

# Equity Report

## Evanston/Skokie School

### District 65

May 22, 2017

**Vision: A Balanced Educational Ecosystem**  
Student focused with adult collaboration

To build a more equitable learning environment focused on every child, every day, whatever it takes, while working to eliminate the racial predictability of achievement.

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## Executive Summary

There is a persistent and unacceptable opportunity gap for students of color in District 65. The District's leadership team attributes the racial predictability of achievement and disciplinary outcomes to institutional racism, a huge problem that can only start to be solved by acknowledging the history of white supremacy in Evanston/Skokie Schools. This report affirms what scholar Sonia Nieto (1992) asserts, "Simply desegregating schools will not make a difference until the power relations within such settings are challenged." Therefore, a commitment to conducting an equity audit was the first step in interrupting the systems that are sustaining and maintaining the status quo. District 65 adopted the Racial and Educational Equity Statement in August 2016 (Appendix A) to guide future work. Equity walks then began to understand the current state in order to build a more equitable learning environment.

The findings in this report are designed to build understanding and make collective thinking visible, based on qualitative and quantitative data versus looking for "right" or "wrong" answers. The tenets of Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billing's CRT (Culturally Relevant Teaching) reminds us that creating a more equitable learning environment will require respect at the most basic level, student empowerment, cultivating cultural capital and honoring student backgrounds and social identities including but not limited to gender expression, religion, and ethnicity. Additionally, adults must model lifelong learning through sustainable professional development to enhance skills and knowledge along with a commitment to collaborate and model loving accountability for all of our children.

### Why Equity and Why Racial Equity?

Equity is about fairness, justice and individuals getting what they need and deserve in order to reach their full potential as opposed to equality, which is about sameness and treating everyone in exactly an identical manner regardless of their differences or unique situations. District 65's focus on racial equity acknowledges that race is one of the first visible indicators of identity while recognizing that students hold multiple, intersecting identities such as mental or physical ability, sexual orientation including gender identity and/or expression, religion, economic status, national origin and many other personal characteristics. As historian Robin D. G. Kelley says, "Racism isn't about how you look, it's about how people assign meaning to how you look." Fundamental to understanding this work is clarity regarding the historical context which informs our current situation.

**#1** Black and Latinx students comprise approximately ½ of District 65's enrollment. As noted above, academic outcomes for students who are Black or Latinx are substantially below district averages. The District also has a large number of English Learners, students living in low-income households, students who are homeless, and students with special needs.

**#2** Throughout U.S. history, racially discriminatory policies and practices in housing, healthcare and education have systematically disenfranchised Black people and people of color, impacting schools and our children. Tuskegee's syphilis experiment, Illinois'

sundown towns and the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women, are just a few examples. From laws prohibiting anyone teaching kidnapped and enslaved African people to read and write, to the Native American boarding schools that forbade children from speaking their mother tongue, students of color have been intentionally negatively impacted by the American school system.

**#3** In Evanston, the “detrimental myth of integration” as clearly articulated in Mary Barr’s *Friends Disappear* has laid the foundation for the important work to be done. Although Black and Latinx students have opportunities to attend the same schools as white students, their school experiences may be vastly different from their white peers. The differences in experience are based on factors such as housing segregation, differential effects of school placement practices on attending neighborhood schools, and racial identity development.

### Approach

In an effort to understand the barriers so that we may build a more student centered, equitable learning environment and to eliminate the racial predictability of achievement in District 65, I conducted 20 Equity Walks in each of the 18 sites along with Family Focus and the Family Center over the past 9 months. These walks included 233 focus groups. More than 500 parents, teachers, support staff and administrators participated. In addition, approximately 1,000 students gave voice to their experiences through student focus groups. Questions asked (Appendix B) during the equity walks were adapted based on stakeholder group and were developmentally appropriate for students based on their age/grade. Spanish was used during parent interviews, focus groups and in TWI classrooms when necessary to effectively communicate with parents/students. These walks afforded the opportunity to spend time with parents, students and adults in the Evanston/Skokie school community allowing a unique chance to listen to hundreds of voices and perspectives. (Appendices C & D)

Additionally, 1,424 people consisting of D65 employees, parents, students and community members responded to an online equity instrument. This instrument included a number of questions designed using traditional survey research methodology. It also intentionally included several survey items designed to encourage the survey taker to think more deeply about equity and to wrestle with any emotional reactions brought up by this thinking. Responses to these prompts were captured through open-ended questions ranging from explicit support to direct criticism.

