understanding about what it looks like and how it plays out.	✓	✓

Leadership doesn't do anything because it doesn't want to hold white teachers accountable.	✓	
White teachers sometimes don't hold students to high standards for fear of being called racist.		✓
Teaching staff is predominantly white, juxtaposed with predominantly black support staff and cafeteria staff.	✓	✓
<i>-Staff of color are not valued</i>		
No room for advancement and no one encouraging teachers of color to seek ways to advance.	✓	
Credibility and stature in the district is more connected to degrees as opposed to experience and wisdom.	✓	
<i>-Curriculum or instructional issues</i>		
Many teachers still don't teach black or racial history. Why? They don't want to talk about the FACTS of Chapel Hill, NC, and our country's problem with race and racism	✓	
Programs, like videography and cosmetology, are being cut. These are often courses of interest to students of color (SOC).		✓
Doing what's best for students is not always state approved, e.g., at Carrboro High Biology was put after Physical Science for Karen students to help with vocabulary issues (PS is less vocabulary intense). But that meant students were taking Biology as Seniors (not allowed by state).		✓
Test pressure keeps teachers from having time to build personal relationships with students.		✓
<i>-Inadequate understanding and attention to Latino experience</i>		
African-American and Latino issues are different. People of Color is a US/middle class term that many Latinos do not relate to.	✓	
Teachers/administrators lack a real relationship with Latino families, often using the excuse of language barrier, but often there are underlying fears and assumptions and underlying cultural-economic differences (even with our Latin American teachers from abroad).	✓	
6. WHAT CHANGES DO YOU THINK NEED TO BE MADE TO BRING ABOUT RACIAL EQUITY?		
<i>-Administration & district/school climate</i>		
Change administrators.	✓	
After doing far too little for far too long, we need to pursue this with seriousness for the foreseeable future. Make sure people understand this is not just another task, it is a change in how we do our work. Let teachers know we will free them from some of their other tasks so they can take the time to learn and grow as teachers of a diverse group of students.	✓	
There needs to be less top-down management from the district and the administration.		✓
We need good administration with an open environment for discussion and trying out new ideas. Establish a mechanism so that teachers with new ideas who are willing to pilot them could do so. When good teachers feel a sense of autonomy they can accomplish big tasks.	✓	✓
We need to be patient with discomfort of addressing this topic and working for change.		✓
Administration needs to promote a climate of trust – needs to trust the faculty.		✓
Hold “gatekeepers” and all people accountable.	✓	
Need people to come out and say what needs to be said.	✓	
Elect a school board committed to making a difference for black and brown students.	✓	
We need a strong Equity/PBIS leadership team trained through the Racial Equity Institute (REI).	✓	
School administrators need to be strong leaders for diversity. Leadership varies across schools.		✓

Need an easy and trustworthy way to document inequities and grievances	✓	
Policies need to be clear.		✓
Goals of school and faculty need to be clear and there needs to be buy-in.		✓
We need to create a culture of unity in the District.		✓
Review of discipline manuals at the various schools. Look at how to standardize consequences for disciplinary referrals.		✓
White and Asian students who misbehave should receive the same consequences as black and brown students. This simply does not happen fairly and the children know this.	✓	✓
When you look at data illustrating the inequity problems, come up with a plan, timetable and the people responsible for making the changes. What are the benchmarks that let us know we are going in the right direction?	✓	
<i>-Hiring, staff development and supervision of personnel</i>		
Need to hire more people of color, especially for the high schools	✓	✓
Need to hire people of color who are willing and able to address the racial disparities in our district-- otherwise change will not occur.	✓	
Actively recruit Latino professionals from other institutions and other states if needed (not relying on teachers brought from other countries who do not understand US Latino history or experience.	✓	
Revamp the Beyond Diversity training or explore other kinds of staff training like that provided through REI.	✓	
Educate and provide training to ALL staff about strategies and techniques to support students around equity.	✓	
Need more Student 6 work.		✓
Hire more male teachers in elementary schools. The lack of male teachers at this level is unacceptable.		✓
Need equity coaches at every school.		✓
Need more social workers, counselors and school nurses in each school to meet all the needs of students and free teachers to spend more time focusing on reading and language skills, particularly in kindergarten and first grade.		✓
<i>-Changes to curriculum and instruction</i>		
Need to be able to teach true racial history and black history year round.	✓	✓
Early intervention in elementary and middle schools.		✓
We need to get rid of honors classes so students can be together and interact.		✓
If we have honors and AP, we need to offer support for students who need it.		✓
If we have honors and AP, we need to get rid of quality points. These increase inequities.		✓
Classes, especially freshman ones, should all be at the same level. Not standard and honors. All students should be held to the same high standards with supports built in for those who need them.		✓
We need more interesting elective programs.		✓
We need to strengthen the AVID program.		✓
Mandatory Saturday morning and summer school for kids who need additional support around cognitive skills and academic achievement. Use this time for enriching activities, like museum visits, guest speakers, etc.		✓
Daily PE classes K-12. No exceptions. Healthy minds and bodies should be developed together.		✓
More focus on learning, less focus on test scores.		✓
Teachers, administrators, teacher assistants, and coaches need to be clear on what is proficient versus beyond grade expectations.	✓	
A realization that four-year colleges are not for everyone. There are many well-paying jobs that can be had with a community college degree. Middle school is not too early to have		✓

students investigating the possibilities that lie beyond a K-12 education. We need to change options and course offerings to reflect multiple career possibilities.		
Creation of hybrid classes in high schools.		✓
Homework: send homework home that a student can always do independently to practice already taught skills. We shouldn't be widening the achievement gap by sending work home that requires parent involvement, language skills of the parents or particular resources that all families don't have. Make sure every student has the resources needed to do the assignment at home.	✓	
<i>-Support for students</i>		✓
Student government in high schools needs more power—students need to be empowered rather than squelched.		✓
We need to get the kids talking; give students experiences and simulations.		✓
We need to empower ECHHS Advocacy by having more frequent meetings and focusing on social/emotional learning as well as student activism. All students, including whites need to be encouraged to be activists.		✓
We need to work on how students perceive school.		✓
We need to get students of color more involved in school activities.		✓
We need more student mentors, from the school and from the community.		✓
There needs to be greater support and funding for programs such as Wildcat Welcome, Latino groups, and CTE enrollment.		✓
Breakfast and lunch served to all students.		✓
<i>-Families and community</i>		
Regularly scheduled community meetings with parents.		✓
Parents need the opportunity to be made aware in plain non-educational jargon-loaded terms what is required to be a successful student in a particular grade or program. Spell out in plain language what major skills children need to be proficient in at various points in the year, by grade level (could be a month-by-month trajectory or quarter by quarter).	✓	
Teachers must be expected to always speak respectfully to parents, especially to parents of black and Brown students—with appropriate warmth, respect and eye contact. Teachers who speak to white parents as if they are colleagues in a corporate board meeting have been known to speak to black parents in a dismissive, finger-pointing way.	✓	
Systems in place at each school for proactive communication with Latino families - administration (not just teachers) need to think about creating systems across the board so that communication is easier with Latino families (ideas - home visit program, use of Connect Ed for Spanish message, short-term outside contractors for parent-teacher conferences, more than 2 Spanish translators at district level, Spanish templates for notes sent home, Remind.com for sending Spanish text messages to families and students, etc.)	✓	
Tweet parents reminding them to read to or with their kids. Heard this was successful some place else.		✓
Socioeconomic inequities need to be addressed in school and in community.		✓
Need more programs like Community Connections that are designed to give computers and Internet connection to people in lower income housing.	✓	
As a community, we need to advocate for living wage; access to prenatal care and childhood medical care; high quality and affordable childcare.		✓

Table 2. Listening Session Results – Parents

QUESTION -Theme Responses	PARENTS			
	<i>Black</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Burmese/ Karen</i>	<i>White</i>
1. HOW DOES RACE SHAPE THE CULTURE, CLIMATE AND PRACTICES OF CHCCS?				
<i>-Racial disparities, disproportionality and segregation</i>				
White and black children are treated differently; white children get best treatment, AA children get worst treatment.	✓		✓	✓
Differences in how races are treated grows worse the older children get				✓
Dual language schools ignore “non-language” cultures				✓
<i>-Other factors</i>				
Race-shaping culture varies by school; some schools try harder at equity than others				✓
White parents contribute to the problem.				✓
The schools are too big and impersonal				✓
Schools rely too much on tests, less on getting to know the students				✓
2. HAS RACE AFFECTED HOW THE SCHOOLS INTERACT WITH YOU?				
Agreement that race affects how schools interact with parents	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>-White parents treated best; parents of color/refugee parents treated worse.</i>				
White parents enjoy white privilege. They are given the greatest attention and consideration from schools.	✓	✓	✓	✓
White privilege comes from perceived “participation” differences. White parents volunteer and participate in PTA. This gives those parents elevated status.				✓
A-A parents participate in areas where they feel welcome (e.g., football activities, when PTA meeting was held at Hargraves, black parents came white parents didn’t).				✓
If an A-A parent volunteers or comes to PTA, s/he gets asked to do everything, treated as a race “representative.”				✓
Parents of color feel teachers ignore them and look down on them.	✓	✓	✓	
A-A parents are treated with less respect, starting with the front office.	✓			✓
When A-A parents go in to talk about child they are asked about drugs in the home or marital status	✓			✓
Parents are afraid if they bring a complaint to the school their children will be treated poorly.		✓	✓	
Refugee parents are treated worse by black teachers and staff.			✓	
Refugee parents have difficulty reaching out to school because of language difficulties.			✓	
Refugee parents described teachers refusing to answer their questions about how children are doing in school.			✓	
Latino parent signed up to volunteer three times; never called.		✓		
It is very hard to get information from teachers or counselors about which classes will set our children up for better grades and a better future. This is not an English problem. It is a problem with knowing how to navigate this system.		✓		
Some teachers tell us too late—or not at all- when our children have a problem in school	✓	✓		
Undocumented parents are fearful of visiting schools or attending school events because of new ID system that requires people to have a		✓		

driver's license or ID.				
There are challenges for ESL families in understanding the transportation system including: not knowing how to access information on-line, information is confusing; information is in English only; transportation staff do not return phone calls; no one speaks Spanish in Transportation office.		✓		
3. HAS RACE AFFECTED HOW THE SCHOOLS INTERACTS WITH YOUR CHILD(REN)				
Agreement that race affects how schools interact with students	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>-Racial disparities and discrimination</i>				
Race affects how teachers/administrators apply discipline. Black and Latino kids get disciplined more harshly for same infractions. White kids not disciplined when they should be.	✓			✓
Race affects how well students do academically: racial gap in academic education.				✓
There are not high expectations for students of color.	✓	✓		✓
Students of color are told that they should not sign up for AP classes because they are too hard for them.	✓	✓		
When counselors at CHHS set up meetings to start the college process, Latino students are not invited to participate. Message is they don't consider Latino students as college material. (Once they had a Latina counselor who did reach out to Latino students, but she was transferred to another school)		✓		
When students of color struggle or don't try hard, teachers and other staff don't push them or help them to achieve more.		✓		
Refugee children who do well are bullied by white children. This leads to children avoiding achievement in order not to be bullied.			✓	
At CHS, many Latino children tried out for soccer. Only one chosen. There are pre-game dinners, but this child and his parents are excluded from email invitation/announcement of these dinners. Parents agree this was true at other schools.		✓		
Those who are chosen for the soccer teams tend to also belong to Triangle United and other clubs that require payment from families to be able to compete. The students of families that don't have the money to belong to these clubs are discriminated against when they try out for school teams.		✓		
Transportation system seems to discriminate against Latino children/families. Sometimes drivers will not make their stops to pick children up.		✓		
4. WHY DO YOU THINK ADVANCED CLASSES, SUCH AS AIG, HONORS, AND AP ARE MAJORITY WHITE AND THE REMEDIAL CLASSES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY STUDENTS OF COLOR?				
<i>-Racial bias and discrimination</i>				
Race is definitely a factor in decisions made about AIG/Honors/AP and remedial pull-outs.	✓			✓
AIG selection process is not parent-friendly. Many parents of color do not know how it works and no one tries to make sure that they do.	✓			
Good performance of children of color is less likely to be recognized or rewarded.	✓		✓	
Students of color are told not to sign up for AP courses because	✓	✓		

teachers or counselors say they are too hard for them.				
Tracking lowers self-esteem of many students of color, lowers their belief in their own competence.	✓	✓		
<i>-Students of color come to school less prepared</i>				✓
By age 3 white middle class kids have so much vocabulary that children of color can never catch up.				✓
Poor parents don't understand about the value of reading and talking to their kids.		✓		
5. HAVE YOU NOTICED ATTEMPTS TO ADDRESS RACIAL INEQUITIES? HOW HAVE THESE WORKED?				
<i>-Programs reinforce stereotypes</i>				
Disadvantage of some of these programs is that they label students. Impression is students of color need special programs to succeed.				✓
White child/parent asked about enrolling child in AVID to increase study skills; told it wasn't for them. See stereotyping of students in district programs.				✓
Parent University: people think it is for black or minority parents, but any parent can participate				✓
Have not noticed attempts; attempts of parents to collaborate in response to equity issues has been rebuffed	✓			
<i>-Attempts that seem positive</i>				
Heard good things about AVID				✓
St Augustine tutoring for literacy—do practicum in schools				✓
Blue Ribbon Mentor Advocate for children of color. Impression that it's great, but needs more mentors				✓
Estes has had a good model promoting equity in last few years (example: celebration of HBCUs) with the children. Parents are still segregated.				✓
Bootstrap draws attention to literacy issues—signs outside of school				✓
<i>-Questions about equity initiatives</i>				✓
Not sure about AVID; how do we know if it is helpful? Are changes in outcomes tracked?				✓
Didn't know that money existed for equity work; if so what are they doing with it?		✓		
6. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SCHOOL SYSTEM SHOULD DO TO CREATE A RACIALLY EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT?				
<i>-Offer opportunities for education about race and racism, especially for white parents.</i>				
Educate parents and school staff and faculty about white privilege (good opportunity for these conversations now because they are happening all over the country).	✓			✓
White parents need to understand equity issues and why it should matter to them.				✓
Have a Parent U book study on microaggressions, especially for white parents.				✓
Recommend that parents get racial equity training.				✓
Sponsor a Facebook activity about white privilege.				✓
<i>-Better communication and more support for parents of color</i>				
Hold special classes or a parent orientation to explain school programs and academic expectations		✓		

