Closing the Gap
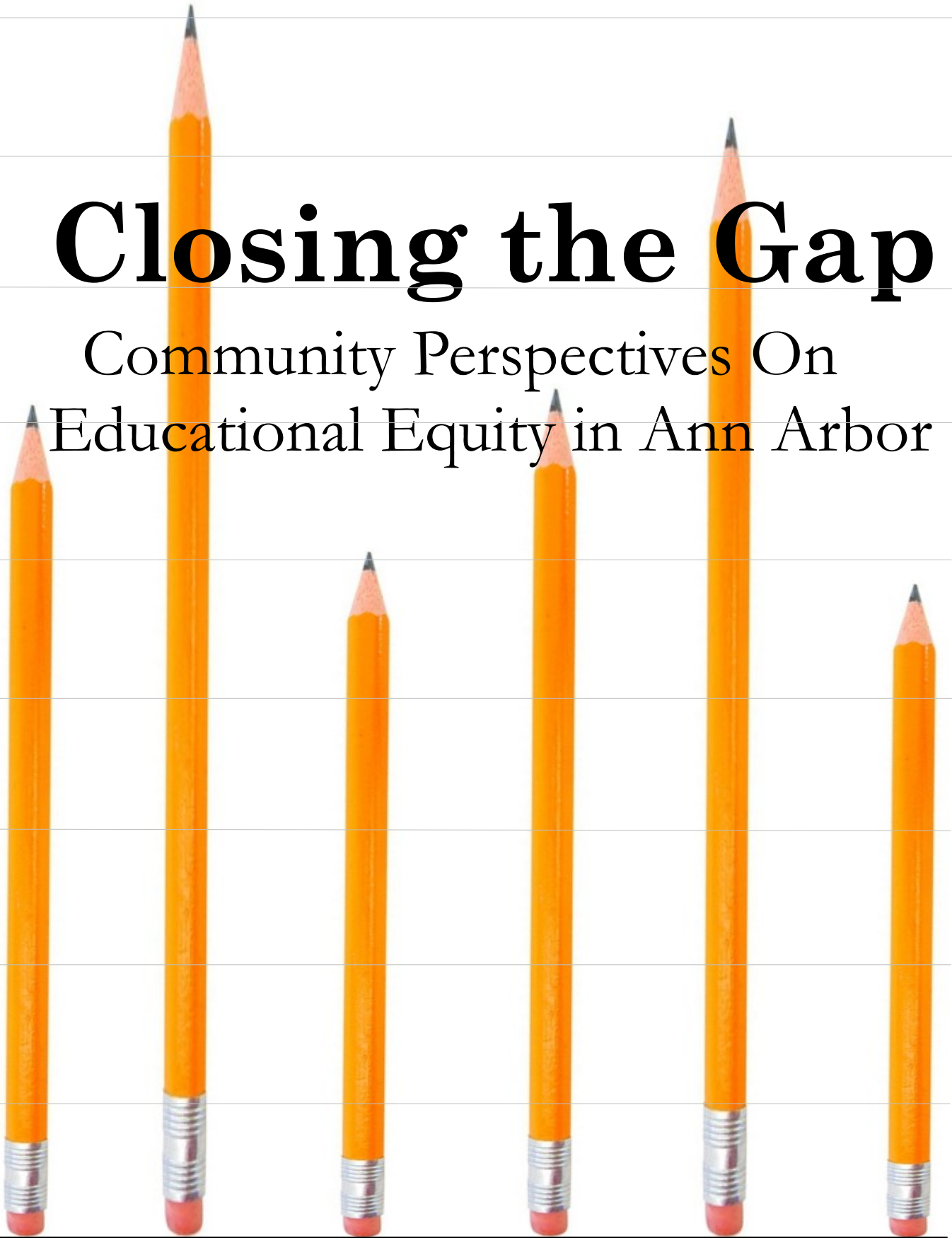
Community Perspectives On Educational Equity in Ann Arbor

A Report of the

Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice

May 2013

Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice

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Mission

Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice inspires, educates, and mobilizes people to unite across differences and to act from their shared ethical and spiritual values in pursuit of peace with social and environmental justice.

Vision

Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice envisions a world free from violence, including the violence of war, poverty, oppression, and environmental devastation. To enact this vision, we commit to nurture a community in which compassion and respect foster actions that dismantle systems of violence while simultaneously creating systems of peace, justice, and ecological sustainability.

Our History

In December of 1965, a small interfaith group from the Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County Council of Churches met for the first time to discuss the undeclared war in Vietnam. Shortly after, the Interfaith Council for Peace, including Jewish, Unitarian, and Christian clergy and lay leaders, was formed to combat the "twin evils of war and hunger." Almost half a century later, the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice continues to unite our community to think globally and act locally to build a better world.