Year one accomplishments (Appendix E) include complementary efforts such as the creation of DELT (D65 Equity Leadership Team,) piloting SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity,) and conducting the CCSJ (Cultural Competence for Social Justice) Self-assessment as examples of equity initiatives that were done in parallel to ensure preliminary actions were being taken across District 65 to address some of the known gaps in order to lay the foundation for building a more equitable learning environment.

## Findings

After walking through the schools and listening to hundreds of voices, patterns emerged as outlined in the following summary of key findings. Equity walk participants identified:

- A need for Racial Literacy throughout District 65 at all levels among students, teachers, support staff, parents and administrators
- A broad-based desire for more Equity Professional Development, specific interests include social justice in education, institutional racism and power, privilege and inequality
- A concern regarding the over representation of Black and Latinx students in special education and behavioral consequences such as ODRs and suspensions
- A desire for increased time for Social Emotional Learning to address student needs
- A need for more consistency in the amount of multiculturalism in the District's curricula (e.g., social studies)
- A perception that existing math placement practices are a barrier to equity
- A general concern regarding the low number of Black teachers, lower retention rates for Black teachers and lack of teachers that reflect student demographics
- A need for a sense of urgency in attending to and addressing the needs of our lowest performing most marginalized students and families
- A desire for accountability and clear consistent communication from leadership to focus and prioritize versus juggling multiple initiatives
- A need to create welcoming spaces and opportunities throughout District 65, specifically at JEH in the district office
- A concern regarding the effects of busing and lack of a neighborhood option for many Black students
- A need for the development of respectful, trustworthy relationships

## Recommendations

The aforementioned findings inform the recommendations below for Evanston/Skokie School District 65 to take towards building a more equitable learning environment. This means as adults a commitment to doing things differently for the benefit of **all** students. Change is hard. So when we say we want to build an equitable learning environment, we must focus on District 65's #1 priority to attend to the needs of the whole child while ensuring high levels of learning where students are stretched but not stressed and social emotional needs are nurtured. As Bryan Stevenson says we must get proximate, stay hopeful and be willing to do uncomfortable, difficult and inconvenient things for the sake of our shared humanity. (*American Injustice: Mercy, Humanity and Making a Difference*, ETHS 2015) We must create spaces to honor and support the social identity groups of our children and the adults in the Evanston/Skokie school community.

- 1. Increase the level of Racial Literacy, Social Emotional Learning, and Culturally Relevant Teaching throughout District 65:**
  - a. Require Equity Training for all Employees starting with BD (Beyond Diversity) including pre/post meetings & SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity)
  - b. Identify a means for incorporating racial literacy into the curriculum such as aligning curriculum with K-12 Anti-Bias Framework
  - c. Interrupt Disproportionality in Special Education, Discipline and Math
- 2. Address the Detrimental Impact of Math Placement**
- 3. Devise an enrollment management strategy that minimizes the disproportionate impact of busing on Black and Latinx students and increases parent/family access to schools within walking distance of traditionally underrepresented students' homes.**
- 4. Develop and implement a plan that addresses the following goals with regard to TWI and ACC:**
  - a. Address racial disproportionality among English dominant TWI students
  - b. Strengthen and fully integrate ACC & TWI (e.g., creating schools where TWI and ACC are combined into a single instructional approach)
  - c. Dispel the myth that ACC is only for Black students
  - d. End isolation of TWI teachers/students
  - e. Develop and strengthen TWI in 6th-8th grade
- 5. Develop a plan to address racial representation of teachers and to increase recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals that have an equity mindset**
  - a. Create district-wide employee Affinity Groups
- 6. Create inclusive "welcoming" spaces and opportunities throughout District 65:**
  - a. Create a Parent Welcome Center
  - b. Pilot parent/family SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) & develop district-wide parent Affinity Groups