Improve communication with parents, especially parents of color. It varies a lot across teachers and schools.	✓	✓		
Administration and teachers need to develop systems for proactive better communication with Latino families (e.g., home visit program, use of Connect Ed for Spanish messages, short-term outside contractors for parent-teacher conferences, more than 2 Spanish translators at district level, Spanish templates for notes sent home, Remind.com for sending Spanish text messages to families and students, etc.)		✓		
Refugee parents would have a lot to say if only schools would create ways for them to engage (in other words, through language translation and interpretation.)			✓	
Teachers need to communicate with parents early on when a child has a problem in school, rather than wait until it is serious and consequences have worsened.		✓		
Have math classes for parents like the one UNC offered last year.		✓		
English classes offered at night because of transportation and child care issues.		✓		
Offer affordable childcare and tutoring at the school.		✓		
<i>-Create more equity in determining who is "gifted"</i>				
Make the process of selecting students for gifted or advance classes more transparent , accessible and equitable.	✓	✓		
Come up with ways other than test scores to determine if a child is "gifted."		✓		
Remove gifted classes and make gifted education for everyone.	✓			
<i>-More African-American leadership</i>				
Hire more African-Americans into leadership positions.				✓
<i>-Involve students</i>				
Get kids involved in discussions about race.	✓			✓

Table 3. Listening Session Results – High School Students of Color

QUESTIONS <i>-Theme</i> Responses	STUDENTS	
	<i>Black</i>	<i>Latino</i>
1. HOW DO STUDENTS TALK ABOUT OR APPROACH RACE AT THE SCHOOLS YOU HAVE BEEN IN?		
<i>Students don't feel supported in talking about racial issues at school.</i>		
Confederate flag incident was not handled well. Tears among her friends. When she brought up with her teacher she didn't feel supported in her point of view. The classroom conversation was ended as soon as it began because black and white students disagreed on the issue and they were not allowed to discuss further.	✓	
Confederate flag. Principal email the teachers, but no one told the students. This was disrespectful of the students. Keeping them out of the loop meant there was not a good opportunity to discuss it. Also meant the teachers didn't have to discuss it with their students.		✓
2. WHAT ABOUT TEACHERS? DOES RACE AFFECT HOW THEY SEE EACH OTHER AND THE STUDENTS?		

<i>-Conversations about race are rare and difficult.</i>		
Teachers do not talk about race, but they are quick to bring up gay rights. It makes us feel like one is more important than the other.	✓	✓
Race was once discussed in history class. When people disagreed the conversation stopped.	✓	✓
<i>-Race influences how students are disciplined</i>		
Black kids get suspended quickly. It causes tension between the student and the teacher.	✓	✓
At East, the principal has humiliated black kids more than once in a public fashion. Once following a disagreement among students, she imposed a punishment that included calling kids' names out over the intercom. Another time she humiliated the dance squad because they were wearing spandex, called them a name and threatened to disband the entire dance squad. This came about at about the same time she was protecting and defending white students who posted a Confederate flag with racially offensive comments.	✓	✓
Race determines how student behavior is perceived; white students' words and actions are protected by freedom of speech and freedom of expression. These same actions by black students result in them being labeled bullies or aggressive.	✓	
<i>-Teachers have been supportive.</i>		
Overall my teachers have been supportive and care. They do not want students to get below a C. They want you to put forth a good effort and to do quality work.		✓
3. HOW HAS RACE INFLUENCED THE CULTURE, CLIMATE AND CURRICULUM OF YOUR SCHOOLS?		
<i>School personnel underestimate and stereotype students of color.</i>		
"My guidance counselor tried to change my courses when I chose AP classes. I know what I want to learn, but the guidance counselor said she was not happy with my schedule and she kept trying to change it to make me take less challenging classes. She was underestimating me. She told her me I couldn't take 2 AP courses, but I took them anyway."		✓
The same guidance counselor just changed the schedule of another student, without even asking her, because she was shy. Guidance counselors take advantage of students who do not speak up or stand up for what they believe in.		✓
In a Spanish class, when teacher was taking attendance and Carlos wasn't there, teacher asked, "Did he drop out already?" It was said in front of the whole class. Teachers think because we are Latinos, we drop out.		✓
		✓
<i>Administrators not supportive of students of color</i>		
Students do not talk to the principal when this stuff (like with guidance counselors) happens; the principal is not supportive.		✓
The principal only talks to you if you are in trouble or if a bad event happened.		✓
4. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT THE ADVANCED CLASSES ARE MOSTLY WHITE AND THE REMEDIAL CLASSES DISPROPORTIONATELY STUDENTS OF COLOR? HOW HAS THIS IMPACTED YOU?		
<i>Racial disparities in these classes make students of color uncomfortable</i>		
It feels more comfortable taking regular classes. There is more diversity. "I do not have to think like the whites in the class. I don't want to pretend to be like white people and think the things that they think."	✓	✓
You can't be yourself in honors classes. When you aren't reading fast enough and not getting everything right you don't want to be there.	✓	✓
In these classes you are the only black student. You are in a AP class with people who do not take it seriously. Students playing paper basketball in class and teacher allows them to do this. They know they are going to make a good grade and no one really cares. (Students	✓	✓

also play paper basketball in remedial classes too and the teacher doesn't say anything.)		
<i>Advanced classes are considered more for white and Asian students</i>		
In freshman year the teacher gave up and said "you can do what you want" to the entire class. In sophomore year, the teacher felt more pressure because more students in the class were White and the parents have money. Almost all white and Asian. They push the students for grades and college. Parents tell their kids what grades they are going to get.		✓
5. HAVE YOU NOTICED THE SCHOOLS DOING ANYTHING TO TRY TO CREATE A MORE RACIALLY EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT? IF SO, WHAT'S WORKED WELL OR HAS NOT WORKED WELL?		
<i>-Placement in AP or Honors – uncomfortable, intimidating</i>		
Intimidating being the only black or Hispanic kid in the class.	✓	✓
Black kids get singled out in advanced classes—sometimes babied and sometimes teacher tries to offer help even when it's not asked for.	✓	
Student called a "good Latina" and asked why she is in AP. A group of AP Latino students was called to the office and asked for advice for how to get other Latino student to do as well.		✓
<i>-Student Six problems</i>		
Student Six: some students were forced. Not a lot of teachers show up to their trainings.	✓	
6. IF YOU HAD A MAGIC WAND AND COULD WAVE IT TO CREATE A RACIALLY EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT, WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE... WHAT WOULD YOU SEE IN YOUR SCHOOLS?		
<i>-Offer training about race and racism</i>		
Every teacher should go to Racial Equity Institute training and students should go also.	✓	
<i>-Stop racial stereotyping</i>		
There would be no more stereotyping from teachers or other students. Students of color have negative stereotypes placed/said against them. Students internalize these stereotypes and start to see themselves that way. Then they act out these stereotypes. I have heard students of color even say that they are not smart and I say "yes you are". We need to change the way students see themselves. We need to stop stereotyping students.	✓	
<i>-Happier, more effective teachers</i>		
You (teachers) have to motivate students to want to join the class. We want to feel welcomed.		✓
Make sure teachers have good and positive communication with their students.		✓
Teachers who can teach are the only ones there.	✓	
Teachers paid better so they are happy in their jobs.		✓
<i>-Principals and counselors also play a role in inequities</i>		
Can't blame everything on teachers. Principals and counselors play a role, too.	✓	
<i>-Allow more student-to student support</i>	✓	✓
If you see your friends doing well, it makes you want to do well. This also has the power to cause you to separate from peers who are not doing well. This causes students/groups of students not to like one another (around academic achievement). We need to support one another.		
<i>-Need more collaboration</i>	✓	

There would be no separation of students. No underestimation. No grouping. No levels to the classes. All students would learn together and study together. We would learn from each other.		
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Themes from listening sessions

Themes that predominated across all the listening sessions included:

- History of racial advantage and disadvantage that continues today, exemplified by resource, access and power differentials between white families, staff/faculty and students, and those of color (particularly African American).
- Inadequate attention, lack of knowledge, understanding and consciousness regarding institutional and structural racism. A call for more training.
- Racial stereotyping that plays a role in lowered academic expectations, fewer advanced academic and other non-academic opportunities, and disproportionately harsh discipline for students of color.
- Tracking into gifted, honors and AP (including “quality points) disproportionately advantages white students and should be discontinued.
- In-school segregation by race that emanates from tracking and other differential opportunities (e.g., off-campus lunch, sports, student government, clubs, summer school).
- African American, Latino, and immigrant parents experience inadequate and disrespectful treatment from schools. White parents seen as having inordinate power to shape priorities.
- Latino and other immigrant families have special, unmet needs regarding communication and lack of cultural understanding.
- Concerns regarding the relative power and position of white staff and faculty vs. staff and faculty of color.
- Curriculum and instructional issues that include inadequate recognition and instruction regarding racial history and diverse cultural norms and values.
- Curriculum options (e.g., discontinued technical courses) and poor advising by guidance counselors limit post-graduation opportunities for students of color.
- High stakes testing is a barrier in terms of improving curriculum focused more on equity and to developing personal relationships with students.
- Efforts to address inequities have been inadequate, ineffective and misguided. In some cases efforts that have shown promise are implemented poorly or only sporadically making it hard to evaluate effectiveness.
- Poor leadership and accountability for equity goals

V. How Has the District Tried to Address Inequities?

Over the years Chapel Hill/Carrboro City Schools has implemented a number of programs intended to promote equity and close the achievement gap. Some of the programs aim to assist individual students, while others promote district-wide changes. There is seemingly little coordination across programs and they emanate from various offices.

Following are basic descriptions of these programs. In most cases, information was obtained from the District or program website.

Programs Focusing on Individual Students

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

The CHCCS AVID program is part of a world-wide, non-profit effort to close the achievement gap by preparing students for college and the global market. According to the AVID organization (taken from their web site), AVID

- Teaches skills and behaviors for academic success
- Provides intensive support with tutorials and strong student/teacher relationships
- Creates a positive peer group for students
- Develops a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination

At its core, AVID is an elective class that students take starting in middle school and continuing through high school graduation. The class is taught by an AVID trained teacher and focuses on research-based, academic and social support to increase college readiness. Students selected for the program are in the “academic middle” and are pushed to take advanced classes. The theory behind the program is that students in the academic middle are mostly ignored and are not encouraged, or supported, to take rigorous classes. By enrolling in AVID these students are held to a higher standard, are supported in their studies, take higher-level classes, and are more likely to attend college.

Blue Ribbon Mentor-Advocate

The Blue Ribbon Mentor-Advocate (BRMA) is intended to support the achievement of students of color. Begun in 1995, the program selects students in the fourth grade and supports them through high school graduation. Approximately 128 students, in grades 4-12, participate in the program. BRMA is a strengths-based, skills-building program. Components include (taken directly from the BRMA web site):

Mentoring – The one-on-one relationship is the fundamental component of the program. The mentor exposes the child to new experiences while also helping the student pursue his or her interests and talents.

Advocacy – Mentors and parents collaborate to support their student by working within the school and community to develop and utilize resources that support the student’s success.

Tutoring – Students have the opportunity to receive tutoring in community-based, evening tutorials. Tutorial sessions include peer support, college exposure, and creative learning activities. For more information on tutoring, please see our Academic Support page.

Social and Cultural Enrichment – The program sponsors social and cultural events for mentors and mentees. Scholarship funds are also used to provide opportunities for student engagement in activities such as summer camps, arts lessons, and athletic leagues.

College and Career Exposure – Students are provided with regular opportunities to explore options for attending college and pursuing the career of their choice. BRMA sponsors college tours, workshops, and assistance through the college application and enrollment process. Mentors provide students with individualized guidance throughout a student's time in the program. See our College and Career Curriculum page for more information.

Parental Involvement – BRMA provides direct support to parents through individualized assistance intended to support their child's success in school.

Youth Leadership Institute – The Blue Ribbon Youth Leadership Institute operates a leadership summer camp and year-round service club that encourages students to develop their leadership skills through service-learning activities. This program serves more students than just those who are officially part of BRMA.

Scholarships – BRMA provides scholarship funds for students who wish to pursue post-secondary education. The Haidt Scholars fund is an endowed scholarship that aids in paying the tuition of a student attending a four-year college or university. The Sponsor a Scholar fund uses community donations to assist students who wish to attend any type of post-secondary educational institution.

In 2012, UNC School of Education conducted an evaluation of BRMA. The evaluation report was glowing in its conclusions. Significant findings include:

- Program participants' GPAs were higher than non-participants', but their standardized test scores were not.
- 97.5% of participants graduate high school
- 100% of graduates go to college

Community Connection Program

The following description of the Community Connection Program comes from Darren Bell, CCP Program Manager:

The CHCCS Community Connection Program (CCP) provides Economically-Disadvantaged students with technology to access their Digital Learning Environment in a safe and secured manner while off-campus. To create a safe and secured environment, CCP offers:

- *District managed Chromebooks*
- *WIFI devices that sends all of the data to our filtered and monitored network*

- *Parent/guardian workshops on ways to keep kids safe online while benefiting from being online*

For the 2015 - 2016 school year, we are planning to expand the program in the high schools by deploying more devices and increasing the workshops.

