

Loudoun County Public Schools

# Comprehensive Equity Plan Evaluation: Final Report



August 2022

# Comprehensive Equity Plan Evaluation: Final Report

Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) has demonstrated a strong commitment to excellence with a reputation for rich learning experiences and high achievement outcomes for students. In recent years there has been an intentional focus on addressing inequities to ensure that every LCPS student has access to high quality learning experiences and feels a sense of belonging and connection to the wider LCPS community.

This report provides a summary of the Year Two implementation goals from the Comprehensive Equity Plan adopted by the Loudoun County School Board (LCSB) in September 2020. The report includes multiple sections chronicling the development of the plan, the monitoring and implementation of the plan's goals through the use of logic models, results for each logic model, conclusions, and next steps toward creating and sustaining equity for every LCPS student.

## BACKGROUND ON THE COMPREHENSIVE EQUITY PLAN

The LCPS [Comprehensive Equity Plan](#) was developed through a combination of qualitative data, including recommendations from both the [Systemic Equity Assessment](#) in June 2019 and the Equity Committee in December 2019, quantitative data, and a root cause analysis of opportunity gaps and disparities among racially marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented groups.

During the spring of 2019, LCPS underwent a systemic equity assessment. Five themes emerged from a series of focus group sessions conducted at 24 schools across the division:

- Despite efforts from the division, school site staff, specifically Principals and teachers, indicate a low level of racial consciousness and racial literacy. People are unclear and fearful on how to participate in conversations about race, let alone respond to racially charged incidents.
- Educator focus groups indicated a desire to recruit and hire diverse school staff that reflect student racial and language backgrounds.
- Economic diversity across the county/division complicates the discussions about race, leading many people to steer the conversation away from race to focus on poverty.
- Discipline policies and practices disproportionately negatively impact students of color, particularly Black/African-American students.
- Many English Learners, Black/African-American, Latinx, and Muslim students have experienced the sting of racial insults/slurs or racially motivated violent action.

Around the same time, the Equity Committee of the LCSB, initially named the Ad Hoc Committee on Equity, was formed with the task of submitting recommendations for equity-focused solutions to the LCSB by December 2019. After completing this task, the Committee was extended in December 2019 and is still actively working to address inequities in LCPS. The Committee's current charge is to create a culturally responsive school system by researching current LCPS practices and policies related to equity.

Additional input was provided through an iterative process including the Pathway to Equity Community Conversation in February 2020, informal discussions at various cross-departmental leadership meetings, and two meetings of the Equity Committee held in June and July 2020.

After reviewing the feedback provided by key stakeholder groups, the Office of Equity developed the LCPS Comprehensive Equity Plan for implementation across the school system. Multiple drafts of the plan were shared for feedback and revision before the final version was approved by the LCSB in September 2020. The rationale for developing the three-year plan was to fulfill the following commitments to equity (LCPS, 2020):

- **Collaborate and engage with families and community stakeholders** to ensure student growth and success for every child.
- Ensure a **culturally-responsive and supportive environment** that represents a welcoming, identity-affirming, inclusive, and safe teaching and learning space for every student and adult.
- Utilize strategies to **eliminate opportunity gaps**.
- **Improve programming** to leverage greater access, opportunity, and outcome data for students.
- **Provide continuous professional learning and coaching** on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work to our teachers and staff.

Since that time, the Office of Equity has collaborated with leaders across the division to implement the plan in order to address inequities and eliminate barriers that prevent students from reaching their full potential. The foundation of this work is a framework comprised of six focus areas (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** LCPS Equity Framework.



## CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL TEAM MEMBERS

Over the last two years, the Office of Equity has partnered with a cross-departmental team of content experts who have identified implementation and outcome indicators that would measure progress toward meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Equity Plan. During Year Two of the plan, the content experts continued to assess indicators such as equity-focused professional development, diverse student enrollment in advanced academic opportunities, perceptions of the implementation of culturally responsive practices, suspension rates, participation in affinity groups, and the recruitment and hiring of a diverse workforce.

The following LCPS staff are acknowledged for their participation in cross-departmental team meetings:

### **Office of Equity (previously within the Office of the Superintendent)**

- Lottie Spurlock, Director of Equity/Cross-departmental Team Facilitator

### **Department of Instruction**

- Nereida Gonzalez-Sales, Director, High School Education
- Chad Green, Analyst, Program Evaluation
- Veronica Cuadrado Hart, Coordinator, Family and Community Engagement
- Tina Howle, Director, Professional Learning
- Amanda Kim, Supervisor, Professional Learning
- Elaine Layman, Director, Elementary School Education
- Cynthia Lewis, Supervisor, Culturally Responsive Instruction
- Gus Martinez, Director, Middle School Education
- Jenny Miller, Supervisor, Professional Learning
- Rae Mitchell, Executive Director, Chief of Schools
- Neil Slevin, Executive Director, Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Ryan Tyler, Director, Research, Assessment and School Improvement

### **Department of Student Services**

- Dr. Charles Barrett, Coordinator, Diagnostic and Psychological Services
- Dr. Clark Bowers, Director, Student Services
- Dr. Tracy Jackson, Supervisor, School Counseling
- Dr. Stefanie LaPolla, Supervisor, Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- John Lody, Director, Diagnostic and Prevention Services
- Dr. Lindsay Orme, Coordinator, Social Emotional Learning
- Nykea Purnell, Supervisor, Special Education
- Ashleigh Spiegel, Supervisor, Special Education
- Dr. John Walker, Supervisor, Student Support Services

### Department of Human Resources and Talent Development

- Laura Collins, Supervisor, Human Resources and Talent Development
- Lisa Gray, Director, Human Resources and Talent Development
- Bob Phillips, Director, Human Resources and Talent Development
- Alix Smith, Supervisor, Human Resources and Talent Development
- Karyn O’Neill, Supervisor, Human Resources and Talent Development

### Department of Digital Innovation

- Seju Shastry, Data Modeler
- Thomas Wolf, Coordinator, Digital Experience
- Andy Wolfenbarger, Director, Infrastructure and Engineering

### Department of Support Services

- Tisha Austin, Assistant Director, Transportation
- Erin Goodykoontz, Supervisor, Management and Coordination

### Department of Business and Financial Services

- Susan Casale, Executive Director, Financial Services

### Communications

- Joan Sahlgren, Director, Communications and Community Engagement

## EQUITY LOGIC MODELS

To distribute the data collection responsibilities across the departments, the Year Two goals of the Comprehensive Equity Plan were organized into seven themes as follows:

1. **Culturally Responsive Framework:** Support student-centered learning environments with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse students.
2. **Expanded Access to Gifted and Advanced Academic Opportunities:** Create access to opportunities for underrepresented student populations in gifted programming and advanced academic opportunities.
3. **Equity Literacy Development:** Identify and differentiate professional learning opportunities to further equity literacy development for staff across the division.
4. **Student Affinity Groups:** Provide opportunities for students to interact with other students from their affinity group to increase connections to school and their identity.
5. **Equitable Practices Related to Discipline:** Utilize the Culturally Responsive Framework to mitigate against bias in discipline practices by student groups (e.g., by race, students with IEPs, English learners or ELs).

