COMPREHENSIVE EQUITY AUDIT

Upper Arlington City Schools

Insight
EDUCATION GROUP

CONTENTS

PART I

CONTEXT

In this section, please find:

- An overview of the audit process including background and methodology
- Important district context and background

INTRODUCTION

There is currently an active discussion in schools and districts regarding how to ensure that each and every student has equitable access to a high-quality education. Schools and school districts are uniquely situated to impact both educator and student views and actions related to equity. However, without thoughtful planning, clear objectives, and an honest assessment of the current situation, districts will be less likely to achieve educational equity for each and every student.

The purpose of this report is to share the results of a comprehensive equity audit that Insight Education Group's audit team conducted in Upper Arlington (UA). The team met with stakeholders from the district and larger community in order to gain as many perspectives as possible and to confirm trends identified through examination of multiple data sets. The audit included an analysis of district student achievement data, graduation and discipline data, district staffing, professional development, and stakeholder perceptual data.

Data shows that students in the United States face significant disparities in educational opportunity and outcomes. This is especially true for students of color and students from low-income communities. (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016; Reardon, 2014). When considering disparities in educational opportunity and outcomes, it is important to also consider access, a third variable that we consider to be the critical bridge between the first two. It is our belief that the pressing challenge facing schools and districts is to provide all students with both equitable opportunity and access to high-quality educational experiences in order for them to achieve successful life outcomes.

The equity audit team has developed this report in alignment with our Equity Framework. It includes recommendations that are aligned to each domain in the framework for the superintendent and his team's consideration. This report addresses the current district landscape pertaining to equity and presents an important opportunity for district leadership to develop a plan to implement the recommendations in an aligned, coherent and intentional manner. It is recommended that the district take time to study and make sense of the findings and recommendations to develop a plan to stage the necessary work efficiently and effectively in order to improve outcomes for each and every student in UA.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

Spanning less than 10 square miles in Franklin County, Upper Arlington Schools is a school district situated in the northwest suburbs of Columbus, Ohio. During the academic year 2022-2023, the district served approximately 6,400 students, providing an array of educational opportunities.

Comprising one early childhood school, 5 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 1 high school, and an online academy, Upper Arlington Schools aims to deliver high quality learning experiences. The district's commitment to educational excellence is reflected in its varied offerings.

According to the state of Ohio's report card, the student population at Upper Arlington can be categorized by race and ethnicity as follows: White (83.9%), Asian (5.6%), two or more races (5.4%), Hispanic/Latinx (3.4%), and Black or African American (1.7%).The Equity Audit conducted at that time revealed that 4% of students were classified as low income/economically disadvantaged, 17.5% of students were reported as having disabilities, and 2.1% were identified as English Language Learners.

Figure 1
Upper Arlington City Schools
Student Demographics
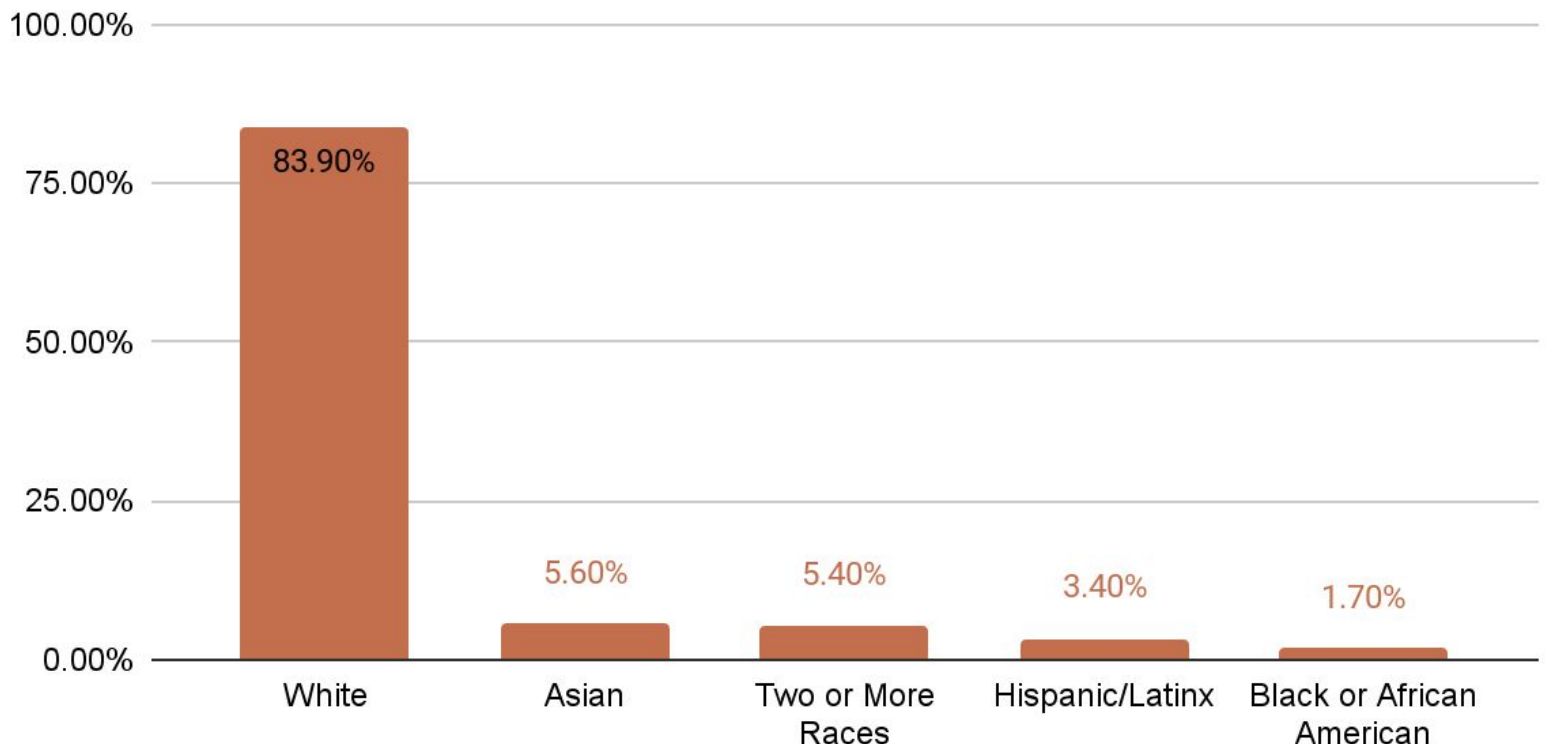
METHODOLOGY
DATA COLLECTION

Insight Education Group conducted an Equity Audit in Upper Arlington between July-December of 2023. The team met with stakeholders from the district and larger community to gain as many perspectives as possible to determine district trends using an equity-focused lens by collecting multiple datasets.

In this section of the report, we will review the foremost components of our methods surrounding the Comprehensive Equity Audit for UA. To begin we will provide a detailed overview of the data collection process. We will share data analysis techniques employed to inform our understanding of trends occurring in UA both in strengths and areas for future improvement.

The Insight audit team worked closely with the district to amass a robust set of district data and documents for review in the initial phase of the Equity Audit as well as to engage stakeholder groups throughout the data collection process during the first semester of the 2023-2024 school year.

The data collection process included the following activities to assess district beliefs, policies, and practices in relation to equity:

- Review of graduation and discipline data

- Evaluation of student achievement data

- Review of district documents

- Assessment of district finances

- Stakeholder surveys

- Focus groups

DISTRICT DATA

Graduation rates supported audit team members' appraisal of how frequently, consistently, and to what percent UA students graduate. Audit team members also reviewed previous academic achievement data in English and mathematics found on the Ohio Department of Education website for 3rd and 8th grade students to survey the academic performance of UA students by various demographic subgroups. These two critical developmental points allowed team members to detect relatively persistent gaps in academic performance between peers in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English Language Learner status, and special education classification.

Team members reviewed discipline data to understand discipline related trends in terms of frequency, school site, type of infraction, and punitive responses to student infractions. Moreover, Insight evaluated discipline data by infractions attributed to groups of students demographically.

DISTRICT DOCUMENTS

In addition to preliminary quantitative datasets provided by UA, the audit team conducted an evaluative review of district documents to establish additional trends involving equitable beliefs, practices, and policies maintained by the district. The audit team evaluated district artifacts within the scope of five domains outlined by the Insight Equity Framework. The five domains are outlined as follows and will be described in further detail with relevant research in latter sections of this report: 1) Structures, Systems, and Resources; 2) Culture and Community; 2) Equity in the Educator Workforce; 4) Professional Learning and Personal Growth; and 5) Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning.

The Insight audit team reviewed district organizational charts and strategic planning documents to evaluate the structures and systems in place at the district level utilized to provide an equitable education for all Upper Arlington's students.

Insight audit team members reviewed the UA website, social media sites, and outgoing communication to the community, such as published Board meeting notes, to evaluate trends aimed towards building a culture and community grounded in equity within the district. Additionally, team members reviewed district discipline policies and student codes of conduct for punitive actions and escalation practices as well as any biased or discriminatory language.

To assess UA educator workforce with a focus on equity in the recruitment, retention, placement, and promotion of district educators, Insight audit team members supplemented District UA school leader and UA staff demographic data with data made available via survey descriptive statistics. Furthermore, audit team members reviewed professional learning opportunities extended to UA educators to foster a sense of professional growth and learning as well as district recruitment cycles.

Lastly, the district provided assessment calendars, access to state-wide achievement archives, as well as accelerated course information to evaluate equitable policies for student education relative to equitable access to programs and opportunities.

STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

In partnership with Insight's audit team, UA invited a diverse stakeholder group to complete a survey evaluation of equity within the district as well as the assessment of equitable practices and policies exhibited throughout the district. Survey questionnaires ranged in length from 9 questions to 40 questions depending on which stakeholder group the participant maintained membership. Upper Arlington received a total of 4,730 survey responses–the six stakeholder groups included: central office staff, school leaders, school district staff, non-school based district staff, family and caregivers, and students.

In the first section of each survey, participants were asked to respond to equity specific questions related to the district and district schools. In this portion of the survey respondents recorded their answers on a 4-point Likert scale. Participants responded to a statement prompt and recorded their level of agreement with the statement. As an example, a student participant would respond to the statement, "My school prioritizes equity." In response, the student participant indicated their agreement using the following: "1" strongly disagree, "2" disagree, "3" agree, and "4" strongly agree.

Following the completion of the equity-specific section, respondents were given the option to contribute additional descriptive information, including personal demographics such as race, age, gender, length of professional career, and school affiliation.

In the subsequent sections outlining the report's findings, we will present both overall survey data and demographic-based data. It's important to highlight that while respondents had the choice to provide their demographic information, not all chose to do so, resulting in variations in the available data.

Responses provided by participants were securely acquired, stored, and managed by the Insight audit team. Respondents participated on a voluntary basis and were assured that their responses were kept private throughout the data collection.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	Completed Surveys
Secondary Students	2,484
Elementary Students	1,292
Parent/Guardians	908
School Staff	203
District and School Leader	46
Total	4,730

Stakeholder surveys are broken down by demographic groups and LGBTQIA+ status and can be found in Appendix G.

FOCUS GROUPS

UA recruited stakeholders from multiple groups to engage in focus group sessions with Insight audit team members. During the recruitment process, UA invited potential group members from the following stakeholder groups: k-12 students, families and caregivers, as well as school community members.

Each focus group session, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes, was facilitated by Insight team members. To maximize participation, flexible options for virtual and in-person sessions were provided, ensuring accessibility for all interested individuals.

Recognizing the importance of diverse perspectives, the window for focus groups was extended. This extension served a dual purpose: accommodating all interested participants and specifically ensuring the inclusion of multiple voices from secondary students.

During the focus groups, participants were provided the opportunity to share their lived experiences in the district. In particular, focus group participants conveyed the district's definition of equity as well as their understanding of equity as communicated by the school district in beliefs, policies, and practices. All focus groups maintained a standard operating procedure where group members were given norms/logistics as well as a set of questions based on their stakeholder group.

For ethical and integrity reasons, participants were notified their participation in the focus group was voluntary and should they choose to no longer participate, they were at liberty to terminate their involvement. Participants were assured their identifying information and views expressed during the focus group would remain confidential. As such, audit team members would anonymize all details during the reporting process.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	Focus Group Participants
High School Students	33
Middle School Students	12
Elementary Students	48
Parent/Guardians (This also includes: PTO DEI, Building DEI, and EAB)	50
School Staff	13
School Administrators	5
Central Office Staff	10
Cabinet	10
Total	181

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analyzed in three stages. In one stage, descriptive statistical analysis was applied to datasets provided by the district where trends in school profiles, student demographics, discipline rates, and academic indicators were documented. Qualitative data sets derived from district artifacts were also analyzed during this stage of analysis.

During a second stage, survey responses were analyzed across all stakeholder surveys in relation to the five domains of the Equity Framework first with descriptive statistics followed by inferential statistics. All participant responses were coded and cleaned prior to analysis whereby all responses were de-identified using numeric demographic codes, response codes, and responses containing missing data not at random were removed prior to analysis.

Lastly, qualitative data analysis for focus groups as well as researcher field notes and memos (Emerson et al., 2011) was performed. An iterative coding cycle was applied to documents and texts. The coding cycles were executed until saturation was reached (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Saunders et al., 2018).

Audit team members collaborated during the data analysis phase of the equity audit to ensure inter-rater reliability was achieved among team members for each of the noted district trends, findings, and recommendations. Of note, audit team members triangulated data sources to support all discussed trends, findings, and recommendations from the equity audit of UA.

PART II
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, please find:

- A description of the overall assets of the district found through the review process
- Findings and recommendations for the district grounded the five domains of the Insight Equity Framework.

DOMAIN 1
STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS, AND RESOURCES

Operations, finance, and organizational structure can feel very technical in a school district. But what sits under those technical components is a belief system and understanding of the impacts of bias on adults and students. A growing body of scholarship emphasizes the critical role of district leadership in ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for students. Districts must intentionally design organizational structures and routines that support the success of historically underserved students, otherwise schools may "function as sites of oppression" rather than places of opportunity (Irby et al., 2019).

A district's commitment to equity relies on fundamental systemic change throughout the organization, as well as the anti-racist beliefs and actions of individual educators and leaders (Welton et a., 2018). Furthermore, districts must explicitly centralize equity in their school improvement plans to ensure that resources are equitably distributed to students in both policy and practice (Starr, 2018; Gorski, 2019).

At the foundation, strategic planning (a district process of establishing goals and the strategies that will be employed to achieve those goals) should explicitly name race and equity as a priority in the organization. Goals must be meaningful and represent access and opportunity, not just absolute achievement, in order to ensure equitable support of all students. In order to achieve this, district goals, as well as their measurable targets, must be developed collaboratively with leaders and stakeholders.

Upon the foundation of strategic planning sit the technical decisions and systems that comprise budgeting; the allocation of resources; access to clean, healthy and updated facilities, access to technology hardware, software and internet; quality. Food and nutrition programs; and safe and effective transportation. Therefore, this domain addresses both the degree to which the school board and senior leadership team have and continue to develop competence when it comes to race, ability, socioeconomic status, LGBTQ+ status and English proficiency, and use that to plan strategically, make technical decisions and create structures and systems that promote equity.

There is a clear and direct link between student achievement and access to material and nonmaterial resources such as effective teachers, high-quality instructional

materials, academic rigor, and learning-ready facilities (Travers, 2018). The allocation of these resources at the macro level can alleviate or exacerbate inequities across an organization. Research suggests that districts and school boards often do not direct resources to students with equity in mind, resulting in intra-district disparities in teacher assignment, curriculum, and building quality (Darden & Cavendish, 2011). Cheatham, Baker-Jones, and Jordan-Thomas (2020) suggest that districts can demonstrate their commitment to equity by "intentionally allocating their resources more flexibly based on the changing needs of individual students" through strategies such as reconfigured funding formulas and differentiated instructional designs.
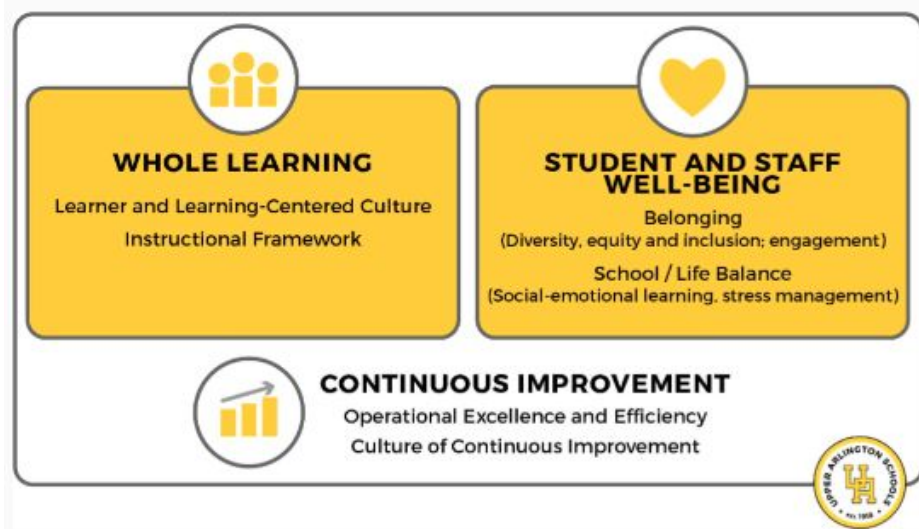
UPPER ARLINGTON SCHOOLS' FINDINGS

Establishing structures, systems, and resources that promote equitable practices and improve outcomes for every student in a district is a pivotal undertaking. This involves conveying a clear message that underscores the significance of equity to all members of the community. This commitment is typically articulated in the district's strategic plan and/or an equity plan, outlining a vision for equity that all stakeholders are expected to be aware of and comprehend.

A visit to the Upper Arlington School district website or their district offices reveals displays of the district's mission – to "challenge and support every student every step of the way." This mission is complemented by the district's vision of "uniquely accomplished students prepared to serve, lead, and succeed." These statements articulate the district's overarching aspirations. Despite the prevailing dedication to equity, it's important to acknowledge that certain stakeholders may harbor reservations or misunderstandings about the concept.

Specifically, there exists a subset of individuals who may have aversions to the term "equity" due to a lack of understanding regarding its definition and implications. While the district's mission and vision make their commitment clear, addressing these reservations and fostering a shared understanding of equity among all stakeholders remains an ongoing endeavor. The subsequent examples further underscore the district's commitment to prioritizing equity throughout its schools:

- 2019-2024 Strategic Plan - Aligned with the district's commitment to nurturing the holistic development of every student, the strategic plan emphasizes the philosophy of supporting the whole child. The following strategic priorities encapsulate the core focus areas outlined in the plan.

Figure 2

It is worth noting, at the time of this equity audit, the district is currently executing the planning and writing process for a new strategic plan.

UPPER ARLINGTON SCHOOLS' FINDINGS

During the second phase of the audit, stakeholders were given the opportunity to complete a survey. Below displays the results from when respondents were asked about the strategic planning process:

- Prompt: Historically, the strategic plan has been developed by holding multiple input sessions to increase participation from a diverse population of district stakeholders.
  - 68% of School leaders shared that they agree/strongly agreed with this statement
  - 58% of Staff shared that they agree/strongly agreed with this statement
  - 52% of Family/Caregivers shared that they agree/strongly agreed with this statement

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	45%
Black of African American	33%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	80%
Multiracial	39%
White	53%
Not Listed	43%
Prefer Not to Say	51%
More than 1 option selected	41%

- Equity Advisory Board: Composed of representatives from various stakeholder groups, the Equity Advisory Board (EAB) was established in response to the Board of Education's dedication to eliminating racism, prejudice, bias, and bigotry within the school community. Tasked with advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) priorities for the district, the Advisory Board operates as a vital resource, collaborating with both building and district DEI teams. Its objectives encompass comprehending the experiences of students, staff, and families in the Upper Arlington community, delineating equity in alignment with the district's mission and strategic plan, nurturing partnerships with local entities involved in DEI endeavors, fostering an environment conducive to candid conversations, and offering insights into the recruitment and retention of a diverse staff. Through the exchange of insights and provision of expert counsel, the Advisory Board significantly contributes to the efficacy of the district's existing DEI teams and leadership.
  - Additional Groups committed to equity in the district: PTO DEI Chairs, Building Leadership Teams, Well-being Committee

Note: Given the size and diversity of our school leadership cohort and staff, providing a demographic breakdown of survey responses could potentially compromise anonymity by disclosing excessive detail. Therefore, displaying such data may not align with our anonymity standards.

- **Resolution on Eliminating Racism and Bias in our Schools passed in June 2020:** represents a formal commitment by the Board to address racism, social injustice, bias, and bigotry within the school community. The resolution outlines specific actions, including the addition of resources, staff positions, and the creation of an equity advisory board, all aimed at fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion. This commitment, stated explicitly in the resolution, provides a foundational framework for equity work in the district by demonstrating UA's dedication to creating a safe, inclusive, and unbiased learning environment for every student. The resolution serves as a guiding document for evaluating and measuring the district's progress towards these equity-related goals during the audit process.

Defining Equity

To ensure the district has a shared driving force, alignment on the definition of equity in the district is imperative. According to the survey, one of the prompts said, "The district has shared a clear definition of equity."
- 50% of School leaders shared they agreed/ strongly agreed with the prompt
- 45% of Staff shared they agreed/ strongly agreed with the prompt
- 48% of Family/Caregivers shared they agreed/ strongly agreed with the prompt

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	57%
Black of African American	22%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	53%
Multiracial	30%
White	50%
Not Listed	36%
Prefer Not to Say	42%
More than 1 option selected	45%

In the third phase of this process, stakeholder focus groups were formed. When discussing the district's definition of equity, Family Members/Caregivers shared the following quotes:
- "I don't think the district has a vision or a definition for equity. I think they value it, but don't know how to articulate it to parents or the rest of UA.I also think they do not want to ruffle anyone's feathers."
- "I feel like the distinct is wrapped up in test scores and ranking. The issue of equity is lost in the vision for high academic achievement."

Note: Given the size and diversity of our school leadership cohort and staff, providing a demographic breakdown of survey responses could potentially compromise anonymity by disclosing excessive detail. Therefore, displaying such data may not align with our anonymity standards.

- "I think there is a disconnect between what the community sees is the vision versus what the district communicates."

In focus groups, members from various stakeholder groups shared their frustrations with the perceived lack of clarity around the leadership and direction of equity in the district. In a discussion with the Cabinet regarding their equity vision, key concepts emerge. The vision encompasses the integration of equity into all decision-making processes, the cultivation of a comprehensive understanding of equity, and the establishment of an inclusive environment where every student feels welcomed. The aspiration is to transcend the belief that certain issues do not occur within the district, embracing a steadfast commitment to the principle of "all means all." However, the acknowledged challenge lies in translating this commitment into tangible actions, with a recognized need for a systematic approach to effectively address these issues.

Use of Data

In this domain, the focus is on structures, systems and resources and how use all of these things to make informed decisions for the district. An overall theme throughout each domains is a hope for more data driven approaches. Various members of stakeholder groups shared their curiosity about the tracking of demographic data.

Resource Allocation

When evaluating the structures, systems, and resources within the district, the allocation and distribution of resources are intricately linked to a clearly defined vision for equity outlined in the strategic plan. This involves a deliberate focus on disrupting outcomes that are often influenced by social factors.

Survey responses provide valuable insights into community perceptions: 37% of family respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the district is transparent and equitable in distributing funds to schools. In contrast, 16% of staff members agreed or strongly agreed that the district has a formula to allocate funding to each school based on need. Notably, 62% of staff members expressed agreement that they consistently have ample supplies, materials, and resources to meet every student's needs.

Additionally, 50% of school leaders endorsed the statement: "As a district or school leader, my team and I monitor resources, including funding, materials, facilities, and staffing, to ensure equitable allocation/distribution." These responses collectively offer valuable insights into the perceptions and practices related to resource allocation within the district.

A leadership member shared, "The allocation of resources is determined by historical spending, considering departments that may have excess funds or specific needs. There's

a recognition of the need for better allocation of resources to support the English Learner (EL) population, addressing deficiencies in funding, materials, and staffing."

Concerns about financial accessibility for extracurricular activities persist, with School PTOs gaining recognition across focus groups. While stakeholders appreciate the commendable efforts of PTOs in mitigating costs, the challenge arises from the lack of uniformity across the district. Each school operates with its own PTO, leading to misalignments in expectations and outcomes. This fragmentation underscores the necessity for more cohesive and standardized approaches to consistently address financial accessibility issues throughout the district.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Upper Arlington School district demonstrates a strong commitment to equity through its mission, strategic planning, and initiatives like the Equity Advisory Board and the 2020 Resolution on Eliminating Racism and Bias. Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including stakeholder reservations and varied perceptions about equity definitions.

Survey results indicate ongoing work is needed to clarify and communicate the district's equity vision. Additionally, there is a call for more data-driven approaches and uniform resource allocation to address financial accessibility issues, particularly in extracurricular activities.