2015 - 2016 Deployment

- *100 Chromebooks/MIFI devices to High School students. Plan delivery in late September and October*
- *High School Student/Parents required to participate in technology fair and workshops*
- *Referrals to Kramden if a computer is only needed (refurbished desktop computer)*

Workshops

- *PowerSchool*
- *Free Online resources (college and educational)*
- *How to stay safe and secured online*
- *Digital Footprint*
- *Why parents need to be online (Email, Peachjar, PowerSchool, communicate with school)*
- *Social Networking*
- *Elementary School Title 1 - Online security and safety and free resources*

Need for the program in the district

- *Not having internet access at home is a social economic issue like students not having a good meal. With this said, the numbers of students that need support varies based on economical conditions in the family. The district has ~3,000 students (and growing) who receive free and/or reduced lunch. Based on surveys, we estimate 700 students do not have adequate internet access at home. This means they do not have internet at all or not continuously throughout the school year. This represents ~400 families.*

ESL instruction

To meet the needs of English as a second language students the district offers special programs at each school and dual-language programs in Spanish/English and Mandarin/English. Important documents are translated into Spanish with English on one side of the paper and Spanish on the other. Additionally, translators are available for meetings with parents.

Increase in underrepresented students in honors and AP classes

The District partnered with Equal Opportunity Schools, a private organization, to identify and increase the number of African American and Latino students in honors and AP classes. So far they have worked with Carrboro and East Chapel Hill High Schools. While the number of African American and Latino students enrolling increased, there was a significant drop out rate. Plans may be underway to develop a retention programs for students enrolled.

Parent University

“Parent U” is a community-school partnership intended to improve academic success of students of color by providing parents with the skills to advocate for their children in the school system. A key concept behind the Parent U is to build parental confidence in navigating the school system. Through a series of workshops and classes, Parent University teaches parents about the academic and social support available in both the school system and the community; how to have positive relationships with school personnel; and how to help their children achieve academically.

Parent U offers courses in schools and community locations. Courses include both one-time workshops to series workshops. Course topics fall into one of the following areas:

- Effective Parenting
- Leadership and Advocacy
- Supporting learning and Navigating the School System
- Health Awareness

A 2012 evaluation of the Parent U pilot program, conducted by a graduate student in the UNC School of Social Work, found that parents who participated in Parent U felt positively about the experience and that the program more confidence in negotiating the school system.

Pre K/Head Start

A program serving 3 and 5 year old children that provides education, health, mental health, nutrition, parent involvement, family services, and disability services. The idea behind the program is to reduce the academic gap between lower-income students and middle-income students entering kindergarten. According to a 2012, government-funded impact study found that by third grade there were no discernable differences between children who participated in Head Start and those who didn't in health, behavior, and academic achievement.

Read to Achieve

The goal of the State is to ensure that every student read at or above grade level by the end of third grade and continue to progress in reading proficiency so that he or she can read, comprehend, integrate, and apply complex text when needed for secondary education and career success.

The 7 Components of Read to Achieve

1. Developmental Screening and Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)
2. Elimination of Social Promotion. 3rd graders not at grade level for reading will be retained. Three ways to show proficiency: 1) Score a 3 or above on the English EOC; 2) Pass a Read to Achieve test; 3) By portfolio.
3. Successful Reading Development for Retained Students
4. Parent/Guardian Notification
5. Accountability Measures
6. Comprehensive Reading Plan

7. Facilitating Early Grade Reading Proficiency

Summer Reading Camp – For students not at grade level and who don't qualify for an exemption. Six week program whereby the child either passes a Read to Achieve test or is approved by portfolio.

Responsiveness to Instruction

Written into State and Federal special education law, RtI is a collaborative process for meeting the needs of all students. It emphasizes that all staff, not just Exceptional Child staff, are responsible for a student's education. Parents are considered an important part team. According to the district website, the philosophy behind RtI includes:

- All children can learn
- Focus on meeting the needs of all children
- Wealth of knowledge and partnership from parents
- Work collaboratively to develop solutions and strategies
- Proactive instruction within general education
- Prevention more cost effective than remediation
- Utilize resources necessary to meet the educational needs of all children
- Evaluate effectiveness of educational strategies frequently
- Communicate accurate information about student progress regularly
- Provide opportunities for all children to achieve their goals
- Best educational strategy: the one that works!

Restorative Practices

Select staff from all schools were exposed to restorative practices, a collaborative approach to keeping kids in school. The goal is to create communities and reduce disruptive behaviors. Through the use of circles (sitting in circles), that include the teacher and students, students are given responsibility for their behavior. Instead of punishment for misbehavior, the circles focus on finding ways to, "make things right." In theory, restorative practices will reduce the amount of disciplinary actions taken and keep more children in school. School staff were trained in the beginning of the summer, so there is not information on program implementation, yet. It is not mentioned on the district's website.

District-wide Programs

Community-Parent Advocacy Network

A committee of parents working with the district to support students of color. According to the website, the purpose of C-PAN is, "...to influence district policies that impact effective culturally-relevant programs, curriculum and delivery strategies in order to increase the achievement of students of color."

District Equity Task Force

This past spring (2015) Sheldon Lanier, CHCCS Director of Equity convened "...a task force consisting of Principals, Counselors, Social Workers, and community members..." The task force's purpose is "to meet and discuss where we (the district) are currently in terms of minority student achievement, where we want to go, and what culturally proficient practices we need to take as a district in order to continue closing both the achievement and opportunity gap for students." (Long range plan update, January 30, 2015, http://chccs.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=126&meta_id=13470)

As of early September, the task force had met three times and had developed a vision, mission, and set of values.

Learning-Focused Lessons

Headed by Dr. Magda Parvey, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, Learning-Focused Lessons is an instructional methodology designed to meet each student's needs in order to close the achievement gap. The district has contracted with a private company, Learning-Focused, to train teachers in the LFL methods. Max Thompson, of Learning-Focused, consulted with the district and provided teacher training throughout the 2014-2015 school year and additional, more advanced training was provided this past summer.

According to the web site, Learning-Focused Lessons Provides:

- An instructional framework for planning standards-driven lessons.
- Lessons focus on how students learn and whether students learn, not coverage or test prep
- Purposefully connected research-based strategies provide maximum achievement gains in every lesson.
- Built-in strategies for engaging and challenging students.
- Provides a direct connection between research and application.
- Defines a path so teachers can unleash their professional abilities.

According to one school administrator, Learning-focused Lessons is, "...truly the only way to add equity instruction and eliminate the achievement gap in the district." It is the, "...greatest equity effort of the district."

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)

All schools in the school district have implemented by PBIS, a positive behavior support system. It is an environmental approach to encouraging positive social behaviors and discouraging negative ones all the while decreasing the number of suspensions and expulsions. In theory this would positively impact children of color who are the victims of a disproportionate number of suspensions and expulsions.

Instead of focusing on what behaviors schools don't want to see, a committee decides which behaviors they do want to see and develop specific strategies to encourage those behaviors. At least 80% of the staff must agree with the goals. Then implementation strategies are developed, including positive rewards for children fulfilling the behaviors.

Racial Equity Training

Teachers and staff in the school district have attended various equity training programs, including those offered by the Racial Equity Institute and the Pacific Educational Group (Courageous Conversations). Attendance at the workshops is voluntary.

School Equity Teams

Schools determine how often meet. Each school is doing something different. It is up to the principal and there is not district oversight. District policy says that school equity teams are responsible for assessing the progress of low-achieving students at least four times a year. They are to develop action plans and work with teachers and parents to implement the plan. Equity teams were also responsible for looking at discipline data to analyze the degree of disproportionate discipline.

Student Six

Student Six is a strategy to increase culturally relevant teaching that was adapted for the District by Graig Meyer, former BRMA and equity director and Bonnie Davis, an equity consultant. The program drew from research-based teaching strategies proven to be effective with students of color. In 2011 Meyer and Davis presented BRMA students with a series of teaching strategies and the students identified which six strategies they wanted teachers to implement. The School Improvement Network filmed professional development videos of the students and select teachers (those students believed implement the strategies in their classrooms) to be used as training videos. The idea is that small groups of teachers from each school would be trained in the methods and would become trainers for their schools. The program is considered a student-driven, professional development program with students serving as the primary trainers.

The six strategies chosen by students as the most important are:

1. Visibility - Every student should feel valued and included in the classroom.
2. Proximity - Use physical space to engage students and reduce perceived threat.
3. Connecting to student's lives - Make curriculum relevant to students' experiences.
4. Engaging students' culture
5. Addressing race - Talking openly about race and how it affects students' experiences.
6. Connecting to future selves - Helping students identify future paths and use classroom activities to guide them towards their personal goals.

The program has been implemented sporadically in the last year.

Student Programs

CORE ("Creating Our Own Reality")

CORE is a student-led group concerned with racial equity. This year the group is working with Nancy Kueffer, Exceptional Children Behavioral Support/PBIS Coordinator, to modify the student code of conduct. The group could use additional funding from the district.

Multicultural Student Achievement Network (MSAN)

The CHCCS District is a member of MSAN, a national coalition of school districts whose goal is to understand and eliminate achievement, and opportunity, gaps. MSAN supports research to understand the achievement gap as well as separate conferences for both school staff and students.

Youth Leadership Institute

YLI offers students of color opportunities for leadership, including service learning activities, college tours and international travel. Each high school has its own service club. Activities are offered year round, including a summer leadership program.

VI. What Can We Learn From Others?

Models of Equitable Schools

The issues of differential achievement levels, differential disciplinary rates, and differential access to advanced curriculum along racial and economic lines are endemic throughout this nation. Gaps between the excellence that is expected and the results that are achieved are particularly large in Chapel Hill Carrboro because expectations are high. There is a sharp contrast between the inability to effectively teach most students of color when compared to the high levels of academic accomplishments enabled for white and Asian students.

However, this is not to say that it is impossible to eliminate gaps in our ability to help all students achieve excellence. There are many schools that have been able to overcome the obstacles that are so prevalent in our society, and have created environments in which all students are able to achieve at high levels. These benchmarks of success provide a window on what is possible.

In this section we take a look at some schools or districts that have shown gains in the performance of students of color, or have reduced gaps between the performance of students of color and their white counterparts.

The following is an in-depth look at (I) A study conducted by the School Redesign Network at Stanford University, which focused on five schools with models that have successfully improved the performance of low-income students of color; and (II) the Portland Public School System's racial equity policy, which looks at all school policies with a racial equity lens, seeking to close the achievement gap and provide a racially equitable school environment for all students.

(I) High Schools for Equity

In the *High Schools for Equity* study, The School Redesign Network at Stanford University conducted an in-depth case study on five schools in California that were focused on achieving racial equity and had achieved improved educational outcomes for low-income students of color (Friedlander). Because of the strong structure and practices at the five schools, they are all moving toward narrowing racial, socio-economic, and language achievement gaps of their students and are outperforming the majority of other schools in their communities serving similar populations.

A. The Schools

Table 2: Study School Characteristics, 2006-07

School Name	Animo Inglewood	Construction Tech Academy	June Jordan School for Equity	Leadership Public School	New Tech High School
Type of School	Statewide charter	District school	District school	District-approved independent charter	District-approved dependent charter
District or CMO affiliation	Chartered by Los Angeles Unified S.D. and operated by Green Dot CMO	San Diego Unified Public Schools	San Francisco Unified Public Schools	Chartered by San Francisco Unified S.D. Not affiliated with a CMO	Chartered by Sacramento Unified S.D. and operated by New Tech Foundation
Student Enrollment	518	430	371	320	355
% Free and Reduced Lunch	74%	68%	48% (75%)*	52%	62%
% Students of Color	100%	81%	95%	96%	70%
% African-American	37%	17%	37%	18%	27%
% Latino	63%	51%	32%	39%	26%
% English Language Learners	7%	24%	13%	12%	25%

Source: California Basic Education Data System. Free- and Reduced-Lunch information is from 2005-06; all other data are from 2006-07.

*Although more than 75% of the students in the school are from families with incomes below the eligibility threshold for free and reduced-price lunch, only 48% of students have enrolled in the lunch program.

B. Common Design Features

In each school studied, the improvements required structural changes to staffing, time, and school organization that were “grounded in different beliefs about what students are capable of, how they learn, and what they need to be contributing members of society.”

The central changes have required new approaches to how students and teachers are organized for instruction to provide continuity and reduce tracking. Instruction is organized and supported to be more coherent, intellectually and practically rigorous and engaging. Assessment drives stronger performance and reinforces teachers’ understanding of standards, students, and the learning process. These five schools had several common designed features that were effective in improving student performance:

1) Personalization

Created through:

1. Small learning environments
2. Continuous, long-term relationships between adults and students

3. Advisory systems that assign a single adult to work closely with a small group of students, usually for multiple years. Advisors facilitated and organized counseling, academic supports, and family connections
4. Devoting more resources to teaching than non-teaching staff, enabling smaller class sizes and reduced pupil load for teachers
5. Reorganized schedules so teachers have fewer groups of students for longer periods of time
6. Teachers working in teams that share the same students and share responsibility for their students' progress and well-being.

2) Rigorous and Relevant Instruction

Coherent instructional programs:

1. Provide access to college preparatory curriculum and career preparation through internships, coursework, and other connections to the world outside of school.
2. Assess students' skills through major projects and investigations as opposed to constant standardized testing
3. Fill gaps in students' academic skills with additional supports and teaching them in ways that are culturally relevant and adapted to their learning needs
4. Provide connection to communities through strong parent outreach, curriculum specifically about students' communities and cultures, and partnership with community groups, industries, and higher education

3) Professional Learning and Collaboration, Participation in the Decision Making Process

The schools allocated significant time for teachers to work collaboratively and provide actionable input:

1. Faculty is actively involved in determining and enacting shared goals and engaging in democratic decision making that is close to the classroom. Teachers and other staff in these five schools reported that they were willing to work hard because they felt valued and supported by these design features that allowed them to make a difference for their students.
2. Summer retreats
3. Regular professional development time built into the school year
4. Joint planning each week
5. Parents and students are frequently involved in the process

C. Specific Practice Examples from One of the Studied Schools

A look into the specific practices of Amino Inglewood High School in Los Angeles gives closer insight into specific policies schools can enact to improve student performance. Amino Inglewood High established high expectations for all students and provided extensive support.