6. **Integration of Trauma-Informed Practices:** Integrate trauma-informed practices with equity through [Multi-tiered System of Supports](#) (MTSS), social emotional learning (SEL) and other LCPS supports for students.
7. **Diverse School Faculty and Staff:** Recruit and retain a high performing, diverse workforce.

These themes were operationalized into implementation and outcome indicators, along with suggested methods for data collection, in accordance with a logic model format. The indicators did not represent an exhaustive list of all action steps and priorities across each department, but rather targeted their strategies which contributed to a welcoming, inclusive and affirming environment for all students.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The cross-departmental team of key stakeholders collected quantitative and qualitative data for Year Two of the Comprehensive Equity Plan from a number of data sources including surveys, self-assessments, documentation reviews, and the Phoenix student information system database. Descriptions of the three primary data collection sources for this report are provided below.

### LCPS Annual Student Survey

The LCPS [Annual Student Survey](#) was conducted in March/April 2022 to assess indicators of school climate, as well as the implementation of key initiatives. Seventy percent of students in third through fifth grade participated in the elementary student survey and 47% of middle school students responded to the secondary student survey. High school students were excluded from the LCPS Annual Student Survey because they participated in the Virginia School Climate Survey.

The SEL subscale of the LCPS Annual Student Climate Survey provides an assessment of student’s perception of their ability to demonstrate the five SEL competencies (self-management, self awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills).

### LCPS Annual School-Based Staff Survey

The LCPS [Annual School-Based Staff Survey](#) was conducted in March/April 2022 to measure perceptions about school climate and instructional practices. Thirty-four percent of teachers and classified staff completed the survey.

### Culturally Responsive Tiered Fidelity Inventory

The [Culturally Responsive Tiered Fidelity Inventory](#) (CR-TFI) was administered as a self-assessment to PBIS Teams in January/February 2022 to align culturally responsive practices to the core components of [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#) (PBIS). The goal of using this fidelity inventory is to guide PBIS teams and schools in examining how to cultivate strategies and practices into their existing schoolwide PBIS framework to increase responsiveness to the cultures and communities they serve.

# Culturally Responsive Framework and Equity Literacy Development

The purpose of the LCPS Culturally Responsive Framework, developed during the 2019-20 school year, is to “create and guide support of student-centered learning environments with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse students that have been marginalized by inequitable systems” (LCPS, 2020). The three components of the framework help guide the culturally responsive practices of teachers, specialists, and administrators as follows:



## **Welcoming, Inclusive and Affirming Environment**

A welcoming, inclusive and affirming environment feels safe. It is a space where people can find themselves represented and reflected, and where they understand that all people are treated with respect and dignity. The environment ensures the multiple identities and cultures of students, staff and families are affirmed, valued, celebrated and used as assets for teaching and learning.



## **Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment**

Inclusive curriculum and assessment affirms diverse identities and engages students in deeper learning in the content area by building knowledge and skills in cultural literacy. It creates opportunities for students to examine authentic challenging problems including issues of justice and equity. Inclusive curriculum and assessment provides culturally affirming opportunities for students to make meaningful contributions to the community and the world.



## **Engagement and Challenge through Deeper Learning**

Through continual reflection and introspection of its policies and processes, LCPS teachers, administrators, and staff design and implement instructional practices that are responsive to the needs of all learners by promoting a learning environment that values the perspectives of its students, staff, families, and the greater Loudoun community. Taking a broad view of culture, LCPS strives to reflect the diversity of the human experience, recognizing the strength and value of varied perspectives and approaches on the transmission and acquisition of knowledge.

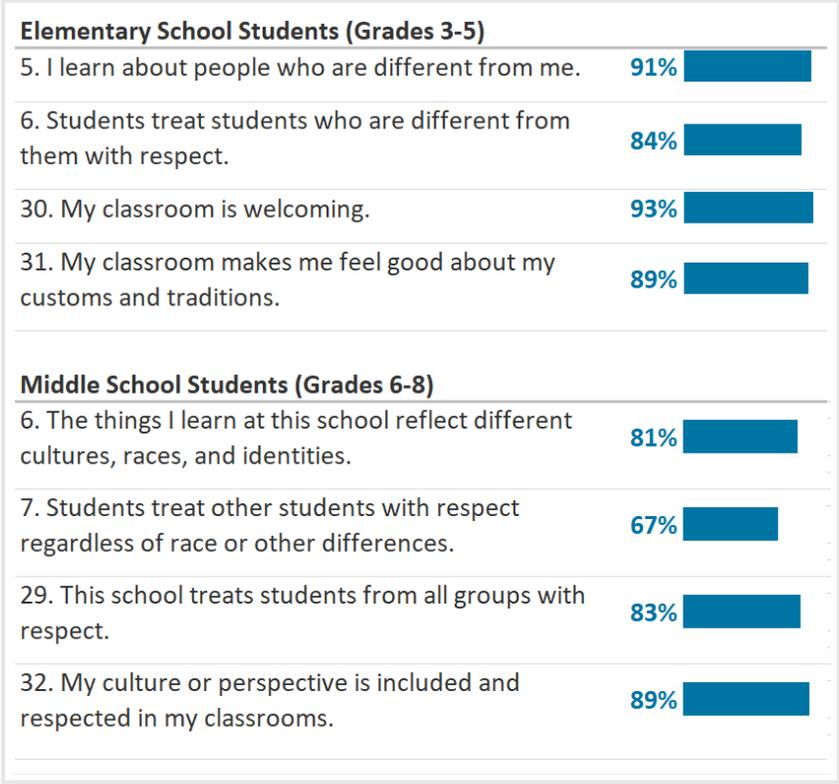
During the 2021-22 school year, the Office of Culturally Responsive Instruction provided at least 14 different professional learning opportunities for licensed, classified, and central office staff to support their culturally responsive practices and the integration of the Culturally Responsive Framework. The sessions focused on equity in LCPS, family engagement, culturally responsive instruction, deeper learning, and culturally responsive leadership. In addition, 645 new hires completed Equity in the Center Foundations. The Office of Equity accomplished their goal of maintaining Equity Leads at each school.

## PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the results of the LCPS Annual Student Survey (see Figure 2), 89% of elementary and middle school students felt that their culture is included and respected in their classrooms. Elementary students also reported high levels of agreement with statements such as *I learn about people who are different from me; Students treat other students with respect; and My classroom is welcoming.*

More than 80% of middle school students indicated that *they learn about different cultures, races, and identities in school and that the school treats students from all groups with respect.* The lowest area of agreement was *Students treat other students with respect regardless of race of other differences* (67%).

**Figure 2.** Student perceptions of the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Framework. Annual Elementary Student Survey and Annual Secondary Student Survey, 2022. Percent of respondents answering “Yes,” “Strongly Agree,” or “Agree” with each statement.

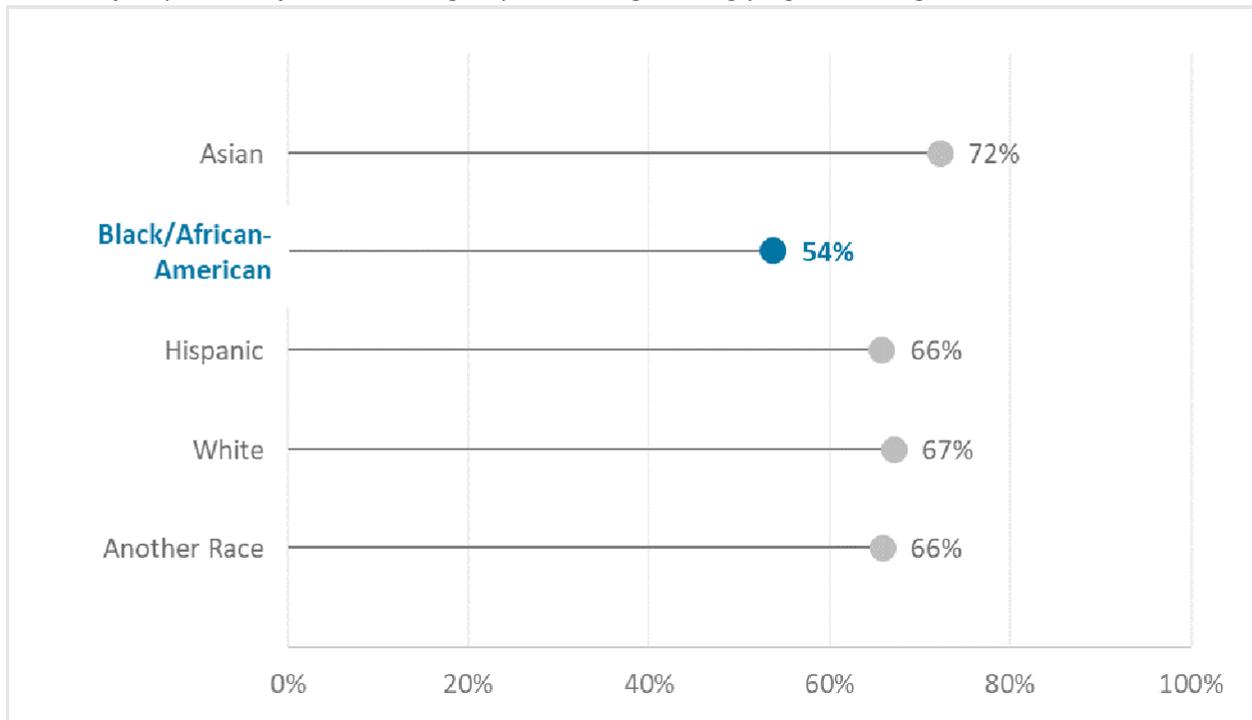


Only 54% of Black/African American middle school students agreed that students treat other students with respect regardless of race or other differences, a rate more than 10 points lower than any other racial group (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Middle school student perceptions by race for the statement “Students treat other students with respect regardless of race or other differences.”

Annual Secondary Student Survey, 2022.

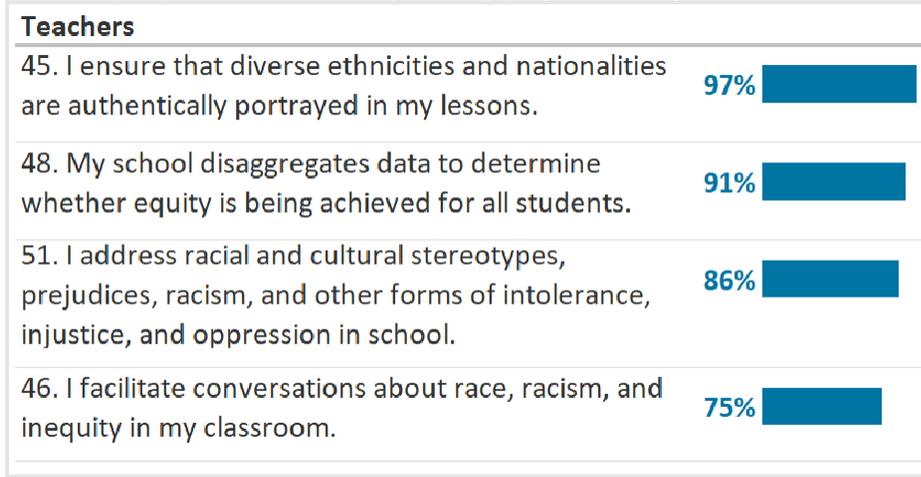
Percent of respondents from each subgroup answering “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with each statement.



Similarly, almost all teachers who responded to the LCPS Annual School-Based Staff Survey (see Figure 4) agreed that *diverse ethnicities and nationalities are authentically portrayed in their lessons* (97%) and that *their school disaggregates data to determine whether equity is being achieved for all students* (91%). Eighty-six percent of teachers agreed that they *challenge racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression in school*. The indicator with the lowest agreement rate was “*I facilitate conversations about race, racism, and inequity in my classroom.*”

**Figure 4.** *Teacher perceptions of the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Framework. Annual School-Based Staff Survey, 2022.*

*Percent of respondents answering “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with each statement.*



# Expanded Access to Gifted and Advanced Academic Opportunities

## EDGE

According to the National Association for Gifted Children (2011), identifying and serving culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students “enriches the fabric of gifted education and cultivates what is still an untapped national resource.”