Your Involvement

ICPJ is a member-led organization. Your involvement by sharing your thoughts, volunteering your time, and your financial contributions is essential to our impact. Contact us today to get involved.

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Introduction

Once a year educational inequality fills the local headlines when standardized test scores highlight how far our schools still have to go to achieve racial and economic equity. Hands are wrung as some people say we need to do more to ensure that our schools educate all students while others rush to declare the problem unsolvable and to abandon efforts toward equality.

And then the issue fades from the headlines.

Since 2009, the Racial and Economic Justice (REJ) Task Force of the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) has worked with members of the Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) and other educators to explore ways to improve educational equity. Following a series of small-group discussions with the school district and community leaders, REJ convened a gathering of educators, scholars, service providers, and community members to map out:

- What are the points of leverage available to promote educational equity?

- What groups are currently working in these areas?

- What gaps exist that are not being filled?

Many insights came out of that meeting, which REJ then further organized based on if the concern is personal or institutional and if it happens inside or outside of the "schoolhouse walls" (see Appendices).

REJ continued to research and refine these concepts into the series of analyses and recommendations put forward in this report. Our hope is that the findings of the report provide support for exiting AAPS efforts to promote educational equity, insights that might improve these works, and a challenge for the school district to continue to strive to create a learning and teaching environment that serves all students.

Potential next steps from the Achievement Gap Map

Overall approach

There are three core elements of ICPJ's approach to addressing educational inequities:

1. Structural Perspective: We recognize that the teachers, administrators, and support staff at Ann Arbor Public Schools are well-intentioned and genuinely want to provide educational equity, yet the data show that our schools provide unequal education based on students' race or economic status. How do we explain this persistent effect?

The Aspen Institute identifies how white privilege, national values, and contemporary culture can create conditions that maintain ongoing racial inequalities even in the context of formally "colorblind" policies and a stated commitment to equality, a dynamic they refer to as "structural racism".[1]

In today's world where overt Jim Crow segregation is long gone and outright bigotry is now taboo, those committed to equity must apply a more sophisticated analysis of structural inequalities and consciously work to dismantle them.

2. Institutional Accountability: Often discussions of educational inequalities descend into blame-passing. The usually implicit, sometimes overt, message is, "We've done all we can, but without (better parents, more funding, community responsibility, etc.) we can't be expected to better educate these children."

In *Courageous Conversations About Race*, Glen Singleton and Curtis Linton challenge educators to abandon attempts to evade responsibility. Instead, they offer the challenge that*:

> Educators need to stop placing blame on the places and people beyond their control. By doing this, they will avoid faulting children for who they are and what their background is. We advocate a new strategy because it encourages educators to engage in difficult self-assessment and to take responsibility for what they can control: the quality of their relationships with colleagues, students, and their families, both in the classroom and throughout the school community.
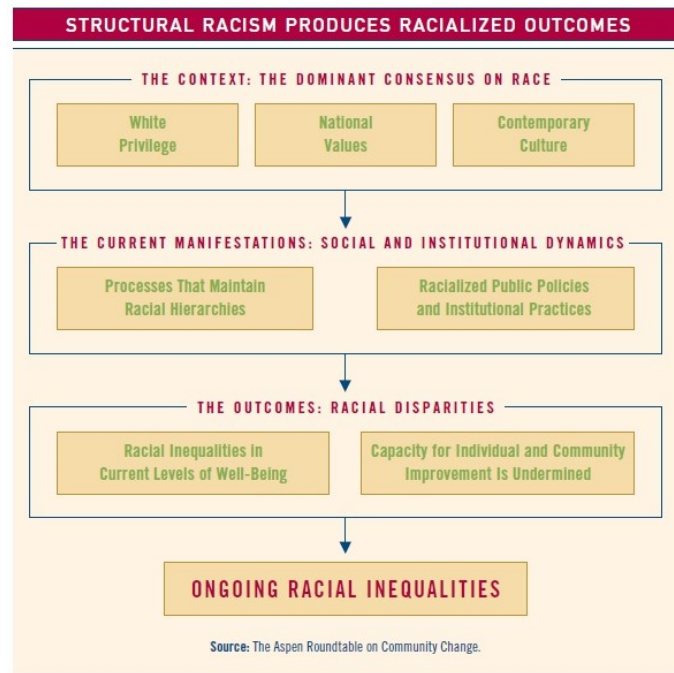
While Ann Arbor Public Schools has decided to curtail its partnership with Pacific Education Group, we encourage AAPS to fully embrace Singleton's call for robust institutional accountability.

