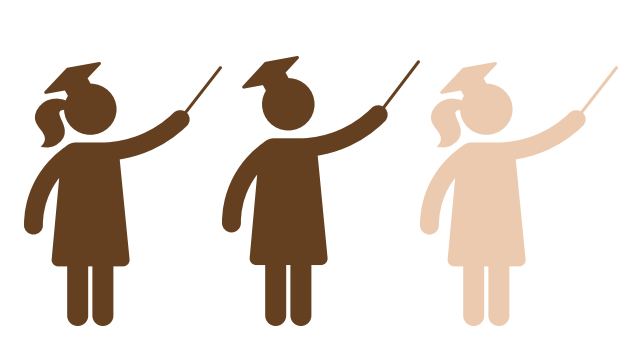
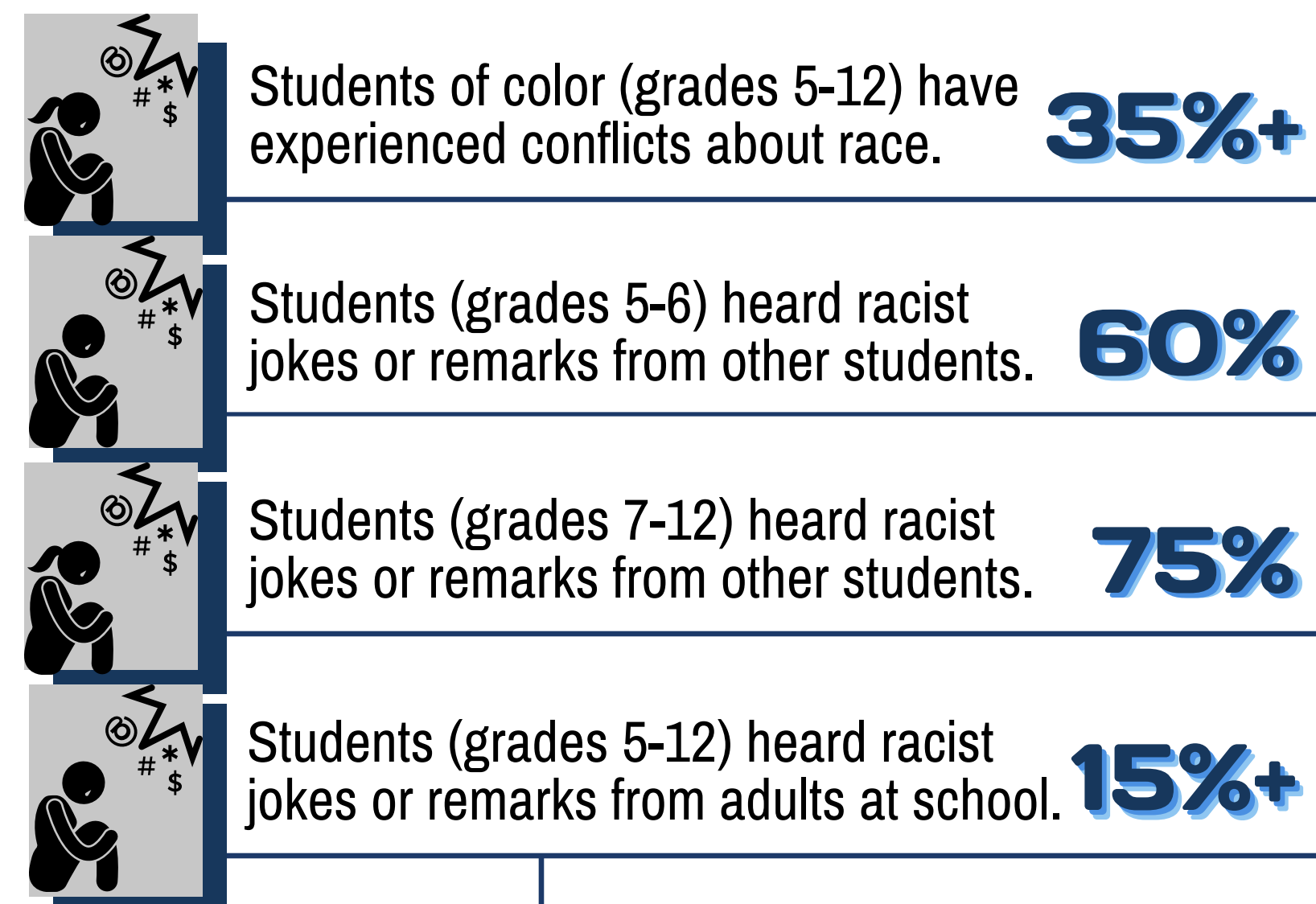
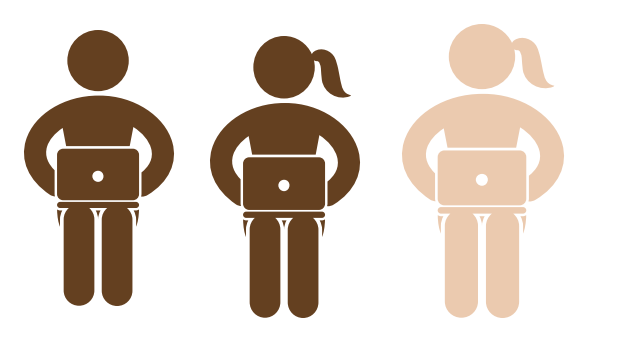


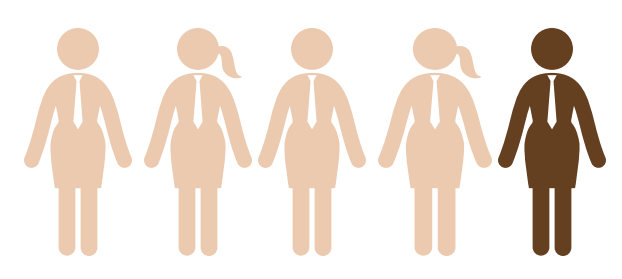
Students, staff, and families in MPS reported witnessing racist behavior and experiencing microaggressions.



Staff members of color were more than twice as likely (21% v. 9%) to agree that racism is a problem in their work environment.



Staff members of color were more likely to agree that they have heard racist jokes or remarks from adults at their school.



White staff members were more likely to agree that staff at their workplace respect people who are different from them and are significantly more likely to agree that their religion is respected at their school or office.

A white male staff member commented on how racialized fear is showing up in student and staff relationships. "I think there is lots of fear. Fear of the kid. Fear of the parent. Some is actual, 'I am afraid of you. You could actually hurt me.' Some of it is, 'I am afraid to do the wrong thing.' Especially with white staff and students of color."

Staff members of color talked about the strained relationships between white staff members & students of color because of racial bias.

A Latinx elementary school student reported, "In school, people started saying that Puerto Ricans are dumb and idiots. I cry because all my family is from Puerto Rico, none of them are dumb..."

Several Black male students reported various instances of adults yelling at them to "shut up," and when asked what would improve their school they indicated that the biggest improvement would be if adults at school changed the tone, volume, and language they use to address students.

In an interview, a staff member commented, "[white teachers] are so scared of [students of color]...and in particular, the boys...these boys are constantly getting security called on them..."

One white female staff member who has been a part of the MPS community for over a decade talked about how fear of people of color within MPS connects to the history of Manchester.

A middle-school Asian student shared she's been called a "chink" and has been asked if she eats dogs.

An evaluator observed a teacher repeatedly calling a student wearing a hijab the name of another student in the class who was also wearing a hijab.

A Latinx elementary school student reported that "fights broke out because people want to comment on the color of your skin".

A staff member of color described her experience of discrimination: "Indirectly, they expect me to explain certain aspects of minority culture. They ask me to speak to the 'aggressive' POC [people of color] parents. I don't want to be seen as the angry Black woman," she said. "My white co-workers can be upset, and I can't."