The LCPS Gifted Education Office continues to provide support to school staff to enhance the Empowering Diversity in Gifted Education (EDGE) program at every elementary school. Professional learning has been offered to gifted resource teachers, classroom teachers, and administrators on talent development and best practices for identifying and serving gifted learners from underrepresented populations.

Through EDGE, students are challenged to think deeply, solve difficult problems, and create unique products. Students also learn to collaborate and communicate at a deeper level. The LCPS Gifted Education Office, in collaboration with classroom teachers and other school staff, will continue to provide students with opportunities to enhance their advanced academic skills so they can reach their full potential and contribute to the world around them.

A total of 1,219 students from 57 elementary schools participated in the EDGE program during the 2021-22 school year (see Table 1). Enrollment is highest in the third and fourth grades.

**Table 1.** Number of students enrolled in EDGE during the 2021-22 school year.

Grade	Count of Students
Kindergarten	19
Grade 1	80
Grade 2	196
Grade 3	300
Grade 4	364
Grade 5	260
Total	1,219

## PROPEL AND LEVEL UP

In 2017, the Loudoun Education Foundation received a Good Neighbor Grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to support the creation of PROPEL, an after-school STEM program that closes the “opportunity gap” by targeting highly capable, underrepresented populations of students in STEM. These students are engaged in tasks designed to build computational and analytical thinking skills within the context of intensive, long-term STEM investigations. The program now includes Level Up at the middle school level and will soon include a similar program at the high school level. In the 2022-23 school year, the expansion plan is to add one middle, one elementary and one high school.

Students develop intellectual, creative, and/or leadership capacities associated with giftedness. Because of this we have seen increases in the number of students (a) taking honors classes at the middle school level, (b) accepted into gifted programs, (c) obtaining a pass rate on the SOL assessments, and (d) scoring higher in Reading in comparison to their peers based on the MAP Growth assessment.

Students feel successful and supported when they participate in this program, something many of them have not felt before in school. They identify with the culture of STEM and see themselves as belonging to the STEM community. PROPEL and Level Up challenge students to go above and beyond the general class curriculum and enhance the learning of these students, while at the same time giving them an opportunity to complete general classwork or challenging classwork with the extra support they need.

About 200 students were enrolled in PROPEL at 10 elementary schools during the 2021-22 school year (see Table 2). Enrollment was highest in the fourth grade.

**Table 2.** *Number of students enrolled in PROPEL during the 2021-22 school year.*

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Count of Students</b>
Grade 4	129
Grade 5	79
Total	208

A total of 269 students attended the Level Up program in middle school (see Table 3). The following schools offered the program: River Bend MS, Seneca Ridge MS, Smarts Mill MS, and Sterling MS.

**Table 3.** *Number of students enrolled in Level Up during the 2021-22 school year.*

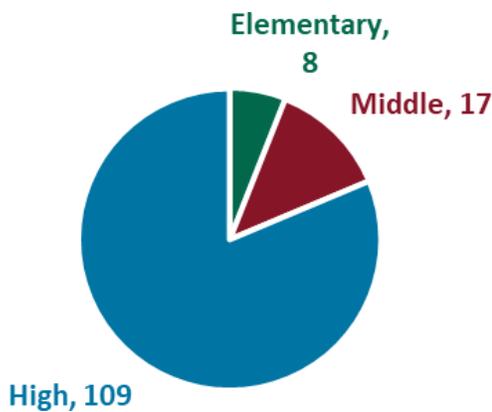
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Count of Students</b>
Grade 6	98
Grade 7	85
Grade 8	86
Total	269

# Student Affinity Groups

Why are affinity groups important? Based on feedback from LCPS students and families, under-represented Students of Color (and LGBTQ+, Muslim students, Jewish students, etc.) do not always feel connected with the LCPS community. Research has demonstrated that providing an opportunity for under-represented Students of Color (and LGBTQ+, Muslim students, Jewish students, etc.) to support each other, feel connected, and belong to a community results in growth in their racial identity, cultural confidence, acceptance, and academic success, as well as improves their leadership voice within the school community. In short, affinity groups allow students with similar racial, ethnic, or social backgrounds an opportunity to feel connected by talking about issues that are important to them.

Based on a survey of school social workers, a total of 134 affinity groups were observed across LCPS during the 2021-22 school year, with most of the groups (N=109) located at the high school level (see Figure 5). Almost 60% of the affinity groups were affiliated with a particular racial/ethnic identity. Another 22% were based on LGBTQ+ identity.

