Belonging and Equity Strategic Action Recommendations
May 2021

AHISD Belonging and Equity 2021

In AHISD, equity means that each student has full access to the educational services, resources, and rigor they need at the right moment in their education, and students' needs are not going unmet due to race, ethnicity, dominant language, learning differences, gender, sexual orientation, religion, family income, or being a new student in AHISD. Furthermore, equity means that each student experiences a deep sense of belonging within our schools and that not a single student walks our hallways feeling marginalized because of their identities.

This document summarizes the work of the AHISD Equity Council during the 2021-2022 school year. It includes the actions completed and summary findings from the district-wide participatory equity assessment. The participatory equity assessment involved 70+ volunteers including students, staff, parents, and community members. These findings highlight bright spots in our data as well as areas of needed improvement. Specific recommendations to address those areas of needed improvement are listed in this document.

District Action Items Completed 2020-2021

Amplify and Value Student Voice	District-Wide Professional Development	Policy and Regulation Review
Implemented student survey to provide students with opportunity to give anonymous and individual feedback to all of their teachers and coaches. March 2020 13,000 responses *AHJS and AHHS students completed one survey for each teacher in their class schedule	Session 1- The Gifts of Curiosity and Listening Session 2- Reflections on Student Comments- "What do you wish adults on your campus knew about inclusion, equity, and culture?" Session 3- Use of Inclusive Language Session 4-Teaching Through an Equity Lens: Responsibility of Educators to Remain Impartial	Clarified procedures for dealing with student discrimination/ harassment. - New Campus Discipline Management Plan with 3 Tiers of Consequences - New Investigation Report form to standardize how allegations are investigated - Revised AHISD Extracurricular Code to include more explicit language about prohibited harassment

AHISD Belonging and Equity
Exemplar Bright Spots in Equity Assessment Findings

Academic Achievement

State STAAR Exams: AHISD exceeds regional and state comparison norms for STAAR/EOC academic achievement, student progress, progress of prior-year non-proficient students, and percentage of students reaching highest Masters-level proficiency standards.

College Entrance Exams: AHISD exceeds regional, state, and national comparison norms for English Language Arts and Writing, Mathematics, and Composite scores on the SAT, ACT, and TSIA exams.

Advanced Placement Exams: AHISD exceeds regional and state comparison norms for student participation rates, percentage of students meeting AP criteria, and number of AP Scholars, AP Scholars with Honors, and AP Scholars with Distinction

AHISD has seen 150% increase in both the number of students taking AP courses and the number of students meeting AP criteria on exams in the last 10 years since AHISD opened enrollment in AP courses to all students.

AHISD has higher attendance and graduation rates than regional, state, and national comparison groups.

Access and Inclusion

71 % of AHISD secondary students participate in school activities

- Students in AHISD who participate in activities have a much stronger sense of BELONGING
- Students in AHISD who participate in activities have a much stronger sense of CULTURAL AWARENESS
- Students in AHISD who participate in activities have a much stronger sense of TEACHER STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS
- Students in AHISD who participate in activities have a much stronger sense of RIGOROUS EXPECTATIONS

AHHS has numerous existing student activities to promote diversity and inclusion such as Unified Champions, Unified Theater, Special Olympics, Peer Tutors, PALS, and Multicultural Club

Culture and Climate

PARENTS: 94% of parents would recommend AHISD to friends and colleagues

STUDENTS: 96% of Gr. 3-12 students grade their classes as an A or B. 76% of Gr. 3-12 students grade their classes as an A. (Spring 2021 Student Survey)

STAFF: 85% of AHISD teachers feel trusted by their school community

AHISD Belonging and Equity

Work Team 1: Equitable Academic Achievement and Outcomes

Picture of Success:

Disaggregated data on academic achievement should show high comparable performance for all groups of learners, and achievement gaps should be virtually non-existent.

FINDINGS

1.1 Across subjects and grades Students of Color/ Non-White underperformed compared to White peers on academic assessments..