A parent of a Black student said, "There is a huge problem in school. My 6-year-old should never be called the 'n-word'. My other children have been called this disgusting word."

Family members of color were significantly more likely than white family members to agree that they feel pressure from adults at their school to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to fit in and that they have experienced conflicts about race with other parents from their child's school.

Discrimination is still impacting students, staff, and families from marginalized groups in MPS.

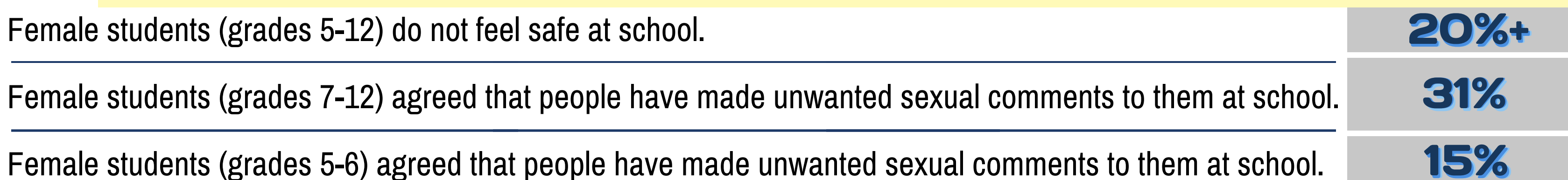
Students, staff members, and family members in MPS reported witnessing racist behavior and experiencing microaggressions. Students, staff members, and family members from marginalized groups, in particular those belonging to more than one marginalized group, reported they do not feel safe at school including students and staff members of color and students experiencing food insecurity. Female students, including female students belonging to more than one marginalized group, reported being harassed in school. LGBTQ+, transgender, and gender non-conforming students, in particular LGBTQ+, transgender, and gender non-conforming students of color, reported being discriminated against in school. Across all races, students, staff, and family members with one or more disabilities reported feeling unsafe in school, and, across all races, non-Christian students and staff reported feeling stereotyped and discriminated against in school.

Students, staff members, and family members from marginalized groups, in particular those belonging to more than one marginalized group, do not feel safe.



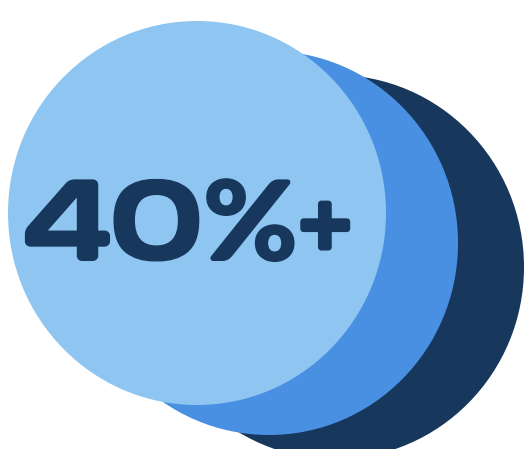
Female, transgender and gender non-conforming, LGBTQ+ students, students with disabilities, and students experiencing food insecurity—including students of color belonging to one or more of these groups—were more likely to not feel safe at school.

Female students, including female students belonging to more than one marginalized group, reported feeling unsafe and being harassed in school.

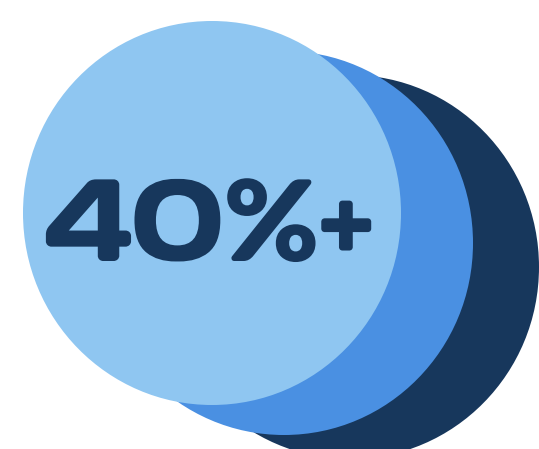


Transgender and gender non-conforming students, in particular students of color belonging to one of these marginalized groups, reported feeling discriminated against and unsafe in their schools.

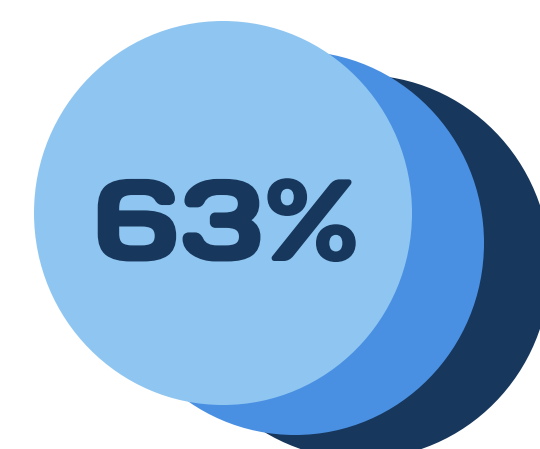
Transgender and gender non-conforming students...



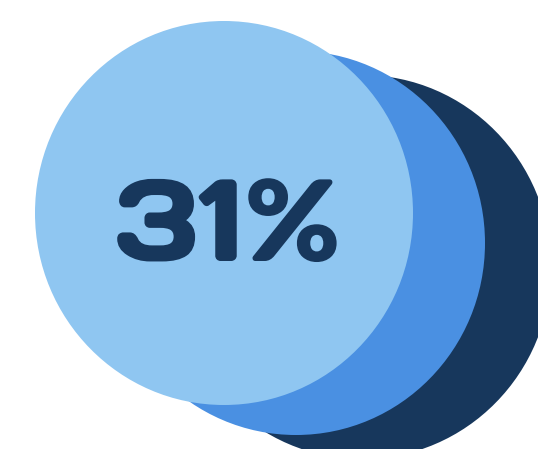
agreed that discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender students is a problem at their school.



of color were most likely to disagree that they feel safe at their school when compared to their peers.



in grades 5 and 6 agreed that they have been physically hurt by another student more than once at school.



in grades 7-12 agreed that they have been verbally or physically intimidated by an adult at their school.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, pansexual, and asexual (LGBQ+) students, in particular students of color belonging to one of these marginalized groups, reported feeling discriminated against and unsafe in schools.



1/3

When asked whether they feel safe at their school, more than one-third of LGBQ+ students disagreed.

LGBQ+ students (grades 5 and 6) were less likely than their heterosexual peers to agree that they have a staff member they can talk to when they are struggling or upset.

40%+

When asked whether discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender students is a problem at their school, more than 40 percent of LGBQ+ students agreed.

27%

LGBQ+ students (grades 7-12) agreed they have felt verbally or physically intimidated by an adult at school.

64%

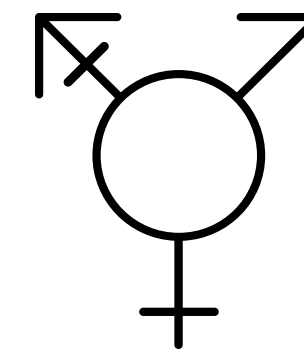
LGBQ+ students (grades 5 and 6) agreed that they have been made fun of or intimidated by other students.

40%+

LGBQ+ students (grades 7-12) agreed that they have been harassed or intimidated by other students in school and that people have made unwanted sexual comments to them.



“I look androgynous. People think I’m a boy, even though I identify as a girl. I’ve had people dare other kids to ask me if I’m a lesbian and they’ll buy them stuff if they do it. People just look at my appearance and are just like, ‘oh, she’s gay’, even though I’m bi.”