3. Targeted Universalism: In their work with education funders, the National Center for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) calls for an approach of "targeted universalism," explaining that:

> The key is for grantmakers to focus conscientiously on the needs of marginalized students, in ways that can benefit education generally and the population of students at large. Without such targeting, the services and systems-change efforts funded by foundations are not likely to successfully address the needs of marginalized students.[2]

NCRP finds that:

> Several studies of seemingly neutral universalist programs conclude that without an explicit recognition of barriers to equality in grantmaking, such initiatives can serve to reify deeply entrenched structures of privilege and hierarchy, no matter how well-intentioned. Universalist programs can and do result in gains for targeted beneficiaries; but the unconscious reifying of existing racialized structures that lead to disparate outcomes are a cause for concern. [Grantmakers who presume] systemic neutrality would achieve their objectives more effectively if they respond to who benefits and apply "targeted universalism," an approach that is targeted to benefit the most marginal, but benefits all in the long run.

While the NCRP focuses its work on grantmakers, their findings also apply to educational institutions themselves. Calls to provide "quality education for all students" are important, but we will only achieve that goal if we specifically address the needs of those whom the education system leaves behind.

Teaching

As educators and education supporters, the participants in our mapping session put a high value on teaching, teacher training, and teacher support. They also recognized that issues of teacher evaluation and assignment touch on thorny, politicized concerns within the education community.

As Ronald Ferguson notes in *Toward Excellence with Equity*, "There is growing evidence that students are most motivated when teachers are strong on all three legs of the instructional tripod: content knowledge, pedagogic skills, and relationship skills. The evidence is clear that some teachers produce much larger achievement gains than others do and that differences in teacher effectiveness tend to persist from year to year in the absence of effective professional development."[3]

We are grateful, then, to see the high emphasis placed on teacher professional development in the District's Achievement Gap Elimination Plan (AGEP)[4] , and we look forward to seeing the

implementation of these plans.

Teaching Recommendations:

Consistent with Ferguson's findings and the "targeted universalism" perspective described above, we recommend that AAPS:

- Assign the best teachers to the students who most need great teaching, in line with the AGEP recommendation to "examine personnel policies [to place] best teachers in high need areas."

- Focus teacher training on the achievement gap. This includes training teachers to identify and confront their own individual racial and cultural biases (including both overt and tacit bias) as well as systemic bias (e.g. the TESA program). As one participant noted, "The cultural ignorance of many middle class educators (Black and White) causes them to misinterpret some of the behaviors and affectations of minority students. For example, young men dressing in baggy, saggy pants and hoodie sweatshirts is a Black cultural expression frequently associated by middle class educators with the negative aspects of misogynistic rap music, crime and drug use. For most young Black men, this is merely the uniform worn by those within their culture and age group, having no specific negative association."

- Include improvements in educational equity in teacher evaluation.

Cultural Inclusion

One education professional at our mapping session described the importance of "a rigorous, relevant curriculum *in which students can see themselves"* [emphasis added]. We are therefore grateful that the AGEP calls for the district to "View curriculum and instruction through the lens of equity."

One challenge in this language of inclusion is making sure that educational, library, and other materials portray the experiences of people of color, working people, women, and immigrants as central to the American narrative rather than as add-ons.

For example, one of the participants in our mapping section described an American History textbook he reviewed at a different school district. The textbook had a call-out box in the section dealing with the settlers that talked about the "Black Settlers." Although the inclusion of African Americans in the settlement narrative is an improvement from the previous norm of invisibility of

A school district that wishes to relate to students of all identities must consciously and continuously work to identify the ways that what is in the textbooks, what is on the walls, and what is in the library may unintentionally marginalize some students"

non-white settlers, this framing leaves people of color in the margins. The body text tells the story of (white) settlers (who are never named as white, because that is the assumption), while the unusual group of "black settlers" is set aside as a curious addendum in the call-out box.