As the district embarks on a new strategic plan, there is an opportunity for systematic improvements. By addressing these challenges collaboratively, the district can further advance its commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment for every student.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each domain within the Equity Audit will feature findings accompanied by corresponding recommendations. It's crucial to emphasize that these recommendations stem from the audit's information. It's essential to recognize that the district may already be implementing some of these measures. For certain recommendations, the expectation is for the district to persist in enhancing these areas, fostering continuous improvement.

1.1	Integrate findings in this report into the district's comprehensive strategic plan

Establish SMART Goals:
- Ensure that action steps from this equity audit and the strategic planning process incorporate SMART goals for equity in student outcomes, resource allocation, staff diversity, and overall school climate.

Align Resource Allocation with Equity Vision:
- Conduct a budget audit to identify and rectify existing inequities in resource distribution.
- Establish a system for intentionally and strategically allocating resources to disrupt outcomes predicted by social factors, including targeted funding for schools serving marginalized populations, investments in culturally responsive curriculum materials, and additional support for English learners and students with disabilities.

Implement Monitoring and Evaluation System:
- Introduce a robust monitoring and evaluation system to consistently assess progress toward equity goals outlined in the strategic plan.
- Adjust strategies based on continuous feedback and evolving needs to facilitate ongoing improvement.

Transparent Communication:
- Communicate transparently with the school community regarding the development and progress of the comprehensive strategic plan with an equity focus.
- Engage stakeholders actively throughout the process, seeking input, and incorporating diverse perspectives to enhance the plan's effectiveness.

1.2	Identify Vision for Equity:

- Develop a clear and inspiring vision for equity within the district, aligning it with the comprehensive strategic plan.
- Engage a diverse range of stakeholders to contribute to the formulation of the equity vision, ensuring a representative and inclusive perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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1.3	Develop a Data Analysis Framework

Establish clear data analysis protocols:
- Determine how data will be reviewed at various levels (cabinet, district, school, grade team, classroom) to inform decision-making and monitor progress towards equity goals.

Identify Relevant Data Points:
- Determine specific data points for tracking progress, encompassing staff demographic data, student achievement data, attendance data, discipline data, survey data, and resource allocation data.

Establish Data Collection Protocols:
- Determine the frequency of data collection (e.g., quarterly, annually).
- Designate responsible parties for data collection and reporting.
- Implement standardized data collection methods and tools.

Develop Data Analysis and Reporting Procedures:
- Create a system for analyzing collected data across different levels and departments.
- Standardize data formats and reporting processes.
- Identify key metrics and trends, utilizing data visualization tools for clear presentation.
- Regularly report data and progress to stakeholders.

Develop a Review Protocol:
- Establish a set of questions and criteria to analyze the equity implications of major events, decisions, or initiatives.
- Consider impacts on different student groups, potential biases, equitable resource allocation, and future planning insights.

Define Review Timelines:
- Determine when and how often equity autopsies will be conducted (e.g., after specific events, annually).

Assign Review Teams:
- Establish cross-functional teams with representatives from different departments and stakeholder groups to conduct equity reviews.

Share Findings and Recommendations:
- Ensure findings and recommendations from equity reviews are shared with relevant stakeholders to inform future planning and decision-making.

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

Cultural competence is crucial to fostering an environment in which students, educators, and families from diverse backgrounds feel safe, welcome, and valued as integral members of their school and district community. Fostering a culture of cultural competence entails cultivating an inclusive climate within each building, implementing social and emotional supports to actively engage with cultural issues, and establishing partnerships with families and communities to build social trust. With cultural competence as the foundation of a district's culture, students, educators, and families can comprehend and address biases that impact every aspect of teaching and learning, participate in constructive conversations about diversity and equity, and achieve their full potential in a secure and supportive school environment.

The distinction between school climate and school culture is nuanced but can be clarified as follows: climate refers to a school's attitude, while culture refers to its personality. A school or district's culture evolves over time through changes to its climate (Gruenert, 2008). Therefore, establishing an inclusive, culturally competent climate in every school is essential for ingraining a culture of cultural competence throughout a district.

An inclusive school climate ensures that all students, staff, and families, regardless of background, have access to "effectively supported high expectations for teaching, learning, and achievement; emotionally and physically safe, healthy learning environments for all; caring, courageous, self-reflective relationships among and between peers and adults; and multiple, culturally responsive pathways to participation" (Ross, Brown, & Biagas, 2020).

A district's commitment to cultural competence requires educators and leaders to adopt an asset-based approach to educating and serving students and families from diverse backgrounds. This means recognizing diversity as a strength and valuing individuals for their unique contributions to the school and district community.

A culturally competent school climate mitigates potential adverse effects of policies and practices on staff and students from diverse backgrounds. Restorative discipline stands as a promising alternative to conventional disciplinary approaches, emphasizing "belonging over exclusion" to enhance school climate and culture (Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue, n.d.). Social and emotional learning (SEL) serves as a catalyst for equity in education. As stated by the National Equity Project, SEL provides the opportunity to recognize, address, and heal from the impacts of racism and systemic oppression (National Equity Project, n.d.). The implementation of SEL in schools should be guided by the explicit goal of cultivating a culture of cultural competence. This involves enhancing the self-awareness and social and emotional

intelligence of all students and educators, encompassing considerations of race, ability, socioeconomic status, LGBTQ+ status, and English proficiency to foster equity.

Establishing an equitable school climate necessitates the inclusion of diverse voices from students, staff, families, and community members in decisions related to school policies. It also involves fostering "courageous conversations" about equity on an ongoing basis (Ross, Brown, & Biagas, 2020). Research underscores that family and community engagement not only positively impacts individual student achievement but also contributes to overall school improvement. However, many districts struggle to effectively engage families and communities of diverse backgrounds in their school improvement initiatives, often influenced by misguided deficit thinking about non-white cultures and attitudes toward education (McAlister, 2013). School and district leaders must proactively develop social trust and positive relationships with families and community organizations to strengthen the overall culture and promote improvement.

UPPER ARLINGTON SCHOOLS' FINDINGS

Upper Arlington is renowned for its close-knit community and rich historical roots, fostering a sense of belonging for families that span multiple generations within the school system. While the district actively engages families and community members in events and board meetings, the strength of these community bonds can present challenges for newcomers and staff seeking integration. A staff member expressed a critique, stating, "We celebrate homogeneity more than diversity."

The strategic plan places a significant emphasis on student and staff well-being, aligning with the district's commitment to a safe and unbiased learning environment for all, as outlined in the [Resolution on Eliminating Racism and Bias in our Schools](). The elementary schools, each contributing unique cultures, funnel into distinct middle schools, forming the diverse fabric of the high school. Despite shared elements such as the focus on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), there are variations in how support is tailored to meet the diverse needs of students and staff across different schools.

The adoption of MTSS signifies a collective effort to meet the comprehensive needs of all students. It is essential to acknowledge that, although MTSS is faithfully implemented at the elementary level, there is significant progress required for its implementation at the middle and high school levels.

Several initiatives, supported by various Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and DEI groups, are actively working towards fostering an inclusive environment. Notably, the Middle School Program of Studies is commendable for integrating life support skills coursework over three years to instill a sense of respect for diversity.

Staff and parent focus groups express frustration regarding accessible spaces for students and staff with disabilities, highlighting the district's progress in aesthetic designs but the need for further improvements. A teacher details concerns about a student's inability to play during recess due to accessibility challenges.

However, concerns have been raised regarding access to the SACC (aftercare) program, leading to confusion among stakeholders. While program goals aim to foster diversity appreciation, there is a persistent issue with clarity on access. Family/caregivers also noted challenges, indicating that some extracurricular activities are not accessible to all students due to cost and other factors. The absence of buses to the high school is identified as an equity issue for many families.

Perspectives on Community Cohesion and Socioeconomic Diversity

The term "the bubble" frequently refers to Upper Arlington, symbolizing its tightly knit community. However, in various focus groups, stakeholders have portrayed "the bubble" with nuanced perspectives. While some express a sense of pride associated with it, others convey feelings of exclusion from this perceived bubble. A staff member articulated, "Navigating this

environment can be challenging, given the limited diversity in our student and staff demographics. Our community doesn't encompass a wide socioeconomic spectrum, which can result in certain voices being amplified while others remain unheard. Those who are economically disadvantaged may find it difficult to advocate for their needs in such an environment."

Additionally, discussions concerning establishing avenues for families to access financial support for activities are complicated by the community's small size. Some families are reluctant to disclose their financial struggles to the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), comprised of other parents within the district. This reluctance underscores existing concerns about the effectiveness of such initiatives, particularly when families already feel marginalized within the community. It prompts questions about inclusivity and the ability of existing support structures to truly address the needs of all families.

School Culture

Each school within the district possesses its unique culture, influenced by a set of handbooks that serve as guiding frameworks:

1. Upper Arlington Schools Student Life Handbook for Families
2. Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for Families
3. Upper Arlington School-Age Child Care Program Parent Handbook
4. Student Device Handbook

Feedback gathered through focus groups in elementary and middle schools revealed positive sentiments among students, expressing a strong sense of belonging.

On the survey, elementary and middle school students were given the following prompts in regards to culture.

Prompt: Do you think all students are treated with respect at your school?
- 79% of Elementary students responded most of the time/ all of the time

Demographic Group	% of "Most of the Time" and "All of the Time"
American Indian/Alaska Native	86%
Asian	69%
Black of African American	78%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	73%
Multiracial	75%

UPPER ARLINGTON SCHOOLS' FINDINGS

Demographic Group	% of "Most of the Time" and "All of the Time"
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	100%
White	82%
Not Listed	83%
Prefer Not to Say	75%
More than 1 option selected	79%

Across all demographic groups, a similar percentage of students agreed with this statement. However, notably, 86% of students identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native strongly agreed.

Prompt: Are the students kind to each other?
- 76% of Elementary students responded most of the time/ all of the time

Demographic Group	% of "Most of the Time" and "All of the Time"
American Indian/Alaska Native	73%
Asian	65%
Black of African American	50%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	73%
Multiracial	70%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%
White	80%
Not Listed	77%
Prefer Not to Say	77%
More than 1 option selected	64%

High school students shared similar sentiments on the survey.
Prompt: At school, adults treat me fairly and with respect.
- 91% of Secondary students agreed/ strongly agreed.

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	83%
Asian	92%
Black of African American	74%

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	82%
Multiracial	95%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	100%
White	92%
Not Listed	93%
Prefer Not to Say	88%
More than 1 option selected	85%

Among high school students who identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community, comprising approximately 11% of survey respondents, 84% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Conversely, among students who do not identify as members, 92% agreed or strongly agreed. Notably, 16% of LGBTQIA+ identifying students disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared to 8% of non-LGBTQIA+ identifying students.

Prompt: I feel comfortable participating in student life activities.
- 88% of Secondary students agreed/ strongly agreed.

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	86%
Asian	89%
Black of African American	87%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	79%
Multiracial	95%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	100%
White	89%
Not Listed	89%
Prefer Not to Say	82%
More than 1 option selected	83%

- 72% of Secondary students who consider themselves apart of the LGBTQIA+ community agreed/strongly agreed.

High School Students' Viewpoint on Cultural and Socioeconomic Dynamics

High school students conveyed a different perspective during their focus groups than the survey data reflects, noting a perceived division within the school. Geographical distinctions,

such as living "North of Lane" or in the "Golden Ghetto," contribute to a sense of being "othered."

Students also revealed instances of negative language, including racial slurs, occurring within the school environment. While students did not specifically mention the use of LGBTQ slurs, parents in a focus group shared instances where their children encountered negative language or were subjected to derogatory names. According to the survey, students who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community reported that 52% of them agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Students in my school respect each other's differences," compared to 83% of students who do not identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Students expressed that such incidents are often dismissed as jokes, resulting in a lack of consequences. Furthermore, financial disparities among students were brought to attention, with some students expressing feelings of embarrassment regarding their family's income and encountering obstacles in participating in certain activities. These insights underscore the significance of addressing not only the physical but also the cultural and socioeconomic dimensions of the school environment to ensure inclusivity and equity for all students.

School Culture Data Examination

A quantitative assessment of culture-related data unveils significant insights:
- Demographic Composition:
  - White students constitute the majority at 83.9%, followed by Asian (5.6%), two or more races (5.4%), Hispanic/Latinx (3.4%), and Black or African American (1.7%) students.
  - The district identifies 4% of students as economically disadvantaged, 17.5% with reported disabilities, and 2.1% as English Language Learners.
- Chronic Absenteeism Rates:
  - Black or African American students exhibit a disproportionately higher rate (23.5%) compared to other racial groups.
  - Despite comprising only 4% of the population, economically disadvantaged students exhibit a notably higher chronic absenteeism rate of 23.7% compared to their non-low-income peers.
- Disciplinary Actions Disparities:
  - Office Discipline Referrals:
    - White students, constituting 85% of the population, account for a proportional percentage (85%).
  - Out-of-School Suspensions:
    - Black or African American students, constituting 1.7% of the student population, face overrepresentation, accounting for 16.4% of students receiving Out-of-School Suspensions.
- Student Perception:
  - In response to the survey prompt about the fairness of consequences for disciplinary infractions, only 30% of secondary students agreed or strongly agreed that consequences were applied fairly through a process they

- understood.

The data suggests the need for a comprehensive examination of disciplinary practices, absenteeism, and a focus on fostering an understanding of consequences among secondary students.

Student Voice

Engaging with the voices of students is vital for fostering equity within a district. The following mechanisms demonstrate the district's commitment to incorporating student perspectives:

- Superintendent Engagement: The superintendent actively tours schools, engaging directly with students through focus groups and conversations. This intentional effort aims to understand the current landscape and address the needs of the district.
- Insight Education Group Surveys: While traditionally focused on secondary students, the district extended its survey and focus group efforts to include all students (elementary and up), contributing to a more inclusive equity audit process.
- Speak Up! Hotline:The hotline allows anonymous reporting of various concerns. However, students expressed a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of this reporting channel.
- Electronic Surveys: Students are periodically provided with electronic surveys, such as the Panorama survey, offering a comprehensive feedback mechanism.
- Principal Advisory Group: Monthly groups in some schools provide students with a platform to suggest improvements and changes, fostering discussions about initiatives like recycling. However, not all students are consistently included, indicating potential gaps in inclusivity.
- Affinity Groups in High School: Spaces for cultural groups, such as Hispanic Heritage and Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander (AAPI), offer students opportunities to express opinions and desires, contributing to a more inclusive environment.
- Student Athlete Survey: Student athletes are surveyed on aspects like GPA, personal growth, and team belonging, providing insights into their experiences.

Community Voice

Engaging the community is a crucial aspect of ensuring diverse perspectives are considered. Here are a few trends and activities we learned from the community:

- Listen Learn Lead Roundtables: Past initiatives indicated scheduling roundtables for community input, but evidence suggests inconsistent implementation.
- Influence Dynamics: Focus groups highlighted a trend where families, particularly those with longstanding connections, wield more influence. Legacy families, often well-connected, tend to have greater sway in decision-making processes.
- Impact of Lawsuits: There is a concerning theme that threatening legal action accelerates decision-making processes. A lawsuit related to dyslexia prompted swift actions, but questions arise about whether such drastic measures should be a prerequisite for addressing other issues.

- Board Communication: Concerns were raised about the impact of public comments during School Board meetings, with varying responsiveness from Board members. The district clarified that Board members cannot respond during public participation at Board of Education meetings, but there is a procedure for addressing comments the following day. Stakeholders across various groups expressed uncertainty about this process. Emphasizing the need for more effective two-way communication was underscored.

On the other hand, a community stakeholder shared the following quote: "I'm not sure this will come up, but the schools need to consider creating affinity groups for families of students of color and for families of students who identify LGBTQ+. The expectation that parents or students will attend a Listen, Learn, and Lead or show up to Board of Education meetings and share their pain, unique to their minority identity, is unrealistic. Also, there not being affinity groups affiliated with the schools has been used as a reason that leadership does not intentionally seek out the voices of the most marginalized students and families when collecting information for important district decision making." It is imperative to note that similar comments were made in other stakeholder focus groups, indicating the emergence of this as a trend.

On the survey, school leaders were given the prompt: Our school regularly hosts engagement sessions to inform parents/ guardians of student progress.
- 77% of School leaders responded that they agreed/ strongly agreed
- 95% of Staff members responded that they agreed/strongly agreed
- 74% of Family/caregivers responded that they agreed/ strongly agreed

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	72%
Black of African American	78%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	87%
Multiracial	58%
White	74%
Not Listed	79%
Prefer Not to Say	72%
More than 1 option selected	75%

- Prompt: My student(s)' school has an effective and accessible system to share information from school to home and home to school.
  - 80% of Families/caregivers shared that they agreed/ strongly agreed

Note: Given the size and diversity of our school leadership cohort and staff, providing a demographic breakdown of survey responses could potentially compromise anonymity by disclosing excessive detail. Therefore, displaying such data may not align with our anonymity standards.

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	85%
Black of African American	44%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	86%
Multiracial	67%
White	83%
Not Listed	64%
Prefer Not to Say	65%
More than 1 option selected	90%

- Prompt: I am comfortable speaking with my student(s)' teachers or administrators.
  - 90% of Families/ caregivers share that they agreed/ strongly agreed

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	87%
Black of African American	89%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	87%
Multiracial	79%
White	93%
Not Listed	79%
Prefer Not to Say	85%
More than 1 option selected	86%

- Prompt: Adults at the school(s) my student(s) attends treat me with respect.
  - 92% of Families/ caregivers share that they agreed/ strongly agreed

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	89%
Black of African American	89%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	100%
Multiracial	76%

Note: Given the size and diversity of our school leadership cohort and staff, providing a demographic breakdown of survey responses could potentially compromise anonymity by disclosing excessive detail. Therefore, displaying such data may not align with our anonymity standards.

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
White	94%
Not Listed	86%
Prefer Not to Say	87%
More than 1 option selected	97%

- Prompt: I am confident that if I report a safety or well-being concern it will be handled appropriately by an adult in student(s)' school.
  - 69% of Families/ caregivers share that they agreed/ strongly agreed

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	60%
Black of African American	67%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	80%
Multiracial	48%
White	73%
Not Listed	69%
Prefer Not to Say	56%
More than 1 option selected	59%

Conclusion

The Upper Arlington School District grapples with the delicate balance between its tight-knit community legacy and the evolving need for inclusivity and diversity. While the strategic plan prioritizes well-being, challenges surface in the varied implementation of support systems underscoring the complexity of achieving true equity.

High school students reveal perceived divisions and instances of negative language, emphasizing the importance of addressing cultural and socioeconomic aspects for genuine inclusivity. Quantitative assessments expose demographic and disciplinary disparities, highlighting the imperative for a comprehensive examination of practices. Engaging student and community voices is crucial, but challenges exist, including confidence in reporting channels and inconsistent implementation of engagement initiatives. In conclusion, the district navigates a complex landscape, requiring collaborative efforts, clear communication, and a commitment to fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each domain within the Equity Audit will feature findings accompanied by corresponding recommendations. It's crucial to emphasize that these recommendations stem from the audit's information. It's essential to recognize that the district may already be implementing some of these measures. For certain recommendations, the expectation is for the district to persist in enhancing these areas, fostering continuous improvement.

2.1	Expand the Equity Audit & Build Capacity

- Deepen the Equity Audit:
  - Include an in-depth analysis of cultural sensitivity in disciplinary practices, considering the impact on different student groups.
  - Assess the effectiveness of targeted support programs for at-risk students, ensuring equitable access and support across diverse needs.
  - Evaluate the school environment through an inclusivity lens, identifying barriers or practices that may marginalize or isolate certain groups.
  - Explore the intersecting challenges faced by students with disabilities and/or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, developing strategies to address their unique needs.
- Invest in Leadership Development for Equity:
  - Implement a K-12 leadership model that integrates inclusivity and equity into student leadership experiences.
  - Partner with the Student Life office to create diverse leadership cohorts for student group leaders, transcending traditional boundaries like sports and clubs.
  - Provide training on essential leadership skills such as perseverance, conflict resolution, integrity, fostering potential, delegation, strategic thinking, effective feedback, goal setting, and community mobilization.
  - Equip staff at all levels with skills to build inclusive classrooms, understand cultural differences, and address implicit biases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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2.2	Leverage Existing Strengths: Community

- Build upon the strong sense of community to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.
    - Encourage established families and community members to act as mentors and ambassadors for newcomers and marginalized groups.
    - Implement initiatives that celebrate diversity and cultural understanding, fostering cross-cultural connection and appreciation.
        - Expanding on initiatives like the Human Connections Festival
- Promote Shared Values and Identity:
    - Develop and articulate a district-wide vision that emphasizes inclusivity, belonging, and respect for all individuals regardless of their connection to the community.
    - Celebrate the diverse stories and contributions of both newcomers and legacy families, showcasing the richness and strength that comes from varied perspectives.
    - Organize intergenerational events and activities that encourage interaction and relationship building between newcomers and established community members.
- Address Underlying Biases and Misconceptions:
    - Conduct implicit bias training for staff, students, and families to raise awareness of unconscious biases and their impact on interactions.
    - Facilitate open conversations about the challenges faced by both newcomers and legacy families, fostering empathy and understanding.
    - Create a safe space for community members to share their experiences of feeling excluded or marginalized based on their status.
- Build Bridges and Collaboration:
    - Establish mentorship programs where experienced families and community members can guide and support newcomer families.
    - Create cross-generational committees and task forces to work on issues of shared concern, fostering collaboration and leveraging diverse expertise.
    - Implement buddy systems or welcome circles in schools to help newcomers feel connected and integrate into the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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2.3	Challenge Exclusive Practices and Power Dynamics

- Review and revise policies and practices that may inadvertently favor or disadvantage specific groups. This could include admissions processes, resource allocation, and decision-making structures.
- Increase transparency and accountability in decision-making processes. Ensure diverse voices are heard and represented at all levels.
- Address the influence of legacy families and power dynamics within the community. Develop strategies to ensure all voices have equal weight and influence, preventing marginalization of newcomers.
- Create an online platform or resource center where newcomers can easily access information about the district, community resources, and support services.
- Utilize social media and other communication channels to share district news and events in a welcoming and inclusive manner, targeting both newcomers and established families.
- Facilitate virtual and in-person communication channels for open dialogue and feedback gathering from all stakeholders.
- Execute exit interviews for when families or students leave the district

RECOMMENDATIONS

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2.4	Address Communication Gap

- Enhance Two-Way Dialogue and Engagement:
  - Host regular community forums and town halls where Board members and district leaders actively engage with stakeholders in open and honest conversations.
  - Utilize focus groups and surveys to gather targeted feedback from diverse community members on specific issues or initiatives.
  - Establish advisory groups composed of students, parents, staff, and community members to provide ongoing input and guidance on district decisions.
- Build Trust and Transparency:
  - Share data and evidence publicly to support decisions and demonstrate accountability.
  - Be open about challenges and opportunities, acknowledging areas where progress is needed and showcasing successes along the way.
  - Encourage respectful and constructive dialogue during Board meetings and community forums, actively listening to and addressing concerns raised by the public.
- Review and adjust public comment procedures to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness. This might involve setting time limits, establishing clear guidelines for respectful discussion, and creating alternative avenues for offering feedback.

EQUITY IN THE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

Every student deserves educators who can equip them with the knowledge and skills essential for success in both present and future educational endeavors. Recent compelling research highlights the significant positive impact that teachers of diverse backgrounds, have on all students. This impact extends to areas such as academic achievement, expectations for success, and long-term life outcomes. A diverse educator workforce not only reflects a district's commitment to providing equitable access to excellent educational opportunities but also signifies a dedication to eliminating barriers and ensuring equitable career advancement opportunities for educators of minority groups. Ensuring that the right individuals are in the right positions should be a top priority for school districts, given the

profound influence of effective educators on student outcomes. Skillful management of educator talent can transform bureaucratic systems into more agile processes, aligning with the ultimate goal of ensuring that every classroom has effective teachers and every school has effective leaders.

Equitable beliefs, policies, and practices are integral at every stage of an educator's journey through a school district, from recruitment and hiring to retention, placement, and promotion. These strategies encompass involving diverse voices in hiring and onboarding, implementing induction programs and leadership academies for educators of minority groups, and ensuring that leaders comprehend the positive and negative experiences of teachers and staff based on identifying factors. Together, these strategies can mitigate inequities and ensure equitable representation.

The benefits of diversity extend to every workforce, including teaching. Research consistently indicates that a diverse teaching staff positively impacts all students, yielding benefits

such as increased test scores, reduced school suspensions, improved academic attitudes, higher student attendance, and a lower risk of dropping out. Furthermore, diversity among teachers contributes to breaking down biases, positively affecting all students.

Despite these benefits, many districts struggle to effectively recruit and retain educators of diverse groups. In 40% of U.S. schools, there is no teacher of color on staff, and teachers of color represent only 18% of the overall teaching population.

Teachers of color experience higher turnover rates than white teachers, driven by factors such as antagonistic school culture, unfavorable work conditions, lack of agency and autonomy, feeling undervalued, and the high social and emotional cost of being a teacher of color. It is essential to broaden this perspective to include the need for staff from other backgrounds, including individuals with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other diverse groups, to create truly inclusive and equitable educational environments.