- a. Amino Inglewood High enrolls *all* 9th-grade students in algebra courses, regardless of placement scores or previous coursework
 - i. To ensure student success, all 9th-graders are required to participate in a 5-week summer bridge program designed to build basic math skills and introduce higher order math concepts

- ii. Students who continue to struggle also take a curriculum skills math class, which meets 3 days a week and is taught by the lead math teacher in the school
- b. All classes are heterogeneously grouped and all curricula is college preparatory. All offered coursework satisfies the University of California AG requirements and the school provides as many as 7 Advance Placement courses each year
- c. Classes are taught on a rotating A/B block schedule for the full year, with 95-minute periods to allow teachers to teach the concepts with depth, and provide opportunities for students to explore ideas more fully.
- d. Struggling students are required to attend after-school support classes taught by their teachers and parents are communicated with to determine effective support strategies for the student
- e. Each student is placed in a small advisory group of 25 students for all 4 years. Advisory groups meet once a week for 65 minutes to discuss and address students' social needs and to connect to students' lives. This prevents students from "falling through the cracks."
- f. Teacher development driven by school data. At staff meetings, entire staff examined course pass rates disaggregated by subject area, student race/ethnicity, gender, and grade level. They analyzed the data for patterns and reflected and strategized on how to better serve struggling students and how their own practices may be contributing to the problem.
- g. Additional support: "Homework Café" – free after-school tutoring staffed by local college students

The cumulative effect of Animo's practices and beliefs is an achievement level among low-income African-American and Latino students rarely seen in California. The staff set out to prove that given the same quality of education, lower income students of color can and will achieve as well as their more affluent counterparts, and the data High Schools for Equity show considerable movement toward that goal.

Animo's 2006 Academic Performance Index (API) score was 720, compared to 564 and 549 at neighboring district high schools. When compared to similar schools, Animo Inglewood is ranked a "10," the top ranking. In addition, Animo students far exceed the level of proficiency set in other Inglewood high schools. In 2006-07, 42% of Latino students at Animo were at or above a proficient level on the Algebra CST, compared to only 2% in district high schools, 8% in Los Angeles County, and 11% in the state. At all grade levels, Animo students outperformed other economically disadvantaged, African American, and Latino students in the state. By the 11th grade, the 42% proficiency rate for Animo students on the state English language arts test is nearly double the 22% proficiency rates for these groups elsewhere in the state.

D. Specific Practices from All five Schools

The Stanford study provides charts that delineate the specific practices and models for all five schools that support the important aspects for improving educational outcomes.

Personalization

Table 6: School Features Supporting Personalization

	Animo Inglewood	Construction Tech	June Jordan	Leadership High	New Tech High
School size	518	430	371	320	355
Average class size	28	26	25	24	22
Pupil load/ teacher	140	100-150	75-100	80-100	145
Length of block periods	95 minutes A/B schedule	75-90 minutes A/B schedule 4x4 block	55-90 minutes	90 minutes A/B schedule	90 minutes A/B schedule
Advisory	Meets once a week for 65 minutes. 25 students stay with the same advisor for 4 years.	Meets 3 times a week for 45 minutes. 26 students stay with the same advisor for 1 year.	Meets daily for 30 minutes. 15-17 students stay with same advisor for 2 years.	Meets 3 days a week for 90 minutes. 15 students stay with same advisor for 4 years.	Meets daily for 30 minutes. 15 students stay with same advisor for 4 years.

Career and technical education	Career readiness class for 12 th graders	Instruction in architecture, engineering, and construction integrated with core academic classes	CTE opportunities through internships and community service	CTE opportunities through community service	Technology and workplace skills taught in all classes
Partnerships with higher education	Students can take 2 elective courses a year offered by Santa Monica City College on the Animo campus 2-3 days a week after school	Students can take community college courses for AP credit Students in good standing receive admission and full scholarship to San Diego State Construction Management Program	All students take classes at San Francisco State (SFSU) All students in good academic standing are guaranteed admission to SFSU	Some students opt to take some college courses at San Francisco City College through their College for Teens program	Students complete at least 12 units of college credit at Sacramento City College, American River College, or Consumnes River College

Instructional Design Features

Table 7: Instructional Design Features

	Animo Inglewood	Construction Tech	June Jordan	Leadership	New Tech
A-G courses available or required for graduation	Required for all students	Available to and taken by all students	Available to and taken by all students	Required for all students except transfer students	Available to and taken by all students
Project-based learning	Classes offer within-class projects around a unit of study	All instruction is organized around major projects; interdisciplinary projects occur in advisory each year	Classes offer within-class projects around a unit of study	Classes offer within-class projects around a unit of study	All instruction is organized around major projects using technology
Inter-disciplinary courses	NA	Technical and academic content are integrated	Humanities classes	9th- and 10th-grade humanities courses	Humanities and some combined math/science classes
Performance-based assessment	In class, students demonstrate their knowledge through oral presentations & research papers	Annual large scale interdisciplinary grade-level projects completed through advisory	Semester portfolios, portfolio defense at end of 10th grade, 5 in-depth demonstrations of mastery for 11 th and 12 th graders	Annual portfolio exhibitions and projects	Exhibitions in class at the end of every project
Internships/service learning	Community service project within advisory	Regular internships and job shadowing throughout high school	Internships for 2 hours weekly for 9 th and 10 th graders and 3 to 7 hours weekly for 11 th and 12 th graders	35 hours annual community service completed outside of school which advisors help students find	Annual 10-hour community service project; seniors conduct a 50-hour community service project

Instructional Support Design Features

Table 8: Instructional Supports Design Features

	Animo Inglewood	Construction Tech	June Jordan	Leadership	New Tech
Teacher collaboration	Grade-level teachers meet weekly, and departments meet monthly to address individual student's needs.	Grade-level teachers meet twice a week to address individual student's needs.	Grade- and department-level teachers meet weekly to address individual student's needs.	All-school professional development day dedicated to 15 high need students, weekly grade- and department-level meetings to address student's needs.	Team teachers meet daily to address individual student's needs.
In class instructional supports	Warm-up activity and agenda posted in every class, scaffolding, teaching to multiple learning modalities.	Hands-on, small-group instruction, flexible scheduling, scaffolding of instruction, heterogeneous grouping of students in working groups.	Scaffolding of instruction, teaching to multiple learning modalities, heterogeneous grouping, active learning.	Warm-up activity and agenda posted in every classroom, scaffolding of instruction, teaching to multiple learning modalities, group instruction.	Hands-on, small-group instruction, flexible scheduling, scaffolding of instruction, upper-classmen as student aides in classes.
Culture of revision and redemption	In class	In class	In class and in performance assessments	In class and in performance assessments	In class
Inclusion of special education and English language learner students	Students included in all academic classes.	Students included in all academic classes; special education aides in the classroom; additional program for moderately disabled students.	Students included in all academic classes and receive specially tailored instruction; aides in the classroom.	Students included in all academic classes; aides in classroom.	Students included in all academic classes; special education teacher meets individually with each special needs student.

Table 8 (cont'd)

	Animo Inglewood	Construction Tech	June Jordan	Leadership	New Tech
Advisory as instructional support	Primary point of contact with parents, tracking of students' academic progress and progress towards graduation, connection with college and career preparation	Primary point of contact with parents, Payday program provides micro-grade updates on student academic progress and attendance, tracking of progress toward graduation	Primary point of contact with parents, tracking of students academic progress and progress towards graduation.	Primary point of contact with parents, tracking of students academic progress, 20 minutes daily Silent Sustained Reading, quarterly on-track-to-graduation reports from counselor.	Primary point of contact with parents, tracking of students academic progress and progress towards graduation, development of personalized learning plans for each student.
Additional academic support classes	Summer Bridge Algebra for all 9th graders, extra math course for struggling 9th graders, college readiness course for all 11th graders.	Extra English or CAHSEE prep course for 9th and 10th graders below grade level.	Math and humanities support classes for 9th and 10th graders below grade level.	Academic literacy class for students far below grade level.	Powerskills literacy class for students below grade level.
Culture of revision and redemption	In class	In class	In class and in performance assessments	In class and in performance assessments	In class
Inclusion of special education and English language learner students	Students included in all academic classes.	Students included in all academic classes; special education aides in the classroom; additional program for moderately disabled students.	Students included in all academic classes and receive specially tailored instruction; aides in the classroom.	Students included in all academic classes; aides in classroom.	Students included in all academic classes; special education teacher meets individually with each special needs student.

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Out of classroom supports	After school tutoring	Principal makes home visits to struggling students; after school tutoring with late bus	Informal office hours with teachers on an as-needed basis	Extensive counseling support, after-school tutoring program, academic intervention plan for struggling students	Saturday school for struggling students and others who want extra support
Teacher contact with parents	Frequent communication with parents	Frequent communication with parents	Frequent communication with parents	Frequent communication with parents	Frequent communication with parents

Professional Learning and Collaboration Opportunities

School-led professional development	Weekly PD time; 1-week summer institute/retreat; 5 days of PD during the year; monthly buddy observations.	Two-week paid summer institute on project-based learning; release time for teachers for individual PD.	Twice a month PD; 10-day summer retreat; 1 day of PD in January; 3 days at the end of the year.	Weekly PD; 6-day summer retreat; 3 days PD each semester; and 3 days at the end of the year.	Weekly PD; 4 ½ days a year and one week in summer with the New Tech Foundation and other New Tech schools.
Shared governance	All staff participate in major decisions. Leadership is shared with department chairs, teachers, parents and administration.	All staff participate in major decisions. Leadership is shared with grade-level “lead teachers” or “mini-principals.”	All staff participate in major decisions. Leadership is shared with department chairs, grade-level leaders, and an active parent organization.	All staff participate in major decisions. Leadership is shared with department coaches and administration.	All staff participate in major decisions. Leadership is shared with 2-3 teacher leaders and teacher liaisons with CMO.

Table 9: Professional Learning and Collaboration Opportunities

	Animo Inglewood	Construction Tech	June Jordan	Leadership	New Tech
Teacher mentoring	Monthly teacher meetings for first- and second-year teachers; review of weekly lesson plans; department chair mentoring; evaluation process modeled on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification.	Monthly “new teacher meetings.”	Teacher release time to observe other teachers and for planning; department head mentoring and non-evaluative observations of new teachers two hours weekly.	Department coaches provide weekly mentoring.	Teachers are mentored by the principal as well as by New Tech Foundation-trained teacher leaders and coach. All teachers share projects with each other for feedback.
Teacher collaboration time	Subject-area teachers have a common prep period 4 times a week; grade-level teams meet once a month.	Grade-level teams meet twice a week and have 90-minute sessions on late start days ten times a year.	Grade level and content area teams meet twice a week.	Grade level, department and mixed “inquiry” groups of teachers meet weekly.	Partner teachers in humanities and math/science meet 90 minutes daily.

E. Positive Outcomes

Each school has seen positive outcomes in various different measurable statistics. Most notably, the percentage of students moving on to higher education in most of the schools is significantly higher than that of the California State average:

Table 3: Graduation and College-Going Rates, 2006-07

School	Four-Year Graduation Rate, 2006*	Percent of Graduates Going to 2- or 4-year Colleges**	Percent of Graduates Admitted to 4-year Colleges**
State	85%	56% **	26%**
Animo Inglewood	99.1%	94%	69%
Construction Tech	98.6%	81% (19% go into ap-prentice programs or military)	36%
June Jordan	95.0%	95%	73%
Leadership	86.8%	100%	68%
New Tech	95.9%	100%	42%

Sources: *California Department of Education, DataQuest. Graduation rates calculated by CDE using NCES definition (number of graduates minus dropouts over four years). For details see http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_gradrates.asp. June Jordan rate was not yet posted by CDE and is calculated from school data.

** California Postsecondary Education Commission (2007). Data are for 2004.

Table 4: Average Percent of Students Proficient, English Language Arts CST, 2006

Grade	9th Grade		10th Grade		11th Grade	
Student Group	Five-School Average	State Average	Five-School Average	State Average	Five-School Average	State Average
Economically Disadvantaged	31	27	35	21	28	21
African American	29	28	26	22	30	21
Latino	35	28	32	21	28	21
All	37	44	37	37	34	36

Outcomes at the Specific Schools

June Jordan School for Equity

June Jordan's estimated graduation rate for its first graduating class in 2007 was 95%, using the state's formula for calculation, which adjusts for transfers. Of the students who did not graduate in 2007, 2% were still in school, aiming to finish in 2008. Even more remarkable is that 95% of this first class of graduates was admitted to college, and 73% of the students were admitted to 4-year colleges, including 63% 20 High Schools for Equity of African-American students and 77% of Latino students. College admissions included University of California campuses at Berkeley, Davis, and Santa Cruz; Clark Atlanta University; Dartmouth College; Rochester Institute of Technology; Smith College; Virginia State University; and Yale University; as well as many of the California State campuses

Leadership High School

Leadership High's practices and commitments enable the school's African-American, Latino, and low-income students to perform significantly better than their peers do at other high schools they would have attended on the south side of San Francisco.

For example 41% of LHS's low-income students scored proficient on the 10th-grade English Language Arts CST in 2006, compared with 7 to 27% of low-income students from nearby schools. The differentials were equally large for African American students (32% scored proficient, compared with 6 to 9% of their peers at nearby high schools) and Latino students (28% scored proficient, compared to 9 to 17% of their peers at nearby high schools). In 2007, the state-reported graduation rate was 87%, substantially higher than that of most urban high schools. Perhaps even more impressive, in 2006, all graduates completed the A-G courses required for admissions to the UC/CSU system, a rate almost three times greater than the statewide average and from three to ten times higher than that achieved by African-American and Latino students in neighboring city schools.