These design and content choices can be subtle, but they are powerful. Dominant American culture creates a perspective in which some identities are seen as "normal" (white, male, straight, middle class) and some identities are seen as "other" (immigrant, Latino/a, lesbian, disabled). A school district that wishes to relate to students of all identities must consciously and continuously work to identify the ways that what is in the textbooks, what is on the walls, and what is in the library may unintentionally marginalize some students.
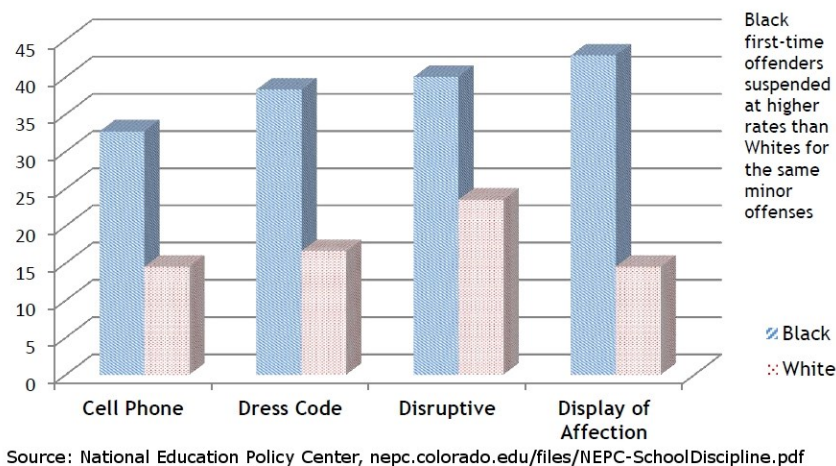
Cultural Inclusion Recommendation

- Conduct a "cultural inclusion" audit of curricular and library materials. Such an audit could survey:

    - How many picture books show people of color or people with visible disabilities?

    - Are multiple family arrangements included in instructional materials (single parents, nuclear family, same-sex parents, grandparents caring for grandchildren, extended families living in a single house)?

Discipline

AAPS has already identified that discipline inequalities can lead to unequal access to education, and we are grateful to see the districts efforts to address this concern. We look forward to hearing the results of the meetings of the task force convened to address this issue. We strongly encourage AAPS to continue with this initiative and extend it.

Black first-time offenders suspended at higher rates than Whites for the same minor offenses

Source: National Education Policy Center, nepc.colorado.edu/files/NEPC-SchoolDiscipline.pdf

There are several elements of the District's discipline gap plan that we find laudable. First is the focus on standardizing, collecting, and reviewing data relevant to discipline. This practice is in line with the recommendation of the National Education Policy Center's *Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice* that "Public school educators should routinely collect, reflect upon, and publicly report data on school disciplinary removal."[5] REJ also appreciates the consideration of "pro-social skill development that teaches empathy, impulse control, and anger management" and the "social and emotional learning components in schools.

For all its strengths, there is one notable failing of the discipline gap plan: it does not recognize the role of structural racism. Nationally, there is significant evidence to show that students of color face harsher punishments for the same infractions than do white students. For example, the *Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice* report observes that black students were suspended at a rate two to three times greater than white students for the same offence. Within the district we hear anecdotal accounts of the same dynamic. AAPS cannot solve the discipline gap problem unless it directly addresses the fact that well-meaning teachers, administrators, and other school staff may be handing out harsher punishments on students of color than on white students.

The Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice report observes that black students were suspended at a rate two to three times greater than white students for the same offence.

Recommendations:

- Develop robust and transparent mechanisms for reporting discipline data by race, infraction type, and responses taken so that inequalities in disciplinary actions can be identified and addressed.

- Work with teachers, administrators, and other support staff to explore how individual bias, even when tacit, can result in institutionalized patterns that favor certain students over others.

Curriculum

The ACEP includes attention to the role of curriculum in closing the achievement gap. In this context, we would add that an inclusive curriculum should not ask more of students' parents and guardians than they can provide.

In 2009, Joan Doughty of the Community Action Network shared concerns about the AAPS "Home Links" component of the *Everyday Math* curriculum with REJ. Ms. Doughty noted that this curriculum requires a "competent adult assistance." The curriculum requires that parents not only ensure that students complete their homework, but also to help explain the math concepts presented and in the manner in which they are presented. We call this approach "parent teaching," and it expects that parents have:

- sufficient time available to spend assisting their children with homework;

- a stable enough home situation to reliably assist students with homework;

- sufficient attention, ability, and time to learn this curriculum's specific system of math instruction.

Not all parents and home situations meet these three criteria, and the long history of education inequity means that those that do not meet these three criteria are disproportionately people of color and people of low economic means[6]. Therefore, a curriculum that requires parent teaching risks reinforcing the achievement gap. Research shows that parental involvement, including parental involvement in homework, supports student achievement.[7] This concern is acknowledged in a 2009 report by Andrew Thomas for the Ann Arbor PTO Council, which notes that "because EDM [Everyday Math] involves a significant amount of parental participation, it would be reasonable to hypothesize that children from highly-educated, two-parent households would fare better with EDM (compared with other math curricula) than children from less-educated, single-parent households." The report does go on to note, though, that the "data is [sic] not inconsistent with this hypothesis, but there is no conclusive evidence that this is the case."