UPPER ARLINGTON SCHOOLS' FINDINGS

When addressing equity within the educator workforce, a crucial starting point involves examining existing demographic data and the district's data-driven decisions related to recruitment and retention. Currently, there is a noticeable disparity between staff demographics and student demographics. According to data provided by the district, out of over 1000 staff members, 71% identify as female and 29% identify as male. Regarding racial and ethnic diversity, 84.9% identify as white, while 3.4% identify as black or African American, and 1.3% identify as Hispanic or Latinx. Less than 1% identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native and Asian, with the remaining 9.45% unidentified.

For school leaders, 52.5% identify as female and 47.5% identify as male. Regarding racial diversity among school leaders, 87.5% identify as white, while 2.5% identify as Black or African American, with the remaining 10% having unknown identities.

These statistics underscore the need for deliberate efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the educator workforce to better reflect the diverse student population served by the district.

The district's commitment to fostering workforce diversity is palpable, evidenced by recent changes in staffing procedures, notably the establishment of a Chief Talent Officer. Additionally, the School Board of Education's Resolution on Eliminating Racism and Bias in our Schools, enacted in June 2020, underscores a dedicated effort to diversify teaching and administrative staff. This commitment is further underscored by the creation of the Equity Advisory Board in the same year, which aims to provide invaluable insight and feedback on the recruitment of a diverse staff.

However, despite these commendable initiatives, there remains limited evidence of a formalized process for recruiting educators from diverse groups or strategically placing them across the district. In parallel, the district appointed an individual to spearhead Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts. Subsequently, a structural change ensued, with DEI initiatives now falling under the purview of the Chief Excellence and Engagement Officer. This officer oversees a broad spectrum of responsibilities, including student and staff engagement, technological advancements, and overall well-being within the district.

There exists a shared vision among the leadership team for the establishment of a dedicated DEI office, rather than solely relying on individual efforts. District leadership emphasizes that they view DEI as a collective responsibility, asserting that everyone has a role to play. However, the envisioned team members within the office of Excellence and Engagement would bring a specialized DEI lens to their roles, focusing on initiatives related to staff and student well-being, resource allocation, policy development, welcoming new families, grant management, and providing support for translators across the district.

Opportunities for improvement are identified in addressing training gaps, particularly in

interview and recruiting processes. Concerns about privileging legacy candidates, typically white and middle to upper class, prompt a call for a push towards diversification in hiring practices. Initiatives, such as hosting hiring open houses throughout Columbus, are suggested to enhance diversity in staffing.

Despite the recognition of the need for diversification, school leaders express a lack of control over hiring, emphasizing that staffing decisions are largely centralized. However, it is noteworthy that district leadership characterizes the hiring process as site-based. There is a need for a comprehensive understanding of this operational framework.

Over the last three years, the district has experienced a change in staff turnover, necessitating the development of a clear exit interview strategy. Notably, staff departures are attributed anecdotally to significant life events rather than routine professional transitions. On the survey, only 7% of Families/caregivers reported that teachers at their child's school often leave or move schools.

Below are the prompts and responses from the survey specific to Equity in the Educator Workforce:
Prompt: Our district has written specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals into our strategic plan for increasing the diversity of our educator workforce.
- 20% of School Leaders responded with agreed/strongly agreed
- 37% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

Prompt: Our district effectively recruits educators of diverse backgrounds.
- 20% of School leaders agreed/ strongly agreed
- 20% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

Families/ Caregivers were given a similar prompt, it said, "The district recruits teachers from diverse groups." 31% of the respondents agreed/ strongly agreed.

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	17%
Black of African American	22%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	47%
Multiracial	34%
White	28%
Not Listed	43%
Prefer Not to Say	53%
More than 1 option selected	24%

Note: Given the size and diversity of our school leadership cohort and staff, providing a demographic breakdown of survey responses could potentially compromise anonymity by disclosing excessive detail. Therefore, displaying such data may not align with our anonymity standards.

Prompt: Our district effectively retains its educators, including educators of diverse backgrounds.
- 37% of School leaders agreed/ strongly agreed
- 40% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

Families/ caregivers were given the prompt, "My student(s) have teachers from other races, ethnic groups, and or cultural backgrounds." 32% of the respondents shared that they agreed/ strongly agreed. They were also also given the prompt, "My student(s) have a school leader(s) from a different race, ethnic group, and or cultural background." 22% of respondents agreed/ strongly agreed.

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	19%
Black of African American	33%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	40%
Multiracial	41%
White	29%
Not Listed	36%
Prefer Not to Say	54%
More than 1 option selected	28%

Concerns about Paraprofessionals and Disparities in EL Teaching Resources

In focus groups, stakeholders express concerns about paraprofessionals hired for students with disabilities. While praising the dedication of current paras, concerns arise about turnover, attributed in part to employment conditions. Disparities in English Language (EL) teaching resources are noted, with staff sharing in focus groups that some schools relying on tutors rather than certified EL teachers. District leadership noted that the district uses both tutors as well as certified teachers, however, specific staffing structures are not consistent across schools. The challenges faced by differently-abled students are highlighted, with stakeholders emphasizing the need for equity in resource allocation to ensure every student receives the support they require. One Family/ Caregiver shared, "You do not get retention, benefits, full time hours. Therefore the kids do not get the consistency they deserve. Kids who need the consistency of a support person are not getting. These might be kids who cannot verbally communicate they way we do. they rely on the support staff. Imagine them not being high quality. We should show our students that we value their lives."

Note: Given the size and diversity of our school leadership cohort and staff, providing a demographic breakdown of survey responses could potentially compromise anonymity by disclosing excessive detail. Therefore, displaying such data may not align with our anonymity standards.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the imperative for equity within the educator workforce is underscored by the data revealing significant disparities in demographic representation among staff and school leaders compared to the student population. While commendable efforts have been made to address this issue, including the establishment of a Chief Talent Officer, the enactment of resolutions, and the formation of advisory boards, there remain opportunities for improvement, particularly in formalizing recruitment processes and enhancing diversity training. The district's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is palpable, yet the need for more proactive measures, such as hosting hiring open houses and addressing concerns about centralization in staffing decisions, is evident. Furthermore, challenges related to paraprofessional turnover and disparities in English Language teaching resources highlight the ongoing need for equitable resource allocation to ensure every student receives the support they deserve. By addressing these challenges head-on and fostering a culture of inclusivity and diversity, the district can continue its journey towards creating an equitable and supportive educational environment for all students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each domain within the Equity Audit will feature findings accompanied by corresponding recommendations. It's crucial to emphasize that these recommendations stem from the audit's information. It's essential to recognize that the district may already be implementing some of these measures. For certain recommendations, the expectation is for the district to persist in enhancing these areas, fostering continuous improvement.

3.1	Develop a comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Plan

Establish and implement a long-term vision and strategic plan for diversity hiring:
- Revise the job description for the Chief Talent Officer to include incorporating an Equity Lens perspective into their responsibilities.
- Develop measurable targets for year-over-year recruitment and retention of educators and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensure clear and coordinated practices across all departments and schools to guarantee systemic coherence in diversity hiring efforts.
- Provide ongoing training and professional development for hiring managers and search committees on culturally competent hiring practices.

Create a District Recruitment and Retention Team:
- Form a cross-functional, cross-departmental team to collaboratively drive recruitment and retention initiatives aligned with the district's vision and goals.
- Define responsibilities, including supporting the onboarding of new staff and annually developing a comprehensive plan encompassing recruitment and retention goals.
- Collaboratively work to evolve and enhance recruitment and retention systems and processes throughout the district, ensuring continuous improvement.

Recruitment Support:
- Establish a formal process for recruiting educators of color, including partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and other colleges with diverse student populations.
- Utilize diverse interview panels and search committees to mitigate unconscious bias and ensure diverse perspectives are considered.
- Develop clear criteria for hiring decisions, focusing on skills and qualifications rather than personal connections or legacy status, and implement a transparent rubric for evaluating candidates.
- Host hiring open houses and career fairs in diverse communities across Columbus, promoting these events through targeted outreach to relevant organizations and media outlets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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3.1 Develop a comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Plan (Continued)

Retention Support:

- Conduct exit interviews to understand reasons for educator turnover, analyzing data to identify areas for improvement such as workload, compensation, professional development opportunities, and school climate.
- Invest in retention initiatives for educators of color and all staff, creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment that values diversity and fosters cultural competency.
- Provide targeted professional development opportunities for educators of color, including training on culturally responsive teaching, implicit bias, and anti-racism practices.
- Offer mentorship and support programs for new educators, particularly those of color, matching them with experienced mentors who can provide guidance and support.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

- Prioritize accurate and comprehensive data collection on staff demographics. Implement secure systems for staff to self-report their race, ethnicity, and other relevant demographic information. Ensure anonymity and data protection to encourage participation.
- Analyze staff demographic data alongside student demographics to identify disparities and track progress towards achieving workforce diversity. Compare the racial and ethnic makeup of the teaching staff to the student population, disaggregating data by school and grade level.
- Develop a data dashboard to visually track progress on diversity and equity goals related to the educator workforce. This will improve transparency and accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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3.3	Develop the Office of Excellence and Engagement

Build a Robust Structure:
- Ensure the Office of Excellence and Engagement has a committed team and sufficient resources. Staff the office with experienced professionals representing diverse backgrounds and expertise in equity, policy, data analysis, and community engagement. Allocate adequate funding to support initiatives and staff development.
- Develop precise strategies for collaborating with building leadership teams, focusing on specific equity areas including educator diversity, student achievement gaps, and resource allocation.

Expand Scope and Impact:
- Move beyond reactive measures and proactively work on dismantling systemic inequities. Conduct audits and analyses to identify and address systemic biases and barriers within policies, curriculum, and school climate.
- Develop a comprehensive district-wide equity framework with measurable goals and strategies. This framework should guide all decision-making and resource allocation, ensuring equity is embedded in every aspect of the district's operations.
- Prioritize data-driven decision making and continuous improvement. Regularly collect and analyze data on student achievement, disciplinary practices, resource allocation, and staff demographics to track progress and inform program modifications.
- Empower the Office of Excellence and Engagement to play a lead role in professional development and community engagement. Develop training programs for educators, administrators, and staff on culturally responsive practices, implicit bias, and anti-racist education. Facilitate community forums and dialogue sessions to gather feedback, build trust, and promote collaboration.

Ensure Accountability and Sustainability:
- Develop a transparent communication plan to keep stakeholders informed about the Office of Excellence and Engagement's work, progress, and challenges. Utilize multiple channels (website, newsletter, community meetings) to reach diverse audiences.
- Establish systems for accountability and evaluation. Regularly assess the impact of the Office of Excellence and Engagement's initiatives and adjust strategies as needed.
- Secure sustainable funding for the Office of Excellence and Engagement/ through long-term budget allocations, grants, and community partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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3.3	Develop the Office of Excellence and Engagement (Continued)

Leverage Existing Assets and Build Partnerships:
- Connect the Office of Excellence and Engagement with existing initiatives and programs focused on diversity, inclusion, and social justice. Collaborate with student groups, parent organizations, and community partners to leverage collective resources and expertise.
- Build partnerships with universities, research institutions, and advocacy organizations to access technical assistance, research data, and best practices.
- Empower and support student leadership in promoting equity and inclusion within the school community. Provide training and resources for student groups to organize awareness campaigns, advocate for policy changes, and promote cultural understand

3.4	Enhancing Workforce Development and Support for Student Success

Set up effective pipelines and create opportunities from within:
- Create mentorship programs where experienced staff can mentor newer staff, providing guidance, support, and professional development opportunities.
- Develop career pathway programs for roles like paraprofessionals that outline clear steps for career advancement within the district. This could include opportunities for job shadowing, internships, or apprenticeships in teaching roles.
- Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input from staff in "hard to fill" roles about their career aspirations, professional development needs, and areas for growth, informing district-wide policies and programs.

Invest in Paraprofessionals:
- Analyze current practices for hiring and retaining paraprofessionals
- Offer professional development opportunities that lead to licensure or advanced degrees, creating pathways for upward mobility within the district.
- Increase compensation and benefits to attract and retain qualified paraprofessionals, aligning wages with the critical role they play in student success.
- Develop clear guidelines and communication protocols for collaboration between paraprofessionals and teachers to ensure a unified approach to student support.
- Create regular opportunities for co-planning, co-teaching, and data analysis to maximize the effectiveness of support for students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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3.4	Enhancing Workforce Development and Support for Student Success (Continued)

Strengthen EL Staffing and Support:

- Increase the number of certified EL teachers and ensure equitable distribution across schools:
  - Conduct an audit of EL teacher needs across the district, considering student demographics and language needs.
  - Partner with universities and training programs to prepare and recruit more certified EL teachers, targeting diverse candidates.
  - Implement equitable staffing policies to ensure all schools have access to a sufficient number of EL teachers, based on student EL population.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

For years, educational equity work has centered primarily (and necessarily) on our students- their race, culture, ability, language, socioeconomic status, and identity. However, too often, the impact of educators' race, culture, and identity on students has been left unacknowledged. Placing equity at the center of educator practice means building structural, individual, and collective consciousness among all staff around issues related to racism, bias, and power, and the ways in which they interact to undermine equitable education for students. By engaging all educators in personalized, aligned professional learning that critically examines individual and systemic biases and provides effective tools and practices, schools can improve their effectiveness in working with diverse populations.

As districts work towards creating systems that dismantle systemic discrimination, it is imperative that their professional learning examine, question, and address personal and institutional issues of race, bias, and power head-on. People are not born racially competent–the skills and attitudes that comprise racial competence are learned through continuous questioning, reflection, and realignment. And yet, that work is often avoided out of fear that it will "expose our gaps in racial competence, and people might think we are racist. But without asking questions or taking risks, we can't grow. If schools adopt a growth mindset about race, we can create a culture in which everyone is continuously developing their racial competence" (Michael, n.d.).

Additionally, research shows that professional learning is most effective when it is content-focused and job-embedded. When creating professional learning to develop the consciousness of educators across the district, it is important to not only meet staff where they are in their personal learning, but also to ensure that the

offerings are tailored, as is appropriate, for their specific role. Engaging educators in collaborative professional learning and providing opportunities for them to have an active role in the development and implementation of professional learning is essential for sustaining an effective and responsive professional learning program.

In order to ensure that the district creates a professional learning culture grounded in the need for continuous development of racial competence, it is critical to seize every opportunity to engage educators in the understanding and ownership of the priorities around equity. In doing so, improvement feels cohesive and relevant, and becomes an invaluable part of what it means to be a culturally competent educator.

Recent research repeatedly corroborates the link between teacher quality and outcomes for students (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018). According to the Center for Public Education, teacher quality has a greater impact on student achievement than other factors often associated with academic outcomes, including a student's race, socioeconomic status, and

prior academic record (Schmidt et al., 2017).

In order to have a positive impact on outcomes for all students, teachers must be provided with the training, resources, and supports needed to deliver high-quality instruction to all students. Research also shows that teachers and their implicit biases can be a barrier to students of color reaching their full academic potential (Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016). Teachers must be provided with opportunities to participate in equity-focused training so that they are willing and able to continually and critically reflect on the ways in which their personal and professional identities inform their ability to effectively meet the needs of a diverse student population (Larrivee, 2000).

While the impact of teachers cannot be overstated, students' experiences in schools are influenced by all adults employed by the district. Ongoing professional learning in equity and bias must be designed to allow all educators to reflect on their implicit biases and learn culturally responsive best practices.

Educators who engage in professional learning related to cultural responsiveness learn to formulate strategies for collectively addressing equity issues in their schools. Through this process educators gain a deeper understanding of equity and equity-related problems in their school context and are more empowered to contribute to the solutions.

The district's commitment to equity is evident in the Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Education (po2260) policy, emphasizing nondiscrimination and access to equal educational opportunities. This policy underscores the district's dedication to an ongoing training program for school personnel, designed to identify and resolve bias-related issues.

On the survey, School Leaders were given the prompt: As a district or school leader, I provide opportunities for my staff to engage in meaningful conversations about equity and diverse identities.

- 74% School Leaders agreed/ strongly agreed

SEL-Focused Professional Development: CharacterStrong and Responsive Classroom

In 2023, the district implemented the CharacterStrong Pilot, allowing K-8 staff to opt into the program by attending a 45-minute Zoom session. Staff members were then tasked with communicating with families, incorporating Character Strong lessons into their classrooms and collecting feedback from students. The program's goals include fostering a sense of belonging and school/life balance, strengthening relationships in a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and implementing strategies to support student well-being.

Additionally, Responsive Classroom professional development received positive feedback across the district. Despite these positive strides, challenges persist in achieving consistent attendance in isolated professional development opportunities related to Social-Emotional Learning (SEL).

Professional Development Landscape: Gaps and Opportunities

While the district has shared instances of professional development opportunities touching on mental health, well-being, and the district-wide profile of an engaged learner, a comprehensive schedule of professional learning remains absent. Isolated professional development opportunities related to the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) were presented, but evidence supporting consistent implementation across all grade levels was not provided.

Focus group insights brought to light challenges faced by family members in initiating conversations about diverse students, leading to the hiring of an educational advocate. Another family/caregiver highlighted the need for a cultural shift in teaching to address diverse needs, citing instances of resistance to incorporating a wide range of literature.

Efforts to analyze social emotional data, particularly through tools like Panorama, were acknowledged by a school administrator. However, challenges in handling discipline data and attendance were also recognized, with attendance issues significantly contributing to

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discipline concerns.

Central Office Staff shared insights regarding the focus of discussions, stating, 'I have conversations about disability/ability -- my role has to do with testing and looking closer to group students. We do not go into race, gender, or socioeconomic status.' Similarly, other staff members emphasized the predominant focus on disability and academics, stating, 'We talk a lot about disability and academics -- what learning needs do the kids have? That is where the bulk of the work is being done. It is not intersectional.'

Throughout this report, a recurring theme emerges regarding the district's engagement with data. While there are noticeable gaps and missed opportunities, particularly in terms of addressing the holistic needs of students, the district's emphasis on the 'whole child' provides a promising foundation for future exploration. Moving forward, there is potential for the district to further investigate and implement strategies that truly encompass the multifaceted aspects of supporting each student's well-being. It is noteworthy that the district has introduced a new data dashboard titled ABRE. According to a district leader, this dashboard will consolidate academics, attendance, discipline, and SEL information. Presently, the district is actively working to enhance its capabilities and plans to roll it out to elementary and middle schools over the next few years.

Ongoing Initiatives and Future Directions

Teachers have expressed confidence in their ability to provide academic support to students, feeling well-equipped with the necessary tools and resources. In the Survey School Leaders and Staff were given the prompt: Our district has established an annual schedule for professional learning on a range of topics aligned to our academic goals and strategic plan.
- 77% of School Leaders agreed/ strongly agreed
- 66% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

Another related prompt given was: As part of district professional learning, our district and school provide evidence-based and research-based training to support teachers in meeting the learning needs of all district students.
- 70% of School Leaders agreed/ strongly agreed
- 53% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

They appreciate the value of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) meetings and professional development sessions focused on academics, finding them productive. However, they have identified a need for additional support in terms of professional development when it comes to addressing students' social-emotional needs or implementing other equitable practices.

Despite challenges, school administrators have been actively working to foster conversations on student relationships in staff meetings and Professional Learning

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Communities (PLCs), placing a specific focus on various student subgroups. Acknowledging the weekly discussions addressing the needs of students across demographics in MTSS, there is recognition that these conversations could be more systematic and inclusive.

Below you will find additional survey prompts and responses:

Prompt:Our district provides the necessary resources (e.g., potential funding, materials, follow-up training, and administrative support) to implement equity-focused initiatives with fidelity.

- 42% of School Leaders agreed/ strongly agreed
- 29% of Staff agree/ strongly agreed

Prompt: Equity-focused content is integrated throughout the professional learning schedule.

- 49% of School Leaders agreed/strongly agreed
- 35% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

Conclusion

In conclusion, the district's commitment to equity is demonstrated through policies like the Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Education policy and initiatives such as the CharacterStrong Pilot and Responsive Classroom professional development. While challenges persist, particularly in achieving consistent attendance in SEL and MTSS-related professional development, ongoing efforts and proactive measures are evident. The introduction of the ABRE data dashboard presents an opportunity to enhance data-driven decision-making further. Moving forward, it's crucial to address identified challenges and ensure resources are provided to implement equity-focused initiatives effectively. By integrating equity-focused content into professional learning schedules and fostering inclusive conversations on student relationships, the district can continue its journey towards equity and inclusivity for all students.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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4.1	Expand and Systematize Equity-Focused Professional Development

- Elevate the leadership of district leadership and building leadership team members (see Domain 1 Recommendations) by providing opportunities for them to receive advanced, intensive cultural competence professional learning so that they can then develop and deliver professional learning sessions for all UA staff
- Partner with an external organization with demonstrated experience in training school district staff members in developing culturally competent mindsets and practices.
- Develop a comprehensive, district-wide professional development calendar with a dedicated track for equity and social-emotional learning (SEL). Ensure regular opportunities for all staff, not just volunteers, to engage in equity-focused training.
- Prioritize topics like:
  - Culturally responsive pedagogy and inclusive classrooms
  - Addressing unconscious bias and implicit racism
  - Trauma-informed practices and mental health support
  - Implementing MTSS effectively and consistently
  - Responding to diverse student needs and identities
- Move beyond isolated sessions and implement sustained learning models, such as:
  - Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) specifically dedicated to equity and SEL
  - Coaching and mentoring programs focused on implementing best practices
  - Action-oriented workshops with follow-up support and reflection opportunities
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of professional development programs and make adjustments based on data and feedback. Track progress towards equity goals and adjust strategies as needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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4.2	Enhance Data Analysis and Support Systems

- Expand the utilization of the ABRE dashboard to comprehensively analyze data pertaining to attendance, discipline, and academic achievement among student subgroups. Use insights from this analysis to identify disparities and implement targeted interventions for students who are struggling.
- Develop a clearly defined scope and sequence for professional learning sessions aimed at enhancing the analysis and utilization of student data for decision-making purposes. Empower staff with the necessary skills and tools to effectively interpret and act upon data insights.
- Provide consistent and easily accessible support for the implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Ensure that all staff members possess a thorough understanding of the MTSS framework and are equipped with the resources and training required to utilize it proficiently in their respective roles.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration across departments by bridging the gap between academic and social-emotional support. Facilitate robust collaboration between MTSS teams, educators, and families to ensure a holistic approach to student support and well-being. Foster an environment of shared responsibility and collective problem-solving to address the diverse needs of students effectively.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND LEARNING

The quality of a student's learning environment and their access to opportunity play a key role in their academic and developmental life outcomes. Research has shown that a racially, culturally, and identity conscious curriculum and teaching practices are beneficial to all educators and learners. An equitable learning environment provides the culture, climate, and content needed to enable all students to thrive in the global economy. The establishment of equitable teaching and learning practices and the equitable provision of teaching materials and resources ensure positive student outcomes by providing racially, culturally, and identity affirming and high-quality instruction, diverse and inclusive curriculum, and programmatic access and equity.

Good practice dictates that educators analyze student performance and identify gaps in learning. However, if those educators do not reflect on the systems, biases, and practices that lead to such inequitable outcomes, there is a tendency to engage in deficit thinking and seek to "fix" the students. Educators who instead focus on fixing the system are those who have invested in increasing their own understanding of the historical and social context of students, their culture, and education through reading, reflection, and discussion with colleagues and students. These equity-conscious educators:

- Ensure each student feels like an active member of an inclusive learning family through engagement and belonging.
- Center all students by promoting their voice and celebrating their identities, interests, cultures, and context.
- Actively engage each student in meaningful learning experiences through collaboration, differentiation, and exploration.

Providing students with equitable learning opportunities builds trust, enhances rapport with learners and, consequently, improves student motivation (Weimer, 2010). As noted by Chiefs for Change in their 2019 report "Honoring Origins and Helping Students Succeed: The Case for Cultural Relevance in High-Quality Instructional Materials," a commitment to cultural relevance is a commitment to honoring student diversity and increasing student engagement and cannot result in the decrease of academic rigor. Providing a high-quality education to all students requires that a district offer them equitable access to a variety of courses. Students are best prepared for successful lives when they are engaged in teaching and learning that goes beyond knowledge transfer and pushes them to generate new ideas, engage with content critically, express themselves effectively, and work with others to solve problems in a global world.

Upper Arlington is known in the Columbus area for its academics, as reflected in its consistently high achievements and the recognition of students as National Merit Finalists, Commended Scholars, and International Baccalaureate Diploma scholars. The district scored a 5 star rating on the Ohio School Report Card, significantly exceeding state standards. However, feedback from focus groups indicates a perceived gap where stakeholders feel the district prioritizes catering to students planning to attend college, prompting calls for a more inclusive approach.

The district emphasizes academic excellence through its Quality Profile, highlighting strategic plans, the profile of an engaged learner, and initiatives like Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Early Literacy Instruction. While there's an abundance of information on academic programming, families express challenges in finding pathways for students not pursuing traditional college routes.

Equity in Curriculum and Instruction

Board Policies, including po2260, commits to equal educational opportunities for all students. Equity considerations are embedded in teacher evaluations, focusing on diverse perspectives in language arts materials and engaging math teachers in equity-oriented book studies.