“The other students in the hall, they are really disrespectful. They give dirty looks and sometimes make comments. [They say] ‘Eww, really, that’s gay. Are you not a child of God?’ Sometimes when I hear that, I get so angry. Being bisexual in this school...I’m not able to tell anyone and I don’t feel like myself when I am here [at school]. I wish you can be able to be who you want to be in school without people judging you and making comments. I don’t tell anybody. There are a lot of kids... [who are LGBQ+]. I have a friend that wants to [come out] but he doesn’t feel comfortable telling anyone else, and I don’t blame him.”

Non-Christian students and staff reported feeling stereotyped and discriminated against in school.

Non-Christian students reported feeling negatively stereotyped by peers and adults at their school because of their religion.

Christian students were more likely to agree that their religion is respected at their school than their non-Christian & non-religiously-affiliated peers.

When compared to their Christian and religiously unaffiliated colleagues, non-Christian staff were less likely to agree that their religion is respected and more likely to agree that Christian hegemony is a problem in their work environment.

A Muslim student expressed that she wants to be heard as an individual, not seen as representing all of Islam when she expresses an opinion. “I never felt unsafe but more so targeted. I realized how much people’s perception changed when I took off my hijab. I got a lot of terrorist comments [wearing it]. I had to use the faculty bathroom last year because of something happened in the bathroom—a group of girls said I was making a bomb in the bathroom and it was constant. The teachers were all nice about it but why do I have to be different?”

An Asian staff member commented that the district does not support their practice of culture and faith. “[We don’t] have one religion, and [my] New Year is not acknowledged [in MPS]. People think about food [from my culture] but not holidays.

Students, staff members and family members with one or more disabilities reported feeling unsafe in school.

1/4

More than a quarter of students (grades 5-12) with disabilities disagreed that they feel safe at school, and more than a quarter of students with disabilities (grades 7-12) agreed that they have been physically hurt by another student more than once. There were significant differences in the responses of students with disabilities and students without a disability to these questions about safety.

1/4

More than a quarter of staff members with disabilities agree that they have been insulted, harassed, intimidated, or targeted by another staff member—making them twice as likely to agree to this as staff without a disability.



Students of color with disabilities report that they feel unsafe at school.

31%



Family members with disabilities agreed that they have been insulted, harassed, intimidated, or targeted by an adult in their child’s school.

16%



Staff with disabilities experienced sexual harassment.

6%



Staff w/ disabilities agreed that grievance procedure is an effective tool to ensure equitable solutions.

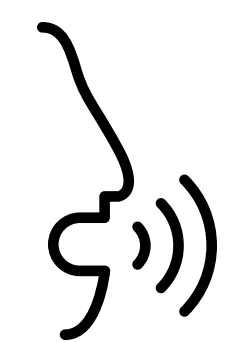
32%

Students experiencing food insecurity reported feeling unsafe in school.



Students who experience food insecurity (grades 5-6) agreed that an adult from their school has yelled at them in a way that scared them.

40%



Students (grades 7-12) who experience food insecurity have felt verbally or physically intimidated by an adult (significantly more than peers).

23%

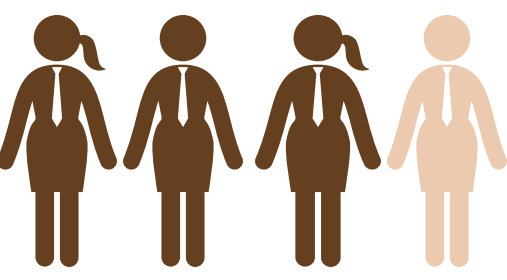

Although Manchester Public Schools has provided a number of equity-focused workshops and trainings for staff members, these initiatives have been limited, unsystematic, and often optional.

Staff members agreed that they would like additional professional development to be able to better work with:

- 17%** students or family members of color.
- 16%** student or family members identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, asexual, or pansexual.
- 20%** students or family members identifying as transgender, gender non-conforming, gender fluid or non-binary.
- 34%** students receiving ELL services or family members whose primary language is not English.
- 52%** students or family members with a history of trauma.
- 38%** students or families living in poverty.

A staff member spoke passionately about feeling unprepared to support an elementary student that she perceived to be questioning their gender identity shared that she would benefit from additional training in how to support transgender and gender non-conforming students, and students questioning their gender identity. The teacher said, "She would shut down and cry and not talk like I've never seen before...I felt like she was a true at-risk kid and I didn't know what to do for her...I can read up on it, but it still doesn't equip me as a teacher."

MPS is losing staff members of color to other school districts and is lagging in its stated recruitment goals for staff members of color.

	<p>Staff members of color were three times as likely (15 percent v. 4 percent) to agree that they have felt unwelcome in their school or office because of an aspect of their identity.</p>
	<p>Staff members of color were more likely than their white colleagues to agree that they are comfortable with the plan outlined for behavior management at their school, that the disciplinary rules established by the school district are easy to understand, and that they are confident in their ability to use restorative practices with students or adults.</p>

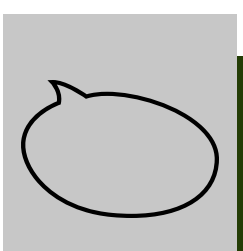
Many staff members of color talked about the challenges of being the only person of color or one of few people of color in their school or workplace. In particular, staff members of color reported feeling pressure and judgment from their colleagues and administrators at MPS.


Staff members of color reported being forced to take on the role of "spokesperson" about race and criticized for speaking up about racial issues. They recounted experiences when white colleagues failed to address how race and racism were impacting a situation. After naming or addressing a racial issue, Black staff members reported being labeled and stereotyped as 'an angry Black person'. A female staff person of color in a focus group said, "I find when I am in meetings and I say something that is related to race, it's like, 'Oh no, what is she going to say?'...Whenever I speak people get defensive." When equity and inclusion are being discussed in a school setting, staff members of color reported feeling less engagement and like equity work is considered their responsibility as POC.


Staff members of color reported feeling disproportionately called upon to leverage their relationships with students and their comfort with restorative practices to take on disciplinary and restorative work in MPS: "Kids of color who have issues with white teachers get sent to me because I will fix it," said one staff member of color in a focus group.

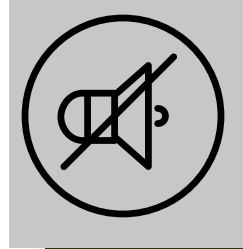
Lack of Institutional Structures for Support of Staff in Creating an Equitable School Climate in MPS

MPS lacks a comprehensive vision for equity work that can help the district systematically address obstacles to an equitable climate, more effectively communicate opportunities for engagement, and share successes in the district's equity work. The current organization of equity work in MPS and the lack of requirements for professional learning also fail to distribute the responsibility of institutionalizing equity onto all leadership. MPS is lagging in its stated recruitment goals for staff of color and in its retention of staff members of color; and the lack of staff members of color, particularly educators of color, was a common concern among students, staff, and families. There are particular gaps in institutional support structures needed by staff members of color and staff members with disabilities. MPS lacks a true multicultural curriculum and the tools staff members need to create an equitable classroom environment.

 Discussions and interviews revealed a pattern of staff members of color who were uncomfortable reporting their full and complete experiences and recommendations to the school administration.

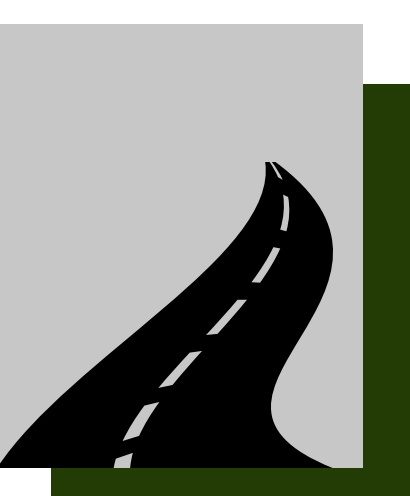
 One educator of color did not want evaluators to take notes during their interview for fear of being tied back to the conversation.