The debate about the merits of Everyday Math is beyond the scope of this report, but the dynamics raised in the controversy can be applied more broadly: equitable education depends on recognizing and addressing the different needs and background of different students. Family status, cultural background, household income, and other variables affect students' classroom experiences, and curriculum choices must be sensitive to these dynamics.

Curriculum Recommendations:

- We therefore recommend that the Everyday Math curriculum be re-examined to see if it is the best curriculum to ensure that we educate all students.

- Implement "student context reality check" to ensure that the assumed parental involvement in the curriculum does not reinforce the achievement gap.

Accessible Administration and Support

Providing a high-quality education to all students is a complex undertaking. AAPS employs highly-trained staff who are fluent in the language of pedagogical theory and who can navigate the maze of federal, state, and local policies and mandates.

Parents are not equally able to ensure this system works for their children. Parents and caregivers with advanced degrees, flexible work schedules, and stable home situations are better able to navigate the school system when their child needs additional support. For example, we recently heard from one parent who was unable to get instructional assistance for her son until a friend helped her understand the institutional jargon, the "magic words," that triggered intervention.

Parents and caregivers with advanced degrees, flexible work schedules, and stable home situations are better able to navigate the school system when their child needs additional support.

A system that works best for the highly-educated well employed will reinforce social stratification.

Administration and Support Recommendations

- Develop a practice of "accessibility testing" AAPS services. The disability rights movement has changed how we construct our built environment. Every carpenter and architect is now trained to ask, "how would somebody in a wheelchair access this site? How would somebody with low vision navigate this space?" AAPS should use this same mindset and rigorously test all practices to ensure they are accessible to people who speak English as a second language, who don't have stable housing, who don't have advanced degrees, etc.

- Explore the possibility of using accessibility testers (similar to secret shoppers or the equality testing model used by Fair Housing Center) to test the accessibility and equity of AAPS services.

- The professional development work undertaken by AAPS provides a framework for educating teachers and administrators about institutional racism, but they are not the only professionals who impact student success. Look for ways to expand this engagement to support staff, school board members, and the staff and volunteers of non-AAPS educational programs (e.g. tutoring programs, health services providers, PTO leaders).

External Partners: Support Services

Not all education takes place in the classroom or even the schoolhouse. We respect the partnership that AAPS has built with service providers such as tutoring groups, health service providers, and social service agencies to provide the comprehensive services to support learning and learners.

We have found the staff and volunteers involved in these programs to be deeply concerned about student well-being and committed to a quality education for all students. Concern and commitment, while necessary, are insufficient to end educational disparities.

To truly promote equity, support service providers also require an understanding of the structural dynamics of economic and racial inequity and the tools to address them--exactly the kind of analysis and skill-building that AAPS has been working to develop through your professional development work.

We see an opportunity for AAPS leadership here for the school district to support the professional and volunteer development of support service providers so that they are better equipped to address their own tacit biases and the structural factors that contribute to education inequity.

Recommendation

- Encourage staff and volunteers of nonprofits providing support services to go through racial justice training. AAPS may even wish to require such training for key service providers.

External Partners: Funders

Ann Arbor Public Schools' expressed commitment to ending educational disparities positions the district to challenge local education funders and to also prioritize educational equity. AAPS can be a leader and a model for the Ann Arbor Education Foundation, Ann Arbor Community Foundation, PTOs, and other groups that fund education. The existing partnership with the Ann Arbor PTO to provide funding to allow low-income children to participate in field trips is one example of such leadership.

Funder Recommendations

- Help to help shape the conversation to prioritize educational equity. In particular, we support the findings of the National Center for Responsive Philanthropy that call on "grantmakers to provide at least 50 percent of their grant dollars to benefit marginalized groups and to provide at least 25 percent of their grant dollars for "advocacy, organizing and civic engagement to promote equity, opportunity and justice.[8]"

Special Education

We are concerned with the disproportionate referrals of students of color into the special education system: being a student of color is not a mental illness. It is not an indication of a learning disability. We recognize that there is a tricky balance to find here. On the one hand, it is a problem if students with legitimate learning impairments are not diagnosed or do not receive the supplemental instruction that could help them succeed academically. On the other hand, there is a real danger in teachers and other education professionals mis-diagnosing minority students and shuffling them off into special education programs rather than discovering the techniques that would allow them to succeed in regular classrooms.