The district's Textbook Review, Selection, and Approval Policy, along with other relevant policies, emphasize diversity and freedom from bias. However, concerns arise about teachers resorting to external platforms like Teachers Pay Teachers, emphasizing the need for reviewing materials to ensure quality.

The following prompts were given to stakeholders on the survey:
Prompt: Our school ensures a safe and inclusive classroom environment to support learners of all cultural backgrounds.
- 86% of School Leaders agreed/ strongly agreed
- 69% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

Prompt: Our teachers utilize a variety of instructional delivery methods to help all students learn.
- 81% of School Leaders agreed/ strongly agreed

Cultural Competence and Inclusivity

Despite efforts, limited evidence exists regarding a culturally competent and inclusive curriculum. A protocol evaluating curriculum materials with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) lens is in place, yet it lacks widespread implementation. Notably, a potential opportunity for infusing equity into the curriculum is identified through service

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requirements, aligning with Upper Arlington's pioneering approach to service as a graduation requirement. Stakeholders shared their pride in this graduation requirement, a participant lifted up this missed opportunity to infuse equity in this existing programming. Other stakeholders in the group agreed with this suggestion.

The following prompts were given to stakeholders on the survey:
Prompt: Our district/school curriculum incorporates readings and learning experiences from diverse races, ethnic groups, and cultures.
- 76% of School Leaders agreed/ strongly agreed
- 54% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed
- 76% of Families/ caregivers agreed/strongly agreed

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	43%
Black of African American	44%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	53%
Multiracial	45%
White	62%
Not Listed	50%
Prefer Not to Say	60%
More than 1 option selected	55%

Prompt: Our teachers create inclusive classroom learning environments that celebrate student identities, interests, cultures, and backgrounds.
- 78% of School Leaders agreed/ strongly agreed
- 86% of Families/ caregivers agreed/ strongly agreed

Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
American Indian/Alaska Native	100%
Asian	60%
Black of African American	67%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	87%
Multiracial	61%
White	71%
Not Listed	62%

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Demographic Group	% of Agree/ Strongly Agree
Prefer Not to Say	70%
More than 1 option selected	55%

Teachers were given a similar prompt: I personally work to create an inclusive school/district environment that celebrates student identities, interests, cultures, and backgrounds.

- 94% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

The variation in staff responses to the curricular diversity prompt suggests the need for further exploration and potentially targeted efforts to ensure a shared understanding and commitment to inclusivity across all staff members.

Data-Driven Decision-Making and Disparities

School leaders and teachers have expressed gratitude for the district's emphasis on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), with dedicated teams addressing students' academic needs throughout the academic year and on designated Professional Development days. Feedback from focus groups indicates a perceived overemphasis on test scores, raising concerns about equity considerations being overshadowed.

While school leaders affirm their commitment to collecting and discussing data to address achievement gaps, the diverse responses highlight opportunities for improvement. Although there are acknowledged efforts to solicit parent/guardian input and comprehensively assess students, lingering concerns stem from the district's historical pattern of insufficient action in response to identified issues.

Direct quotes from family members shed light on specific concerns:

A family member shared: "My kid was flagged for reading intervention so I asked for his test scores. They took their time sending it. Once I got it he was achieving way above grade level, even the intervention teacher said she did not know why he was receiving intervention."

Another family member remarked: "Black kids are overrepresented in intervention. This keeps happening but we are not talking about the bias that is happening to cause this."

These quotes provide firsthand accounts of the challenges faced by families and highlight the need for a more nuanced approach to data-driven decision-making, particularly concerning equity considerations for all students.

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UPPER ARLINGTON SCHOOLS' FINDINGS

Course Demographics

During the focus group phase, numerous participants raised concerns about the disproportionate representation of male students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) classes at the secondary level. One parent expressed curiosity about the gender composition of higher-level math classes, stating, "I wonder about the ratio of girls to boys in those advanced math classes. My daughter often feels like she's the only girl." Similarly, a student participating in the focus groups shared her experience, stating, "I'm part of the engineering team, and I'm the only girl. It's really intimidating. I know there are more girls interested because when I posted about it on my social media, more girls joined within 24 hours."

It's important to highlight that at the time of the audit, we neither had access to nor required the UA team to share demographic information regarding classes. However, it may be worthwhile for the district to investigate this further.

Gifted Programming and Disparities

The district provides detailed information on gifted programming, adhering to state criteria. However, disparities emerge in proficiency percentages among different demographic groups, suggesting potential inequities in access or support. A Family/ caregiver shared , "The opportunities to qualify for gifted services are determined by test scores. So even if a student is a high achiever in school work and is interested in learning more, and is bored because the current content is too easy, if they don't meet the testing criteria, they cannot access gifted services." This rigid approach may inadvertently exclude deserving students who possess the aptitude and motivation but fall short in meeting specific testing benchmarks, thus exacerbating the potential for inequities in educational opportunities.

On the survey, for the prompt: As a district or school leader, my team and I monitor enrollment in special education, gifted education, and advanced courses for disproportionality.
- 60% of the School Leaders agreed/strongly agreed

Teachers/ Staff were given a similar prompt: Our school/district regularly monitors enrollment in special education services, academic interventions, and advanced courses to ensure its proportionality reflects district demographics.
- 33% of Staff agreed/ strongly agreed

The lower agreement among staff members signals a potential gap in communication or implementation that needs to be addressed to ensure a shared understanding and commitment to equitable enrollment practices across the district.

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Conclusion

In summary, Upper Arlington is renowned for its academic excellence, yet feedback indicates a need for a more inclusive approach. While initiatives like MTSS are in place, challenges persist in providing pathways for non-college-bound students and ensuring a culturally competent curriculum. Data-driven decision-making faces hurdles in addressing achievement gaps, and disparities in gifted programming enrollment highlight inequities. Overall, while excelling academically, Upper Arlington must prioritize inclusivity and equitable opportunities to uphold its commitment to excellence.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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5.1	Diversify Pathways and Celebrate Multiple Successes

- Highlight and expand career and technical education (CTE) programs, internships, and apprenticeship opportunities. Emphasize the value of diverse career paths and connect them to the district's strategic plan.
- Develop alternative graduation pathways beyond traditional college preparation. Offer options like portfolio demonstrations, service-learning projects, and industry certifications.
- Showcase student achievements in various domains, not just academics. Celebrate artistic, athletic, entrepreneurial, and leadership skills alongside academic successes.

5.2	Infuse Diversity and Equity into Curriculum Instruction

- Conduct a comprehensive audit of curriculum materials across all subjects to identify biases and ensure diverse representation. Prioritize primary sources and perspectives from a variety of cultures and backgrounds.
- Implement the DEI curriculum evaluation protocol consistently and transparently. Train teachers on applying the protocol and provide adequate time for review and revision of materials.
- Integrate service learning opportunities with a focus on social justice and community engagement. Partner with local organizations to empower students to address real-world issues and promote community well-being.
- Provide teachers with ongoing professional development on culturally responsive pedagogy and equity-oriented instruction. Support them in creating inclusive classrooms that celebrate student differences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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5.3	Address Data Disparities and Foster Transparency

- Analyze data related to academic achievement, disciplinary actions, and access to gifted programs across different demographic groups. Identify disparities and implement targeted interventions to close achievement gaps.
- Increase transparency in data collection and analysis. Share findings with stakeholders and community members, and engage them in developing and implementing solutions.
- Address concerns about over reliance on test scores. Consider alternative measures of student success and incorporate qualitative data like student portfolios and classroom observations.
- Strengthen parent/guardian involvement in data conversations and action planning. Ensure their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed effectively.

5.4	Ensure Equitable Access to Gifted Programs

- Increase transparency in gifted program selection processes and communicate them clearly to all stakeholders. Address any concerns about bias and ensure fair access to programs for all students.
- Improve communication and collaboration among teachers, staff, and administrators regarding gifted education program policies and practices. Create a shared understanding of equity principles and implement them consistently.
  - Provide professional learning for general education teachers to be able to differentiate within the classroom for those who do not qualify for gifted services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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5.5	Build Equity and Leadership into the existing Service Requirement

Design Service with Equity in Mind
- Partner with diverse community organizations and individuals representing various social and cultural backgrounds. Ensure service opportunities reflect the needs and values of the community and challenge systemic inequities.
- Offer a variety of service options catering to different student interests, skills, and accessibility needs. Provide options ranging from environmental conservation to advocacy initiatives and arts-based projects.
- Integrate reflection and critical thinking within the service experience. Guide students to connect their work with broader social issues and develop awareness of their own biases and privileges.

Foster Leadership through Service
- Empower students to design and lead service projects within their chosen areas of interest. Encourage them to identify community needs, mobilize resources, and collaborate with others to make a positive impact.
- Offer leadership training and mentorship opportunities for students involved in service. Develop their skills in communication, project management, conflict resolution, and team building.

Connect Service to Academic Learning
- Develop interdisciplinary curriculum modules that connect service experiences with classroom learning. Encourage students to apply academic knowledge and skills to real-world issues they encounter through service.
- Offer opportunities for students to present their service experiences and learning reflections to their peers, teachers, and community members. This promotes knowledge sharing, inspires others, and builds a culture of engagement.
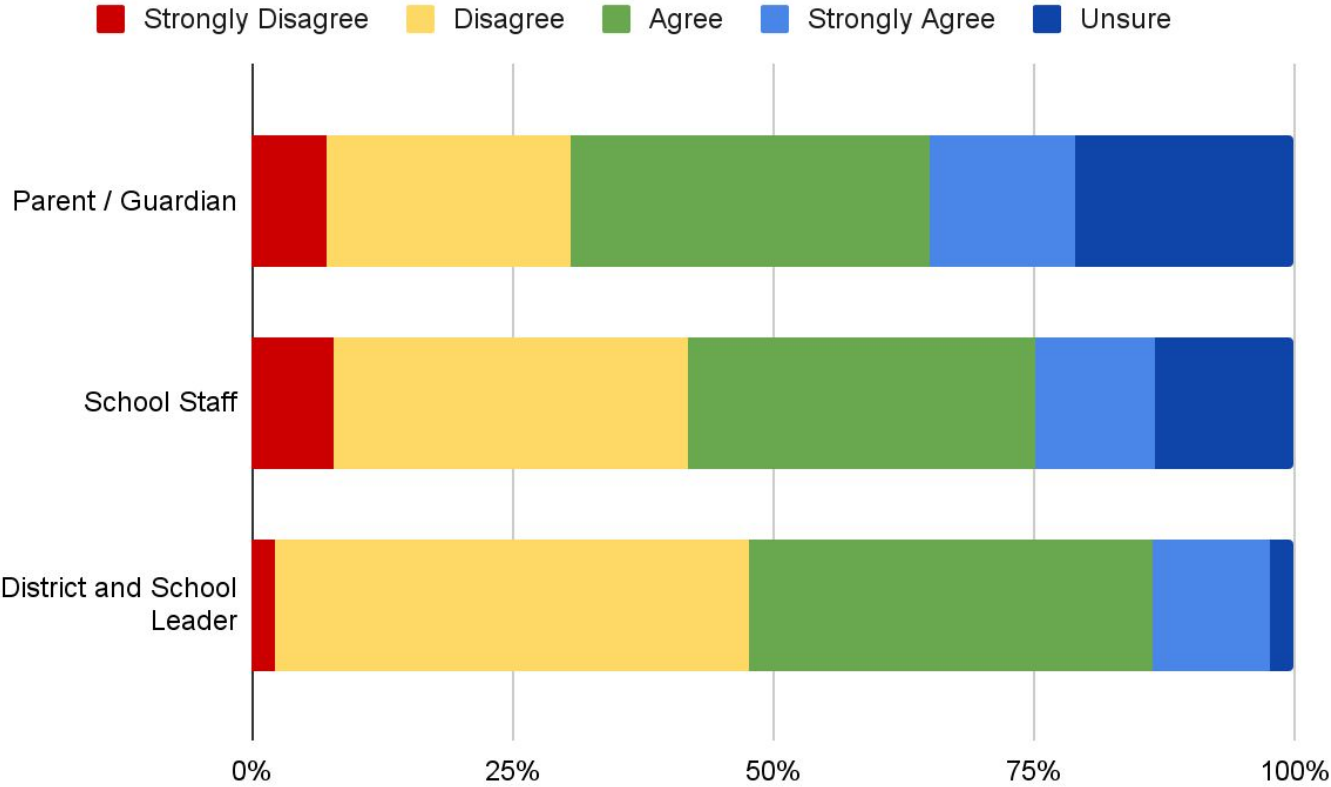
PART III
APPENDICES AND REFERENCES

In this section, please find:

- Appendices that support the findings and recommendations notes in Part II
- List of all references used in the compilation of this report.

Upper Arlington City Schools

Figure 1. Clear Shared District Equity Definition Agreement

Note to Figure 1.
Figure 1 shows responses by stakeholder group to: "The District has a shared definition of equity."

Across the stakeholder groups surveyed, Upper Arlington Public School district and school leaders, school staff, and parents/guardians maintain comparable perceptions of agreement that the district has provided stakeholders with a clear definition of equity.

Upper Arlington City Schools

Figure 2a. Consistent Discipline Enforcement Agreement
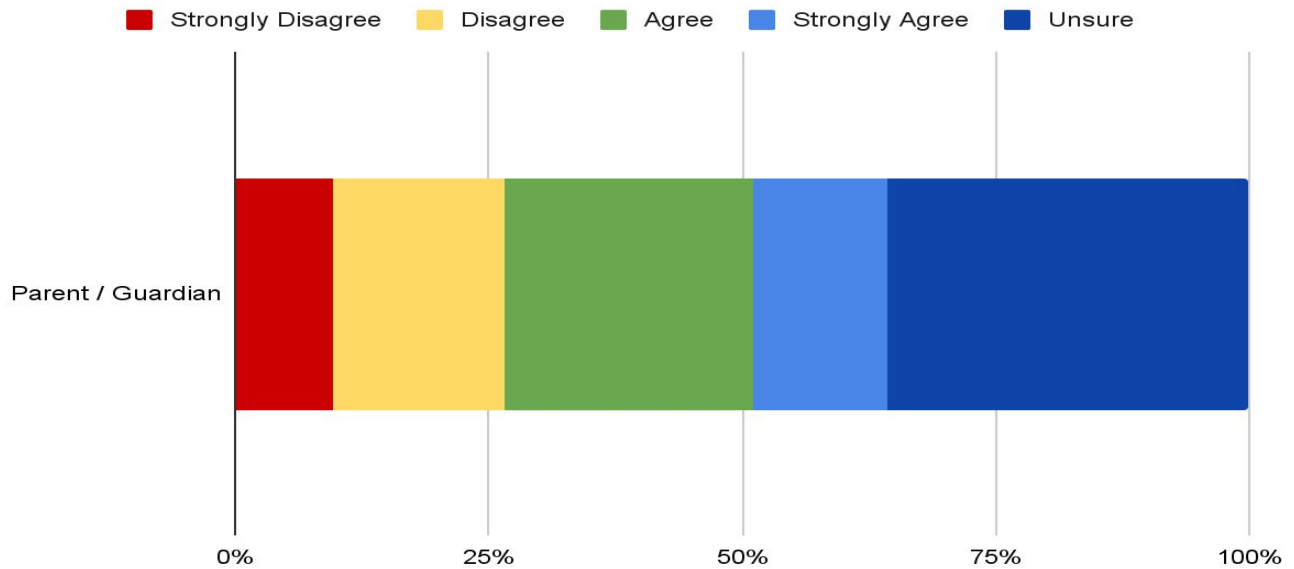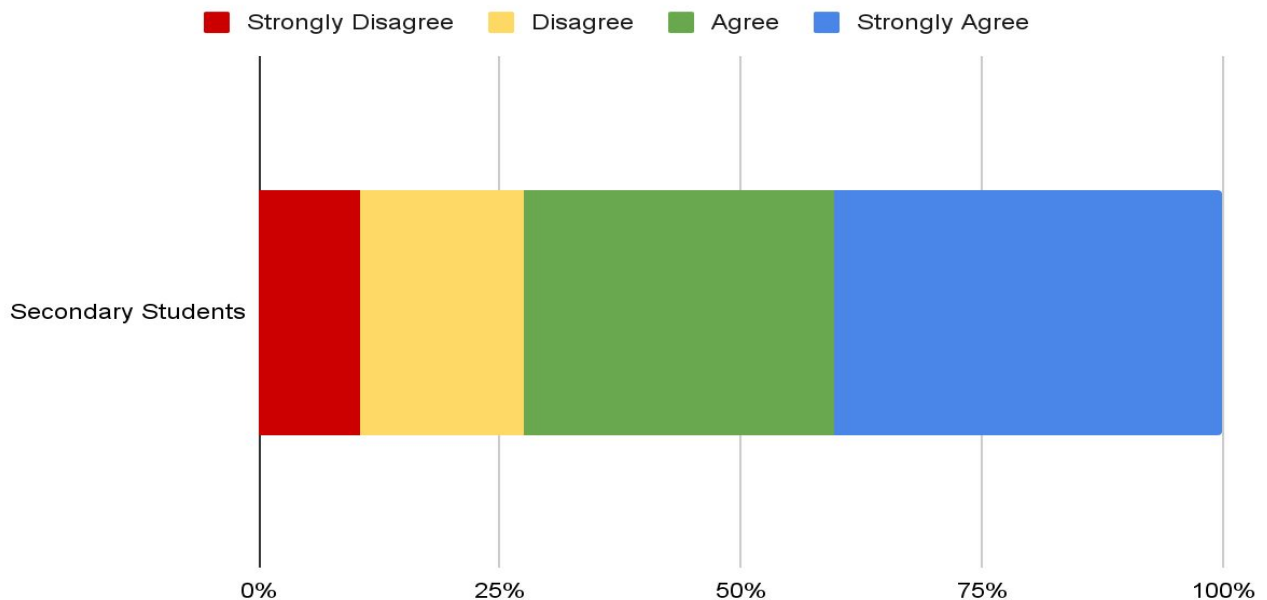

Figure 2b. Consistent Discipline Enforcement Agreement

Note to Figure 2.

Figure 2a shows responses by parent/guardians to: "School discipline policies and practices are consistently enforced with all students."

Figure 2b shows responses by secondary students to: "Consequences I received for a discipline infraction were applied fairly through a process that I understood."

Upper Arlington City Schools
Academic Achievement: Demographics

Upper Arlington Public Schools Performance Summary: 2022-2023				
Student Group	3rd Grade ELA	3rd Grade Math	8th Grade ELA	8th Grade Math
All Students	83.9%	81%	79.7%	76.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	100%	100%	NA	NA
Asian	93.5%	87.1%	79.3%	57.1%
Black or African American	50%	33.3%	71.4%	33.3%
Hispanic or Latinx	73.3%	62.5%	80%	69.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	NA	NA	NA	NA
White	84.4%	82%	79%	78%
Multi-Racial	84.4%	82%	90.3%	86.7%

Upper Arlington City Schools
Academic Achievement: Characteristics

Upper Arlington Public Schools Performance Summary: 2022-2023				
Student Group	3rd Grade ELA	3rd Grade Math	8th Grade ELA	8th Grade Math
All Students	83.9%	81%	79.7%	76.6%
Low-Income	58.8%	41.2%	44.4%	38.5%
Not Low-Income	84.8%	82.4%	81.1%	79.3%
English Learners	80%	75%	50%	60%
Non-ELs	84.1%	81.2%	80.1%	77.1%
Students with Disabilities	61.5%	53%	40.8%	49.2%
Students without Disabilities	90.8%	89.6%	87.3%	89.6%

Upper Arlington City Schools
Educator Perceptions on Staff of Color

EW Figure 1. Recruitment Effectiveness for Educators of Color

Educator Workforce: Recruitment

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Unsure

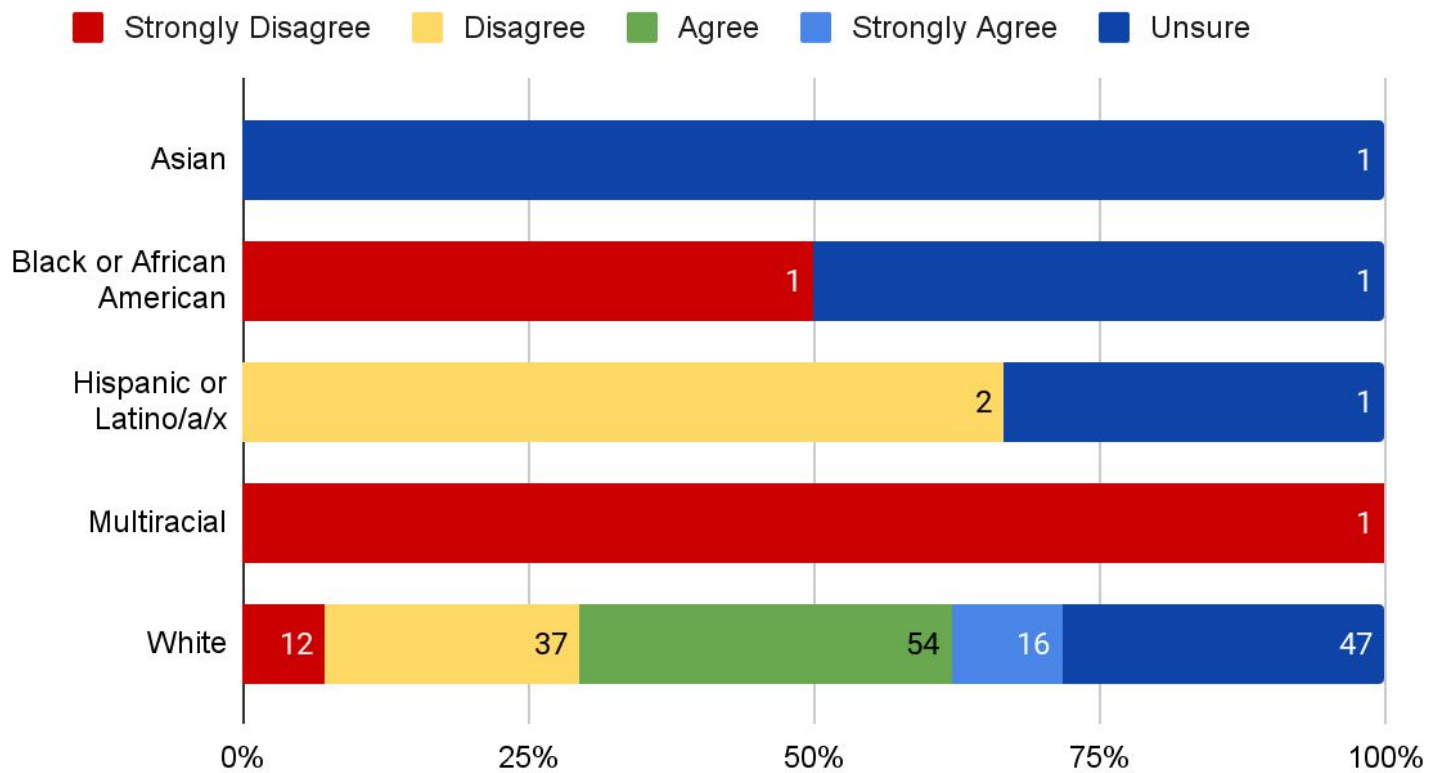| Group	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure
Asian		1			
Black or African American	2				
Hispanic or Latino/a/x		2			1
Multiracial	1				
White	27	51	26	7	57
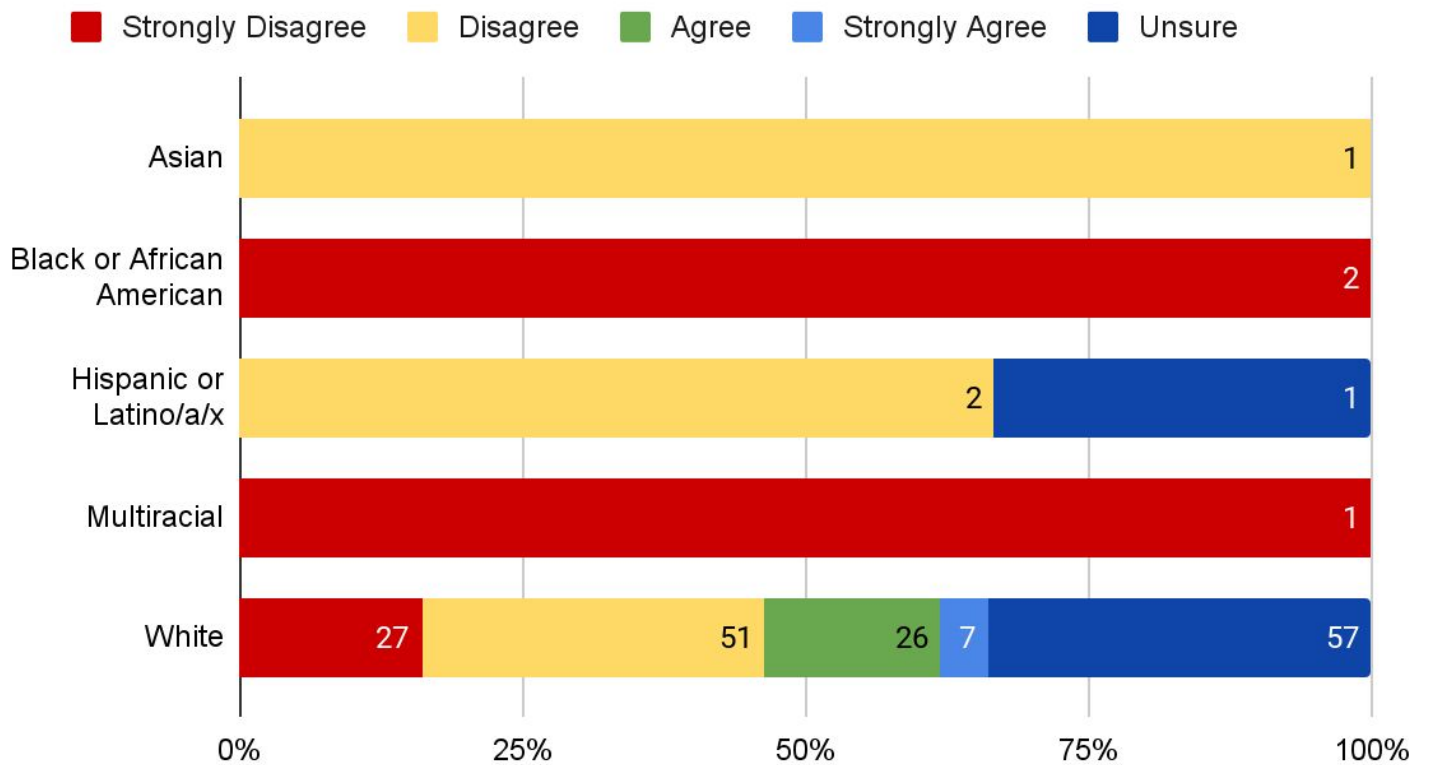
Note to EW Figure 1.