- c. Create a Parent Mentor Program
  - d. Employ Bilingual Family Liaisons, ideally who have Interpreter Training
- 7. Institutionalize the district's commitment to equity and empowerment through dedicated staffing** and organizational structures (e.g., an equity and empowerment office) to maintain a focus on equity and the implementation of the equity plan.
- 8. Develop an implementation plan by October 31, 2017**

### Path Forward

The equity walks provided space to gather the voices of students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators and the community to understand the current state of District 65's environment. The result of this approach has provided great insight into key findings that are contributing to the persistent racial achievement gap throughout District 65, which has also informed the recommendations. To address the findings and recommendations, a District 65 Racial & Educational Equity Plan template (Appendix F) has been created along with a potential Roadmap (Appendix G) to envision what District 65 might look like 10 years from now. Implementing the recommendations and executing the plan over the next 3-5 years will go a long way to advance District 65's vision of *Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes*, beyond words to actual reflections of every student's school experience.

## Process for Data Collection

The qualitative and quantitative data that supports the findings and recommendations were derived from conducting 20 equity walks, 233 focus groups including the voices of over 500 parents, teachers, support staff and administrators, as well as approximately 1,000 students. There was also an online survey provided with 1424 respondents that was supported through collaboration with District 65's FACE (Family And Community Engagement) Coordinator and the District's Office of Research, Accountability, and Data.

## **Questions Asked (see Appendix B)**

Questions asked during the equity walks were adapted from the Colorado Dept of Educational Equity Administrator Toolkit; Kenosha Unified School District; Dr. Leticia Villarreal-Sosa Dominican University; Race Forward; Equity Checklist for the standards-based classroom-Teacher adaptation Christina Perez; Lee Mun Wah Workplace; and District 65 Student Focus Groups. Depending on the unique circumstances of each group, some combination of the questions were asked. Also, it is important to note that students were asked developmentally appropriate questions based on their age/grade. For example, most kindergarteners were talked to as an entire class about their home languages, perception of school, friends and how they see themselves compared to others.

## **Online Equity Survey**

1,424 people consisting of D65 employees, parents, students and community members responded to an online equity instrument which included a number of questions designed using traditional survey research methodology. It also intentionally included several survey items designed to encourage the survey taker to think more deeply about equity and to wrestle with any emotional reactions brought up by this thinking. Responses to these prompts were captured through open-ended questions ranging from explicit support, *"Thank you for working hard on this issue. Many districts are not addressing it, but District 65 is, and I am grateful."* to critiques *"I don't want to see any program show up that has to be funded by my tax dollars that doesn't support all students. If programs are created that target students of color exclusively and not all failing students that will give the impression of racism."* It is important to note that responses are a valuable snapshot but not representative of the District 65 population. Three schools are over represented (Haven, Nichols and King Arts) and higher income households are over represented (59% of respondents reported a household income of more than \$100,000) compared to census data.

## **Evidence Supporting the Findings and Recommendations**

- 1. Increase the level of Racial Literacy, Social Emotional Learning, and Culturally Relevant Teaching throughout District 65:**
  - a. Require Equity Training for all Employees starting with BD (Beyond Diversity) including pre/post meetings & SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity)
  - b. Identify a means for incorporating racial literacy into the curriculum such as aligning curriculum with K-12 Anti-Bias Framework
  - c. Interrupt Disproportionality in Special Education, Discipline and Math



This recommendation is based on the data collected through the equity walks and online survey. In order to engage in difficult conversations about social identity groups such as race, teachers need tools that they can transfer into the classroom, use with colleagues and apply when engaging with families. For example, the unevenness and range in adult responses when a student says “that’s racist” in class or on the playground, speaks to a need for training so that D65 employees will be able to build upon these teachable moments.

Time and space must be allocated for adults to learn, take risks and build their capacity to understand systems of oppression and how they impact school climate. For example, in social studies during lessons about slavery, terminology is extremely important. The potential messages students receive when their teacher uses “slaves” versus “kidnapped and enslaved African people” speaks volumes about people as property and what it means to be human.