 An educator of color repeatedly mentioned in an interview that they didn't want to speak ill of the district, saying it was better than where they had been teaching prior and they did not want to get fired.

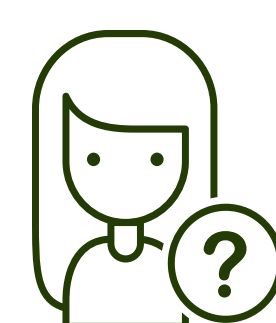
 One former teacher of color described efforts to change their classroom and school environment: "The department hated me. I felt silenced. It was psychologically damaging. That's why I had to leave."

Manchester Public Schools lacks a comprehensive vision for equity work including clear goals, outcomes, and channels for involvement.

The organization of equity work and lack of requirements for professional learning fail to distribute the responsibility of institutionalizing equity onto all leadership.

 Staff members talked and wrote about leadership in MPS being committed to equity, and evaluators witnessed district leadership demonstrating an ideological commitment to creating equitable environments. While equity is a priority, there is a need for a clear path toward equity with specific goals.

Staff members expressed an eagerness for the district to focus on specific goals and equity initiatives and clearly communicate how staff members can participate.

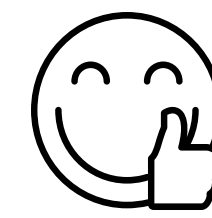
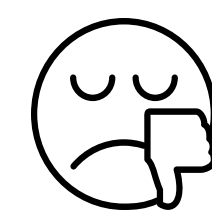


- Administrators who had significant gaps in their awareness, knowledge, and skills around educational equity, were not being supported in finding ways to build their awareness, knowledge, and skills nor were required to work on filling these gaps.



- A small number of administrators appeared to be shouldering the vast task of institutionalizing equity in MPS.

The lack of staff members of color, particularly educators of color, employed by the district was a common concern among students, staff and families.



- In a focus group, a Black female student said, "White kids excel and they're seeing themselves reflected. It's not fair that we don't have that."
- One Black male student commented in an interview, "We should have more Black teachers. More teachers that actually understand the culture and understand the students. These teachers don't understand the students and what they go through. They would at least understand how it feels. I have never had a Black teacher...just a counselor or an ISS [in-school suspension] person."
- During a focus group, a Black female student said, "It's harder to be the teacher's favorite when you are Black, no matter what you do. When I was cheering, nothing I could do could make me the favorite. I had to act more of like how white people act. To get anywhere in school, I needed to act white."

45%

When surveyed, 45 percent of students of color surveyed in grades 7-12 disagreed that there are teachers at their school who have a similar life experience as them.

Staff members with one or more disabilities report lack of support from Manchester Public Schools

39%

Staff members with disabilities disagreed that they are satisfied with the way their concerns are addressed by school and district leadership.

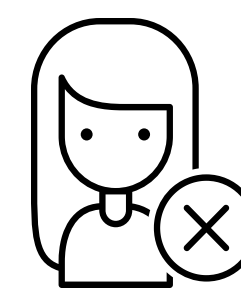
23%

Staff members with disabilities disagreed that leadership at their schools or in their offices are proactive in resolving conflicts between staff members.



Staff members with disabilities were more likely to agree that they feel they have been overlooked for a promotion or desired position change while being an employee in MPS.

One staff member described how the building is "not friendly for people who cannot go far," citing the lack of accessibility to athletic fields, band room, bathrooms, the conference room, and some entrances. While the main entrance and courtyard are accessible, this staff member described how the facility's one elevator is foul-smelling, inconveniently located, and too small, leading to uncomfortable and potentially unsafe situations for students and staff. "If a teacher worked here with mobility issues, it would be a nightmare," they said.

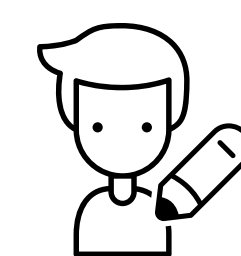


- Through a survey response, a white parent of a Black child stated, "I don't believe that anyone other than his guidance counselor has taken the time to get to know him." Another parent in a focus group for families of color said, "She has not had a teacher of color aside of the assistant in her classroom. However, I think children would feel a connection to their teachers of color if they had them. You're more inclined to feel like they can do things too. The discipline is an issue too, they are more inclined to see a child as a child not a "Black" child. They won't associate the culture with the behavior. Things would be more fair."
- A white parent of a white child also stated in a survey response, "I worry about the cultural responsiveness training (or lack thereof) for teachers and staff. I worry that my child's peers do not have a racially and culturally diverse group of teachers and teacher aides working with them, and this is a deficit for my daughter and her peers. Teachers and staff should better represent their classrooms racially and culturally."

Manchester Public Schools lacks a meaningfully multicultural curriculum.



Evaluators received reports and observed that the MPS curriculum includes minimal histories and narratives of people from marginalized groups, connection to current events, and examination of larger global justice issues.

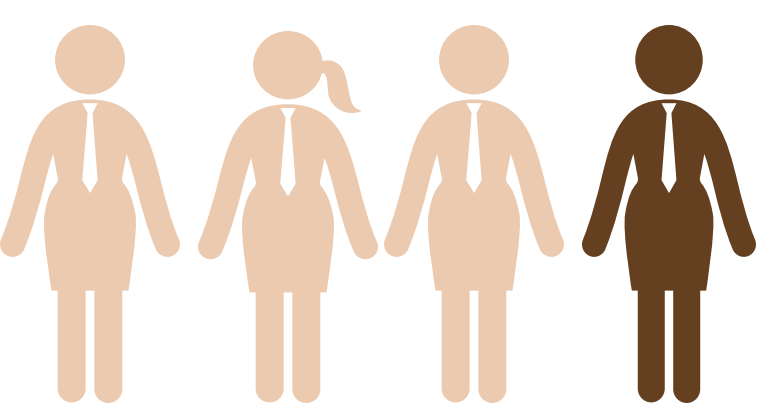


Students, staff members and family members reported gaps in the current MPS curriculum.

46%

Students of color in grades 7-12 disagreed that they see their racial and ethnic identities reflected in the things they learn at school.

White students in grades 7-12 were more likely than their peers of color to agree that they see their racial and ethnic identities reflected in the things they learn at school; read stories about people who share their racial or ethnic identity in school; and learn about the history of people from their culture at school.



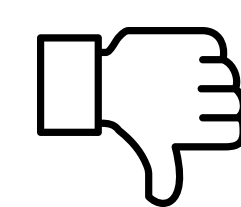
"We need cultural competence – representation of cultures throughout the curriculum and not just during Black History Month or Women's History Month. I want marginalized studies to be the focus and not the elective," said one staff member of color in an interview. "Nowhere in any of these history books, not any class I have been to, has there ever been a lesson on the Stonewall Riots. This is so ridiculous to me for a variety of reasons. It ties into LGBT (issues), but also transgender women of color...I don't know of any Puerto Rican history (being taught) ...none. But yet our population are a majority of Puerto Rican students."

When asked about the top inequities in the school district, one educator responded, "The lack of culturally responsive, Afro-centric, and Latinx cultures and "stories" (along with other ethnic and cultural backgrounds) as a central part of the learning experience/ curriculum for our youth."

One Black parent noted that the biggest challenge they faced as a parent is the "lack of cultural information in the school." They elaborated, "Children need to be taught more things about their own culture. The education is very one-sided."

Another Black parent responded stating that their biggest challenge is "finding better reading materials and books that relate truthfully to our history, culture and experiences" and "having more teachers of color represented in my children's schools."