EW Figure 1 shows responses by school staff to: "Our district effectively recruits staff of diverse backgrounds."

Upper Arlington City Schools
Educator Perceptions on Staff of Color Retention Efforts

EW Figure 2. Retention Effectiveness for Educators of Color

Educator Workforce: Retention

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ Unsure

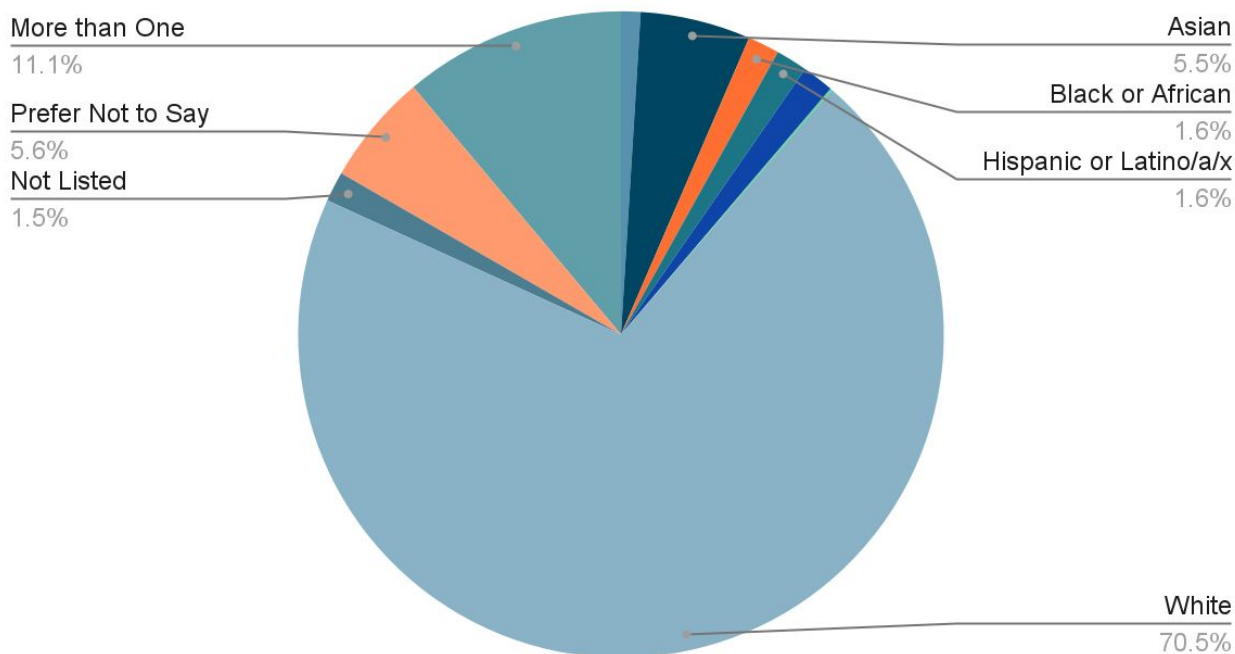| Race	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure
Asian					1
Black or African American	1				1
Hispanic or Latino/a/x		2			1
Multiracial	1				
White	12	37	54	16	47

(X-axis: 0% – 25% – 50% – 75% – 100%)

Note to EW Figure 2.

EW Figure 2 shows responses by school staff to: "Our district effectively retains its staff, including educators of diverse backgrounds."

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: Secondary Students by Race

Secondary Students

More than One
11.1%

Prefer Not to Say
5.6%

Not Listed
1.5%

Asian
5.5%

Black or African
1.6%

Hispanic or Latino/a/x
1.6%

White
70.5%

Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
American Indian/Alaska Native	24
Asian	136
Black or African American	39
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	39
Multiracial	39
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2
White	1,736
Not Listed	37
Prefer Not to Say	137
More than One	274

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: Secondary Students by LGBTQIA+ Status

Secondary Students

Prefer not to say
4.7%

I don't know
10.8%

LGBTQIA+
11.5%
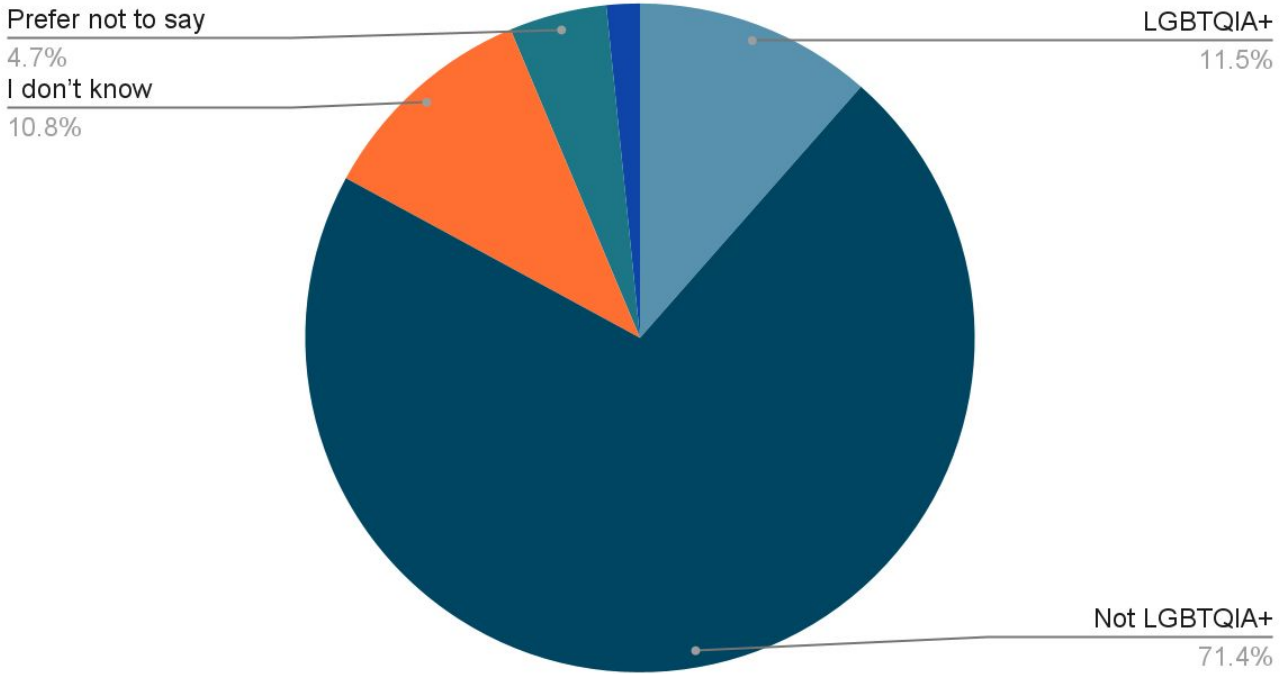
Not LGBTQIA+
71.4%

Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
LGBTQIA+	285
Not LGBTQIA+	1774
I don't know	267
Prefer not to say	117
Blank	40

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: Elementary Students by Race

Elementary Students

More than One
7.0%

Asian
3.3%
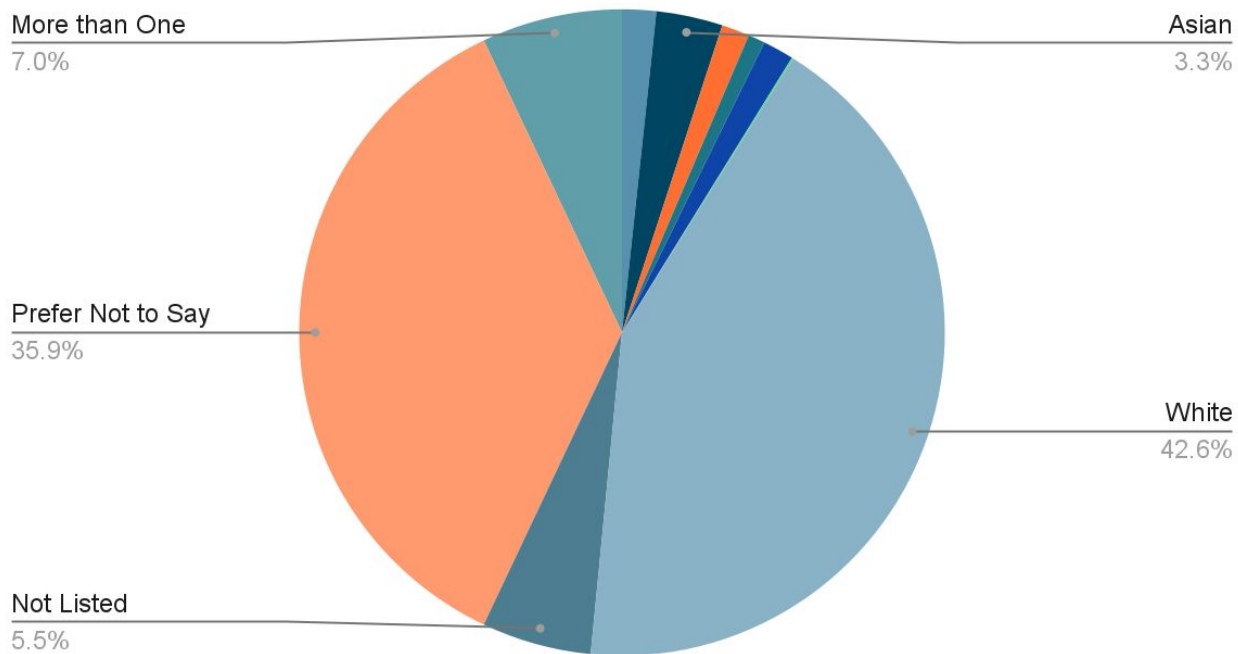
Prefer Not to Say
35.9%

White
42.6%

Not Listed
5.5%

Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
American Indian/Alaska Native	22
Asian	43
Black or African American	18
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	11
Multiracial	20
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1
White	551
Not Listed	71
Prefer Not to Say	464
More than One	91

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: Parent/Guardians by Race

Parent/Guardians

More than One
3.2%

Prefer Not to Say
12.2%

Not Listed
1.5%

Asian
5.2%

Hispanic or Latino/a/x
1.7%

Multiracial
3.6%
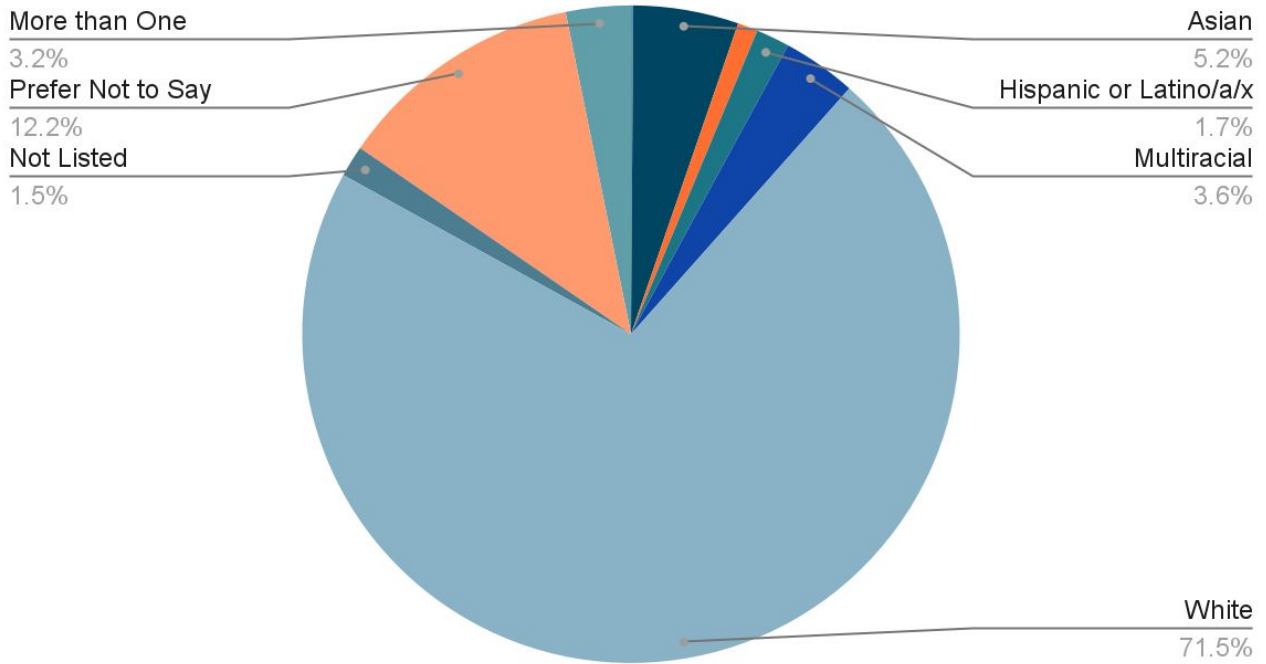
White
71.5%

Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
American Indian/Alaska Native	1
Asian	47
Black or African American	9
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	15
Multiracial	33
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	10
White	649
Not Listed	14
Prefer Not to Say	111
More than One	29

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: Parent/Guardian by LGBTQIA+ Status

Parent/Guardian

Blank
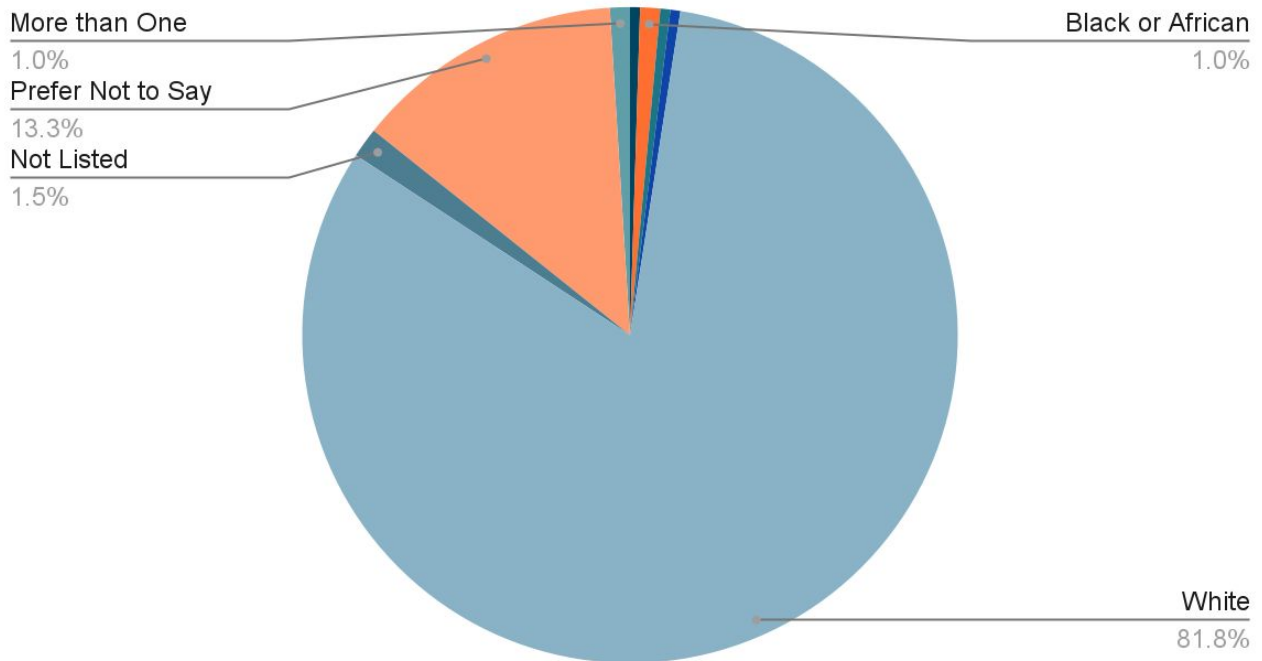1.8%

Prefer not to say
10.5%

I don't know
1.5%

LGBTQIA+
7.7%
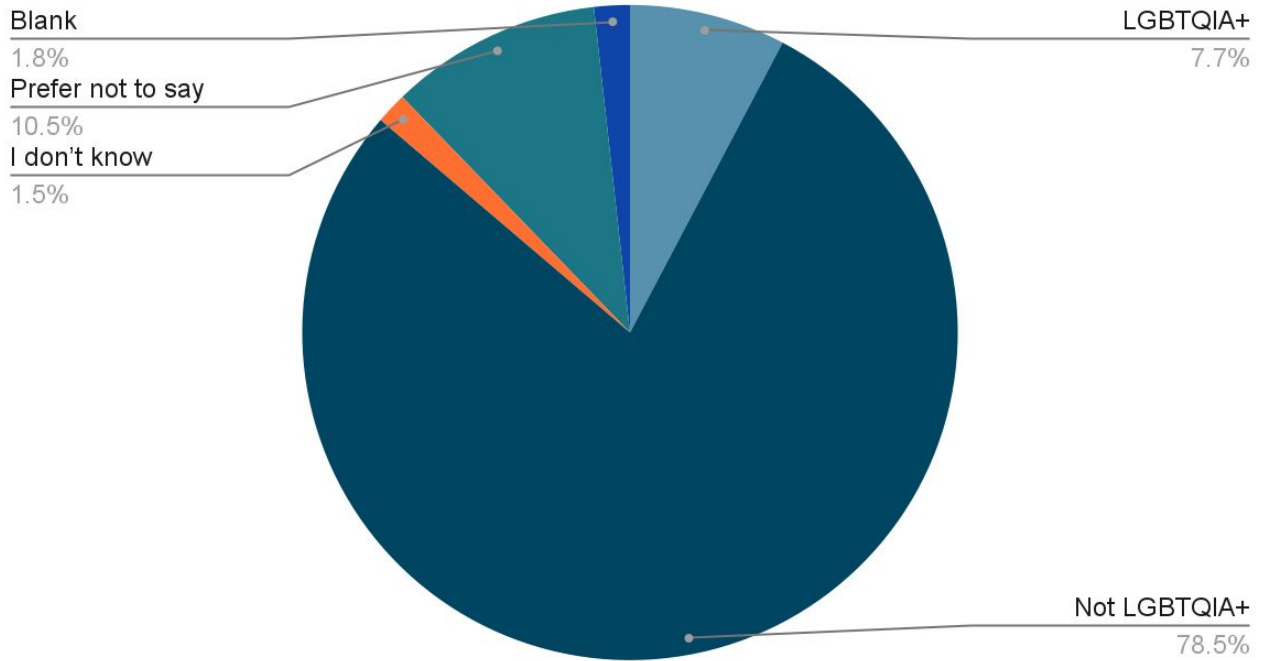
Not LGBTQIA+
78.5%

Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
LGBTQIA+	70
Not LGBTQIA+	713
I don't know	14
Prefer not to say	95
Blank	16

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: School Staff by Race

School Staff

More than One
1.0%

Prefer Not to Say
13.3%

Not Listed
1.5%

Black or African
1.0%

White
81.8%

Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
American Indian/Alaska Native	0
Asian	1
Black or African American	2
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	1
Multiracial	1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
White	166
Not Listed	3
Prefer Not to Say	27
More than One	2

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: School Staff by LGBTQIA+ Status

School Staff

Blank
5.9%

Prefer not to say
7.9%

I don't know
1.0%

LGBTQIA+
7.4%
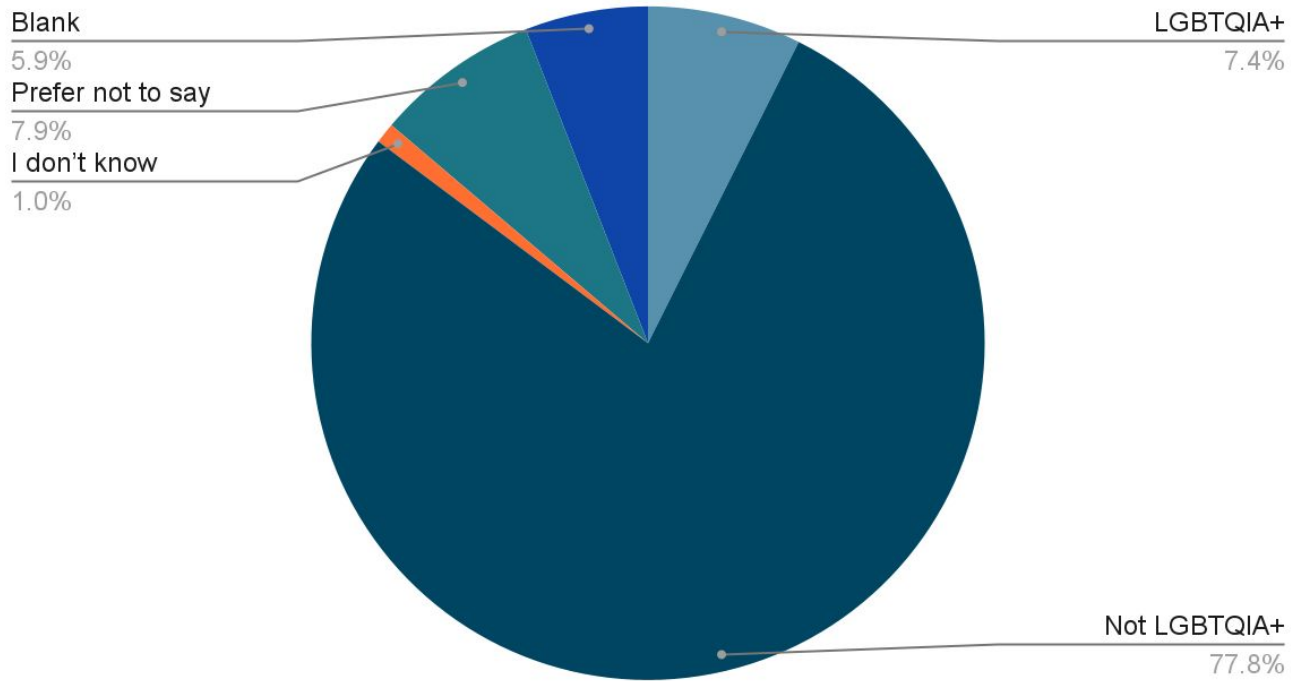
Not LGBTQIA+
77.8%

Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
LGBTQIA+	15
Not LGBTQIA+	158
I don't know	2
Prefer not to say	16
Blank	12

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: District and School Leader by Race