Finally, Leadership High sends nearly all of its students to colleges nationwide, many of them quite prestigious. For example in 2006, 97% of graduating seniors went to college, and more than two-thirds enrolled in 4-year colleges, including UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, UC San Diego, Barnard College, Wheaton College and Stanford University. Of the two students who did not enroll in college immediately, one is playing pre-professional soccer and the other joined the Air Force; both have plans to return to college when the time is right for them

New Technology High

African-American and Latino students at New Tech have higher API scores than do students at the comprehensive high schools they would have otherwise attended. For example, the New Tech African-American students' average API score of 688 compares with 522 to 606 at nearby high schools serving similar populations of students. Similarly, New Tech's API score of 629 for Latino students compares favorably to the 531 to 610 recorded for other schools. Furthermore, before they graduate, New Tech graduates take the A-G requirements and community college courses, as well as participating in community service.

All the school's graduates in the class of 2007 were admitted to post-secondary education, with 42% admitted to four-year colleges. Students are attending University of California campuses at Berkeley, Santa Cruz, San Diego, Davis, and Merced; California State College campuses at Chico, Humboldt, and Sacramento; and private colleges like Howard University, an historically black college in Washington, DC, and Neumont College, a project-based learning college in Utah.

Stanley E. Foster Construction Tech Academy

Stanley E. Foster Construction Tech Academy's (CTA's) instructional model is narrowing the achievement gap and building a more promising future for CTA students than they would have experienced otherwise. For example, on the 10th-grade English language arts CST in 2006, 35% of CTA's African-American students scored "proficient," compared to 25% and 22% of their peers in the district and the state, respectively. Similarly, 37% of Latino students at CTA demonstrated proficiency on the same test, compared to 21% in the district and state. Furthermore, 35% of socio-economically disadvantaged CTA students scored proficient, compared to 24% and 20% in the district and state, respectively.

The school prepares its students well for careers and college. Of the 2007 graduates (who represented 99% of students enrolled four years earlier, adjusted for transfers), 100% went on to college, apprenticeships, or the military. Fully 81% were accepted to college, including 36% to 4-year colleges, primarily in the University of California and California State University systems.

(II) Portland Public Schools Racial Equity Policy

In June of 2011, The Portland Public School Board unanimously adopted a deliberate and comprehensive racial equity policy. The policy seeks not only to attain educational equity among its students, it further seeks to utilize the lens of race and equity in evaluating and producing future policies, programs, practices, and decisions, in order to achieve more equitable future outcomes in education (The Board of Education for Portland Public Schools).

Portland's Racial Educational Equity Policy

The Portland School Board defines educational equity as "raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students; and (2) eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories." The Board has established 6 goals that are aimed at achieving racial equity for students:

1. The District shall provide every student with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.
2. The District shall create multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of our diverse students, and shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for students from all racial groups.

3. The District shall recruit, employ, support and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally competent administrative, instructional and support personnel, and shall provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in achievement. Additionally, in alignment with the Oregon Minority Teacher Act, the District shall actively strive to have our teacher and administrator workforce reflect the diversity of our student body.
4. The District shall remedy the practices, including assessment, that lead to the over-representation of students of color in areas such as special education and discipline, and the under-representation in programs such as talented and gifted and Advanced Placement.
5. All staff and students shall be given the opportunity to understand racial identity, and the impact of their own racial identity on themselves and others.
6. The District shall welcome and empower families, including underrepresented families of color (including those whose first language may not be English) as essential partners in their student's education, school planning and District decision-making. The District shall create welcoming environments that reflect and support the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population and community. In addition, the District will include other partners who have demonstrated culturally-specific expertise -- including government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, and the community in general -- in meeting our educational outcomes.

The Superintendent of the school system is tasked with creating action plans that have clear accountability and metrics, including the prioritization of staff and budget allocations, and that will result in measurable results on a yearly basis towards achieving the 6 enumerated goals. The Superintendent is required to give progress reports twice a year and provide updated action plans to the board annually.

Portland's Racial Equity Plan

The initial racial equity plan, implemented in the 2012-2013 school year, the Board identified 4 areas that were "key areas that require significant investment and attention in order to achieve racial equity in the district": (1) Culturally Responsive Teaching & Learning; (2) Culturally Responsive Workforce Development; (3) Culturally Responsive Family & Community Engagement; and (4) Cultural & Organizational Transformation. (The Board defines "cultural responsiveness" to mean "the knowledge beliefs, skills attitudes and practices that allow individuals to form relationships that create learning environments that support academic achievement and personal development of learners from diverse racial and cultural groups" (Portland Public Schools). See Equitable Curriculum section for more on school culture).

These 4 key areas stem from The Portland School Board belief that students of color can achieve academic and personal success when provided equitable access to common core courses and high quality teachers who demonstrate culturally responsive instructional practices; that the school system must recruit, hire, promote, and retain racially conscious and culturally responsive employees at every level; that focusing on majority culture communication style and pathways leads to an information gap for families of color, and thus there must be an increase in culturally-

specific family engagement opportunities; and lastly, that the school district must build a culture of inclusion and acceptance that actively challenges institutional racism through examining and dismantling systemic policies, programs, and practices that perpetuate racial achievement disparities through the use of disaggregated data and increased accountability for meeting the needs of communities of color. (The Board adapted these ideas from Randall B. Lindsey et al).

The initial racial equity plan listed 18 specific goals aimed towards achieving success in these 4 key areas. Specific highlights of the racial equity plan include:

1. Racializing special education data and providing teachers with culturally responsive strategies for students of color that are referred for special education;
2. Racializing Talented and Gifted (TAG) student data and amending the TAG identification process in order to “remove barriers for students of color and students whose first language is other than English”;
3. Interviewing newly hired teachers, with a focus on teachers of color, to inform the recruitment and retention strategies;
4. Focusing on diversifying the substitute hiring pool; (5) facilitating development and adoption of an affirmative action policy;
5. Providing school-based monthly equity-focused professional development, led by Equity Teams;
6. Applying the Equity Lens Tool in the budget adoption and development process;
7. Improving data collection through disaggregation of key metrics, recommendations for more accurate race/ethnicity data collection, and increased use and variety of culturally sensitive data collection methods; and
8. Enrollment balancing in certain schools in order to increase the number and percentage of students of color who have access to a strong core program.

While the Superintendent is responsible for creating the plan, the Equity & Inclusion Council (EIC) is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the Racial Equity Policy and Racial Equity Plan. The EIC is comprised of individuals with sufficient leadership influence and authority to assemble resources and support needed to make change, and managers who can provide assistance in designing and deploying the Racial Equity Plan. The council is co-chaired by the Superintendent and a Chief Equity Officer (CEO). Members must represent key areas of focus in the equity work; represent multiple perspectives of school district leadership; and represent groups or departments that are specifically focused on the racial equity work for the district.

Portland’s Racial Equity Lens

Lastly, for achieving a future of racial equity in its policymaking decisions, the Portland Public Schools have developed a tool with which it can view policy and practice decisions through the lens of race and equity. The Oregon Department of Education adopted a version of Portland’s racial equity lens during the 2012-2013 school year.

The racial equity lens works by asking 5 questions for any policy, program, practice, or decision:

1. Who are the racial/ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? And what are the potential impacts on these groups?
2. Does this policy, program, practice or decision ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?
3. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? Can you validate your assessments in (1) and (2)?
4. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)
5. How will you (a) mitigate the negative impacts and (b) address the barriers identified above?

Need to Evaluate Racial Equity Policies

Given how recent the policies in Portland were adopted, whether they are/will be effective in achieving racially equitable outcomes in education remains to be seen. The Portland School Board acknowledges that these goals are long term and require a significant amount of work and resources in order to be implemented across all schools. Thus, in order to get a sense of the efficacy of this racial equity policy, it will take analysis of the performance of Portland's minority students during a number of years before 2012 compared to their performance over the coming years as the racial equity policy is implemented district-wide.

Taft High School, Cincinnati

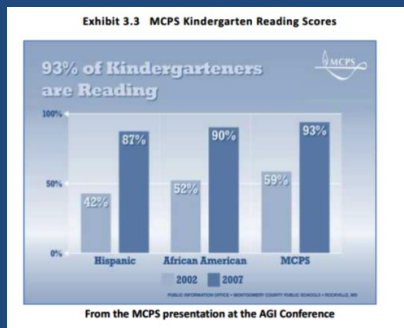
Taft High School in Cincinnati Public Schools, Ohio is another success story. A newspaper headline in 2010 stated: *Taft High School celebrates turnaround – Dead-end school has become high-tech star* (Cincinnati.com, Nov 7, 2010). The school went from only a 21% graduation rate in 2002 to a 95% graduation rate in 2010, and from 28% - 42% of seniors proficient on math and reading respectively to greater than 95% for each. Discipline rates per 100 students improved from 78.7 to 7.3. Success was attributed to many factors, but key among them were:

- Recruiting a principal from the community (a Taft graduate) who cared deeply about the school and who was successful in motivating and empowering the teachers and staff to help the students excel. The principal, Anthony Smith, was quoted as saying:
 - ✓ “It's all about relationships. When kids believe that you really want them to be successful, they'll do whatever you want them to do...”
 - ✓ Taft's success comes down to a lot of people who cared an awful lot, and who worked tirelessly on a turnaround plan with the attitude that failure was not an option...
 - ✓ When you take on this education thing, you have to be serious about it. If you mess up kids, you can't go back and fix them.”
- Engaging with a corporate partner (Cincinnati Bell) that:
 - ✓ Funded significant technology upgrades for the school, located in a predominantly poor, predominantly minority section of the city
 - ✓ Provides tutoring, scholarships and internships for students

- ✓ Set up an academic incentive program in which it gives free laptops and cell phones to all juniors and seniors who earn a 3.3 grade point average and wires their homes with broadband Internet.

Chart 13. MCPS-Kindergarten

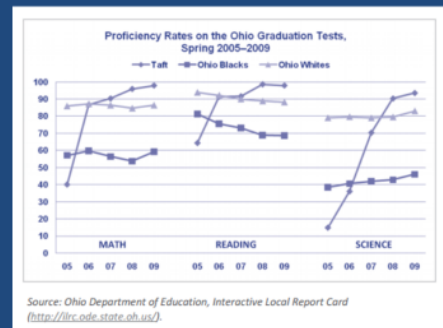
Excellence for All is Possible—Montgomery County Example



Source: RAISING ACHIEVEMENT AND CLOSING GAPS IN WHOLE SCHOOL SYSTEMS: RECENT ADVANCES IN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE 2008 Conference Report, Harvard Achievement Gap Initiative

Chart 14. Taft High School

Excellence for All is Possible—Taft High School in Ohio



Source: Ohio Department of Education, Interactive Local Report Card (<http://lrc.ode.state.oh.us/>)

These examples confirm that excellence with equity is an eminently achievable goal and one that can be accomplished in a relatively short time frame. There are many alternative paths to get to the goal, but one common denominator appears to be clear focus and commitment. With a genuine focus on Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, Time Bound (S.M.A.R.T.) goals of equity and excellence, CHCCS can become a national model of success. Moreover, such success is likely to attract the type of corporate partnerships and funding that facilitated the rapid rise of Taft High School in Ohio. Apple has already indicated an interest in working with the district on innovative new approaches. Other sources of support are likely to follow.

North Carolina Schools

In North Carolina, there are several public (non-charter) elementary schools with at least 40 tests taken by African American students in which at least 75% of those students are achieving at levels considered on pace to be college/career ready, compared to an average of 25%-35% for elementary schools in Chapel Hill-Carrboro.

Table 1. NC Schools with Strong African-American Academic Performance

School	District	# African-American Tests	% African American of Total	% College/Career Ready on EOG
Bain Elementary	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	141	13%	75%
Collinswood Language Academy	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	143	15%	80%

Providence Spring Elementary	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	60	6%	83%
Weddington Elementary	Union County	49	5%	90%

Similarly, there are many North Carolina middle schools in which at least 20 African American students are given the opportunity to take Math I in 8th grade (standard path is to take Math I in 9th grade), and in which at least 70% of those students achieve at College/Career Ready levels, compared to 33% overall for African American students in Chapel Hill Carrboro taking the Math I EOC. Because relatively few middle school students in CHCCS take the Math I EOC, data is not available for middle school students in this district.

Table 2. NC Middle Schools with Strong African American Performance on Math I EOC

School	District	# African-American Students taking EOC Math I	% African American of Total Taking EOC Math I	% College/Career Ready on EOC
Bertie Middle	Bertie County	20	69%	80%
Francis Bradley Middle	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	21	17%	86%
J M Alexander Middle	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	31	30%	74%
Randolph Middle	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	48	23%	85%
Ridge Road Middle	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	57	44%	93%
Shelby Middle	Cleveland County	20	26%	85%
Rogers-Herr Middle	Durham County	47	52%	85%
Hanes Middle School	Forsythe County	28	11%	71%
Jamestown Middle	Guilford County	26	20%	85%

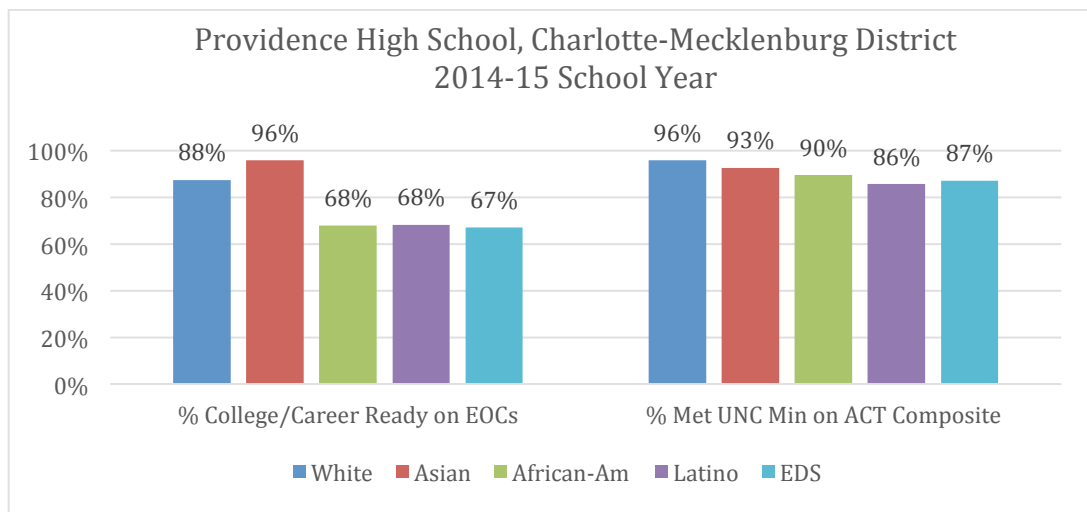
Leesville Road Middle	Wake County	26	11%	73%
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(Individual middle school data not available for CHCCS due to small number of test takers)

Chapel Hill Carrboro	134
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Providence High School in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg district is another example of a suburban public school in an area comparable to Chapel Hill Carrboro in which the level of achievement, while not perfect, is more uniformly high. We suggest that more be done to understand how Providence and other schools in North Carolina (and pockets of success in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools) have enabled a broader cross-section of their students to succeed academically.