**Figure 5.** Number of affinity groups by school level.  
*Survey of school social workers, 2022.*

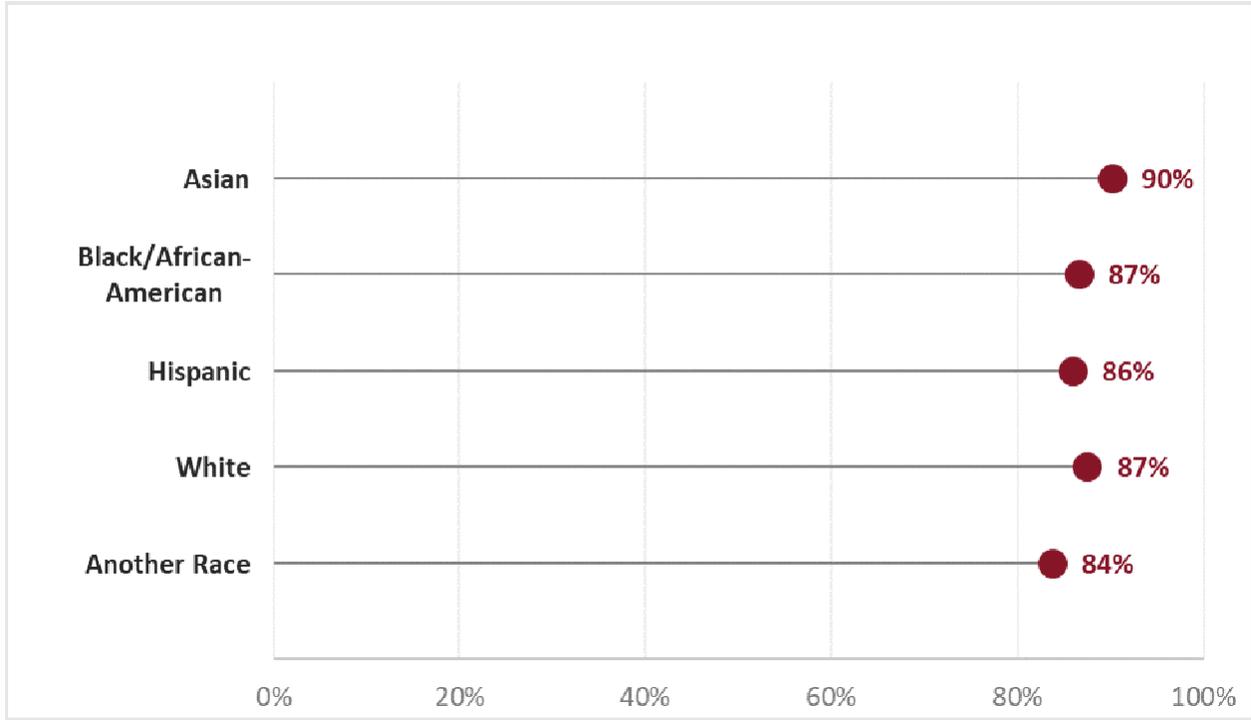


About 90% of middle school students responding to the LCPS Annual Secondary Student Survey indicated that they had an opportunity to participate in an affinity group during the 2021-22 school year (see Figure 6). Acknowledgement of affinity groups ranged from 90% among Asian students to 84% of students who were not Asian, Black, Hispanic, or White.

**Figure 6. Middle school student perceptions by race for the statement “I have opportunities to participate in affinity groups with other students.”**

Annual Secondary Student Survey, 2022.

Percent of respondents from each subgroup answering “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with each statement.



# Equitable Practices Related to Discipline

Regarding the implementation of structures to support PBIS practices, all school administrators received training on the Discipline Referral Process, in collaboration with the Office of School Administration. The MTSS-PBIS team also integrated research-based, equitable discipline practices into the Comprehensive Needs Assessment process completed by all schools in developing School Improvement Plans. According to the PBIS Culturally Responsive Tiered Fidelity Inventory, completed by approximately 75% of PBIS teams in the winter of 2022, 81% of schools indicated that policies and disciplinary practices were examined for disparate impact and an emphasis on proactive approaches. Additionally, 72% of schools indicated that they had access to and reviewed discipline data with a focus on equity and examining school and student outcomes.



An analysis of the discipline office referral data reveals that African-American students and students with IEPs were referred at higher rates relative to other students (see Table 4). However, the differences did not reach the level of disproportionality (2 to 1). Suspension data revealed higher suspension rates for African-American and Pacific Islander students, as well as students with IEPs (see Table 5).

Risk ratios represent the likelihood of the outcome (e.g., office discipline referrals) for one group in relation to a comparison group. Risk ratios are calculated by dividing the risk index of the group of interest by the risk index of a comparison group. The comparison group most commonly used is white students, but others, such as the risk index for all other groups, was used for analysis for this report. A risk ratio of 1.0 shows that the risk for the two groups is equal, whereas a risk ratio greater than 1.0 is indicative of overrepresentation, and a risk ratio less than 1.0 is indicative of underrepresentation (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

**Table 4. Office discipline referral rates for 2021-22.**

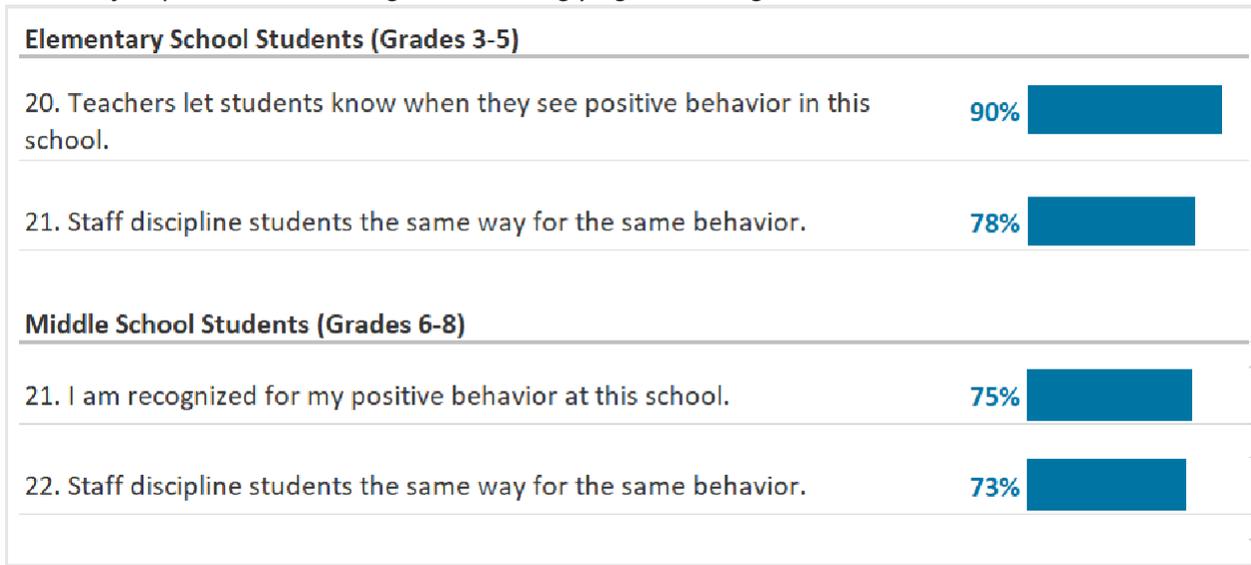
Student Group	Total Count of Students	Students with Office Discipline Referrals	Referral Rate	Risk Ratio: Ratio > 2 is disproportionate
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
American Indian	523	39	7.46%	1
Asian	21,002	879	4.19%	0.49
Black/African-American	6,181	757	12.25%	1.73
Hispanic	16,077	1671	10.39%	1.54
Pacific Islander	107	11	10.28%	1.38
Two or more	4,860	403	8.29%	1.12
White	35,864	2548	7.10%	0.92
<b>IEP Status</b>				
Students without an IEP	74,636	5010	6.71%	0.52
Students with an IEP	9,978	1298	13.01%	1.94
<b>EL Status</b>				
Non-EL Students	68,114	4743	6.96%	0.73
EL Students	16,500	1565	9.48%	1.36

**Table 5. Suspension rates for 2021-22.**

Student Group	Total Count of Students	Students with Suspensions	Suspension Rate	Risk Ratio: Ratio > 2 is disproportionate
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
American Indian	523	4	0.76%	1
Asian	21,002	63	0.30%	0.33
Black/African-American	6,181	105	1.70%	2.47
Hispanic	16,077	189	1.18%	1.77
Pacific Islander	107	2	1.87%	2.46
Two or more	4,860	54	1.11%	1.5
White	35,864	227	0.63%	0.74
<b>IEP Status</b>				
Students without an IEP	74,636	424	0.57%	0.26
Students with an IEP	9,978	220	2.20%	3.88
<b>EL Status</b>				
Non-EL Students	68,114	484	0.71%	0.73
EL Students	16,500	160	0.97%	1.36

Elementary students responding to the LCPS Annual Student Surveys were more likely than middle school students to agree that students are acknowledged for positive behavior in school (see Figure 7), with almost all of elementary students in agreement, compared to three-fourths of middle school students. Respondents at both school levels were less certain that *Staff discipline students the same way for the same behavior*. Seventy-eight percent of elementary students answered “Yes” to the statement, compared to 73% of middle school students who answered “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.”