District and School Leader

Prefer Not to Say
13.0%

Hispanic or Latino/a/x
2.2%
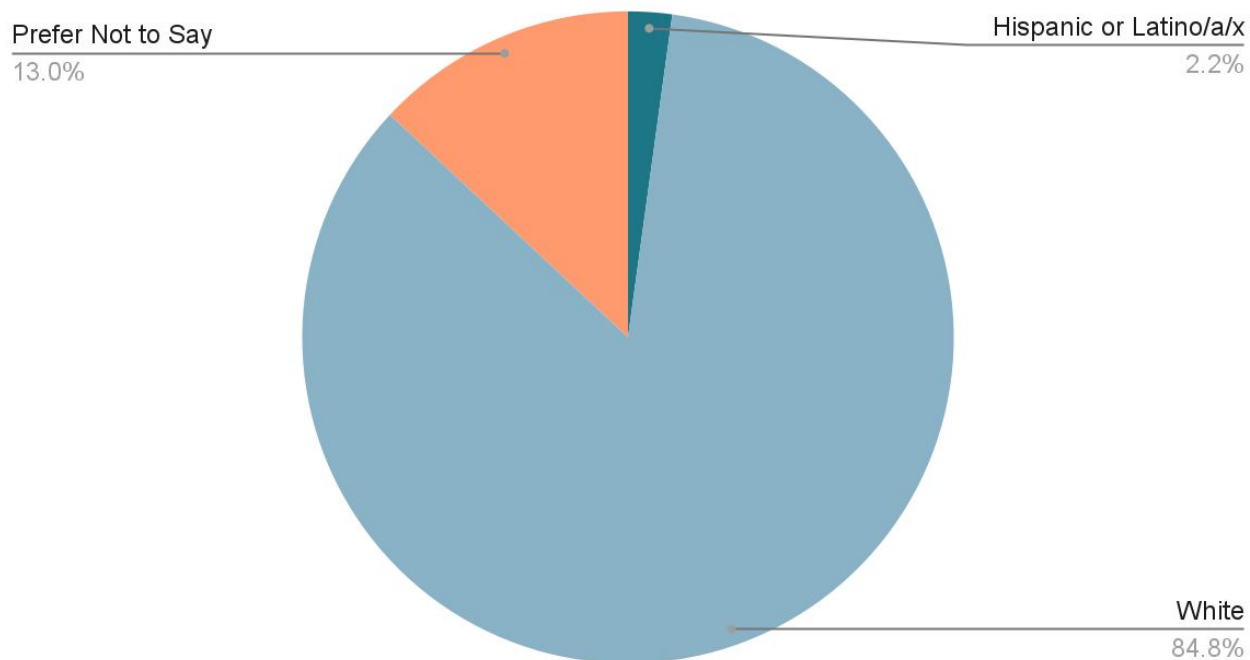
White
84.8%

Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
American Indian/Alaska Native	0
Asian	0
Black or African American	0
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	1
Multiracial	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0
White	39
Not Listed	0
Prefer Not to Say	6
More than One	0

Upper Arlington City Schools
Survey Respondents: District and School Leader by LGBTQIA+ Status

District and School Leader

Blank
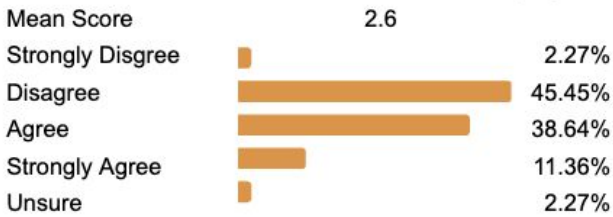6.5%

Prefer not to say
2.2%

LGBTQIA+
8.7%
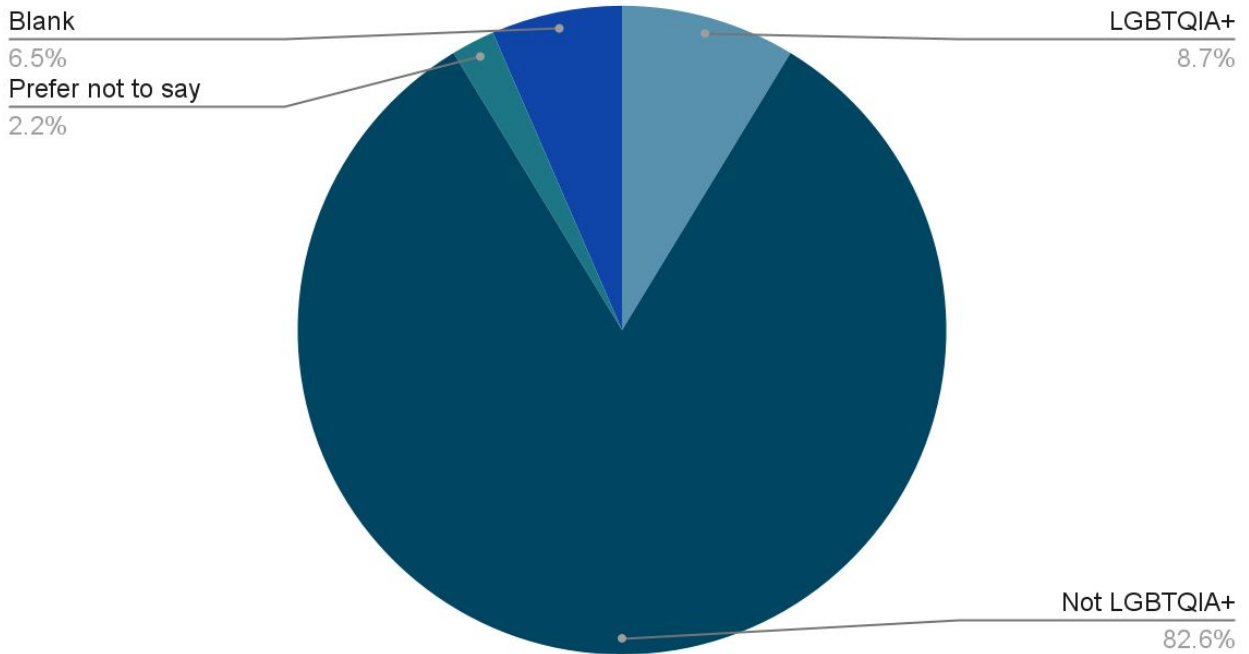
Not LGBTQIA+
82.6%

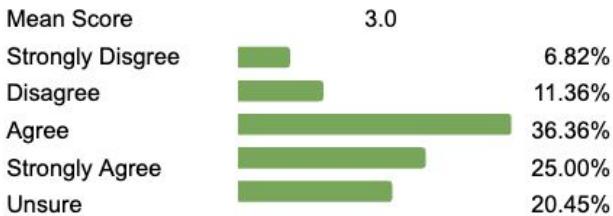| Respondents by Subgroup	Completed Surveys
LGBTQIA+	4
Not LGBTQIA+	38
I don't know	0
Prefer not to say	1
Blank	3

Upper Arlington City Schools

Stakeholder Survey Results: District and School Leader
n=46

Our District has shared a clear definition of equity.

Mean Score	2.6	
Strongly Disgree		2.27%
Disagree		45.45%
Agree		38.64%
Strongly Agree		11.36%
Unsure		2.27%

Our school district and school board work together to evaluate and revise district policies and practices that contain racist language or are discriminatory to a district demographic subgroup.
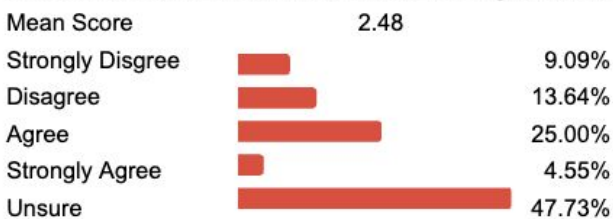
Mean Score	3.0	
Strongly Disgree		6.82%
Disagree		11.36%
Agree		36.36%
Strongly Agree		25.00%
Unsure		20.45%

Our district has developed a strategic plan that seeks to remove educational barriers for historically minoritized and marginalized populations.

Mean Score	3.03	
Strongly Disgree		0.00%
Disagree		22.73%
Agree		34.09%
Strongly Agree		25.00%
Unsure		18.18%

Historically, the strategic plan has been developed by holding multiple input sessions to increase participation from a diverse population of district stakeholders.

Mean Score	3.39	
Strongly Disgree		0.00%
Disagree		6.82%
Agree		31.82%
Strongly Agree		36.36%
Unsure		25.00%

Our district has a formula to allocate funding to each school based on need.

Mean Score	2.48	
Strongly Disgree		9.09%
Disagree		13.64%
Agree		25.00%
Strongly Agree		4.55%
Unsure		47.73%

Our district ensures all schools receive routine maintenance for physical upkeep and safety.

Mean Score	3.15
Strongly Disgree	6.82%
Disagree	6.82%
Agree	43.18%
Strongly Agree	34.09%
Unsure	9.09%
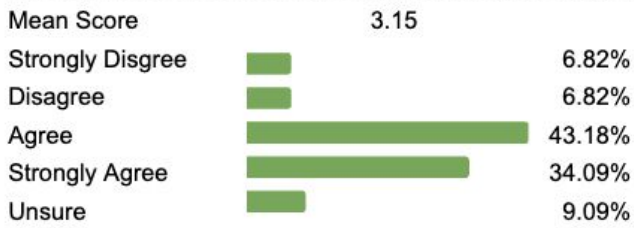
As a district or school leader, my team and I collect, disaggregate, and discuss various data sets to understand and eliminate gaps in achievement and growth between white students and their students of color peers.
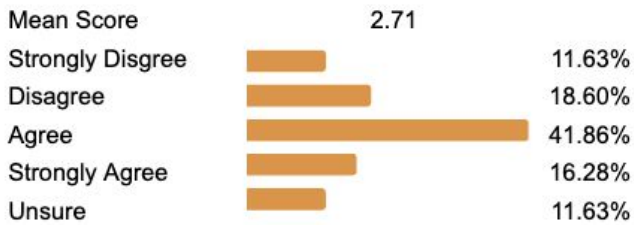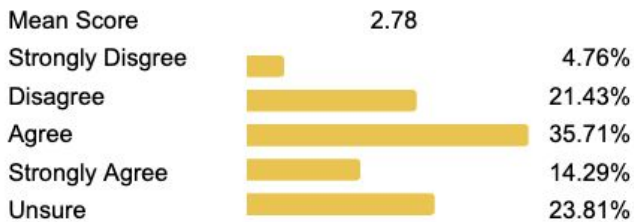
Mean Score	2.71
Strongly Disgree	11.63%
Disagree	18.60%
Agree	41.86%
Strongly Agree	16.28%
Unsure	11.63%

As a district or school leader, my team and I monitor enrollment in special education, gifted education, and advanced courses for disproportionality.

Mean Score	2.86
Strongly Disgree	7.14%
Disagree	19.05%
Agree	38.10%
Strongly Agree	21.43%
Unsure	14.29%

As a district or school leader, my team and I monitor resources – including funding, materials, facilities, and staffing – to ensure equitable allocation / distribution.

Mean Score	2.78
Strongly Disgree	4.76%
Disagree	21.43%
Agree	35.71%
Strongly Agree	14.29%
Unsure	23.81%

As a district or school leader, I provide opportunities for my staff to engage in meaningful conversations about equity and diverse identities.

Mean Score	2.92
Strongly Disgree	2.38%
Disagree	19.05%
Agree	57.14%
Strongly Agree	16.67%
Unsure	4.76%
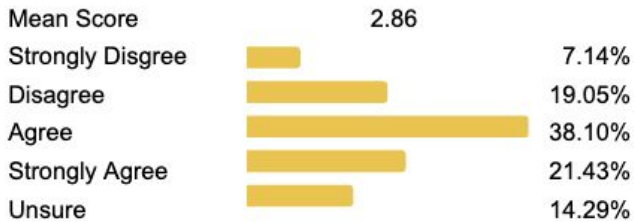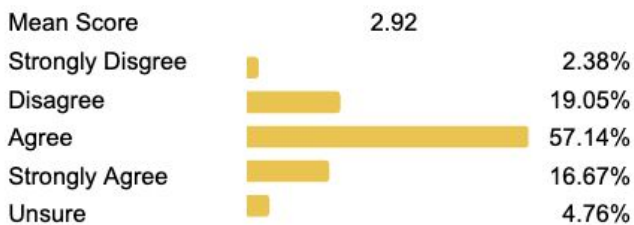
Upper Arlington City Schools

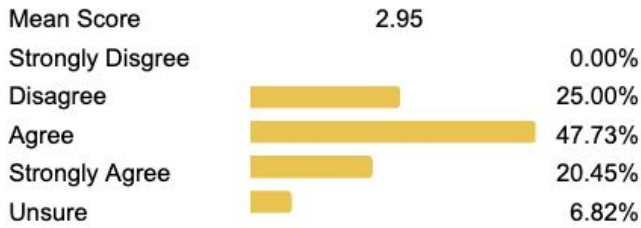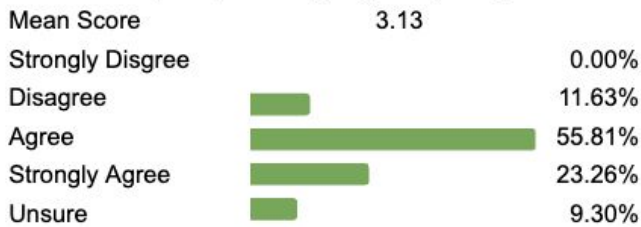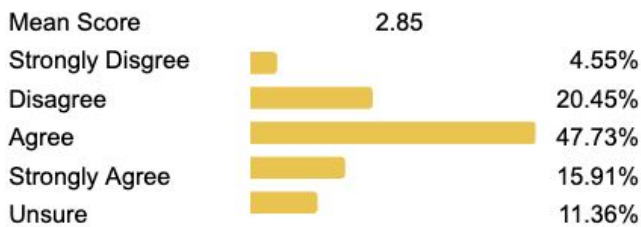**Our school visuals (e.g., posters, artwork, bulletin boards, marketing, social media, etc.) reflect different people, cultures, and ethnic groups.**

Mean Score	2.95
Strongly Disgree	0.00%
Disagree	25.00%
Agree	47.73%
Strongly Agree	20.45%
Unsure	6.82%

School discipline policies, programs, and practices are free from discriminatory language.

Mean Score	3.13
Strongly Disgree	0.00%
Disagree	11.63%
Agree	55.81%
Strongly Agree	23.26%
Unsure	9.30%

School discipline policies and practices are consistently enforced with all students.

Mean Score	2.85
Strongly Disgree	4.55%
Disagree	20.45%
Agree	47.73%
Strongly Agree	15.91%
Unsure	11.36%

Our school implements social-emotional learning resources and programming with all students.

Mean Score	3.29
Strongly Disgree	0.00%
Disagree	13.95%
Agree	34.88%
Strongly Agree	39.53%
Unsure	11.63%

Our school/district has effective methods to provide accessible and friendly communication between families and the school.

Mean Score	3.17
Strongly Disgree	0.00%
Disagree	4.65%
Agree	72.09%
Strongly Agree	20.93%
Unsure	2.33%

Our school regularly hosts engagement sessions to build a sense of community within the school.

Mean Score	3.02	
Strongly Disgree		0.00%
Disagree		18.18%
Agree		61.36%
Strongly Agree		20.45%
Unsure		0.00%

Our school regularly hosts engagement sessions to inform parents/guardians of student progress.
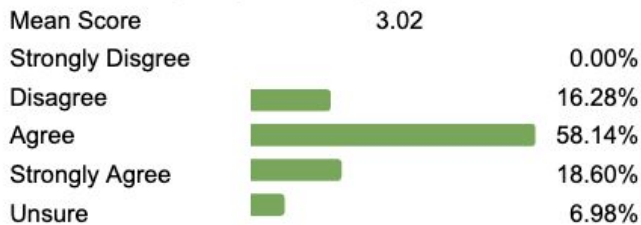
Mean Score	3.02	
Strongly Disgree		0.00%
Disagree		16.28%
Agree		58.14%
Strongly Agree		18.60%
Unsure		6.98%

Our district has written specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals into our strategic plan for increasing the diversity of our educator workforce.

Mean Score	2.28	
Strongly Disgree		6.82%
Disagree		38.64%
Agree		15.91%
Strongly Agree		4.55%
Unsure		34.09%

Our district effectively recruits educators of diverse backgrounds.

Mean Score	2.06	
Strongly Disgree		15.91%
Disagree		40.91%
Agree		20.45%
Strongly Agree		0.00%
Unsure		22.73%

Our district effectively retains its educators, including educators of diverse backgrounds.

Mean Score	2.48	
Strongly Disgree		6.98%
Disagree		32.56%
Agree		30.23%
Strongly Agree		6.98%
Unsure		23.26%

Our district seeks to advance the careers of its educators, including educators of diverse backgrounds.
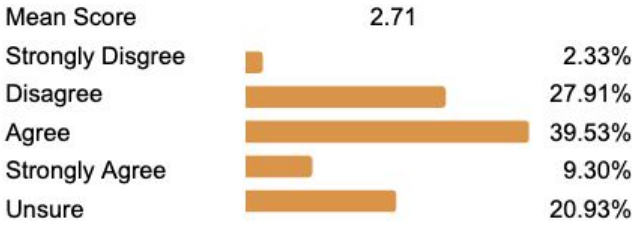
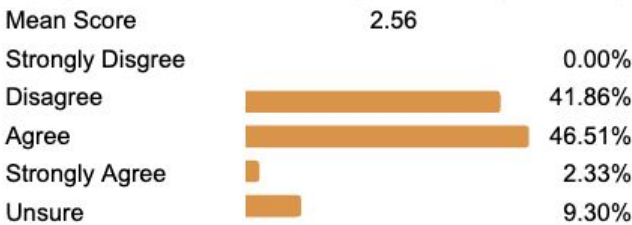|	
Mean Score	2.71
Strongly Disagree	2.33%
Disagree	27.91%
Agree	39.53%
Strongly Agree	9.30%
Unsure	20.93%

Our district has established an annual schedule for professional learning on a range of topics aligned to our academic goals and strategic plan.

Mean Score	3.15
Strongly Disagree	2.33%
Disagree	11.63%
Agree	46.51%
Strongly Agree	30.23%
Unsure	9.30%

Our district provides the necessary resources (e.g., potential funding, materials, follow-up training, and administrative support) to implement equity-focused initiatives with fidelity.

Mean Score	2.56
Strongly Disgree	0.00%
Disagree	37.21%
Agree	39.53%
Strongly Agree	2.33%
Unsure	20.93%

Equity-focused content is integrated throughout the professional learning schedule.

Mean Score	2.56
Strongly Disgree	0.00%
Disagree	41.86%
Agree	46.51%
Strongly Agree	2.33%
Unsure	9.30%

As part of district professional learning, our district and school provide evidence-based and research-based training to support teachers in meeting the learning needs of all district students.

Mean Score	2.95
Strongly Disagree	2.33%
Disagree	23.26%
Agree	46.51%
Strongly Agree	23.26%
Unsure	4.65%

Upper Arlington City Schools

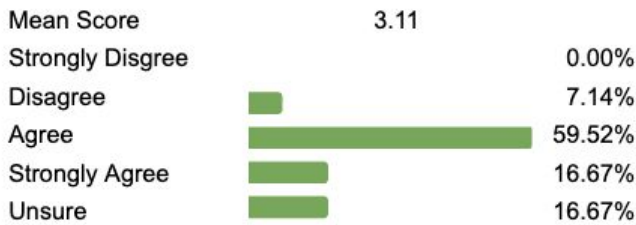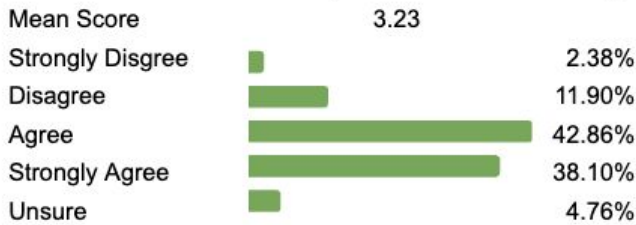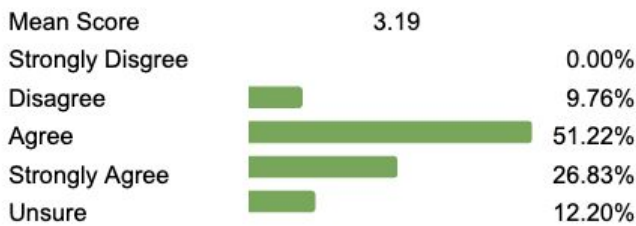**Our school ensures a safe and inclusive classroom environment to support learners of all cultural backgrounds.**

Mean Score	3.17
Strongly Disgree	2.38%
Disagree	7.14%
Agree	57.14%
Strongly Agree	28.57%
Unsure	4.76%

Our district/school curriculum incorporates readings and learning experiences from diverse races, ethnic groups, and cultures.

Mean Score	3.11
Strongly Disagree	0.00%
Disagree	7.14%
Agree	59.52%
Strongly Agree	16.67%
Unsure	16.67%

Our teachers utilize a variety of instructional delivery methods to help all students learn.

Mean Score	3.23
Strongly Disgree	2.38%
Disagree	11.90%
Agree	42.86%
Strongly Agree	38.10%
Unsure	4.76%

Our teachers create inclusive classroom learning environments that celebrate student identities, interests, cultures, and backgrounds.

Mean Score	3.19
Strongly Disagree	0.00%
Disagree	9.76%
Agree	51.22%
Strongly Agree	26.83%
Unsure	12.20%

Our teachers regularly examine academic data to differentiate instruction based on student needs and ensure each student's success.

Mean Score	3.0
Strongly Disgree	2.44%
Disagree	19.51%
Agree	43.90%
Strongly Agree	24.39%
Unsure	9.76%

Our teachers regularly examine social and emotional, belonging and equity data to differentiate instruction based on student needs to ensure each student's success.
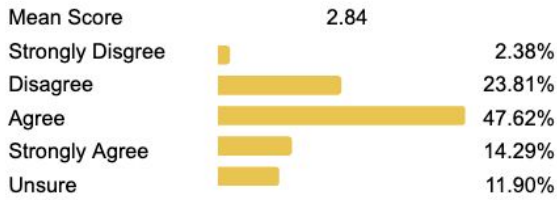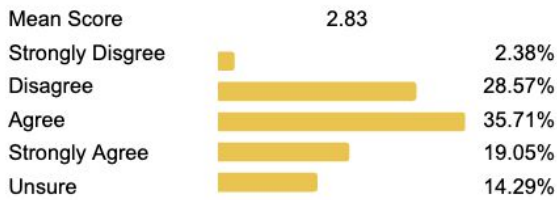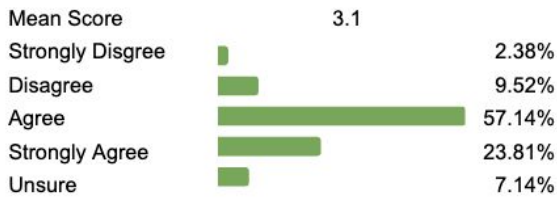
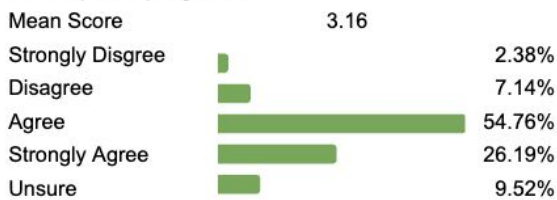|	
Mean Score	2.84
Strongly Disagree	2.38%
Disagree	23.81%
Agree	47.62%
Strongly Agree	14.29%
Unsure	11.90%

Our district/school has a process to gather parent/guardian input and assess the whole child (e.g., academically, socially, and emotionally) when considering academic placements.

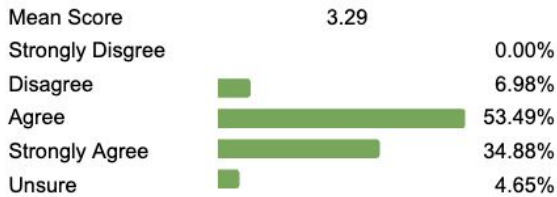|	
Mean Score	2.83
Strongly Disagree	2.38%
Disagree	28.57%
Agree	35.71%
Strongly Agree	19.05%
Unsure	14.29%

Students within each school are granted equal and equitable access to participate in field trips, performing arts, co-curricular, sports, STEM, student leadership, and other special programs.

Mean Score	3.1
Strongly Disagree	2.38%
Disagree	9.52%
Agree	57.14%
Strongly Agree	23.81%
Unsure	7.14%

Across the district, students at each level (elementary, middle, and high) have equal and equitable access to participate in field trips, performing arts programs, co-curricular activities, sports, STEM, student leadership, and other special programs.

Mean Score	3.16
Strongly Disagree	2.38%
Disagree	7.14%
Agree	54.76%
Strongly Agree	26.19%
Unsure	9.52%

Our school/district has an effective system for staff to report concerns regarding bullying, harassment and intimidation of students and/or staff members.

Mean Score	3.29
Strongly Disagree	0.00%
Disagree	6.98%
Agree	53.49%
Strongly Agree	34.88%
Unsure	4.65%

Considerably Low	Low	Approaching High	High	Considerably High
2.49 and below	2.50 to 2.74	2.75 to 2.99	3.00 to 3.49	3.50 and above

Upper Arlington City Schools
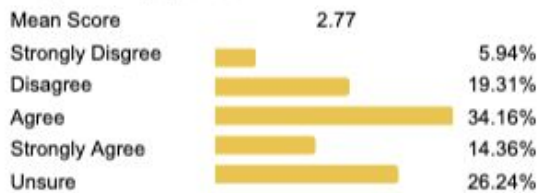
Stakeholder Survey Results: School Staff
    n=203

The district has shared a clear definition of equity.
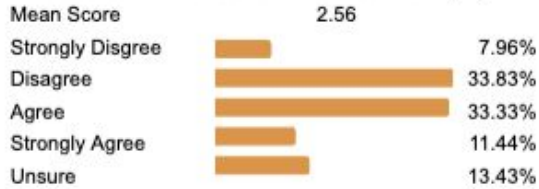
Mean Score	2.56	
Strongly Disagree		7.96%
Disagree		33.83%
Agree		33.33%
Strongly Agree		11.44%
Unsure		13.43%

Our school district and school board work together to evaluate and revise district policies and practices that contain racist language or are discriminatory to a district demographic subgroup.
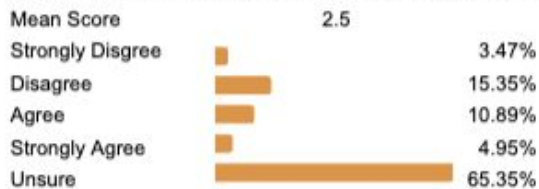
Mean Score	3.04	
Strongly Disagree		3.94%
Disagree		8.37%
Agree		40.39%
Strongly Agree		19.21%
Unsure		28.08%

Our district has developed a strategic plan that seeks to remove educational barriers for historically minoritized and marginalized populations.