Chart 12. Providence High School



Questions often arise regarding the extent to which schools can change if there has been a long history in which many students have not been reached effectively. The 2008 Conference Report of the Harvard University Achievement Gap Initiative highlights several cases in which dramatic improvements were made within a relatively narrow time frame. One was Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), in Montgomery County, Maryland. After “putting race on the table,” in the words of Assistant Superintendent Dr. Frieda Lacey, and making a commitment to “do something dramatically differently” to ensure that all children were given a real opportunity to excel, the MCPS district set very aggressive goals for improved academic performance. Goals such as:

- Growing the percentage of kindergarteners reading books from 50%-60% in 2002 to 90% in 2007 through such strategies as going from half day to full day classes and reducing class size in areas of high poverty

- Growing the number of fifth grade students successfully taking sixth grade math to 5000 from 196 within three years through new teaching strategies
- Growing the proportion of all students taking AP classes to 80% compared to a statewide average of 35%.

While not perfect, the district made tremendous progress, and many of its high schools were rated by *US News and World Report* as among the top 100 in the nation. As a postscript, as MCPS demographics have continued to change, and leadership has changed, the district is once again under community pressure to maintain and expand past success in helping all segments excel.

Curriculum Design and Delivery that Promotes Equity

Schools that show demonstrable gains in equity across race share common features in their curriculum design and delivery. The following section shares those features. These schools demonstrate that students of color and all students can have full and equitable access to a high level, rigorous, engaging curriculum that prepares them to understand both how to navigate a racist world while creating a more equitable one.

Curriculum includes both mandated content and skills as well as guidelines for pedagogy.

Schools that recognize and directly address the persistent, though often unintentional or unconscious, structural racism that undergirds policy, practice, and decision-making at the district and school level, can achieve equity.

Curricula that focus on eliminating race inequity do not disregard other aspects of equity – class, gender, or sexual orientation, for example. Rather, becoming aware of how racism operates in the schools can actually help foster equity across multiple identities; multiple forms of oppression and inequity are interrelated. However, at the same time, research shows that race 'trumps' other aspects of identity every time. Curriculum that harbors racial bias has the most detrimental affect on students of color. They experience the greatest achievement and discipline gaps in the district.

A race-conscious/racial justice lens must permeate all district practices. Any program or policy or change implemented without an analysis of structural racism, without this critical lens will benefit white student and fail to serve students of color.

Common features of equity-achieving curricula: Pedagogy & Content

Non-tracked learning groups

Tracking does not support success for students of color and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. In national and North Carolina-based studies, tracking has repeatedly been shown to hinder the performance of previously low-performing students, especially at the middle and high school levels (national: Burris et. al, Burris & Welner, 2006; Oakes, 2005; NC: Tyson, 2011; Michelson & Everett, 2008; Watanabe 2008). In addition to hindering academic

performance, tracking leads to negative social and emotional consequences for low-tracked students (Rubin, 2001; Watanabe, 2008, Weinstein, 2002).

Tracking prevents full school integration because it results in in-school segregation (Oakes, 2005). It increases segregation for students of color and materially poor students, both of whom are disproportionately represented in lower-level classes (Watanabe, 2008). Providing competent instruction within each track or within each leveled classroom on its own will not overcome the multiple negative effects of tracking. Tracked classrooms still affect how teachers think about students and how students think about themselves. “The hierarchical nature of grouping practices always privileges one group of students over another” (Watanabe, 2008, p. 524).

In contrast, detracking has shown to have positive benefits for students of color (Boales & Staples, 2008; Burris et. al., 2008; Rubin, 2008). Studies of detracking provide evidence that it does not hinder – and can have benefit for – the achievement of students with higher levels of academic achievement (Burris, 2010; Garrity 2004). Detracking can lead to more open and productive conversations on race within the classroom (Rubin 2001).

Schools that successfully detracked grouped students in heterogeneous classrooms in all subject areas and provided access to the same high-level curriculum to all students. In tandem with detracking, schools implemented a variety of strategies to support struggling students. For high school level classrooms, strategies include:

1. Implementing *complex instruction* design for all subject areas, which defines success in multiple ways (Boaler & Staples, 2008; Cohen, 1994; Cohen & Lotan, 1997).
2. Training teachers to practice *assigning competence*, “a practice that involves teachers raising the status of students that may be of a lower status in a group, by, for example, praising something they have said or done that has intellectual value, and bringing it to the group’s attention; asking a student to present an idea; or publicly praising a student’s work in a whole class setting” (Boaler & Staples, 2008, 632).
3. Providing support classes for students who need additional support in reading, writing or math every other day and moving students in and out of support classes as needed (Garrity, 2004). Creating structure to all support classes to be taught by students’ regular math and English teachers (Garrity, 2004).
4. Implementing block scheduling (Boaler & Staples, 2008).
5. Expecting all high school students to take calculus and creating semester-long math courses, allowing students to take more math classes (Boaler & Staples, 2008).
6. Organizing curriculum around theme-based units.
7. Focus on “groupworking” mathematical problems (Boaler & Staples, 2008; Horn 2005).

At the elementary school level, tracking often comes in the form of ability grouping. Like other forms of tracking, an over-reliance on ability grouping has negative consequences for students of color. One researcher found that ability grouping “is an important mechanism through which schools *exacerbate* inequality in academic skills” *and* that such grouping hinders the ability of lower-leveled students to catch up to peers placed in higher groups (Condrón, 2008, 386). Furthermore, ability grouping causes teachers to hold more negative perceptions of students in lower level groups and limits the amount and complexity of the instruction those teachers give to students assigned to lower-levels (Chorzempa & Graham , 2006). These effects and the negative

impact on academic achievement are especially acute among black and Latino students (Lleras and Rangel, 2009). In schools that de-tracked their elementary school classrooms, teachers were trained to implement classroom practices that foster heterogeneous ability grouping and schools ensured all students had access to grade-level reading and math for the entire academic year.

Access to gifted education for all students

Like tracking, gifted education produces in-school segregation. Students of color nationally and across North Carolina have inequitable access to gifted education programs (Ford et. al., 2013; Ford et. al, 2008; Watanabe, 2008). This is true at CHCCS, where students of color are grossly underrepresented in the AIG program.

The notion of “gifted” is itself problematic. The current means to identify 'giftedness' looks at a narrow set of skills and over-relies on standardized test scores (Baldwin, 2010). Access to gifted programs is often not the result of students’ special abilities but rather teachers’ subjective (and often racially biased) perceptions of students and/or parents’ (in)ability to advocate for their children’s admission to gifted programs (Watanabe, 2008). These issues make the AIG program in CHCCS yet another form of racialized tracking.

There are examples of school districts, such as Rockville Center, that have successfully re-organized their gifted education program to one where all or most students receive gifted education services (Garrity, 2004; Burris, et. al. 2008). These programs identify and foster the various strengths unique to each student. Garrity (2004) states:

Over a four-year period, we were able to phase out the exclusive gifted and talented program and blend that curriculum into each elementary classroom, using a new district-wide enrichment program known as STELLAR (Success in Technology, Enrichment, Library, Literacy, and Research). Staffing at each elementary building includes a STELLAR teacher who supports each classroom teacher by enriching the grade-level curriculum. Students participate in both whole-class and small-group investigations that encourage in-depth study in areas of interest.

Race-conscious curriculum

Theresa Perry, in her essay on *The African-American Philosophy of Education* (2003), speaks to the historic struggles by the African-American community for equity in resources (facilities, pay, materials) as well as in intellectual capital, both occurring in the context of an assumption of deficit. She turns the commonly repeated trope of black students doing well as “acting white” on its head by pointing to the more devastating cultural story that “being black was not compatible with being smart” (p. 36). At its heart, a strong anti-racist, culturally relevant pedagogy takes on this prevailing and dominant assumption of black intellectual inferiority by grounding learning in a pedagogy of race equity and justice.

Schools that achieve equity create a school culture and teaching practices that are grounded in the belief of the potential and brilliance of students of color. They do not adopt a curricular approach that “reduces culture to decontextualized practices” (Perry, 58) but instead actively challenge the status quo. Successful curricula aggressively combats the unspoken assumption that students of color should assimilate into a white learning culture that values certain kinds of

(white) intelligence and a narrowly defined (white) idea of “success.” Schools with a racial justice approach to schooling address head on the drive towards an assimilationist culture that “affords automatic advantages to those who come to school with a lot of cultural capital” (p. 85) while undermining those who don't. Perry defines cultural capital as “not just dispositions, practices, language use, and experiences but also those qualities associated with what it means to be white... subordination of emotions to reason, the ability to present a disciplined exterior, and to constrain body movements” (p. 85).

Race conscious curricula that successfully shift away from a learning culture detrimental to students of color:

1. include a race-based history of the United States;
2. include a critical exploration of how that history continues to impact people of color and white people on the local, state, and national level;
3. view knowledge critically (as opposed to an assumption that knowledge is infallible) (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 89); and
4. understand excellence as complex and take student diversity and individual differences into account (rather than seeing them as a unilateral standards independent of the student; some might understand this as a growth model or mindset) (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 89).

Culturally relevant teaching and curriculum

Gloria Ladson-Billings, in her landmark book *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children* (2009), lays out key principles for culturally relevant teaching and curriculum that are features of strong equity practices.

Ladson-Billings describes culturally relevant teaching as that which (p. 89):

1. provides content that is interesting and engaging for all students, including students of color;
2. views knowledge as continuously recreated, recycled, and shared (as opposed to passed only from teacher to student);
3. positions the teacher as passionate about content (as opposed to detached or neutral); and
4. positions the teacher as someone who helps students develop skills (rather than expecting them to demonstrate prerequisite skills).

In addition, a culturally relevant curriculum takes advantage of students' community cultural wealth, which:

1. encourages some level of educational self-determination, the engagement of students and their families in identifying what they want to know and do;
2. honors and respects the students' home culture by offering an accurate and fair representation of the cultures present in the classroom and community; and
3. helps students of color (and therefore all students) understand the world as it is and equip them to change it for the better (p. 150-3).

Some schools have chosen to adopt these principles through a problem-posing curriculum practice. Such a curriculum is:

1. **Led by student voices and concerns.** Brian Schulz, in his book *Spectacular Things Happen Along the Way* (2008), describes how he constructed a year-long fifth grade curriculum in an urban Chicago school starting with questions to which students wanted answers. The result was a rich exploration of history, math, science, and civics, all requiring increasingly strong writing and speaking skills and leading, for example, to students preparing for, interviewing, and debriefing a range of public figures including local and state politicians on their positions related to public schooling specifically because their school was so inadequate.
2. **Focuses on enduring understandings.** Nieto and Bode, (2011, 345) note the importance of creating the ability to access knowledge that “will endure long after the books are closed and years after the students leave their classrooms.”
3. **Prioritizes critical questioning.** Mary Ann Cowhey, in *black Ants and Buddhists* (2006), shares what she learned as a result of developing and teaching a social justice curriculum to racially diverse first and second graders over a nine-year period. The book is a primer in how to help students think critically about their world, how to make connections between their lives and the larger world, and how to handle the controversy and emotion that arises when teaching this way. Cowhey scaffolded lessons (see Ladson-Billings’ list above) to offer the information and skills students needed to pose and explore questions about assigned topics. For example, she taught a required unit on Christopher Columbus by first reading the traditional “Columbus as hero” version of the story and then reading Jane Yolen’s *Encounter*, which tells the story from the perspective of a fictional Tainos boy. She then asked a series of inquiry questions about which version was true and why, which led to engagement with the concept of research and the question, “how do you get at the truth?” The first grade class discussed what it meant to look for evidence, the idea of primary sources, and the need to generate additional questions that they then answer collaboratively. Cowhey followed by leading her students in an activity where three students stood at different points in the room to witness a fourth student enter the room and do a few different things as he walked across the room. Each “witness” is then debriefed, which introduced the idea of multiple perspectives. Cowhey used a number of resources to develop and teach this curriculum, including resources from the organizations Rethinking Schools and Teaching Tolerance.

Peer to Peer learning

Schools that are succeeding in their equity goals allow teachers freedom to identify what works for students of color. They institute methods of accountability at the school level to ensure that practices are learned, adapted, and extended among faculty (while recognizing that no two teachers or set of students is alike). They also institute methods of accountability at the district level to ensure that practices are learned, adapted, and extended among the schools in the district (while realizing that no two school settings are alike).

Nurturing a culture that allows for and fosters productive conversations about race

Finally, schools and districts that make tangible gains in racial equity talk about race. School and district leaders actively seek to build consensus in the community that a racially just school system is in the best interest of all students and community members.

VII. Our Analysis: What Do We Make of What We've Learned?

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools have long enjoyed a reputation as among the best in the state. We have excellent graduation rates and comparatively high SAT scores. What these statistics reflect is a district with high numbers of white, affluent, well-educated families. What is masked in the numbers is a tale of two school districts: one that serves its white clients very well, while black and brown students have a very different set of educational experiences. We know that our district is not unusual in this respect. We know that the crisis we are observing is a crisis across the nation and it is almost impossible to find a school, indeed an institution of any sort, where outcome is not predicted by race.