**Figure 7.** Student perceptions of discipline equity.  
*Annual Elementary Student Survey and Annual Secondary Student Survey, 2022.*  
*Percent of respondents answering “Yes,” “Strongly Agree,” or “Agree” with each statement.*

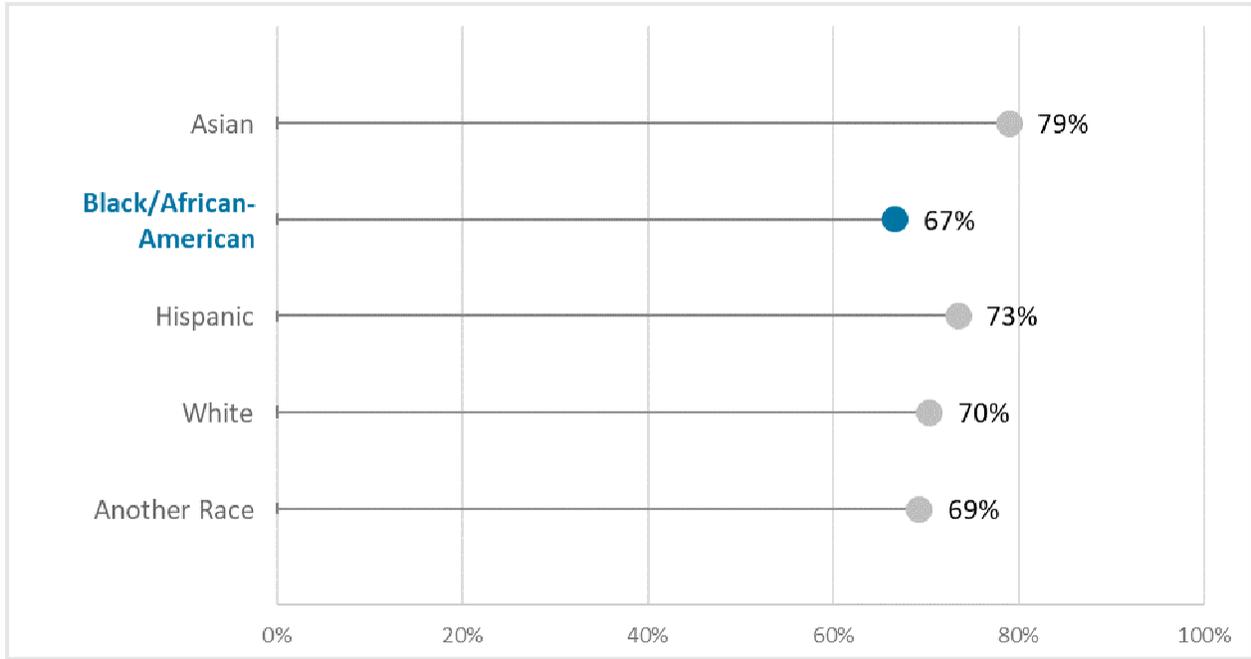


Black/African-American students were less likely than students from other subgroups at the middle school level to believe that students were disciplined equitably (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8.** Middle school student perceptions by race for the statement “Staff discipline students the same way for the same behavior.”

Annual Secondary Student Survey, 2022.

Percent of respondents from each subgroup answering “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with each statement.

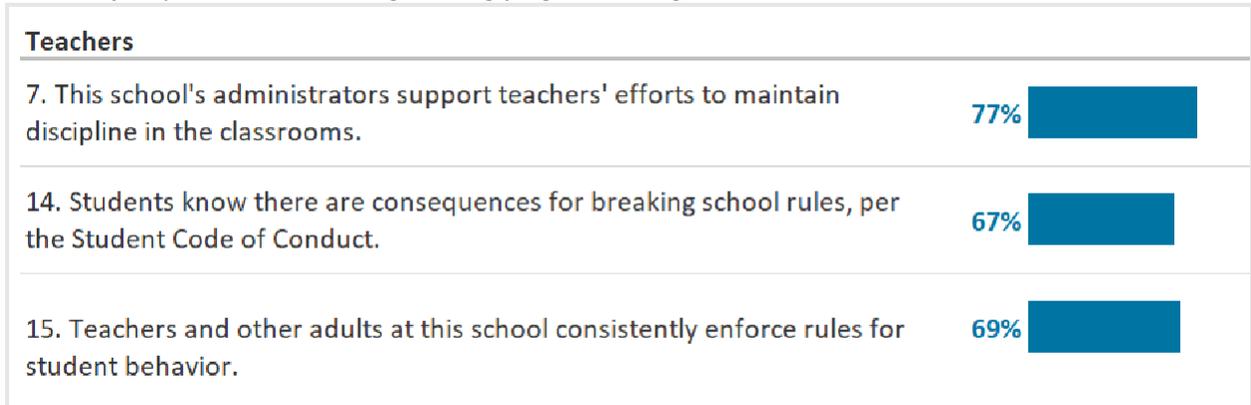


According to the results of the LCPS Annual School-Based Staff Survey (see Figure 9), about two-thirds of respondents agreed (1) that students know there are consequences for breaking school rules, per the Student Code of Conduct and (2) teachers and other adults at this school consistently enforce rules for student behavior. Seventy-seven percent of staff agreed that the school’s administration supports teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.

**Figure 9.** Teacher perceptions of discipline equity.

Annual School-Based Staff Survey, 2022.

Percent of respondents answering “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with each statement.





# Integration of Trauma-Informed Practices

In support of the integration of trauma-informed practices with equity, professional learning was delivered to Unified Mental Health Team (UMHT) staff (e.g., counselors, social workers, psychologists, student assistance specialists) related to supporting students who have experienced racially motivated acts of bias.