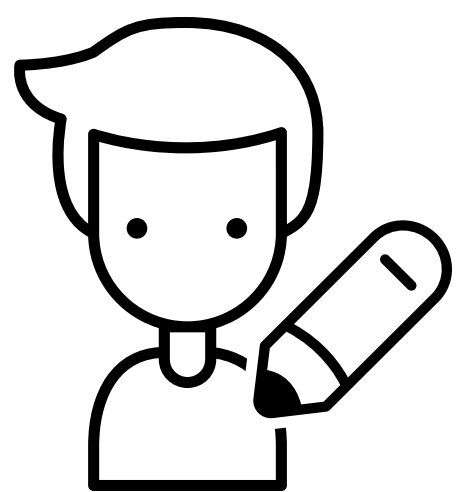
There is one person in the district that is tasked with supporting teachers in making curriculum more "culturally relevant" and "culturally responsive."



Staff members fail to consistently respond to discrimination, harassment, and inequities within a school culture in which staff members are not encouraged to talk about race, class, sexuality, gender identity, and other critical equity issues – highlighting the presence of color blindness in the district.

There are significant gaps in MPS staff members' skills needed to foster equitable learning environments.

Based on survey data and conversations with MPS staff members, evaluators found that many MPS staff members lack the knowledge, awareness, and skills to address the ways race, class, sexuality, gender identity, ability, religion, and language are impacting climate in MPS schools and workplaces. Staff members fail to consistently respond to discrimination, harassment, and inequities in MPS, and evaluators found a school culture in which administrators and adults are not encouraged to talk about race, class, sexuality, gender identity, and other critical equity issues. This lack of knowledge and skills among MPS staff is impacting relationships between staff and students from marginalized groups and their families.

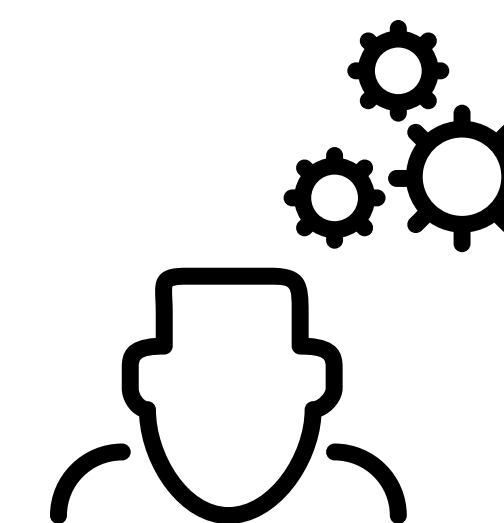


"It's about the look of my face," said one Asian American student. "I feel like a kid from Manchester. Kids used to say 'konnichiwa' to me, but it's now stopped. Other kids continue to call me Chinese. I just want to be called my name." He added, "It would help if the teacher would tell the class that I'm from Manchester, but my family came from [name of country]."

More than a quarter of staff members surveyed disagreed that they openly talk about race and racism with their students and disagreed that they are prepared to respond to racial conflicts at their school or office.

Only 13 percent of staff members agreed that they have reported issues of discrimination to a supervisor in their school or in the district.

One white staff member reported, "Staff mindset is a big challenge because of implicit bias. Public schools are reflective of society, and our society has an issue admitting white privilege."



Evaluators heard reports of staff concerns that discussing topics like sexuality and racism with children will only make things worse.

Staff members reported a hesitation and unwillingness by some white staff in the district to recognize race as an issue.

Another white female staff member said, "I am super frustrated...There is no talk about race, class and gender. Nothing said about the immigration and Muslim ban, and nothing from the district about what to do...Every morning I bring up privilege, Flint, other people who don't have things we have. We have to talk about it and I feel like no one is talking about it." This staff member went on to explain that she felt district leadership should be doing more to support students from marginalized groups. She explained that she wanted the district to "stand up for your marginalized students, especially Muslim students and undocumented students and families. Tell our undocumented students that we will protect them, that we will stand with them, that they are valued. Tell our community that as well."

When asked about teachers' responses to in-school harassment, one LGBTQ+ student said,

"They don't care. They don't pay attention. I have been called a dyke a lot.

I have been told to kill myself.

I have had a teacher laugh and tell me to get back to work."


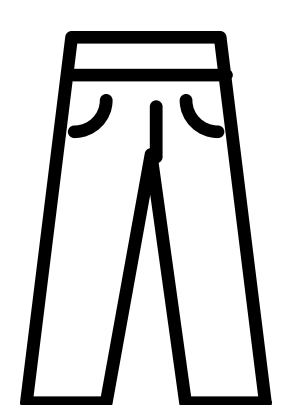
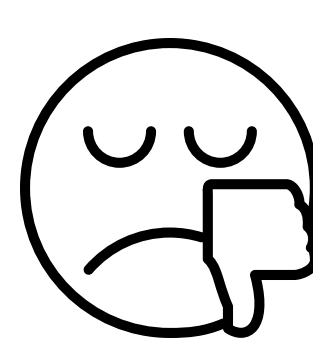
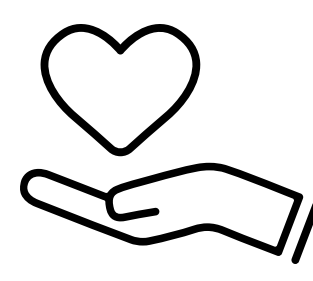



Students of color disagreed that teachers respond to conflicts about race in a way that makes things better.

Grades 5/6 **18%**

Grades 7-12 **31%**

Many students from marginalized groups reported a lack of positive relationships with educators and experiences of inequitable treatment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White students (grades 5-6) were more likely than their peers of color to agree teachers think that they are a good kid. 	<p>Students, particularly Black and Latinx students, reported feeling categorized as a “good kid” or a “bad kid” by adults. Students reported feeling labeled as “bad kids” based on how they talk, act, dress, who they associate with, or due to a single behavioral incident and reported experiencing different treatment, and feeling labeled by adults as “bad kids” based on their appearance and behavior.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students of color (grades 5-6) were more likely than white students to agree they feel pressure from adults at school to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to “fit in.” 	<p>Students, particularly female students, students of color, and students with one or more disabilities, reported feeling that teachers do not believe them. Girls, especially girls of color, reported in a number of cases, girls reported that teachers don’t believe that boys hit them or are bothering them.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female students of color (grades 7-12) were most likely to disagree that adults are supportive when they are feeling negative emotions compared to their peers. 	<p>Students with disabilities reported not feeling listened to, and feeling threatened by teachers: A Latina student reported, “They are getting two more cops. They don’t trust us. My mom and dad don’t trust the teachers in the school.”</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students without disabilities (grades 5-6) were more likely to agree that if something bad happens to them, there is an adult who believes them and responds in a way that makes things better than peers with disabilities. 	<p>Black female students reported feeling treated differently than white female students by adults. They more often reported being treated as angry or disruptive when they are upset.</p> <p>“I came from being an A+/B student to almost failing,” shared a Black female student. “I felt like I couldn’t do it. Teachers ignore how you feel. If I’m sad, I have an attitude. They don’t care or ask. They expect me to be angry, but I’m sad.”</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students without disabilities (grades 5-12) were more likely to agree that teachers understand and listen to them than their peers with disabilities. 	<p>One Latina student commented that they did not feel believed about a conflict, “When I told an adult [about a conflict with a substitute teacher], they wouldn’t listen and think I lied.”</p> <p>According to one teacher of color, “They’re called ‘bad kids’ but they’re just making poor choices due to frustration in class, they’re not getting the attention they need so they disrupt the class or exhibit poor hallway behavior.”</p>

The current relationship of staff members as authority figures and students as subordinates does not encourage student participation or collaboration with problem-solving, decision-making, and determining consequences, and it limits the development of positive relationships.

Students (grades 7-12) disagreed that adults involve them in decisions to make the school better.

40%+



Students commented:

- They [teachers] stand outside the bathroom to wait...”
- “They [teachers] feel like they can have attitude with you.”
- “Give kids a voice in the school, nobody asks us anything. We need a voice.”
- “Like they asked us about Power Hour but didn’t listen.”
- “The people who run things are the ones who don’t want us there. The opportunities are there. But they don’t want us.”