This may seem like a hopeless situation or a problem too large to solve, but we are not daunted because we know that most institutions, including schools, have failed to do the one thing they might do to turn this situation around: approach inequities by addressing the root causes that have their history in a nation built on beliefs, principles and practices that uphold white rights, privileges, and advantages. We have yet to address racial inequities by addressing the structural and institutional racism that have created and continues to create them.

We have tried to provide extra help to those at the bottom, or to mete out extra punishment, in the hopes that we can improve them or remove them. But even when we are successful in providing a few children better opportunities through a school enrichment program, this does nothing to change the overall environment that continues to put our black and brown children at risk the moment they enter our schools.

Cannot solve a race-based problem with a race-neutral solution

When we are not trying to reduce the gaps by addressing the deficiencies of students and families of color, we try race-neutral solutions like improving instructional methods or employing more positive discipline strategies. While these solutions may be beneficial to students overall they will do nothing to address the disparities because, as teachers, parents, and students consistently told us in the listening sessions, these disparities are rooted in race. You cannot solve a race-based problem with a race-neutral solution.

Need to develop racial literacy

So how do we address the harmful impacts of race and racism? It will require dedication to ongoing study and engagement that educates us about our national history and manifestations of white rule and affirmative action that we'd like to forget or deny.

In "White Man's Guilt" James Baldwin said, "People who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and incapable of seeing or changing themselves or the world. This is the place in which it seems to me most white Americans find themselves. Impaled. They are dimly, or vividly, aware that the history they have fed themselves is mainly a lie, but they do not know how to release themselves from it, and they suffer enormously from the resulting personal incoherence."

Training is needed for almost all of us who would try to dismantle racism and its ongoing damage. We need training in the racist history of our country, and we need to provide it to our students, too, so they can better understand why the world looks the way it does, why they find

themselves and their families advantaged or disadvantaged in certain ways. When we are not told the truth, we are left to figure things out on our own. As Baldwin says this may result in personal incoherence. And it also results in implicit or unconscious racial bias.

Need to understand and address implicit racial bias

When we look at the toxicity of the public education system for students of color, one of the poisons in “the lake” is implicit racial bias. Implicit bias can be defined as attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an *unconscious* matter. All educators know that stereotypes are bad and want to believe that they don’t have them. Almost all who work in our schools want to bring their best intentions and understandings to their work with each other and with the children they serve. But we are learning more each day about the extent to which our unconscious brains trigger our emotional reactions and influence our decisions. Unconscious associations about categories of people (e.g., men, women, young, old, tall, short, British, Chinese, black, white, Southerners, Californians) are shaped throughout life, beginning very early, by everything around us and these associations take up residence in our unconscious brains.

Most unconscious associations are necessary for our safety, survival and efficient movement through life. But sometimes our unconscious minds go against our professed beliefs and best intentions, thwarting our goals and creating unintended harm.

Almost all of us have implicit racial bias by virtue of having grown up in a racialized country. Research at Harvard using the Implicit Association Test has shown that a very large percentage of white Americans show positive bias toward white people (as opposed to African American) and that around 50% of African American people also have more positive bias toward white people.

Fortunately good training is available on implicit bias that elucidates how and why biases are formed, how they can be harmful, and most importantly what we can do to reduce bias and hold it in check.

Need to eliminate disproportionality in discipline

In early 2013, over 200 Chapel Hill and Carrboro parents, students, teachers, administrators, lawyers, judges, police officers, and community advocates gathered in a community forum to discuss the problem of, and possible solutions to, disproportionate and criminalized student discipline. Since that time the District has begun tracking and reporting discipline data ranging from office referrals to suspensions with the goal of reducing in-school and out-of-school suspensions and referrals to juvenile court. With closer attention and greater accountability the data show some small improvements in this area of inequity, but the black students are still suspended at eight times the rate of white students.

The largest disparities in office referrals are the categories that allow teachers and administrators wide leeway in interpretation: defiance, disruption and disrespect (Williams, 2015). This is almost certainly due to implicit bias. In one of the listening sessions, a white teacher said, “White people are more afraid of the same behavior if it comes from a black child.” In this statement we hear the narrative of white police officers who have shot, and sometimes killed, unarmed black

men or youth. We can see how unconscious bias, if not acknowledged and held in check, can lead to harmful, tragic, albeit unintended, results.

We are aware that the district has been taking many measures to address disproportionate discipline, including tracking and reporting the data, bringing more standardization and objectivity to referable disciplinary offenses, increasing the use of PBIS and restorative practices, and revising the memorandum of understanding that governs the interactions of school resource officers (law enforcement officers) with our students. Implicit bias training followed by the creation of best practices and tools for reducing bias should also have a significant impact on reducing disproportionality by holding white students more accountable for their behavior while not overreacting to behaviors of students of color.

Need to rethink tracking

Based on our research and our meetings with various groups of stakeholders (parents, teachers, students) and our understanding of recent racist events in our schools, the need to create more heterogeneous environments for our students becomes an imperative. In order to “stop living divided lives”, students need to be working collaboratively in classes that represent the ethnic percentages of our community. Students of all colors need to listen to each other, recognize the gifts that each of them brings to learning, and begin to understand more deeply the histories and cultures that each of them contributes to the learning experience. This means that we need to minimize and hopefully eliminate tracking in our schools. In *Despite the Best Intentions* by Lewis and Diamond, research based on a school system similar to ours demographically, a school counselor describes the school environment: “So we have great diversity at this school, but it’s like two ships traveling in parallel lines – they don’t even really cross.” This could be a description of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools, particularly at the middle and high school levels.

Detracking the schools is not for the sole benefit of the students of color; our white (and often Asian) students are being deprived of the valuable experience of working with a culturally rich array of peers, an experience that will prepare them for the increasingly culturally diverse world they will be moving into. The teachers and students we met with reinforced this thought.

Research supports the practice of providing a challenging rich curriculum to all students. By maintaining standard and honors classes that are racially identifiable, we unfortunately exhibit our support for the concept that one group will have a different curriculum that is less intense and less challenging – a reality that takes place in practice if not in concept. Often, students who take standard classes are simply fulfilling their own self-perception that they are “not good in school” or “in a particular subject” – a self-perception that has been shaped by the surrounding societal structures.

Steele and Aronson did studies of “stereotype threat” and found that context was much more important than any unfounded determinations of “ability.” According to the authors intellectual competence is not just something in a person’s head, rather it is quite literally the product of real or imagined interactions with others. How a student construes the way he or she is viewed and treated by others matters a lot: how welcomed or excluded, how respected, how tuned in to

others' difficulties and triumphs – these perceptions can exert a profound influence on intellectual competence, on motivation, and ultimately upon a student's academic self-concept.

If AP classes are to be continued, then there needs to be much more effort put forth to include a culturally diverse array of students. By providing support structures for these students, they can be successful. We learned this by looking at school systems across our country that have taken the risk and are having success. In our system, too often a single student of color is placed in an AP class with no support for ensuring success. The students who have experienced this (in both AP and honors classes) describe feeling isolated and used by teachers as “the minority voice.” This is not conducive to genuine conversations that lead to deeper learning among all students.

As a school district, we must design schools where all students have frequent opportunities to work together, learn from each other, and develop a sense of academic worth. School structures and organization have a deep, long-lasting and insidious effect on student self-perceptions and motivation. We must take a hard look at our “status quo” high schools and have the courage to make a change based on research and our stated goals of establishing equity and closing the gap.

Issues of accountability

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools District's program for compensation, professional growth, and leadership should have as its foundation the analysis of race as the lens to understanding the district's commitment to equity and excellence. We hope that the three tenets of Project Advance: Credits for Practice and Outcomes, Levels for Career Advancement, and Roles will all reflect the ability to impact the issue of equity and have education for diversity as a priority. The district's commitment to demolishing its institutional barriers that hinders the elimination of racial predictability and disproportionality should be embedded in the implementation plan for Project Advance.

Compensation rewards should also have as a major component teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions to promote high achievement and closing the achievement gap. One area of the district's Professional Growth tenet in Project Advance should center on education on race and examining personal racial implicit biases while providing educators with skills to eliminate racial disparities in achievement and advancement.

The alarming findings of our report on District outcomes and school climate, combined with the promise reflected in some schools that are making faster progress, demands that we work together quickly and deliberately to develop and implement a comprehensive plan that courageously and completely addresses the inevitable institutional racism that characterizes the majority of American schools. This type of racism is almost never intended, and is often hard to recognize until we are able to see through the lenses of racial literacy. But until we are able to face the past racially-distorted way of life that continues to shape our present, we will not be able to realize the future for which we long.

The equity plan for CHCCS cannot be another program or set of programs. It must be a new school environment, a new school culture. It must be how the schools are run at every level. Our goal must be excellence exemplified by equity and justice creating and preparing our children for a changed world that exemplifies our highest ideals as a society.

VIII. Recommendations

Based on the research and analysis presented here, we have a number of recommendations for how the experiences and outcomes of students in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools can be both excellent and equitable across race. Our goal is for all children to thrive in a supportive learning environment, growing in the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully move into post-secondary education or a good job upon graduating high school. We know you share this goal.

And our schools will never be excellent until they are also equitable, meaning that:

- a. Outcomes in achievement cannot be predicted by race.
- b. Participation and success in gifted and advanced coursework are comparable across race.
- c. Attendance, successful course completion, graduation and drop-out rates cannot be predicted by race.
- d. Discipline practices, including suspensions, cannot be predicted by race.
- e. Students' experiences at school including feelings of belonging, self-esteem, and academic self-esteem will not vary by race.

We have divided our recommendations into eight broad categories that we think must be included in any strong equity plan. Considered together these categories cover the breadth of school experience, the only way to achieve true racial equity. It can never be viewed as a program or an initiative. Once we are able to understand and address the true roots of inequity that are based in our history and its resulting belief systems and economic, political, and social structures we will be on the road to righting past wrongs and achieving --through excellent equitable education-- the opportunities that a true democracy guarantees to all its citizens.

EQUITY GOAL 1. Access and Inclusion

All students have access and are included in rigorous and relevant coursework, extracurricular, college & career prep, other social and leadership opportunities.

Recommendations

1. Establish a goal of achieving 10-15 percentage point improvement each year in the proportion of African American, Latino, and Economically Disadvantaged students who score at college/career levels on EOCs and EOGs.
2. Develop a plan to detrack middle and high schools by Fall 2016.
3. Expand gifted programming to include all students by Fall 2016.
4. Investigate disproportionate access and participation in sports and other extracurricular activities and identify cultural, structural or socioeconomic barriers that can be reduced or eliminated by April 2016.
5. Investigate disproportionate access & participation in student government and other school-based activities and identify cultural, structural or socioeconomic barriers that can be reduced or eliminated by April 2016.

6. Develop a plan to ensure that every child has equal access to counseling for college and career planning such that students and their families get the help they need to have a viable plan for post-school education or employment that aligns with the student's goals.

EQUITY GOAL 2. Personnel and Climate

District leadership builds consensus within the district and across the community that there is no excellence without equity, and that a racially just school system is in the best interest of all students and community members.

Recommendations

1. Develop a mandatory professional development for all district personnel in racial literacy and cultural competency including:
 - a. The science of implicit bias and how implicit bias can undermine our highest values and goals unless strategies are in place to check and reduce bias.
 - b. Historical, cultural, institutional and structural racism and how it impacts educational outcomes.
 - c. Consider the Racial Equity Institute or similar 2-day trainings, followed by school-based opportunities to debrief, deepen and apply training concepts on an on-going regular basis.
2. Develop and sustain a district culture that allows for and fosters productive conversations about race.
3. Recruit, employ, support and retain racially literate, culturally competent and linguistically diverse administrative, instructional and support personnel.
4. Ensure that the teacher and administrator workforce in all schools and units reflect the diversity of our student body, striving for over-representation of groups that have been marginalized (i.e., African American and Latino students).
5. Encourage Human Resources to recruit in markets with diverse candidates, but show caution in recruitment of international candidates who rarely have the racial context necessary to further equity goals.
6. Offer a caucus or support group for teachers and staff of color that is not overseen and managed by district administrators.
7. Train principals on how to be intentional in all decisions regarding their school's equity team--from the people they choose to become part of the team to the training they offer staff.
8. Ensure that the school environment reflects diverse cultures - including texts, music, learning materials, wall displays, and physical environment.
9. Continue to develop, implement, and evaluate the use of Student Six as an equity training strategy.
10. Embed accountability to the district's equity plan in all levels for career advancement in Project ADVANCE.
11. Develop and implement a reporting process for students and staff around the issue of inequitable processes, practices, and incidents.
12. Develop and implement strategies to engage students in the development of policies and practices that impact school climate.

EQUITY GOAL 3. Racially Literate Curriculum and Instruction

Eliminate racial bias and promote racial literacy in expectations, curriculum, and teaching methods.

Recommendations

1. Develop or adopt race-conscious curriculum (that acknowledges US history, policy and practices of white advantage and the concomitant oppressions of people of color) across grade levels.
2. Develop and implement culturally integrated curriculum across grade levels that offers counter narratives to dominant white normalcy and superiority.
3. Assure the use of instructional methods that are known to be equally effective across racial and socioeconomic groups.

EQUITY GOAL 4. Disciplinary Policies and Practices

Discipline policies and practices are in the best interest of supporting the student's educational experience and are applied equitably across race.

Recommendations

1. Continue data collection, analysis and examination of discipline data at the school level.
2. Continue conflict resolution/restorative justice (Restorative Circles) training and implementation across all schools. Document and evaluate implementation and outcome of restorative practices.
3. Adopt objective criteria for office referrals, to decrease the chance that racial bias can influence discretionary decisions regarding student behavior.
4. Complete the revisions discussed by the School Board and adopt immediately the Memorandum of Understanding between the District and local police departments regarding the role of School Resource Officers (SROs) that has been under development and consideration for the last 18 months.
5. Develop a plan to replace SROs with school-based programs that have been shown to increase safety and security.