Clearly, this is an issue that needs solutions both inside and outside the school. In the school, professional training and administrative accountability can help ensure that students are correctly matched with the instructional services they need. Outside the school, dynamics such as de facto housing segregation often mean that students of color are more exposed to environmental conditions that can create learning disabilities. For example, the Centers for Disease Control notes that lead exposure can lead to "intellectual and behavioral deficits in children" and that "[blood lead levels] remain higher for certain populations, especially children in minority populations, [and] children from low-income families[8].

Recommendations

- **Apply the lessons of the discipline gap initiative to the special education gap**. As stated above, we are supportive of the AAPS work to address discipline disparities, and we see this program of procedure standardization, data collection and analysis, and professional development as a potential model for addressing inequalities in special education.

- **Strengthen advocacy partnerships with human service providers.** Special education disparities require a holistic approach to address both the in-school and out-of-school contributing factors. AAPS has built partnerships with human service providers to expand access to these services within the school, but budget cuts at the state and federal level imperil both schools and service providers. Unfortunately, most advocacy efforts to maintain our public education system and social safety net have been isolated from each other. Continued and improved funding for education is vital, and we encourage AAPS and its Board to continue advocacy efforts for education and to build ties with local human service providers and state bodies such as the Michigan League for Public Policy (formerly the Michigan League for Human Services) to ensure this funding.

Transportation

Recent budget debates have highlighted the importance of student transportation and the challenge providing it in light of decreased state funding. Transportation means more than getting to and from classes; it also means having access to activities outside of school hours. After-school tutoring can make the difference between academic success and failure. Eligibility requirements for sports and other extracurricular activities provide the needed motivation to keep a student's grades up.

Tutoring and extracurricular activities can be important tools to closing the achievement gap—if students can access them. That's why transportation outside of the school hours is so important.

Transportation recommendations:

- Continue exploring transportation coordination with the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority;

- Support efforts to improve transit service in area, including enhanced urban core transit. The AAPS boundaries extend beyond the City of Ann Arbor boundaries and into areas that have limited-to-no transit service. The AATA's 5-year transit plan, if implemented, would facilitate improving transportation options to all AAPS students.

Attendance and Grading

After the initial mapping session, one person shared additional commentary about grading and attendance policies and practices. He notes:

> Attendance and grading practices/policies tend to support the efforts of traditionally successful student groups while stacking the deck against others. Traditional grading policies/practices easily generate the scenario where, if a student has failed to complete or turn in a few assignments early in the semester/marking period, his/her average would be zero percent. Once this trend is established, there is little motivation for the student to engage in the learning process as no amount of effort will bring the overall average into a reasonable range. Consequently, students just give up. Efforts are being made to use practices where 49% is the lowest possible score a student can obtain. This being the case, effort later in the semester/marking period will yield rewards.

Attendance and Grading recommendation

- Review district policies on attending and grading and submit them to a "student context reality check," as we recommend for curriculum selection. Work to ensure that such policies allow students to recover from poor performance early in the semester and that they do not unduly punish students with unstable family situations or whose family background does not include the cultural capital of how to navigate the educational system.

Unintended Tracking

One novel insight that arose from our community mapping session was on the existence of "unintended tracking." There have been reports that scheduling effects create unintended cohorts of students who move together in similar classes, which could lead to students being tracked into better or worse performing cohorts. For example, it was reported that the students who are together in band are also often in the same math, language, and science courses, and that these tend to be higher-performing classes. It was further reported that some parents of color actually place their children in band so that they will be tracked into these higher-quality classes.

Conversely, it was reported that students in remedial English, for example, may have difficulty scheduling honors math classes, even if they would be eligible.

The data for this practice are anecdotal, but it may merit additional analysis of class data to see if changes in class scheduling could mitigate students being tracked down in to lower-performing classes if they are already in one remedial class.

Unintended tracking recommendation:

- Evaluate if unintended tracking merits study as a mechanism that could impact educational equity.

Conclusion

The Racial and Economic Justice Task Force of the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice is grateful for Ann Arbor Public School's expressed commitment to eliminating racial, ethnic, and economic disparities in education.

We hope that the findings of this report will assist the AAPS in the hard work of focusing many elements of the educational system toward promoting equity, including teaching practice, discipline policies, educational materials curriculum, teacher training, and administrative , support, and extra-curricular functions.

While the goal is a school system that works for all students, we encourage you to adopt a "targeted altruism" approach and to focus your resources on those most marginalized. A rising tide does not lift a sinking boat, nor will educational reforms address the achievement gap unless they explicitly address the most vulnerable students.

Appendix 1: Initial Achievement Gap Map

Is it based on students themselves of messages they get from school/cultural context?