Students who experience racially motivated acts of bias, racial slurs, or hate speech may require support as these experiences could be traumatizing in some cases. Thus, the LCPS Protocol for Responding to Racial Slurs and Hate Speech in Schools was developed by members in the Department of Student Services to address these types of incidents and provide social-emotional support for the student(s) harmed and known witness(es) by involving the UMHT. Each school has a UMHT, which includes the School Counselor, School Social Worker, School Psychologist, and Student Assistance Specialist at the secondary level.

Social Emotional Learning is a Tier 1 approach that is foundational to acceptance, inclusivity, and affirmation. Teachers in the elementary schools also implemented the Second Step curriculum, which was designed to teach students explicit skills in the areas of self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationships. Second Step is an evidence-based, universal, classroom-based curriculum that aligns with the trauma-informed practices of Creating a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment and Implementing a Social Emotional Learning Program. Students with these skills are better able to maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults and have more coping strategies to manage stressful situations. When all students in a school are learning and practicing the social-emotional skills taught in the curriculum, a safe, supportive learning environment can develop.

Based on the LCPS Annual School-Based Staff Survey, 96% of respondents agreed that *the staff in this school are responsive to the social and emotional needs of students*. To provide perspective on the feedback from the teachers, the results of the LCPS Annual Student Survey were analyzed regarding the social-emotional needs of the students (see Figure 10). Elementary and middle school students noted high levels of agreement that they could receive help from school staff, including 95% of elementary school students and 88% of middle school students. More than 80% of elementary and middle school students agreed that they *can identify or name how they feel and know how to decide right from wrong*.

**Figure 10. Student perceptions of social-emotional skills.**  
*Annual Elementary Student Survey and Annual Secondary Student Survey, 2022.*  
*Percent of respondents answering “Yes,” “Strongly Agree,” or “Agree” with each statement.*

<b>Elementary School Students (Grades 3-5)</b>	
8. I can name how I feel.	81% 
9. I work out disagreements with other students by talking with them.	78% 
10. I know how to decide right from wrong.	90% 
11. I can manage my emotions when I am upset.	78% 
27. There are teachers or other adults at this school I could talk with if I needed help with something.	95% 
<b>Middle School Students (Grades 6-8)</b>	
9. I can identify how I feel.	82% 
10. I work out disagreements with other students by talking with them.	79% 
11. I know how to decide right from wrong.	95% 
12. I can manage my emotions when I am upset.	84% 
31. There are teachers or other adults at this school I could talk with if I needed help with something.	88% 

# Diverse School Faculty and Staff



LCPS has implemented a number of initiatives to increase diversity among school faculty and staff. Based on the Human Resources and Talent Development (HRTD) Committee’s [Data Report](#) (2021-22), for example, 23% of the students (N=157) in the Teacher Cadet program during the 2021-22 school year were people of color. In addition, HRTD trained 267 hiring managers and 215 interview panel members on research-based strategies for recruiting and hiring diverse staff.

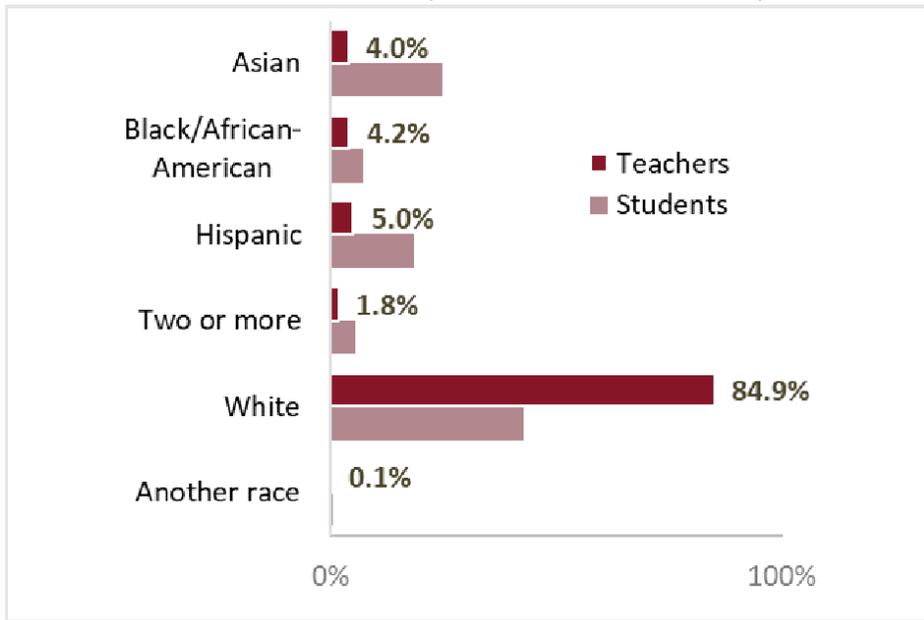
HRTD has partnered with each school to implement equity-driven strategies for teacher recruitment. These strategies have resulted in racial diversity among 94% of the review panels that interviewed and hired school-based staff. These actions also are reflected in the LCPS Annual School-Based Staff Survey, in which 90% of the respondents agreed that *our school leadership takes steps to recruit, interview, and hire diverse staff* (see Table 6 for illustrative quotes).

**Table 6. Illustrative quotes from the Annual School-Based Staff Survey, 2022.**

Commendations	Recommendations
<p>“Our school focus is equity and family engagement. We truly ensure each family is welcomed and we communicate with every family. We also participate in Equity CLT and ensure our equity trainings and meetings are effective and productive. The whole school participated in an equity book study that engaged all staff in significant and reflective conversations.” - Elementary School Teacher</p>	<p>“I would like to see more conversations about diversity in classes throughout the day and as part of morning meeting. There have been many instances of students saying microaggressions, stereotypes, and slurs. We need to be more proactive in preventing these instances.” - Elementary School Teacher</p>
<p>“Our school has diverse professionals in every level. The leadership has created an ecosystem of unity in diversity. We are a large family unit. It is such a pleasure and joy to come [to] work every single day.” - Middle School Classified Staff</p>	<p>“Hire more staff from different ethnic/racial backgrounds. I know my admin tries but minorities don’t usually apply for teaching positions at my school.” - Elementary School Teacher</p>
<p>“The emphasis our principal makes on equity, diversity, and culturally responsive teaching is wonderful and the PD sessions surrounding it are well-executed, particularly the ones that get the students involved.” - High School Teacher</p>	<p>“Our school needs to intentionally diversify its staff. Representation matters. Teachers and admin always attempt to be equitable, but because of a lack of diversity, there is a very narrow viewpoint.” - Middle School Teacher</p> <p>“Continue to increase the diversity of the staff. The adults are far from representative of the students.” - Middle School Teacher</p>