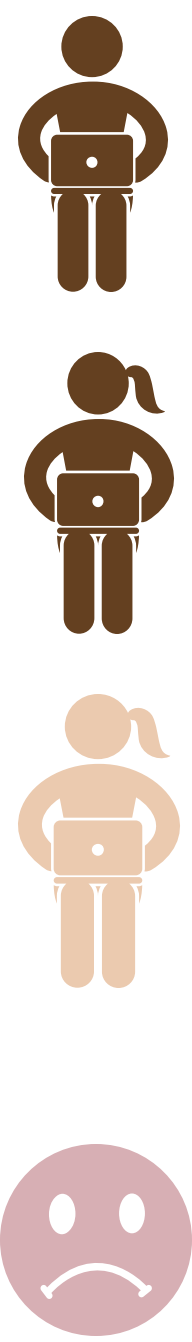
42%

Staff members agreed that punishment is effective at changing students’ behavior.

Staff members commented:

- “We need an opportunity where kids can be kids...It looks like a prison...It feels a lot of the time that fun is taken out of education.”
- “Every adult in the building needs to be comfortable with students’ needs. We don’t understand what ‘empowering students’ means. Some adults believe that ‘empowerment’ means giving children license to disrespect adults.”
- “The challenge to relationship building is relinquishing authority. However, teachers don’t understand the difference between ‘[F] you’ and ‘[F] this’ and that it’s not always personal.”

Exclusionary discipline is a major barrier to access to educational opportunities for students of color, students with disabilities, & students experiencing food insecurity.



- Students of color were:
- More likely to agree that they have been given an in-school suspension (ISS) or sent to ISS or given an office referral because of behavior.
 - (Grades 7-12) More than three times as likely to agree that they have been given an out of school suspension— with male students of color being significantly more likely to agree that they have been given out of school suspension.
 - **(Grades 7-12) Four times as likely as their to agree that they've been physically restrained by an adult in school.**
- White students (grades 7-12) were:
- More likely to agree they are treated fairly by adults at school.
- Students with one or more disabilities (grades 5-6) were more likely to agree that they have:
- Been removed or told to leave the classroom.
 - Received an office referral for their behavior.
 - **Been put in a room by themselves for their behavior.**
 - Been given an in-school suspension or sent to ISS.

In focus groups with middle school students receiving special education services

Students reported that teachers frequently disciplined them by removing them from their learning environment with little to no explanation.

“Teachers kicked me out and they don’t tell you why.”

“They lie to parents. They like to pick on you. Period.”

“[The Teacher] kicked me out because I didn’t get a quiz and said I should’ve been paying attention.”

Evaluators received multiple reports from staff that there is a conflict between the application of punitive and exclusionary discipline measures, and attempts to incorporate restorative practices.

A male behavioral technician said, “100 to 200 kids move through ISS each month. They [school staff] are following the restorative practices model in adult to student interactions. [The] Bulk of discipline is restoring adult-student relationships. It’s challenging dealing with teachers’ inconsistencies and correcting behavior without consequences.”

A staff member of color explained, “I am hitting the wall a lot of the time. The teachers just want to know ‘what are we going to do about the kids?’ They are out of control! What are we going to do?’ They say they’d like to respond with, ‘What are we going to do about you? You are kind of mean and you don’t have good relationship skills. What are we doing about that? – which you can never ask somebody for some reason.”

According to a former MPS teacher and resident, “The students feel it. The students of color get stopped in the hallways more and asked for passes, than the white kids.”

A staff member reported, “It frustrates me when colleagues think [students] are not capable and penalize them for something they’re not able to do, instead of making the necessary modifications. I had a 7th grader last year who couldn’t read *Cat in the Hat*. He was going to class and being a behavioral issue.” She said that staff frequently **ignore, mislabel, or over-diagnose students in need of reading intervention services.** “The teachers look just at the test scores and not the big picture.”

26% Staff disagreed that they are confident in their ability to use restorative practices.

- Staff members reported:
- A lack of clearly outlined/applied guidelines for how students enter/exit alt. placements.
 - A lack of clear and consistent processes to review the progress of students in alternative placements and evaluate their readiness to return to a mainstream environment.
 - “The idea behind them is that there is a strict plan to address skill deficits, fill a void, and start applying them in regular ed. When they were first opened they were meant to be a six-week placement. There are kids who haven’t left and have been there for a year-and-a-half.”

One alternative education student said, “It feels like I’m less than a student here.”



Students in alternative placements repeatedly reported feeling outcast.

There was a recurring theme that the structure of the alt. program was that of a locked-down hallway with no identity of its own and without access or rights to the educational experiences and opportunities afforded to the students/staff in the mainstream school.

One Black male student expressed, “I feel like they generalize us based on who we are and how we talk. Like ‘these types of kids.’” Another Black male student said, “They [teachers and staff] think we’re all juvenile delinquents out here.... They look at us like we’re not normal people.”

Entrance and exit criteria for alternative education placements in the district are not clearly defined nor understood.

An admin. of color described the process by which students who exhibit challenges in mainstream environments begin to be ‘tracked’ for alternative education, **“...there’s talk about a tough time with three 3rd graders. Girls. What to do with them? Test them...because there must be something wrong with them. It can’t be the administrators’ fault!” She went on to say, “Not every black girl who acts up is mentally deranged! They [admins] don’t want to hear the truth-They are the problem! It is something wrong with the kids or parents.”**

Students in alternative placements are unable to access the same social and academic opportunities as students in mainstream environments.

A high school student with a disability who is in an alternative placement explained some of the challenges he has faced throughout his educational life as a student with dyslexia: “I wish they had actually explained to me what dyslexic was. I didn’t learn about it until this year. All I knew is that I was being taken out of classes because I couldn’t read. No one ever explained to me what dyslexic was or why I was struggling. I wish they actually kept me in speech because I can’t pronounce a lot of things. I wish they would actually explain it...I asked my speech teacher why I took speech and she explained to me that it is a disability where you see things backwards or stutter, that’s also why I have an IEP. I didn’t know I had an IEP until freshman year in high school. High school is when I struggled the most...and when I was getting stressed out, I felt stupid...especially in History and English. I hated being forced to read aloud...me being forced to read made me worse. I was sad.”

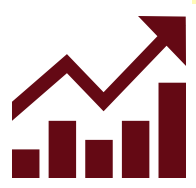
A white female student in the alternative education program said, “They say [this school] is the ‘island of misfit toys,’ but I don’t feel like a misfit.” She reports that when she tells people she is at the alternative program, they ask her: ‘who did you have to fight to get there?’ **She is very concerned about the lack of academic rigor in the program. She says that she is never given any homework assignments at [the school] and thinks this may impact her ability to do college level work.**

- Staff members commented:
- “Kids aren’t being academically prepared for college, but if they don’t learn to take care of themselves, develop their character, & manage emotions, academic rigor won’t matter.”
 - **“The kids in the DLC’s (District Learning Centers) say to me, ‘we are here because we don’t belong anywhere’.”**
 - “[These] students go to lunch last. Sometimes there is no food left for the students. [The school] doesn’t have its own identity. These are not ‘bad kids’, they have learning differences. This is not the ‘bad kids’ school. Alternative isn’t bad; it’s flexible, adaptable to learning and social-emotional needs... There need to be alternative paths for life after high school. Alternative schools need to prepare kids to be skilled and able to enter the workforce, but more resources are needed. We’re only one hallway.”
 - **“People over there [at the mainstream school] don’t care about us.”**

Students, staff, and families from marginalized groups reported barriers to accessing academic, extracurricular, and professional learning opportunities, major factors that contribute to the creation and maintenance of the equity gap.