EQUITY GOAL 5. Resource Allocation and Distribution

Resource allocation and distribution is transparent to the citizens of the District and reflects values of excellence and equity.

Recommendations

1. Tie district and school leaders performance incentives to achievement of district and school equity goals
2. Use a racial equity analysis to examine and shape economic policies and practices of the district (related to wages, contracts, and student and family access and opportunity) in such a way that they help create, rather than inhibit racial equity.

3. Modify budget development and reporting practices so that they are more inclusive and transparent.
4. Create online dashboard making enrollment, financials and academic performance for each school by race and income readily available. Update mid-year and end of year.
5. Correct online enrollment information to include current data for every school, and add reporting that highlights trends (total enrollment, enrollment by race over time).
 - a. Separate individual school and district budgets and financial statements and include in online reports. Include demographics and EOG performance by race and income for each school.
 - b. Clarify how resources are allocated to classrooms, programs, and overheads.
 - c. Report enrollment, costs and outcomes by program.

EQUITY GOAL 6. Broad-based Community Participation in Equity Plans

The input and engagement of all family and community members is sought, valued and responded to with respect.

Recommendations

1. Include two or more community-based equity advocates in the extensive review of the Gifted Program that began this school year.
2. Develop and implement a plan that ensures the participation of community-based equity advocates (e.g., Campaign for Racial Equity, NAACP, Organizing Against Racism, Justice United) in the development of race-conscious curriculum, including the selection of texts.
3. Use PTA, community partners and other mechanisms to educate all parents about white privilege and how it relates to historical, institutional and cultural racism. Include an analysis of how continued inequities harm us all economically, socially and spiritually.
4. Create and share vision – in partnership with community – of what an excellent equitable school district would look like, and what the students would look like who were products of such schools.

EQUITY GOAL 7. Clear Equity Plan with Explicit Thoughtful Racial Equity Goals

The district embraces and leads on an equity plan that includes an implementation timeline, specific goals and tasks for all school district personnel and accountability mechanisms.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that the district equity plan that is under development gives careful consideration to the report and each recommendation developed by the Community Campaign for Racial Equity (CCRE). The CCRE would like an opportunity to hear feedback from the district equity program on each recommendation and the likelihood of its implementation.
2. Ensure that the plan includes clear, explicit and aligned goals at every functional level of the district. In other words, the School Board needs clear, explicit, and thoughtful equity goals. The Superintendent needs clear equity goals. The maintenance staff, the afterschool caregivers, the principals and assistant principals, the teachers, the teacher

assistants, the counselors, the social workers – everyone who plays a role in providing a public education to our children needs to know what race equity looks like in their specific role.

3. Ensure that racial equity plan includes implementation strategies and accountability mechanisms to ensure consistent, continuous, and faithful implementation of plans.
4. Designate a timeline for implementation and identify who is accountable for consistent, continuous and faithful implementation.

EQUITY GOAL 8. Accountability

There is a clear mandate for accountability for equitable outcomes, as listed above, from the Board of Education, District leadership, faculty and staff.

Recommendations

1. Adopt or develop equity assessment tools to guide and assess progress toward equity goals. Progress will be reported on a quarterly basis and if progress is lacking, new strategies will be developed, implemented and documented.
2. Develop clear accountability mechanisms for classroom, school, and district equity goals, providing necessary training and support for the achievement of goals. Performance measures and consequences (e.g, promotion, advancement, supervision, probation and termination) should be tied to personnel effort and achievement of equity goals.
3. Hold administration personnel accountable for equity outcomes in their area of responsibility.
4. Hold the superintendent accountable for equity outcomes in the district.
5. Board of Education is also held accountable for outcomes in the district and for assessing the success of the superintendent in making significant gains in racial equity.
6. Host an annual state of the district meeting and openly discuss progress toward closing the achievement gap.

In closing...

Former secretary of education, Arne Duncan, said, “Education is the great equalizer. It should be used to level the playing field, not to grow inequality.” Our nation has yet to realize its self-proclaimed value of equality for all.

While the un-level playing field created by hundreds of years of inequality contributes --even today-- to inequitable educational experiences, we believe that our progressive community, rich in resources for education, will be able to rise to the challenge of creating bright futures for all our young. Coming to understand and face our racial past is the key to repairing the breach and moving into the 21st century, freed from the specious and noxious notion of a people divided by race.

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X. Appendices

Appendix 1. Change in CHCCS District Racial Composition Over 25 Year Period

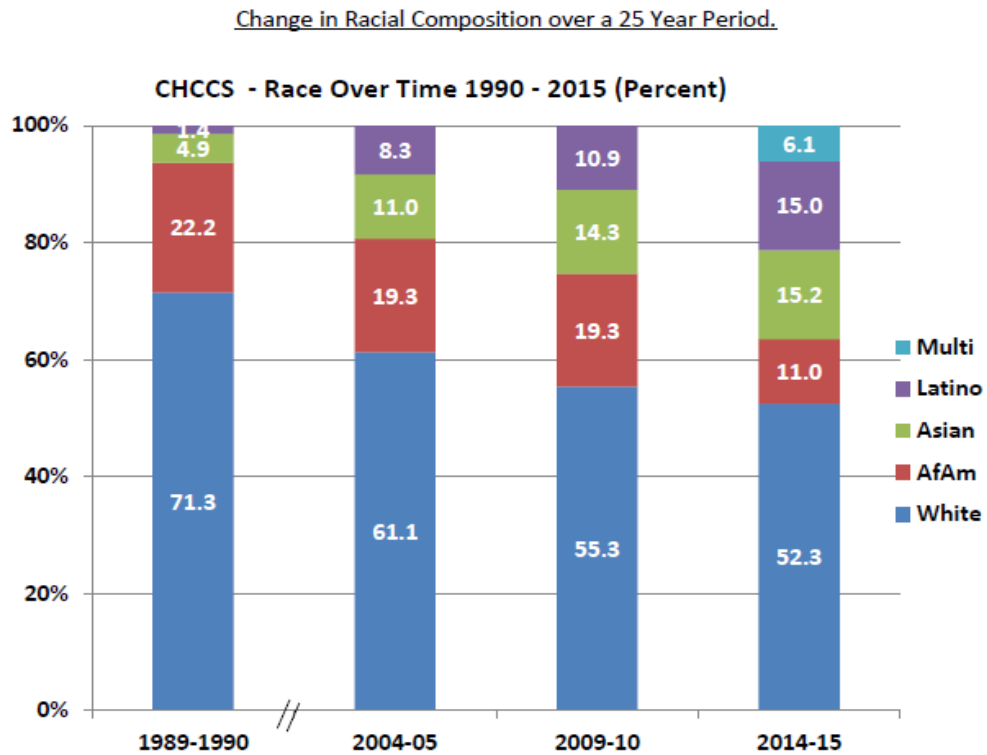
Appendix 2. Listening Sessions Protocol

Appendix 3. Listening Sessions: Questions for Parents

Appendix 4. Listening Sessions: Questions for Staff & Faculty

Appendix 5. Listening Sessions: Questions for Students

APPENDIX 1. Change in CHCCS District Racial Composition Over 25 Year Period



APPENDIX 2. Listening Sessions Protocol

Campaign for Racial Equity in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (Summer 2015)

I. PURPOSE

One purpose is to better understand the stories and lived experiences (of students, parents, and staff) behind the numbers (the “hard data”) that document persistent racial inequities. These are the basic questions we want to learn more about from key stakeholders (students, parents, staff).

1. What can we learn about the roots of the inequities?
2. How does race shape the culture, climate, and practices of CHCCS?
3. What are examples of #2?
4. What measures are taken to address inequities? How have these worked?
5. What are the barriers in addressing inequities?
6. What changes are necessary to bring about racial equity?

We also want to engage key stakeholders in developing solutions for achieving racial equity.

II. PARTICIPANTS: WHO ARE THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS?

For the purposes of this project, we will focus on three primary groups: CHCCS students, parents, and staff/faculty. The listening sessions will segregate members of these three groups into racial identity groups to increase comfort and the freedom to respond openly and honestly to questions that address race.

III. METHODS

1. Campaign will recruit & train listening session teams. Teams will be matched as much as possible with the group they are meeting with (by race and by role).
2. Listening Session Teams will recruit participants for their own sessions. Each session can range from 4-15 participants.
3. Teams will conduct as many sessions as they can between now and August 15.
4. Questions will be pre-determined and standardized for each group.
5. Every session needs both facilitator who will ask the questions and facilitate the session and recorder who will take notes (or record). Data (comments and stories) from listening sessions will be compiled and summarized. Data summaries will be analyzed for themes that address Q. 1-6 above. The summary and our analyses of these data will be included in the report and used to inform the recommendations.

What Will Your Listening Session Look Like?

Size: 4-15 persons

Time: 90 minutes or less, with the discipline of starting and ending on time.

Location: Home, school, church, workplace, or other community facility

Participants: People you know, people referred to you, people from existing networks.

Materials: Notepad, flipchart, markers, sign-in sheet. (Food is optional.)

Basic Structure:

1. Role of FACILITATOR.

- a. Facilitator needs to be someone that the group will find easy to trust. The facilitator will invite participants, arranging time and space.
- b. Facilitator needs to project neutrality as to what participants have to say. It is important to be open and accepting of all experiences, opinions and suggestions. Project understanding without surprise, sympathy, challenge or anything that would encourage or discourage participant comments.
- c. Facilitator must have good listening and group process skills. Needs to be able to keep things moving in a positive, respectful way—keeping things on track in terms of time and getting through all the questions.

2. Role of RECORDER.

- a. The recorder is expected to listen carefully and record all responses from members of the group. Recorder can use flipchart, especially for group input on issues, barriers and solutions. Note how often particular responses are given (to reflect if this is the opinion of many, a few, only one). Get illustrative quotes when possible.
- b. The recorder will also be responsible for getting each participant's information on the sign-in sheet.

3. OPENING (5 minutes)

- a. Introduce yourselves and describe our process.
- b. Let people know why we have invited them. In general what we want to learn. How we will use their answers.
- c. Describe EQUITY as a goal of the district. Statistics show that we still have an achievement gap as well as racial differences in discipline practices and participation in special classes, included advanced and gifted classes. We are trying to understand these differences and make recommendations toward greater equity.
- d. Assure confidentiality as to individual, though we will describe what the groups look like as a whole (e.g., we heard from 20 students of color (13 African-American and 7 Latino, ages ranged from 14-18)
- e. Let people know that it is important to hear from each person there, recognizing that some are naturally more talkative and some more quiet. You'll try to facilitate in a way to be sure that everyone participates.

- f. Also recognize time constraints and that sometimes you'll try to move the process to be sure that we have time to address every question.
- 4. **INTRODUCTIONS (5-10 minutes)**
 - a. After setting the stage and introducing yourself, ask everyone to introduce themselves. Share a bit about their experience in CHCCS. What school(s)? What roles? How long?
- 5. **QUESTIONS (60-75 minutes, approximately 10 minutes per question)**
 - a. Let people know your questions ahead of time so they will know where you are going in your questioning.
 - b. The recorder should be careful to note if, for example, a "barrier" or "solution" has been raised, even if not in answer to that specific question. The facilitator should note that also, saying "thank you for that; I want to get back to that more in a few minutes."
 - c. Move through each of the questions, keeping track of time and participation. Recorder could help by holding a card suggesting that it is time to wrap up that question and move to the next.
- 6. **ENDING and NEXT STEPS (5 minutes)**
 - a. Thank everyone for participating.
 - b. Recorder: summarize the problems/issues/solutions that you heard mentioned to determine if any big issue was left out.
 - c. Ask if anyone knows others who might like to be part of listening session to have more people engaged in the listening process.
 - d. Determine if there are leaders in the group who'd like to work more with us on the report and recommendations.
 - e. Let them know that we will send them a copy of the final report.
 - f. Thank everyone again!
- 7. **FOLLOW-UP TO THE SESSION**
 - a. As soon as possible after the session the Facilitator and Recorder will work together to develop a summary report using the attached form and submit to Wanda Hunter & Stephanie Perry. Please also share your experience with the process so we can modify if necessary.

APPENDIX 3. Listening Sessions: Questions for Parents

Campaign for Racial Equity in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (Summer 2015)

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

1. How does race shape the culture, climate and practices of CHCCS?
2. Do you think your race has affected how school staff, including teachers, interact with (or treat) you? Can you tell us of a time when this happened?
3. Do you think your child's race has affected how she/he has been treated in the school? Can you give us examples?
4. Why do you think the advanced classes, such as AIG, honors and AP, are majority white students and the remedial classes are disproportionately students of color?
5. Have you noticed attempts over the years to address inequities? Examples? How have they worked?
6. What do you think the school system should do to create a racially equitable environment?

APPENDIX 4. Listening Sessions: Questions for Staff/Faculty

Campaign for Racial Equity in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (Summer 2015)

QUESTIONS FOR STAFF/FACULTY

1. What do you think are the roots of the inequities in your school/district?
2. How do you think that race shapes the culture and climate of your school/district? Can you give some examples?
3. What practices in your school/district emphasize racial inequities? Can you give some examples?
4. What has been done to address the inequities in your school/district? Have these been effective? Why or Why not?
5. What barriers are in your school/district that make it difficult to address the inequities?
6. What changes do you think need to be made to bring about racial equity?

APPENDIX 5. Listening Sessions: Questions for Students

Campaign for Racial Equity in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (Summer 2015)

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. How do students talk about or approach race at the schools you have been in?
2. What about teachers? Does race affect how they see each other and the students?
3. How has race influenced the culture, climate and curriculum of your schools?
4. Why do you think that the advanced classes are mostly white and the remedial classes mostly students of color? How has this impacted you?
5. Have you noticed the schools doing anything to try to create a more racially equitable environment? If so, what's worked well or has not worked well?
6. If you had a magic wand and could wave it to create a racially equitable environment, what would that look like... what would you see in your schools?