There are methodologies to address the

3 steps to motivation

Health

Food/Shelter/Clothing

Student Well-being

Adequate funding for social services

Address lack of motivation of students/parents

Daily Parton book program in Ypsi

Success by 6

Pre-K School readiness

Need to have appropriate diagnosis and treatment

Disproportionate enrollment based on race and income

Who involved

Special Ed System

When is a parent/teacher conference triggered? Do we let kids fall too far?

Ensuring schools and agencies have sufficient resources

Getting referrals for supportive services

Student support services

School districts

Neutral Zone

Peri at WISD

Community centers

826 Michigan

Washtenaw County Literacy Coalition

Resources

AAPS has a lot of programs of various types

Personal level: inside of school

Personal level: outside of school

Achievement Gap in Washtenaw County

Structural Level: Inside Schools

Focus on the class

Way to remind educators of gap, hold accountable

Get good numbers

Use the numbers you have

recognize achievement disparities in the numbers

Create curriculum that is relevant, rigorous, and that students can see themselves in

Curriculum

Create curriculum that recognizes family realities outside of school

Limited ability based on limited number of textbook options

Who involved

Teaching has a major effect on the achievement/equity gap.

Teaching

Who has access to best teachers?

Some schools are more ability to attract high-quality teachers than others.

Teacher evaluation

Teacher training

Who involved

How affects?

Extra Curriculars

Cost to participate

Treating in math begins in Middle School and your math class is a partially determinate factor for your other classes

One class affects other classes

Some parents put their kids in band or orchestra so their class's schedule is more likely to shake out with them in other classes with similar kids

You need to get into the feeder system for AP and accelerated classes

Discipline policies and practices

Cohorts are created

Who involved

Need to prevent suspensions

Advocacy efforts

community support for policy changes

People involved

Some parents know better how to work the system

"create demand" for high-quality education

Some "tricks" guarded

Success Stories

Pioneer and huron switched PSAT from Sat to Weekday

Help parents know or create user-friendly system

Tiered project: 3 keys to SOC success

How is information exchanged?

Resources

Anti-bullying collaboration

Books: Black students and middle class teachers

Transportation issues

Structural Level: Outside of Schools

Comprehensive analysis of root causes

Our racialized history affects education today

Achievement gap exists within larger system of racial/economic inequality

Government funding priorities

Not all schools receive same per-pupil funding

Not all students cost the same to educate

Not all schools cost the same per-pupil funding

Not all school systems have the same physical capitol costs

Appendix 2: Outline of Initial Achievement Gap Map

This outline summarizes the themes and concepts that arose during the Achievement Gap Mapping Session. Not all themes and concepts were included in the final report. This presentation of the data does show the connections between concepts (see appendix 1).

1. **Personal level, outside of school**
    a. Student Well-being
        i. Health
            1. School-based health clinics with social workers and Nurse Practitioners
            2. Mental Health Services
            3. Resources
                a. Huron Valley Guidance Clinic
                b. SOS Community Services
                c. Youth and Family Services
                d. WISD
                e. ACA (Association for Community Advocacy) Sherry Hernandez
            4. Needs to be comprehensive system of care
            5. Infant Mortality
            6. Environmental racism
                a. E.g. effects of increased exposure to lead paint
        ii. Food/Shelter/Clothing
        iii. Adequate funding for social services
    b. Address lack of motivation of students/parents
        i. Is it based on students themselves of messages they get from school/cultural context?
            1. La'Ron tells students of color, "you are swimming in a sea of shit"
                a. Personal responsibility: learn the backstroke
                b. Communal responsibility: change the sea
        ii. There are methodologies to address this
        iii. 3 steps to motivation
            1. Not motivated
            2. Motivated by external or instrumental reasons
            3. Motivated by an internalized desire to understand

2. **Personal level, inside of school**
    a. Pre-K School readiness
        i. Success by 6
        ii. Dolly Parton book program in Ypsi
    b. Special Ed System
        i. Need to have appropriate diagnosis and treatment
            1. E.g. properly diagnose and appropriately treat Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
        ii. Disproportionate enrollment based on race and income
    c. Who is involved
        i. Student Advocacy Center
        ii. Courts
        iii. National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
        iv. Community Support and Treatment Services (CSTS)
        v. Support groups for parents with children with FASD
    d. When is a parent/teacher conference triggered? Do we let kids fall too far?
    e. Student support services
        i. Getting referrals for supportive services
            1. E.g. Family Learning Institute
            2. Varies by school
                a. Principal important
                b. What are trigger points for getting a referral?
    f. Ensuring schools and agencies have sufficient resources
        i. UM School of Social Work changes that require field placements to have a licensed social worker on paid staff
        ii. State/local funding cuts
    g. Resources
        i. School districts
        ii. Neutral Zone
            1. Lack of similar programs outside of A2
        iii. Homeless Youth program at WISD
        iv. Community centers
            1. Community Action Network
            2. Peace Neighborhood Center
        v. 826 Michigan
        vi. Washtenaw County Literacy Coalition
            1. Washtenaw County Literacy Directory
        vii. AAPS has a lot of programs of various types