Mean Score	2.77	
Strongly Disagree		5.94%
Disagree		19.31%
Agree		34.16%
Strongly Agree		14.36%
Unsure		26.24%

Historically, the strategic plan has been developed by holding multiple input sessions to increase participation from a diverse population of district stakeholders.

Mean Score	3.17	
Strongly Disagree		1.50%
Disagree		7.00%
Agree		36.50%
Strongly Agree		21.50%
Unsure		33.50%

Our district has a formula to allocate funding to each school based on need.

Mean Score	2.5	
Strongly Disagree		3.47%
Disagree		15.35%
Agree		10.89%
Strongly Agree		4.95%
Unsure		65.35%

Our district ensures my school receives routine maintenance for physical upkeep and safety.

Mean Score	2.94	
Strongly Disagree		6.47%
Disagree		13.93%
Agree		45.77%
Sprongly Agree		21.89%
Unsure		11.94%
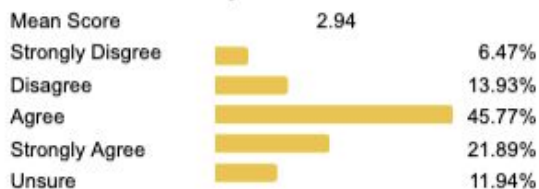
I always have enough supplies, mterials, and resources, to meet every student's needs.

Mean Score	2.84
Strongly Disgree	4.57%
Disagree	26.90%
Agree	41.12%
Strongly Agree	21.32%
Unsure	6.09%
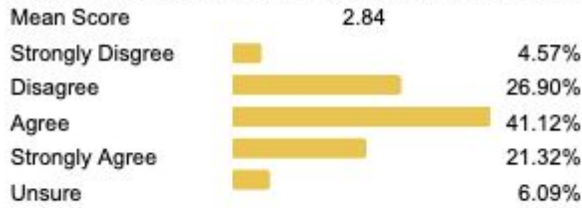
Our school/district visuals (posters, artwork, bulletin boards, marketing, social media, etc.) reflect diverse people, cultures, and ethnic groups.
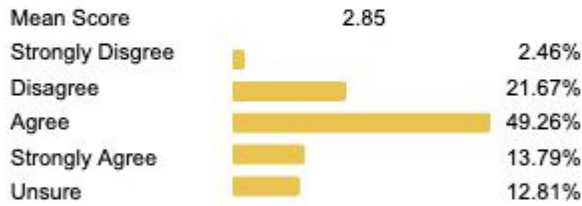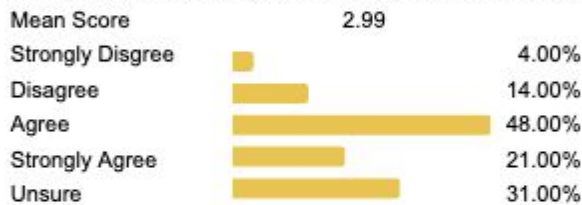
Mean Score	2.85
Strongly Disgree	2.46%
Disagree	21.67%
Agree	49.26%
Strongly Agree	13.79%
Unsure	12.81%

School/district discipline policies, programs, and practices are free from discriminatory language.

Mean Score	3.13
Strongly Disgree	1.98%
Disagree	3.47%
Agree	55.94%
Strongly Agree	17.33%
Unsure	21.29%

School/district discipline policies and practices are consistently enforced with all students.

Mean Score	2.2
Strongly Disgree	17.91%
Disagree	34.83%
Agree	21.39%
Strongly Agree	6.47%
Unsure	19.40%
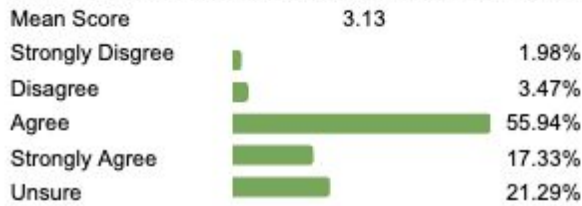
Our school/district implements social-emotional learning resources and programming with all students.

Mean Score	2.99
Strongly Disgree	4.00%
Disagree	14.00%
Agree	48.00%
Strongly Agree	21.00%
Unsure	31.00%

Our school/district has effective methods to provide accessible and friendly communication between families and the school.

Mean Score	3.23
Strongly Disgree	1.00%
Disagree	4.98%
Agree	60.70%
Strongly Agree	28.86%
Unsure	4.48%
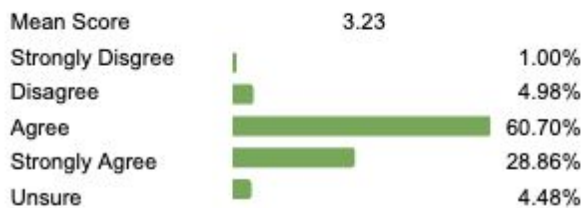
Our school/district regularly hosts engagement activities to build a sense of community within the school.

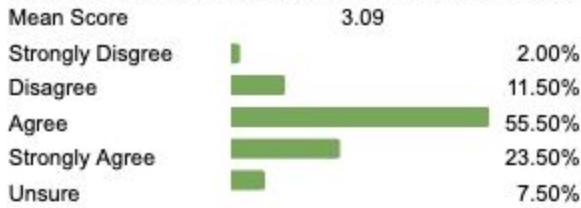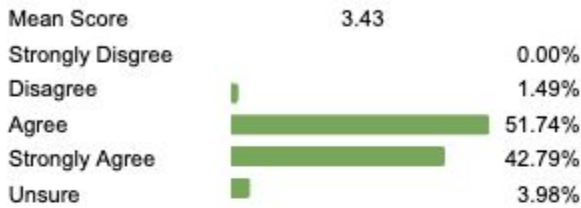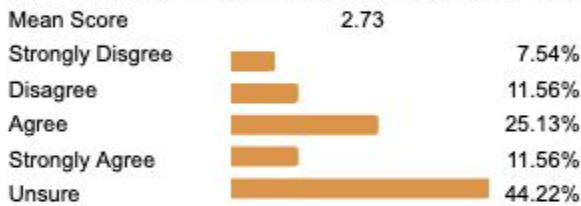|		
Mean Score	3.09	
Strongly Disgree		2.00%
Disagree		11.50%
Agree		55.50%
Strongly Agree		23.50%
Unsure		7.50%

Our school regularly hosts parent/guardian conference opportunities to inform families of student progress.

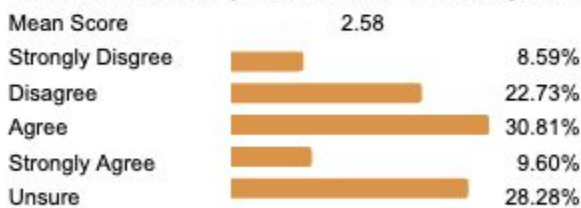|		
Mean Score	3.43	
Strongly Disgree		0.00%
Disagree		1.49%
Agree		51.74%
Strongly Agree		42.79%
Unsure		3.98%

Our district has written specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals into our strategic plan for increasing the diversity of our educator workforce.

Mean Score	2.73	
Strongly Disgree		7.54%
Disagree		11.56%
Agree		25.13%
Strongly Agree		11.56%
Unsure		44.22%

Our district effectively recruits staff of diverse backgrounds.

Mean Score	2.12	
Strongly Disgree		16.08%
Disagree		31.16%
Agree		16.08%
Strongly Agree		4.02%
Unsure		32.66%

Our district effectively retains its staff, including educators of diverse backgrounds.

Mean Score	2.58	
Strongly Disgree		8.59%
Disagree		22.73%
Agree		30.81%
Strongly Agree		9.60%
Unsure		28.28%

Our district provides opportunities to advance the careers of its staff.

Mean Score	2.75	
Strongly Disgree		7.46%
Disagree		23.38%
Agree		45.27%
Strongly Agree		15.42%
Unsure		8.46%

I feel like I am a valued professional at my school.

Mean Score	2.84
Strongly Disagree	7.00%
Disagree	20.50%
Agree	49.00%
Strongly Agree	19.00%
Unsure	4.50%
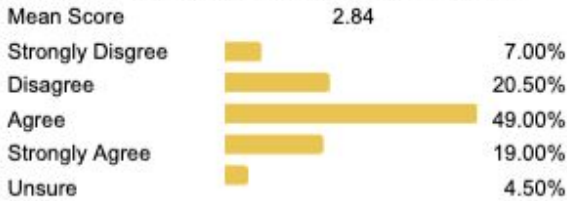
I feel like I belong at my school or building.

Mean Score	3.08
Strongly Disagree	4.00%
Disagree	11.00%
Agree	53.50%
Strongly Agree	27.00%
Unsure	4.50%
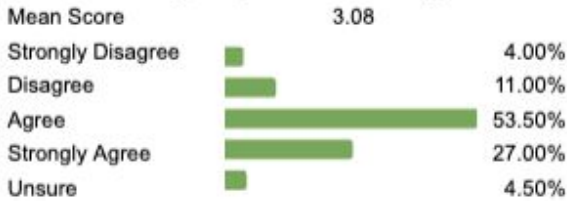
Our district has established an annual schedule for professional learning for all school staff members on a range of topics aligned to our academic goals and strategic plan.
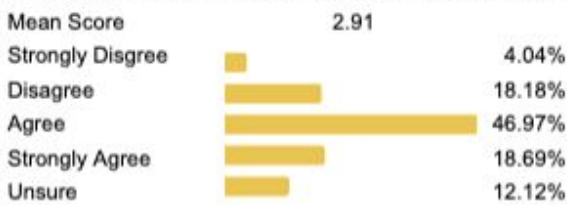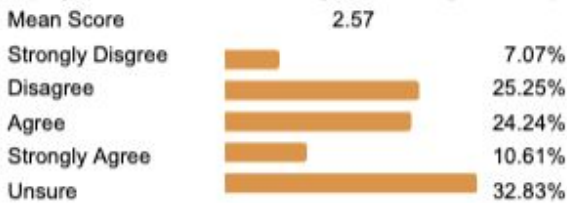
Mean Score	2.91
Strongly Disgree	4.04%
Disagree	18.18%
Agree	46.97%
Strongly Agree	18.69%
Unsure	12.12%

Our district provides the necessary resources (e.g., potential funding, materials, follow-up training, and administrative support) to implement equity-focused initiatives with fidelity.

Mean Score	2.45
Strongly Disgree	8.08%
Disagree	29.29%
Agree	20.20%
Strongly Agree	9.09%
Unsure	33.33%

Equity-focused content is integrated throughout the professional learning schedule.

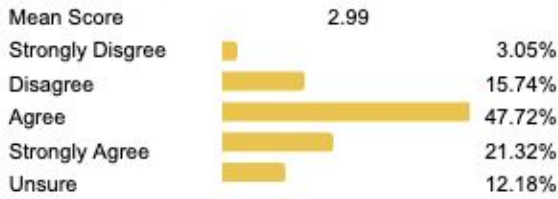|	
Mean Score	2.57
Strongly Disagree	7.07%
Disagree	25.25%
Agree	24.24%
Strongly Agree	10.61%
Unsure	32.83%

As part of district professional learning, our district and school provide evidence-based and research-based training to support school staff members in meeting the learning needs of all district students.
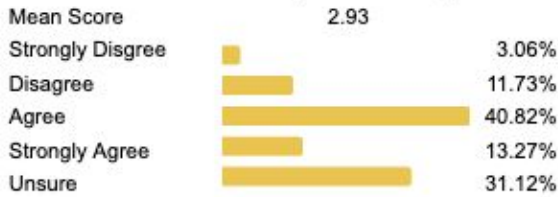
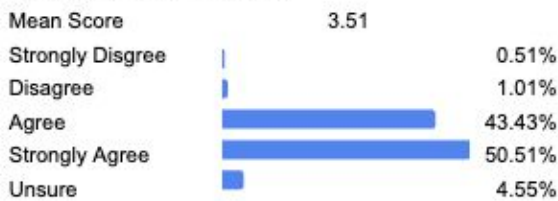|	
Mean Score	2.73
Strongly Disagree	6.57%
Disagree	20.20%
Agree	40.40%
Strongly Agree	12.12%
Unsure	20.71%

Our school ensures a safe and inclusive classroom environment to support learners of all cultural backgrounds.

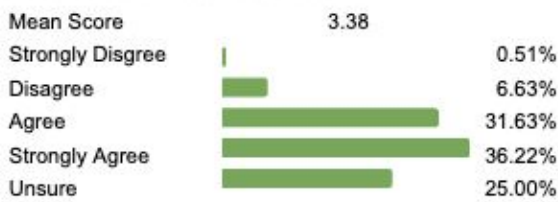|	
Mean Score	2.99
Strongly Disgree	3.05%
Disagree	15.74%
Agree	47.72%
Strongly Agree	21.32%
Unsure	12.18%

Our school curriculum incorporates readings and learning experiences from diverse races, ethnic groups, and cultures.

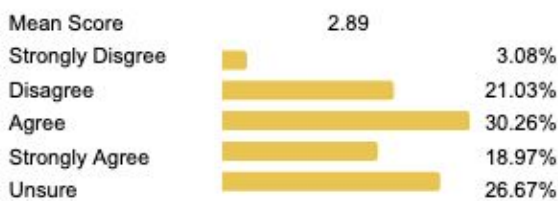|	
Mean Score	2.93
Strongly Disgree	3.06%
Disagree	11.73%
Agree	40.82%
Strongly Agree	13.27%
Unsure	31.12%

I personally work to create an inclusive school/district environment that celebrates student identities, interests, cultures, and backgrounds.

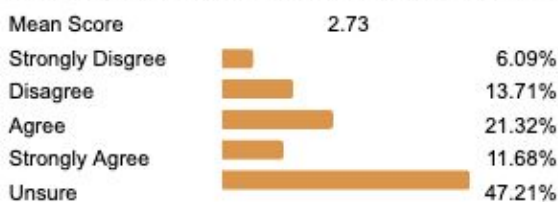|	
Mean Score	3.51
Strongly Disgree	0.51%
Disagree	1.01%
Agree	43.43%
Strongly Agree	50.51%
Unsure	4.55%

I have access to and regularly examine academic data to differentiate instruction based on individual student needs and ensure each student's success.

Mean Score	3.38
Strongly Disgree	0.51%
Disagree	6.63%
Agree	31.63%
Strongly Agree	36.22%
Unsure	25.00%

I have access to and regularly examine social and emotional, belonging and equity data to differentiate instruction based on student needs to ensure each student's success.

Mean Score	2.89
Strongly Disgree	3.08%
Disagree	21.03%
Agree	30.26%
Strongly Agree	18.97%
Unsure	26.67%

Our school/district regularly monitors enrollment in special education services, academic interventions, and advanced courses to ensure its proportionality reflects district demographics.

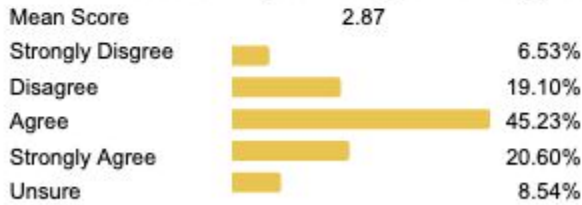|	
Mean Score	2.73
Strongly Disgree	6.09%
Disagree	13.71%
Agree	21.32%
Strongly Agree	11.68%
Unsure	47.21%

Upper Arlington City Schools

Our school/district has a process to gather parent/caregiver input and assess the whole child (e.g., academically, socially, and emotionally) when considering academic placements.

Mean Score	3.03
Strongly Disagree	3.06%
Disagree	8.67%
Agree	42.86%
Strongly Agree	16.84%
Unsure	28.57%

Across the district, students at each level (elementary, middle, and high) have equal and equitable access to participate in field trips, performing arts programs, co-curricular activities, sports, STEM, student leadership, and other special programs.

Mean Score	3.01
Strongly Disagree	3.54%
Disagree	16.16%
Agree	41.41%
Strongly Agree	24.24%
Unsure	14.65%

I am confident that if I report a safety or well-being concern it will be handled appropriately by an administrator.

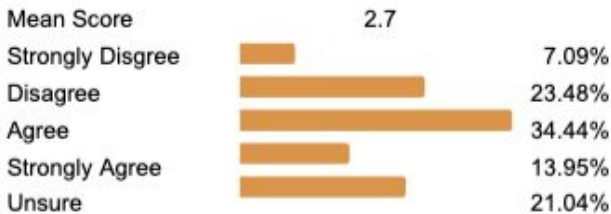|	
Mean Score	2.87
Strongly Disagree	6.53%
Disagree	19.10%
Agree	45.23%
Strongly Agree	20.60%
Unsure	8.54%

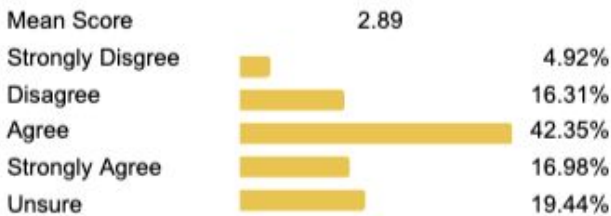| Considerably Low	Low	Approaching High	High	Considerably High
2.49 and below	2.50 to 2.74	2.75 to 2.99	3.00 to 3.49	3.50 and above

Upper Arlington City Schools

Stakeholder Survey Results: Parent / Guardian
n=908
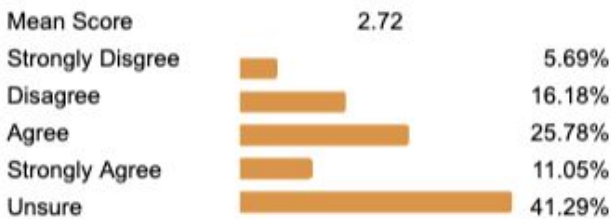
The district has shared a clear definition of equity.

Mean Score	2.7	
Strongly Disagree		7.09%
Disagree		23.48%
Agree		34.44%
Strongly Agree		13.95%
Unsure		21.04%

The district is committed to equitable policies and practices.

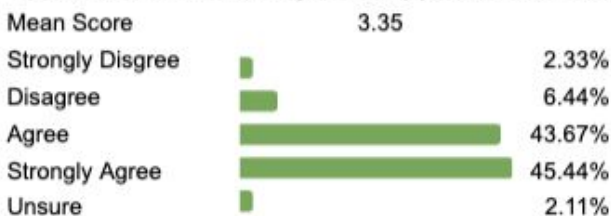|		
Mean Score	2.89	
Strongly Disagree		4.92%
Disagree		16.31%
Agree		42.35%
Strongly Agree		16.98%
Unsure		19.44%

Historically, the strategic plan has been developed by holding multiple input sessions to increase participation from a diverse population of community stakeholders.

Mean Score	3.03	
Strongly Disagree		3.13%
Disagree		10.38%
Agree		32.92%
Strongly Agree		18.86%
Unsure		34.71%

The district is transparent and equitable when distributing funds to schools.

Mean Score	2.72	
Strongly Disagree		5.69%
Disagree		16.18%
Agree		25.78%
Strongly Agree		11.05%
Unsure		41.29%

The district makes sure my student(s) school is safe and in good physical condition.

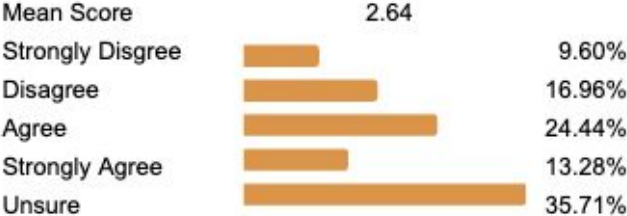|		
Mean Score	3.35	
Strongly Disagree		2.33%
Disagree		6.44%
Agree		43.67%
Strongly Agree		45.44%
Unsure		2.11%

School visuals (e.g., posters, bulletin boards, social media, etc.) reflect different people, cultures, and ethnic groups.

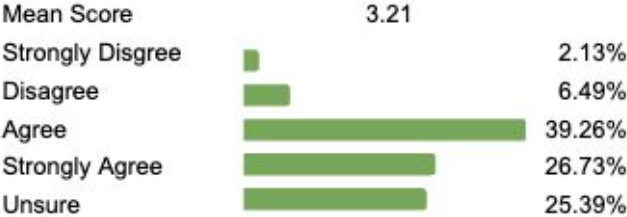|	
Mean Score	3.08
Strongly Disgree	3.02%
Disagree	10.40%
Agree	42.62%
Strongly Agree	23.15%
Unsure	20.81%

School discipline policies, programs, and practices are free from discriminatory language.

Mean Score	3.2
Strongly Disgree	2.12%
Disagree	5.14%
Agree	40.45%
Strongly Agree	23.91%
Unsure	28.38%

School discipline policies and practices are consistently enforced with all students.

Mean Score	2.64
Strongly Disgree	9.60%
Disagree	16.96%
Agree	24.44%
Strongly Agree	13.28%
Unsure	35.71%
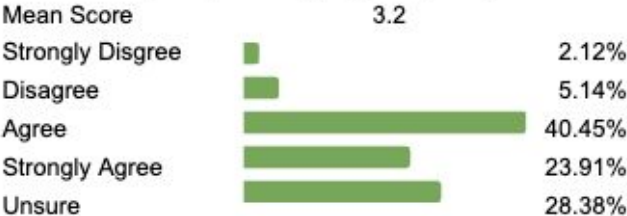
My student(s)' school uses social-emotional learning resources and programming with all students.

Mean Score	3.21
Strongly Disgree	2.13%
Disagree	6.49%
Agree	39.26%
Strongly Agree	26.73%
Unsure	25.39%

My student(s)' school has an effective and accessible system to share information from school to home and home to school.

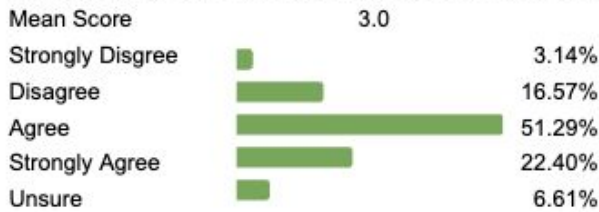|	
Mean Score	3.08
Strongly Disgree	4.04%
Disagree	12.25%
Agree	51.80%
Strongly Agree	28.54%
Unsure	3.37%
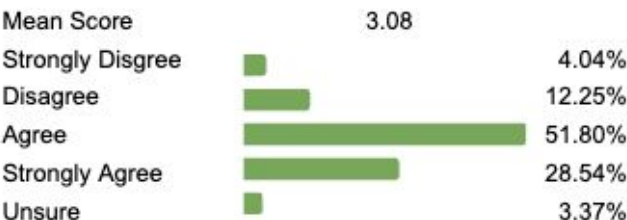
Upper Arlington City Schools

My student(s)' school hosts engagement sessions to build a sense of community.

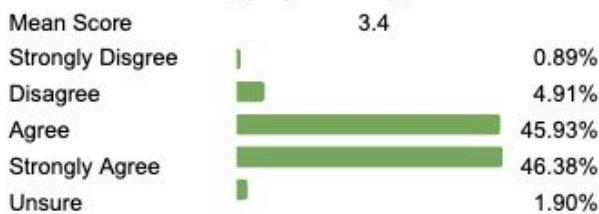|	
Mean Score	3.08
Strongly Disagree	2.25%
Disagree	13.29%
Agree	47.41%
Strongly Agree	25.11%
Unsure	11.94%

My student(s)' school hosts engagement sessions to inform parents/guardians of student progress.

Mean Score	3.0
Strongly Disagree	3.14%
Disagree	16.57%
Agree	51.29%
Strongly Agree	22.40%
Unsure	6.61%

I am comfortable speaking with my student(s)' teachers or administrators.

Mean Score	3.35
Strongly Disgree	1.78%
Disagree	7.02%
Agree	45.43%
Strongly Agree	44.99%
Unsure	0.78%

Adults at the school(s) my student(s) attends treat me with respect.

Mean Score	3.4
Strongly Disgree	0.89%
Disagree	4.91%
Agree	45.93%
Strongly Agree	46.38%
Unsure	1.90%

The district recruits teachers from diverse groups.

Mean Score	2.46
Strongly Disagree	11.36%
Disagree	23.85%
Agree	20.25%
Strongly Agree	10.69%
Unsure	33.86%

My student(s) have teachers from other races, ethnic groups, and or cultural backgrounds.