- 92% of White students passed STAAR in 2019 compared to 78% of Students of Color (All grades and all subjects)
- The mean score on AP exam for White students is 3.18 compared to 3.08 for Students of Color (All AP Exams)
- The mean score on PSAT exam for White students is 1170 compared to 964 for Students of Color (11th graders)

1.2 Across subjects and grades students identified as economically disadvantaged, EL, and Spec. Ed. underperformed compared to peers on academic assessments.

- 68% of students identified as economically disadvantaged passed STAAR in 2019 (All grades and all subjects)
- 64% of students identified as English Learners passed STAAR in 2019 (All grades and all subjects)
- 47% of students served in Special Education passed STAAR in 2019 (All grades and all subjects)

1.3 Students are making progress from year to year, but it is not enough to close the achievement gaps.

COHORT COMPARISON (Reading & Math)	Third Grade STAAR 2013 % Passed	Ninth Grade STAAR 2019 % Passed		Third Grade STAAR 2013 % Mastered	Ninth Grade STAAR 2019 % Mastered
White	96	92		33	43
Students of Color	84	85		16	25
English Learners	50	57		5	10
Special Education	55	56		0	9
Eco. Disadvantaged	77	75		8	10

1.4 AHISD does not have a high student retention rate (not passing from one grade to the next), but the retention rate is higher for specific student groups.

- 66% of grade level retentions are males; 69% are Students of Color, and 37% of retentions are students identified as economically disadvantaged

1.5 AHISD has an exceptionally high graduation rate, but not all student groups have the percentage of graduates

- Overall, the AHISD graduation rate is 98%, but students served through special education have a 79% graduation rate. (Texas graduation rate for SE is 78%)

RECOMMENDATIONS

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION FIDELITY- Increase program fidelity to the frequency of response to intervention (RTI) and dyslexia sessions to ensure students have adequate instructional time in intervention services to reap full benefits and ensure teachers are utilizing all intervention program components as designed for maximum effectiveness.

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION TOOLS- Analyze the effectiveness of all programs and tools used in intervention and confirm that staff are trained on progress monitoring with the academic intervention tools.

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT- Establish parent conferences for all students (in the home language) at the secondary level that includes goal setting for college, career, and military post-secondary readiness.

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT - Implement a structured approach for secondary staff to guide targeted student groups, based on data, through conversations about enrollment in advanced academics to increase represented participation in advanced academics. Provide advanced academic parent informational sessions in multiple languages.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING- Develop an annual professional development plan for staff and administrators who work directly with student who are English Learners and/or served through special education, gifted and talented services. and dyslexia interventions to address student identification and effective classroom practices.

VERTICAL ALIGNMENT- Implement the dual language program at the kindergarten level to vertically align bilingual services K-5.

AHISD Belonging and Equity
Work Team 2:Equitable Access and Inclusion

Picture of Success:

Records of student participation should show unobstructed entrance and full participation of all identifiable groups of learners in courses, programs, and activities.

FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1 Specific student groups are underrepresented in advanced academic courses at AHHS ● Students identified as economically disadvantaged are 14% of total population of AHHS but 8% of advanced academics population. ● Students of Color are 45% of total population of AHHS but 37% of advanced academics population. ● AHISD has done a superb job of expanding Advanced (PAP) and Advanced Placement courses and open enrollment over the last 10 years **2.2 Specific student groups are underrepresented in gifted and talented programs** ● Students identified as economically disadvantaged are 20% of total population of AHISD but 3% of GT population. ● Students of Color are 47% of total population of AHHS but 27% of GT population. **2.3 Students qualify for GT programs through grade level testing, in-house supplemental testing, and outside testing.** ● 16% of qualifying scores come from outside testing and 84% comes from AHISD evaluations ● All students are given CogAT and/or IOWA evaluations in kindergarten and 5th grade ● Students not in HEIGHTS report feelings of "less than" when HEIGHTS students leave the room each week ● There is not consistent training for staff on identifying GT students ● AHISD has greatly increased the % of classroom teachers and counselors GT trained **2.4 Specific student groups are overrepresented in support programs** ● Students identified as economically disadvantaged, English Learners, and Students of Color are overrepresented in Special Education ● Overrepresentation in RtI of specific student groups can provide targeted intervention to close the opportunity gap ● There is not consistent training for staff on identifying and serving students in special service programs ● Students qualify for Special Education, Dyslexia, and Intervention through specific testing based upon recommendations of staff and parents **2.5 Specific student groups are underrepresented in specific activities** ● Students identified as economically disadvantaged are underrepresented in athletics, student council, honor societies, journalism, and clubs ● 62% of White students said school activities matched their interest compared to 52% of Students of Color, 53% of EL, 51% Eco Dis, and 60% SE	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT - Identify gaps in district communication to inform parents of financial, language, and staff support available so all students can participate in athletics and student interest groups. Create a single portal for all student activity scholarship opportunities. Include an "educational terms" key on these pages. COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT - Establish a family outreach and orientation system with special focus towards military-connected families, underrepresented student groups, and new members of the AHISD community COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT- Build an outreach program to connect high school students to elementary students and families to broaden knowledge about sports, fine arts, and extracurricular programs and available resources. GIFTED AND TALENTED- Provide in-house supplemental evaluations or assessments for GT appeals in lieu of outside testing. GIFTED AND TALENTED- Expand identification criteria for GT services to include creative, artistic, and/or leadership. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING- Require core and AP teachers to complete 30-hour GT certification within two years of employment and maintain annual 6-hour training. STUDENT ACTIVITIES- Ensure that financial, language, and staff support are available for all students to participate in extracurricular activities and student interest groups. STUDENT ACTIVITIES- Revise process for establishing student interest groups to facilitate greater diversity of offerings based on student interests.

AHISD Belonging and Equity
Work Team 3: Equitable Treatment of People

Picture of Success:

Student and staff perceptions and observed patterns of interactions between individuals should be accepting, valuing, supporting, and safe so that all students feel challenged and engaged. School systems ensure equitable treatment of all people.

FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
3.1 Local data reveals more discipline incidents for specific student population and more severe disciplinary consequences • Males make up half of the population but 79% of secondary discipline referrals • Students served in special education make up 9% of the population but 18% of secondary discipline referrals • Students identified as economically disadvantaged make up 14% of AHHS students but 34% of in-school suspensions • Students of Color make up 45% of AHHS students but 62% of in-school suspensions • Insubordination is most common reason for discipline referral • 57% of White students felt the approach to discipline worked well compared to 52% of Black students, 50% of Hispanic students, and 33% of Asian students. **3.2 Student population groups have different perceptions of the overall treatment of people** • 66% of White students felt that students treat others of different cultures or races fairly compared to 54% of Hispanic students, 52% of Asian students and 50% of Black students • 76% of White students felt that teachers treat others of different cultures or races fairly compared to 69% of Hispanic students, and only 39% of Black students. **3.3 Not all students feel the same sense of high expectations.** • 68% of secondary students felt like they are held to overall high expectations • There were not statistically significant differences between student groups. **3.4 Students feel respect from teachers but do not experience the same level of personal connection with teachers.** • 81% of secondary students felt like teachers were respectful of them, 32% of secondary students felt connected to the adults in school, • 53% of secondary students felt that if they walked into class upset that their teachers would not be concerned. • Elementary campuses average in the 80th% of national benchmarks while secondary campuses average in the 40th% of national benchmarks **3.5 Not everyone feels a strong sense of belonging in AHISD schools.** • 52% of secondary students felt a positive overall sense of belonging in school. • 64% of teachers felt a positive overall sense of belonging in school.	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT Expand community engagement in the schools to include mentorship programs, career days, career and technical externships, and community involvement in planning advisory lessons. COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT - Align protocols for all campus activities, fundraising events, and incentive structure to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities and reconsider the benefits and impact of individual rewards tied to fundraising. COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT - Create AHISD "TED Talks" focused on diversity of district - humanizing our otherness - in ways similar to Breaking the Silence, Kitchen Table Talks, and videos to include timely topics during commemorative months and dates. DISCIPLINE- Ensure that all disciplinary consequences are equitably enforced. DISCIPLINE- Ensure that all students are aware of and have access to existing procedures for reporting mistreatment. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING- Implement professional development for staff to lead interactive advisory/morning meeting lessons focused on building a culture of belonging. This includes providing each elementary student an opportunity to share about their personal culture in morning meeting.