Overall, licensed new hires for the 2021-22 school year were comprised of [63% more teachers of color](#) when compared to the 2017-18 school year. While there have been increases in the diversity amongst staff, the staff demographics do not yet mirror those of the student population (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11.** Diversity of teachers compared to the LCPS student population.  
*Human Resources and Talent Development Committee's Data Report, 2021-22.*



# Summary and Reflections



Analysis of the results from the Comprehensive Equity Plan evaluation produced the following conclusions for the Year Two goals:

- At least 14 **professional learning sessions** were delivered to LCPS staff system-wide to support the integration of the Culturally Responsive Framework. In addition, 645 new hires completed Equity in the Center Foundations, and the Office of Equity accomplished their goal of maintaining Equity Leads at each school.
- Regarding students' experiences with **culturally responsive instructional strategies**, more than 80% of elementary and middle school students felt that their culture is included and respected in their classrooms. The lowest area of agreement for middle school students was *Students treat other students with respect regardless of race of other differences* (67%), with only 54% of Black/African American students in agreement.
- Almost all teachers agreed that **diverse ethnicities and nationalities are authentically portrayed in their lessons** and that *their school disaggregates data to determine whether equity is being achieved for all students*. Also, most teachers agreed that they *address racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression in school*.
- With respect to **expanding access to gifted and advanced academic opportunities**, about 1,200 students from 57 elementary schools participated in the Empowering Diversity in Gifted Education (EDGE) program during the 2021-22 school year. Over 200 elementary school students were enrolled in the PROPEL after-school STEM program at 10 schools, and approximately 270 middle school students attended the Level Up STEM program at four schools.
- There were 134 **affinity groups** across LCPS in the 2021-22 school year, with most of the groups (109) at the high school level. Almost 60% of the Affinity Groups were affiliated with a particular racial/ethnic identity. Another 22% were based on LGBTQ+ identity. More than 80% of middle school students who responded to the Student Survey had opportunities to participate in affinity groups with other students.

- Regarding **discipline practices in schools**, 72% of schools indicated that they had access to and reviewed discipline data with a focus on equity and 81% of schools indicated that policies and disciplinary practices were examined for disparate impact and an emphasis on proactive approaches. Analysis of the discipline office referral data revealed that African-American students and students with IEPs were referred at higher rates relative to other students. However, the differences did not reach the level of disproportionality (2 to 1). Suspension data revealed higher suspension rates for African-American and Pacific Islander students, as well as students with IEPs.
- Elementary students responding to the LCPS Annual Student Surveys were more likely than middle school students to agree that students are **acknowledged for positive behavior** in school with almost all elementary students in agreement, compared to three-fourths of middle school students. Respondents at both school levels were less certain that *Staff discipline students the same way for the same behavior*. Seventy-eight percent of elementary students answered “Yes” to the statement, compared to 73% of middle school students who answered “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.”
- According to the results of the LCPS Annual School-Based Staff Survey, about two-thirds of respondents agreed *(a) that students know there are consequences for breaking school rules, per the Student Code of Conduct and (b) teachers and other adults at this school consistently enforce rules for student behavior*. Seventy-seven percent of staff agreed that the *school’s administration supports teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom*.
- Elementary and middle school students noted high levels of agreement that they could receive help from school staff, including 95% of elementary school students and 88% of middle school students. More than 80% of elementary and middle school students agreed that they *can identify or name how they feel and know how to decide right from wrong*.
- Almost all interview panels at the school level represent the diversity of their schools, and 90% of school staff agreed that *our school leadership takes steps to recruit, interview, and hire diverse staff* according to the LCPS Annual School-Based Staff Survey results. Moreover, licensed new hires for the 2021-22 school year were comprised of 63% more teachers of color when compared to the 2017-18 school year. Nevertheless, while there have been increases in the diversity amongst staff, the staff demographics do not yet mirror those of the student population.

# THE PATH FORWARD

Some may ask why our focus has been on equity and not equality. Equity involves providing each student with individualized support and tools and full access to educational opportunities so that they have the capacity to reach their promise. This means identifying and removing the barriers so that, eventually, equality can be reached for all. Let's always remember who we are doing this work for - every student; not just some or most students. We are striving on this collective journey to ensure barriers are removed so each and every student is able to thrive within LCPS, our greater Loudoun community and world.

What does this mean and why does it matter? LCPS is a strong division, and we see that when we look at our graduation rate of 97%, SAT/ACT and SOL pass rates, with pass rates higher than some of our neighboring divisions. LCPS continues to be a high performing school system, overall; however, not every child is experiencing that high level of success. We do so many things so well, including getting great outcomes in some areas, yet our data reflects there is still a group of students who don't feel connected or may feel isolated and may not have access to some opportunities afforded to others. As we seek to answer the question "What is next?", we must continuously prioritize equity in all that we do; beyond training and professional learning, but in our actions and commitment to ensuring every student meets with success and every family feels welcomed and included.

It is clear there remains work ahead. At this pivotal time of the launch of the new strategic plan for the school division, this is our opportunity to ensure we center our focus on supporting every student, every day. There is much work underway across departments, and we will continue these efforts, and will be shifting from a Year Three of a stand-alone Comprehensive Equity Plan *to incorporating the core value of "equity and opportunity"* as a priority in quest to serve each student and family. The naming of equity and opportunity as a core value also signals a continued call to action for LCPS to embed equity at the center of policies, practices, procedures, and instruction going forward. The work of the previously adopted equity framework as part of the Comprehensive Equity Plan will continue as areas of importance in family and community engagement, professional learning on culturally responsive and deeper learning, eliminating disproportionality in discipline, increasing opportunities to advanced and differentiated learning pathways, utilizing a multi-tiered system of supports, and building and sustaining a diverse teacher presence.

Ultimately the primary areas of focus will center the collective efforts to empower students, creating exemplary staff, an enriched division, and an engaged community. In an effort to be more strategic, in alignment with the strategic plan, the Office of Equity (which consisted of a director and supervisor) has now merged with the Office of Culturally Responsive Instruction to form the Division of Equity within the Department of Instruction. This change will offer more shoulder to shoulder support with our leaders and school staff to better serve students and families across the school division, in order to truly live out the goals of the [One LCPS 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence](#).

## APPENDIX

- [LCPS Division Elementary School Student Survey Summary \(2021-22\)](#)
- [LCPS Division Middle School Student Survey Summary \(2021-22\)](#)
- [LCPS Division Staff Survey Summary \(2021-22\)](#)
- [Human Resources and Talent Development Committee's Data Report \(2021-22\)](#)

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