Mean Score	2.31
Strongly Disagree	15.78%
Disagree	37.09%
Agree	22.55%
Strongly Agree	9.70%
Unsure	14.88%
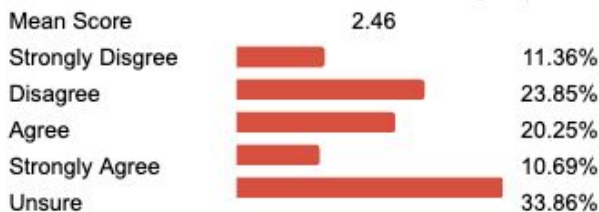
Upper Arlington City Schools

At the end of the school year, teachers at my student(s)' school often leave or move schools.

Mean Score	1.8
Strongly Disagree	23.10%
Disagree	43.75%
Agree	5.13%
Strongly Agree	1.79%
Unsure	26.23%
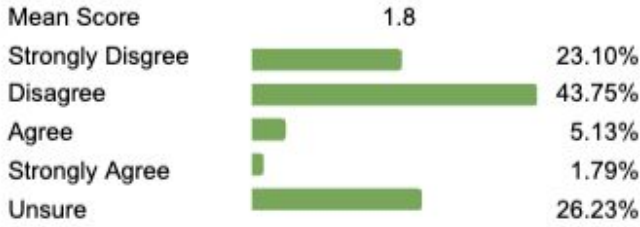
This question is written so that a low mean score is positive.

My student(s) have a school leader(s) from a different race, ethnic group, and or cultural background.

Mean Score	2.11
Strongly Disagree	19.39%
Disagree	38.11%
Agree	15.33%
Strongly Agree	6.20%
Unsure	20.97%

My student(s)' classwork, homework, and learning activities reflect people from diverse races, ethnic groups, and cultures.

Mean Score	2.92
Strongly Disgree	3.84%
Disagree	14.11%
Agree	43.45%
Strongly Agree	15.91%
Unsure	22.69%

My student(s)' teacher uses culturally appropriate instruction in the classroom.

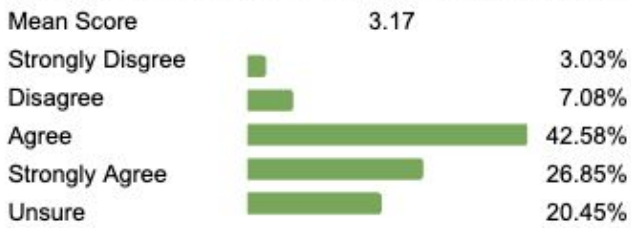|	
Mean Score	3.2
Strongly Disgree	1.69%
Disagree	4.04%
Agree	38.20%
Strongly Agree	20.56%
Unsure	35.51%
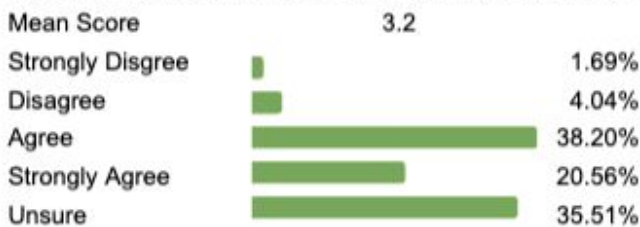
My student(s)' teacher uses many teaching methods to help students learn. For example, valuing and building relationships with all students, representation of diverse student identities within lessons, valuing diverse student experiences when activating prior knowledge, adjusting classroom arrangement for safety and security, and engaging students through multi-sensory experiences.
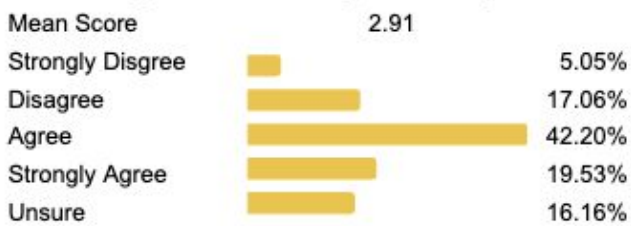
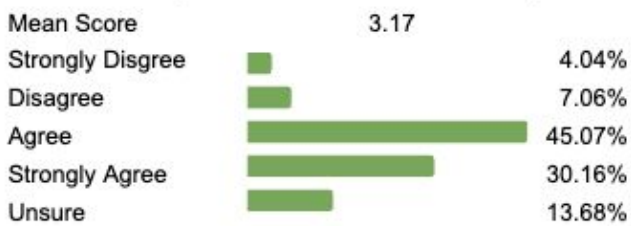|	
Mean Score	3.17
Strongly Disgree	2.48%
Disagree	7.34%
Agree	39.05%
Strongly Agree	24.83%
Unsure	26.30%

My student(s)' classroom learning environment is welcoming to all student identities, cultures, and backgrounds.

Mean Score   3.17

|	
Strongly Disagree	3.03%
Disagree	7.08%
Agree	42.58%
Strongly Agree	26.85%
Unsure	20.45%

The school has a process to gather my input and assess the whole child (e.g., academically, socially, and emotionally) when considering academic placements.

Mean Score   2.91

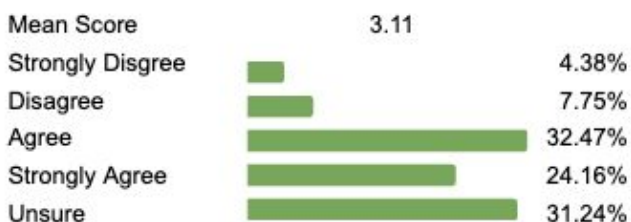|	
Strongly Disagree	5.05%
Disagree	17.06%
Agree	42.20%
Strongly Agree	19.53%
Unsure	16.16%

Students within each school are granted equal and equitable access to participate in field trips, performing arts, co-curricular, sports, STEM, student leadership, and other special programs.

Mean Score   3.17

Strongly Disagree	4.04%
Disagree	7.06%
Agree	45.07%
Strongly Agree	30.16%
Unsure	13.68%

As a parent/guardian, I have the financial resources to allow my student(s) to participate in field trips, performing arts, sports, or other student life extra curricular programming.
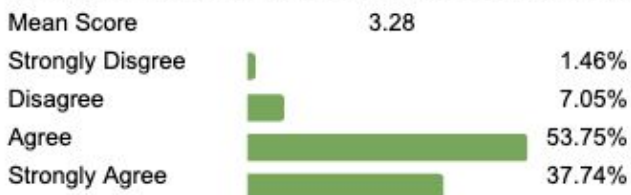
Mean Score   3.28

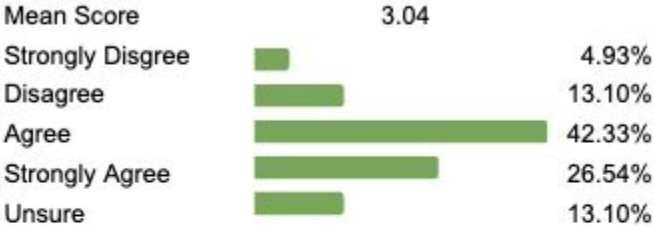|	
Strongly Disagree	1.46%
Disagree	7.05%
Agree	53.75%
Strongly Agree	37.74%

Across the district, students at each level (elementary, middle, and high) have equal and equitable access to fully participate or participate with IEP/504 accommodations in field trips, performing arts activities, co-curricular activities, sports, STEM, student leadership, or other student life programming.

Mean Score   3.11

Strongly Disagree	4.38%
Disagree	7.75%
Agree	32.47%
Strongly Agree	24.16%
Unsure	31.24%

I am confident that if I report a safety or well-being concern it will be handled appropriately by an adult in student(s)' school.

Mean Score	3.04
Strongly Disgree	4.93%
Disagree	13.10%
Agree	42.33%
Strongly Agree	26.54%
Unsure	13.10%

If breakfast were offered at the elementary schools, my student(s) would eat breakfast at school more than 2 days per week.
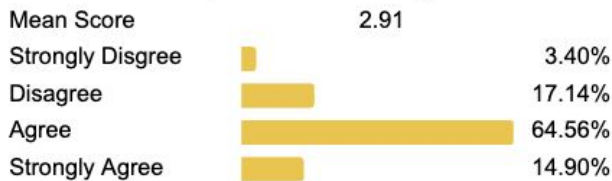
Mean Score	2.13
Strongly Disgree	20.22%
Disagree	28.83%
Agree	16.54%
Strongly Agree	6.59%
Not Applicable	27.82%

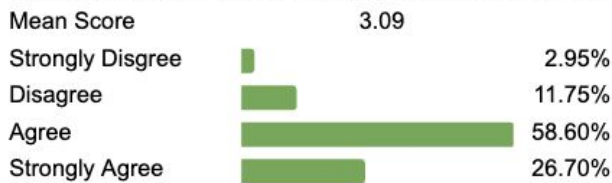| Considerably Low	Low	Approaching High	High	Considerably High
2.49 and below	2.50 to 2.74	2.75 to 2.99	3.00 to 3.49	3.50 and above

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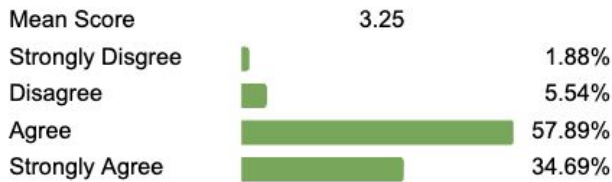## Stakeholder Survey Results: Secondary Student
n=2484

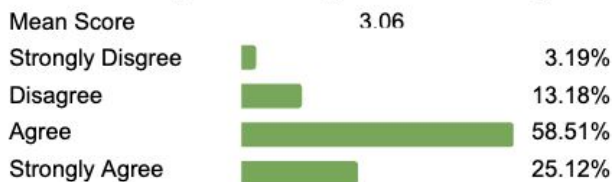**The district has a process to share my voice as a student.**

Mean Score	2.91	
Strongly Disgree		3.40%
Disagree		17.14%
Agree		64.56%
Strongly Agree		14.90%

The district has a clear commitment to supporting all students.

Mean Score	3.09	
Strongly Disgree		2.95%
Disagree		11.75%
Agree		58.60%
Strongly Agree		26.70%

I feel safe while at school.

Mean Score	3.25	
Strongly Disgree		1.88%
Disagree		5.54%
Agree		57.89%
Strongly Agree		34.69%

If I have a safety or well-being concern about myself or someone else, I know how to report it.

Mean Score	3.06	
Strongly Disgree		3.19%
Disagree		13.18%
Agree		58.51%
Strongly Agree		25.12%

I am confident that if I report a safety or well-being concern it will be handled appropriately by an adult in my school.

Mean Score	3.04	
Strongly Disgree		4.18%
Disagree		13.52%
Agree		56.48%
Strongly Agree		25.82%
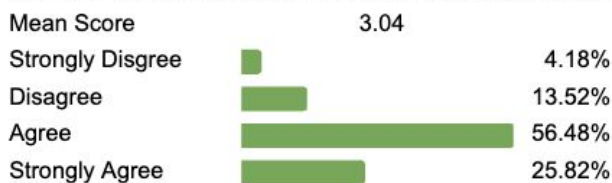
My school is in good physical condition.

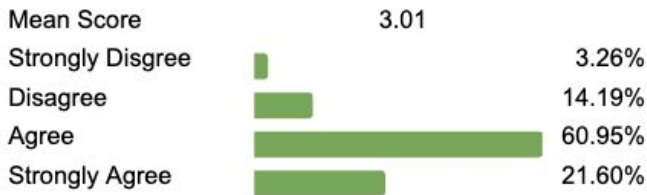|		
Mean Score	3.15	
Strongly Disgree		4.41%
Disagree		10.73%
Agree		50.53%
Strongly Agree		34.33%
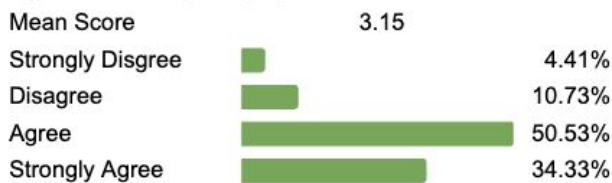
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School visuals (e.g., posters, artwork, bulletin boards, social media, etc.) appropriately reflect my ethnicity, culture, race, language, etc.
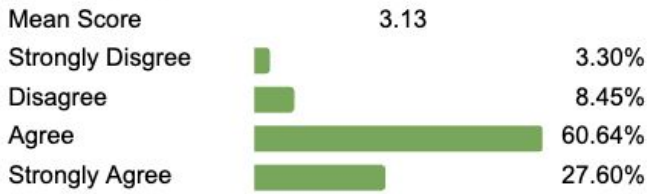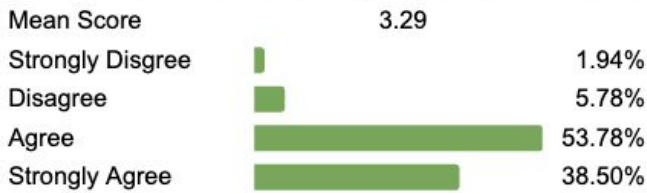
Mean Score	3.13
Strongly Disgree	3.30%
Disagree	8.45%
Agree	60.64%
Strongly Agree	27.60%

My classwork, homework, and learning activities reflect people from diverse races, ethnic groups, and cultures.

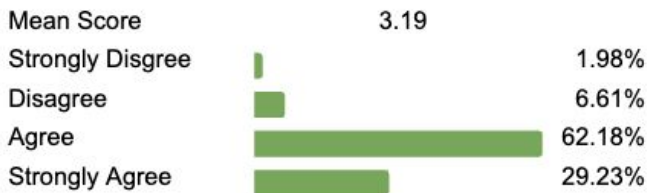|	
Mean Score	3.01
Strongly Disgree	3.26%
Disagree	14.19%
Agree	60.95%
Strongly Agree	21.60%

I have teachers from diverse races, ethnic groups, and/or cultural backgrounds.

Mean Score	2.61
Strongly Disgree	11.29%
Disagree	29.92%
Agree	45.36%
Strongly Agree	13.43%

I have access to courses of my choosing to include advanced and elective courses.

Mean Score	3.29
Strongly Disgree	1.94%
Disagree	5.78%
Agree	53.78%
Strongly Agree	38.50%

I have access to needed supports, resources and accommodations to meet my learning needs.

Mean Score	3.19
Strongly Disgree	1.98%
Disagree	6.61%
Agree	62.18%
Strongly Agree	29.23%

My school uses learning resources that support my well-being and character development.
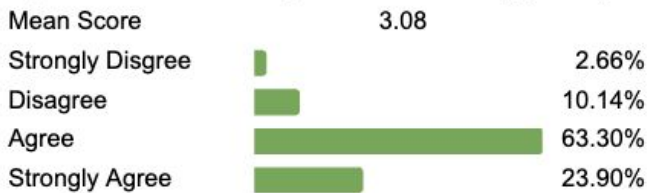
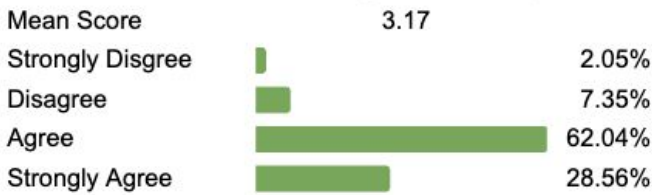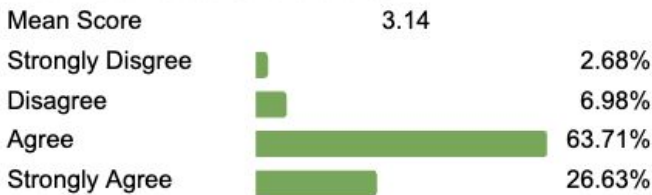|	
Mean Score	3.08
Strongly Disgree	2.66%
Disagree	10.14%
Agree	63.30%
Strongly Agree	23.90%

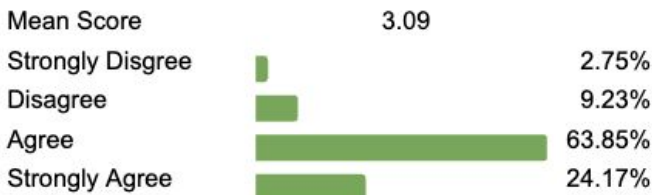**Consequences I received for a discipline infraction were applied fairly through a process that I understood.**

Mean Score	3.02
Strongly Disagree	4.45%
Disagree	7.09%
Agree	13.55%
Strongly Agree	16.90%
Not Applicable	58.01%

At school, adults treat me fairly and with respect.

Mean Score	3.17
Strongly Disagree	2.05%
Disagree	7.35%
Agree	62.04%
Strongly Agree	28.56%
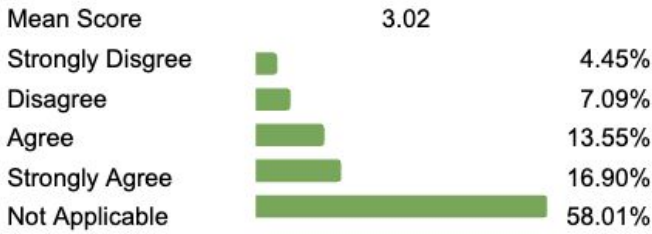
I feel welcomed at school events.

Mean Score	3.14
Strongly Disagree	2.68%
Disagree	6.98%
Agree	63.71%
Strongly Agree	26.63%

I feel comfortable participating in student life activities.

Mean Score	3.09
Strongly Disagree	2.75%
Disagree	9.23%
Agree	63.85%
Strongly Agree	24.17%

I am able to access all field trips or experiences offered in my school either on my own or with my IEP or 504 accommodations.
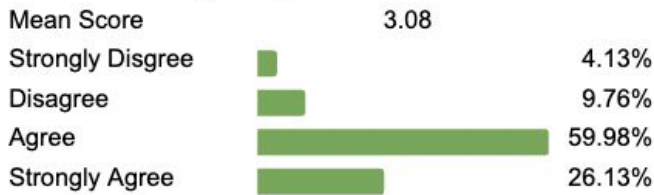
Mean Score	3.26
Strongly Disagree	1.96%
Disagree	4.90%
Agree	58.56%
Strongly Agree	34.58%

Students in my school respect each other's differences.

Mean Score	2.92
Strongly Disagree	5.29%
Disagree	16.87%
Agree	58.60%
Strongly Agree	19.23%
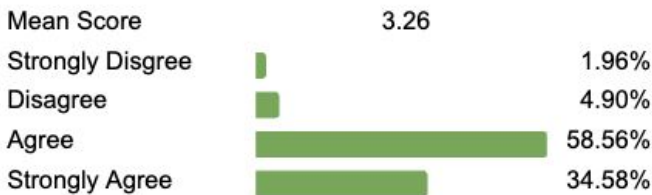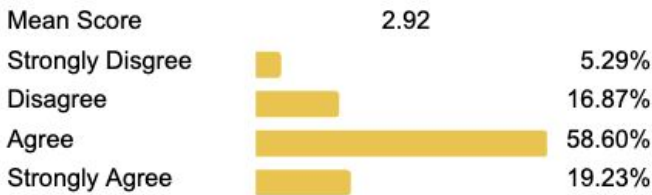
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I feel like I belong in my school.

Mean Score	3.08
Strongly Disgree	4.13%
Disagree	9.76%
Agree	59.98%
Strongly Agree	26.13%

My parents/guardians can access school information in a language that is spoken at home.

Mean Score	3.39
Strongly Disgree	1.63%
Disagree	2.46%
Agree	51.02%
Strongly Agree	44.89%
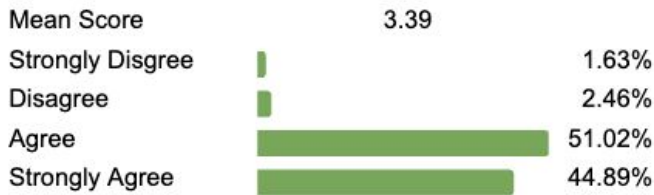
My parents/guardians are comfortable speaking with my teachers or administrators

Mean Score	3.52
Strongly Disgree	1.19%
Disagree	1.32%
Agree	25.20%
Strongly Agree	38.18%
Unsure	34.11%
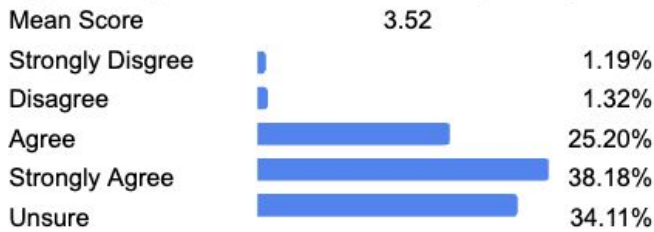
My parents/guardians have the financial resources to allow me to participate in an extracurricular activity that I am interested in.

Mean Score	3.43
Strongly Disgree	1.50%
Disagree	2.70%
Agree	47.22%
Strongly Agree	48.59%
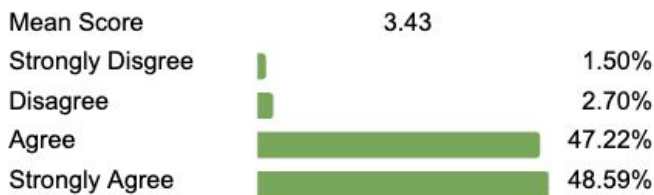
My family has broadband internet access at home.

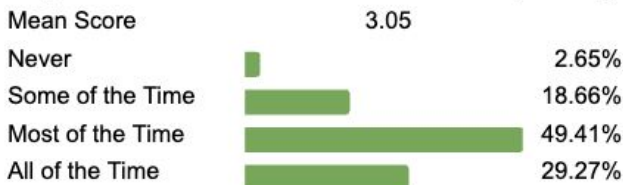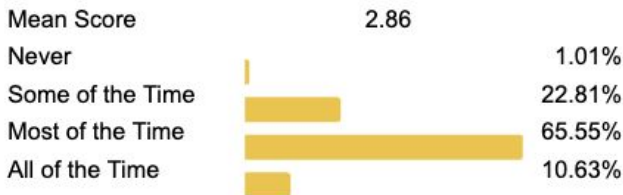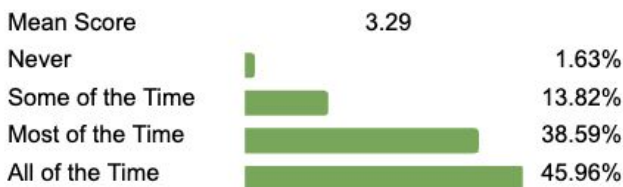|	
Mean Score	2.97
Disagree	2.64%
Agree	97.36%

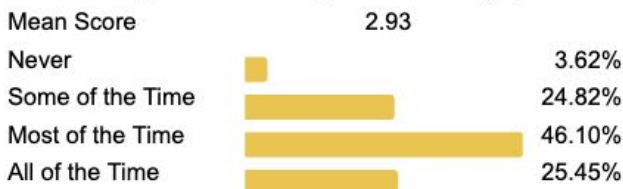## I know who to talk to if I need financial assistance for activities, field trips, lunch, curricular needs, etc.

Mean Score	2.78
Disagree	21.90%
Agree	78.10%

Considerably Low	Low	Approaching High	High	Considerably High
2.49 and below	2.50 to 2.74	2.75 to 2.99	3.00 to 3.49	3.50 and above

Stakeholder Survey Results: Elementary Student
n=1292

My school is safe and in good physical shape.

Mean Score	3.56	
Never		0.62%
Some of the Time		3.57%
Most of the Time		34.78%
All of the Time		61.02%
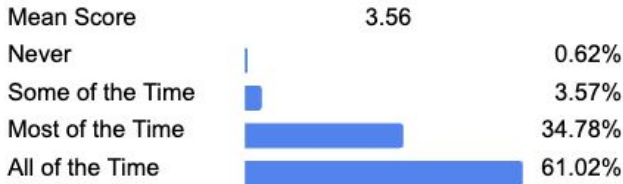
Does your teacher or principal ask for your opinion about things that would help the school?

Mean Score	2.17	
Never		19.62%
Some of the Time		49.80%
Most of the Time		24.11%
All of the Time		6.46%

Do you think all students are treated with respect at your school?

Mean Score	3.05	
Never		2.65%
Some of the Time		18.66%
Most of the Time		49.41%
All of the Time		29.27%

Are the students kind to each other?

Mean Score	2.86	
Never		1.01%
Some of the Time		22.81%
Most of the Time		65.55%
All of the Time		10.63%

Can you get extra help if you need it?

Mean Score	3.29	
Never		1.63%
Some of the Time		13.82%
Most of the Time		38.59%
All of the Time		45.96%

Are there opportunities for you to challenge yourself if things are too easy?

Mean Score	2.93	
Never		3.62%
Some of the Time		24.82%
Most of the Time		46.10%
All of the Time		25.45%

Do your parents/guardians feel comfortable coming to school to talk to your teachers or principal?

Mean Score	3.55
Never	1.42%
Some of the Time	2.68%
Most of the Time	10.42%
All of the Time	30.07%
Unsure	55.41%

Considerably Low	Low	Approaching High	High	Considerably High
2.49 and below	2.50 to 2.74	2.75 to 2.99	3.00 to 3.49	3.50 and above

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