3. Structural Level: Inside Schools
   a. Focus on the data
      i. Way to remind educators of gap, hold accountable
      ii. Get good numbers
      iii. Use the numbers you have
      iv. Recognize achievement disparities in the numbers
   b. Curriculum
      i. Create curriculum that is relevant, rigorous, and that students can see themselves in
         1. AAPS doing process
      ii. Create curriculum that recognizes family realities outside of school
         1. Everyday Math curriculum
         2. Assumes parents have
            a. Time to be involved in homework
            b. Competency to be involved in homework
            c. Motivation to be involved in homework
      iii. Why do we get curriculum like this?
         1. For the people who created and chose this curriculum, these assumptions probably hold
         2. Blind spot to other experiences because of what they see as normal
         3. Bureaucracy of curriculum development
            a. Changes in education trends
            b. Desire to make mark, role out new program
         4. Responsive to demands from some parent groups
      iv. Limited ability based on limited number of textbook options
         1. Need to teach how to put BS meter on for textbooks
      v. Who involved
         1. District Admins
         2. Department heads
         3. WISD has role
         4. State gov: graduation standards
         5. Individual teachers implement curriculum
   c. Teaching
      i. Teaching has a major effect on the achievement/equity gap.
      ii. Who has access to best teachers?
         1. Some studies indicate that the gap could be eliminated by re-shuffling teachers.
         2. Distribution of teachers in classrooms
            a. Local control issue

iii. Some schools are more able to attract high-quality teachers than others.

iv. Teacher evaluation

v. Teacher training

1. Courageous Conversations About Race
   a. AAPS was using
2. Need to go deeper
   a. Put into practice
   b. Discuss at deep level
3. Recognize that unexamined norm is not a neutral state of being
   a. Check assumptions
   b. Recognize racial and economic blind spots
   c. Ongoing process
4. Resources
   a. UM School of Social Work PODS (privilege, oppression, diversity, social justice)
   b. UM School of Ed.
      i. Connecting more with local schools, not just teaching education students, teaching existing teachers
5. Who involved
   a. UM School of Ed.
      i. Lab classes to show & discuss techniques
         1. Equity conversations big issue there
   b. WISD professional education
   c. Washtenaw Area Children's Council
      i. Teacher trainings
         1. Anti-bullying training on April 29
   d. Unions
      i. AAEA (Ann Arbor Education Association)

d. Extra Curricular Activities

i. How affects?

ii. Cost to participate

e. One class affects other classes

i. Tracking in math begins in Middle School, and your math class is a partially determinate factor for your other classes

1. If you're grouped with the kids labeled "smart" in math, due to scheduling, you'll more likely end up with the same kids for English

  ii. Some parents put their kids in band or orchestra so their class schedule is more likely to shake out with them in other classes with similar kids

  iii. You need to get into the feeder system for AP and accelerated classes

  iv. Cohorts are created

   1. Externally viewed as higher or lower-performing

   2. Self identity as higher or lower-performing

f. Discipline policies and practices

  i. Need to prevent suspensions

   1. Can cause dropouts

   2. Can cause family homelessness

   3. Educate parents about how to work with system

  ii. Who involved

   1. Kathy Wyatt, Sherriff's Department

   2. NAACP school to prison pipeline study

   3. Student Advocacy Center

g. Advocacy efforts

  i. community support for policy changes

   1. Efforts to close the achievement gap will face resistance from those who benefit from the current system

   2. Institutional inertia inhibits change

   3. The community needs to know more

  ii. "create demand" for high-quality education

   1. Bob Moses' work with UM School of Education

   2. Organizing students and parents

  iii. People involved:

   1. NAACP

   2. Black Parents Student Support Group (BPSSG)

h. Some parents know better how to work the system

  i. Some "tricks" guarded

  ii. Help parents know or create user-friendly system

  iii. How is information exchanged

   1. "Natural helpers" model of peer/parent navigator might help

i. Success Stories

  i. Pioneer and Huron switched PSAT from Sat to Weekday

   1. Reduced cost and other barriers to participate

   2. Did it increase # kids who took it?

  ii. Anti-bullying collaborations

   1. Success or increased suspensions?

Notes

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