The unequal access to opportunities includes: students from marginalized groups disproportionately experiencing exclusionary disciplinary actions; students and families from marginalized groups facing cost and transportation barriers preventing them from taking full advantage of academic and extracurricular opportunities in MPS; family members from marginalized groups—especially family members with disabilities—lacking information needed to support their students’ learning opportunities; a lack of clear entrance and exit criteria for alternative education placements in the district; and significant disparities between mainstream school environments and alternative education programs in climate and academic rigor. Low expectations from educators also prevent students from marginalized groups from fully accessing academic opportunities available in MPS.

Across all races, family members with one or more disabilities reported challenges accessing the same facilities, information, and opportunities available to their peers without a disability.

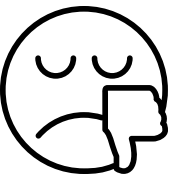


Transgender and gender non-conforming students (grades 7-12) were less likely to agree that teachers encourage them to achieve at a high level.



Black male students said:

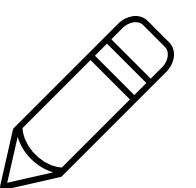
- “Sometimes I feel like I don’t get the help I need. She [the teacher] just tells me to keep trying.”
- **“Sometimes math is too easy. Some teachers have really high expectations for behavior.” He alluded to experiencing low academic expectations, while experiencing much higher expectations for his behavior.**



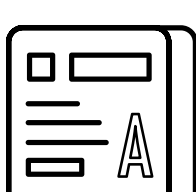
A Black female student said, “I feel like they set us up for failure. If a white kid says they don’t care, and they want to fail the teacher pushes them. But if Black kids don’t care then they [teachers] don’t [push].”



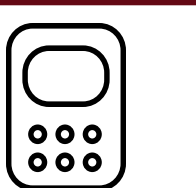
A Latino student expressed that, “I’ve been told by [a counselor], ‘Let’s be realistic, you’re not ready for a real college experience.... I’ve done stupid things, but that doesn’t mean that I’m stupid.’”



A student of color with a disability said, “I feel like we should learn more. We are not getting enough work. Some of the work is too easy. No homework.”



One Asian student reported, “Teachers will suggest things and tell your counselor to be in a certain class. They’ll say, ‘oh but you need it’.... they’ll force you to do it.” The student shared that, “Once you get good grades their standards are higher and maybe they should have the same standards for all the kids in the class.”



An Asian student shared, “My counselor also encouraged me to take a math class that was too hard for me. I’d be a lot more comfortable in a class where I know what I’m doing.”

Two family members with mobility issues described challenges accessing an elementary school. They described having trouble accessing parking spaces close to the building and needing to locate a staff member to use the elevator. They also described conferences being held in inaccessible locations and one instance in which they tried to attend a school event during which the handicapped accessible doors to the auditorium were not opened.

Family members without a disability were more likely to agree that they:

- **Are treated with respect by teachers.**
- **Feel comfortable speaking with teachers.**
- Are satisfied with the way school responds to concerns.
- Have been invited to volunteer at school.
- **Are greeted with kindness when they call or visit.**
- Know how their child is doing academically at all times.
- Receive information from the school about what their child is expected to learn during the year.

35% of non-native English-speaking students (grades 7-12) agreed that they are placed in classes that are too easy for them, making them significantly more likely to agree to this question.

Family members from marginalized groups reported challenges accessing information about school policies, parental and student rights, activities, and resources to ensure their children’s equitable access to educational opportunities.

22%

Family members disagreed that they know where they can get information about their rights as a parent.

A parent of a child with a disability described negative experiences accessing services and the arduous process of getting a lawyer to prove that their child needed an IEP.

“[I have a child] who has been at 3 different schools. [The child] had a hard time for a year and a half before they agreed that he needed to be in a Special Ed class. Instead of an experienced teacher, he had a rookie teacher who was hired because the other one quit. He is doing good now, but it was a fight with the people at the school. **The vice-principal told me it was because I didn’t know how to discipline him.**”

A parent of a child with a disability explained that their partner had to leave a full-time job to advocate for their child’s education.

“The parents at [school name] don’t know their rights so they get less. There is a serious disparity....I’ve considered leaving.”

Some staff members and families reported that information about parental rights and student services is shared inconsistently across the district.

**18%
50%+**

Family members of color disagreed that they know about after-school programs or extracurricular activities. White family members were more likely to agree to this.

Family members of color, LGBTQ+ family members, family members with disabilities, and family members whose children participate in free and reduced lunch program disagreed that they have received information about Gifted and Talented instruction, acceleration/enrichment classes, AP, Honors, and/or Early-College courses.

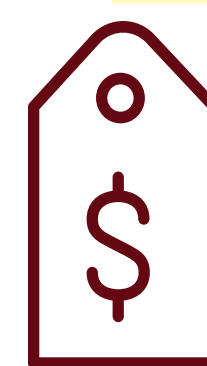
Low expectations prevent students from marginalized groups from accessing academic opportunities and achieving academic success in MPS.

Cost is a barrier for participation in school activities for many students & families from marginalized groups.



White students and students not experiencing food insecurity were more likely to:

- **agree that their teachers encourage them to achieve at a high level.**
- **agree that their classes are academically challenging for them.**



Students from marginalized groups were more likely to agree that they do not participate in some school activities because they cost too much money.

Family members from marginalized groups were more likely to agree that the cost of extra-curricular activities makes it difficult for their child to participate.

“Just because a student’s pants are hanging [low], it doesn’t mean they are any less intelligent. I have a student who I can’t get to pull his pants up, but he speaks five languages – but no one has tapped into that.”

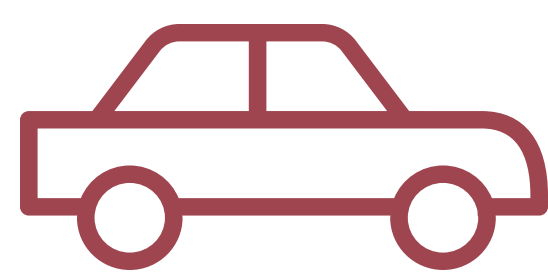
A white female teacher commented on her observations about the lack of resources allocated to provide instruction to ELL students. She talked about a South Asian student who is doing great with hands-on learning but hasn’t yet learned to read. “[ELL] Students were kept in guidance because they have to go through testing, but since there is no ELL teacher available to test these kids, these kids are out of the classroom.... These parents are trusting that the school is caring for and teaching their children!”

One white female teacher spoke about how the academic leveling or tracking system at a high school connects with low expectations, particularly of students of color, “What I have noticed is that there is a lot of coded language... ‘That was pretty good for a CP [College Prep] class... That was amazing for a [College Prep] class’.

Lack of access to transportation is a barrier to taking full advantage of academic and extracurricular opportunities for many students and families from marginalized groups.

Families of color, LGBTQ+ family members, non-native English-speaking families, and families whose children participate in free /reduced lunch program were at least twice as likely to agree it is challenging to attend events because of transportation. Students of color, students who do not speak English at home (grades 5-12) were significantly more likely to agree it is difficult to get to school because of transportation.

Evaluators sat in on classes to observe lessons and instruction. Evaluators found lower-level classes included less engaging material, less engaging teaching strategies, and often more behavioral disruptions. Evaluators saw an over-representation of students of color in the lower-level classes observed during the assessment and an under-representation of students of color in academically advanced classes.



There was a significant difference in reported feelings of school connectedness between heterosexual and LGBTQ+ students, in particular students of color belonging to one of these marginalized groups.

Students and staff from marginalized groups reported a lack of connectedness to their school environment.

This trend emerged prominently among LGBTQ+ students, transgender students, and gender non-conforming students, in particular students of color belonging to one of these marginalized identities; students and staff with disabilities; and non-Christian students. It is important to note that when assessing the experiences of male students of color, evaluators collected conflicting data on feelings of safety and belonging in school.

30%+

LGBTQ+ students (grades 5-12) disagreed that they feel like they belong at school, disagreed that they feel proud to be a student at school, and disagreed that they are interested in what they are learning in school.



During a focus group, an LGBTQ+ student said, "It's not a very supportive and open environment. [The adults] try to change things... but in my opinion nobody is really listening to the kids. The adults are doing things their own way. There's a lot of disrespect from both the kids and the adults, and not really a lot of effort to communicate what both sides think is wrong or what would help.... I think adults in general think kids don't have valid views, like we don't experience enough to know anything." She commented to the evaluator that she's never before had a space to discuss her experiences and express how she feels as student in Manchester Public Schools.

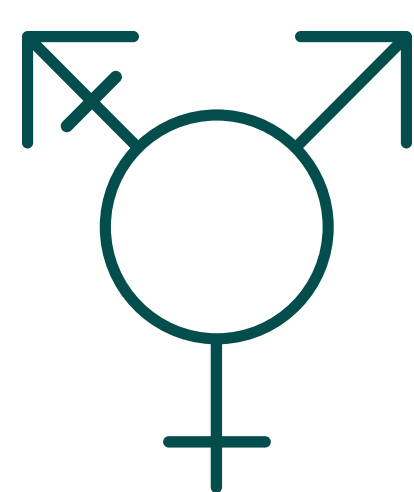
Transgender and gender non-conforming students of color and LGBTQ+ students of color reported challenges connecting to their schools.



Female students of color and transgender and gender non-conforming students of color (grades 7-12) were less likely to agree they feel like they belong at school.



LGBTQ+ students of color (grades 5-12) were less likely to feel they belong.



Transgender and gender non-conforming students of color were less likely to agree:

- They are treated fairly by adults.
- Teachers at their school understand and listen to them.
- They are able to dress and do their hair how they want and still be respected by adults in their school.

The same queer Black male student reported that he struggled to get help when he was being physically abused at home the previous year. He said he had tried to tell the principal and social worker but was ignored. He said that often he would be late to school, and he would try to explain what was happening at home and explain why it was difficult to get to school on time. He felt that his appearance as a big, Black "man" prevented MPS adults from listening to him – he expressed the feeling that if he was a 'little white girl' who was telling them 'these things', the school would have acted right away. When he was out of school for a few days, his friends went to school administration to express concern for his safety. He said he had reached the point of contemplating suicide. Once his friends expressed their concern, DCF was called, an investigation was conducted, and he was removed from the home. Although he now feels safe, he also expressed that he has no faith in the adults at MPS.

One Black male student who identified as queer reported being called a "fruit loop" by an upperclassman and laughed at as the upperclassman proceeded down the hallway. Other queer students agreed: "That stuff always happens, like almost every day."

Across all races, there was a significant difference in reported feelings of school connectedness between male students, female students, and transgender and gender non-conforming students.

Male students (grades 7-12) were more likely to agree that they feel like they belong at their school and feel proud to be a student at their school than female students or transgender and gender non-conforming students.

Transgender and gender nonconforming students (grades 5-6) were less likely than their male and female peers to feel proud to be a student at their school – only 65 percent of transgender and gender non-conforming students in grades 5 and 6 agreed to this question.



Black female students in elementary school, connected with one another over the way that boys mistreated and harassed them at school. One student shared, "They [boys] try to start fights and try to get us mad..." to which a second black female student responded, "Disrespectful! [Boys] Don't know how to treat a lady." A third student shared, "They [boys] say bad things about you. They say things about your family. They try to get your attention." A fourth student added, "They push you." A fifth student said, "They steal your stuff, they say the B-word and the F-word, and it makes girls really mad and want to punch them." When asked how these interactions with boys make them feel, Black female students from the same focus group responded: "It makes me mad", "It makes me feel unwanted at this school. It makes me feel like they want me to be in another state", "They make you want to cry, and they make you uncomfortable", "It makes me uncomfortable; I don't want to be over the top."

Across all races, there was a significant difference in reported feelings of school connectedness between students with one or more disabilities and students without a disability.



Students with disabilities (grades 5-12) were more likely than their peers without a disability to agree that they have been made fun of or intimidated by other students in school and that they feel pressure from adults at their schools to change the way they speak, dress or act in order to 'fit in.'



White students grades without a disability and students of color (grades 7-12) without a disability were most likely to agree that they feel like they belong at their school compared to their peers.



In both student surveys, students without disabilities were significantly more likely than their peers with one or more disabilities to agree that:

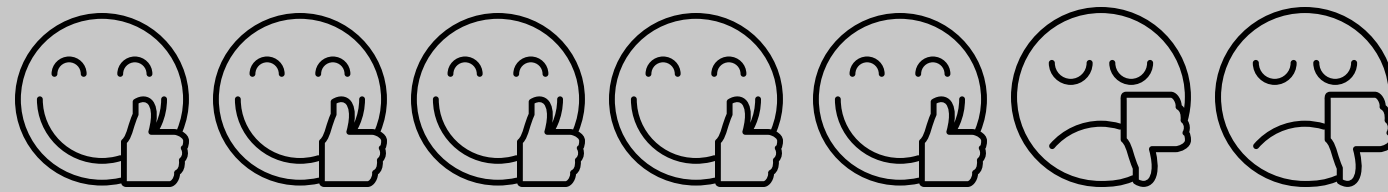
- They have friends that accept them.
- They feel like belong at their school.
- Students at their school respect people who are different from them.

According to a white staff member, there is a prevailing attitude in the district about special education students – that they are not the responsibility of all staff members. She explained, “There’s an attitude of ‘we have bigger fish to fry’ and they are ‘those kids’... No! They are our kids.”

Across all races, there was a significant difference in reported feelings of school connectedness between staff with disabilities and staff without a disability.

33%

Staff with disabilities agreed they could have had a better career or experience working in a different school, a significantly higher percentage than staff without a disability.



Staff members without a disability were more likely than their peers with disabilities to agree that:

- They enjoy being in their school or office.
- There are opportunities for them to pursue positions with greater leadership and pay.
- They are given material to perform their job well.
- They are a valued member of their school team.
- They are proud to work at their school or office.

One staff member said, “I have ADHD. It is ok if I am able to be on my medication, but when I’m not it’s hard to plan,” said another staff member with a disability. “I have not had the good experience others have. When teachers talk about students with the same disability as me it’s always negative. I’ve never felt comfortable enough with any of them to say I have challenges.”

Staff with disabilities were more likely than staff without to agree that they feel pressure at their school or office to change the way they speak, dress, or act in order to fit in and to agree that it is difficult to get to work on time because of transportation.

Across all races, there were significant differences between non-Christian, Christian, and nonreligiously-affiliated students’ experiences of school climate in MPS.



Christian students in grades 7-12 were more likely than their non-Christian and non-religiously-affiliated peers to agree that:

A Muslim female student shared, “I try not to be rude when people say weird stuff about my religion or something that impacts me. It’s like once you say something people think you represent Islam in general.” When asked what conversations she’s had about religion in her school, she described people commenting on her hijab, asking “why are you wearing that thing?” She also said that people mention terrorist groups whenever the topic of Islam comes up and explained, “Those are two separate things. You can’t talk about it in the same unit.” A second student added that discussing terrorism along with Islam would be tantamount to talking about the KKK when someone brings up Christianity.

- They are treated fairly by adults at their school.
- Their teachers understand and respect their families’ traditions.
- They feel optimistic about their future.
- Their teachers think they are a good person.

Another non-Christian student shared, “Teachers get along with social students – they will just be like “oh cut it out.” Last year, I was the only hijab and this guy was like, “oh I really like Donald Trump,” and they didn’t even care because they were popular and knew they weren’t going to face any consequences... [They were making] anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish jokes, and no one was laughing but no one would stop them. I don’t know if the teacher didn’t hear it, but she was just writing on the board and didn’t stop it.”

A white female educator said, “[When] the countdown to Christmas begins...family issues around Christmas start to surface for the kids. Regardless of whatever religion kids might have, all you hear about from school staff is all about Christmas.”