Similarly our ability to appreciate the cultural capital of our students and their families goes beyond the use of “ethnic” names in the Everyday Math curriculum as an example of diversity, when racially visible distinctions in middle school math classes, particularly in 8th grade, communicate which kids are “smart,” “valuable” and ultimately hold the power in our community. The research and statistics regarding racial disproportionality in discipline and special education speaks for itself and presents us with the responsibility to recognize, interrupt and challenge our behaviors.

<b>% students with 1+ ODR for major infraction*</b>	
All students	11%
Free/Reduced Lunch	18%
African-American/Black	25%
Asian	4%
Hispanic/Latino	9%
Multi-racial	9%
White	5%
Students w/Disabilities	22%

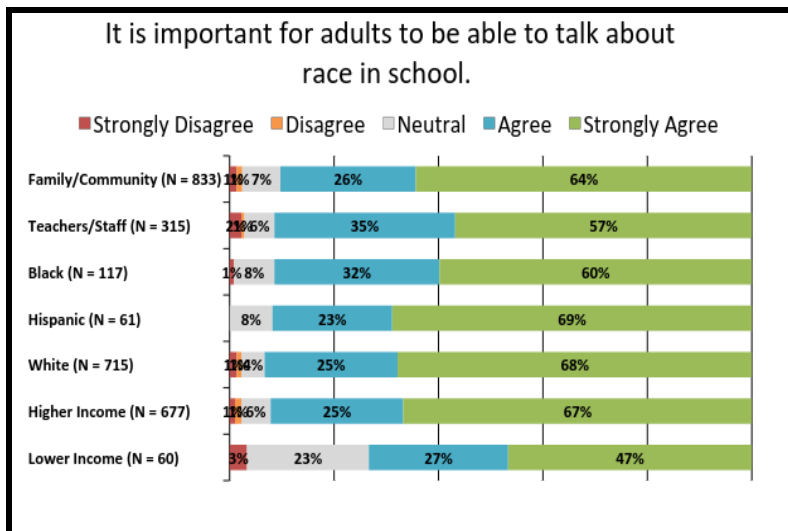
<b>Avg # of out of school suspension days/100 students*</b>	
All students	4
Free/Reduced Lunch	7
African-American/Black	10
Asian	0
Hispanic/Latino	3
Multi-racial	1
White	1
Students w/Disabilities	14

\*January 2016 D65 Strategic Plan Scorecard (2014-15)

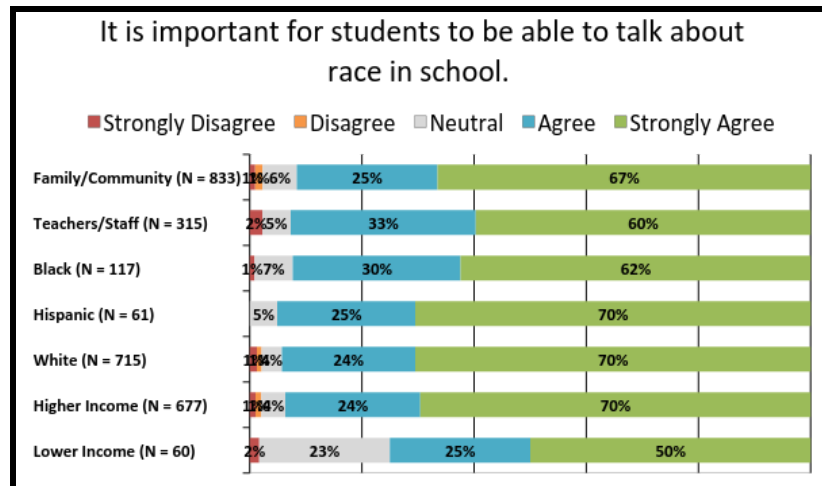
Principals and parents across the district talked about the racially visible distinctions of which students are being sent out of class to the office. Building upon Willard's Anti-bias Education website and drawing from Teaching Tolerance's Anti-bias Education Framework are good places to begin addressing this recommendation. Feedback from the *D65 Online Equity Survey 2016-17* as well as stakeholder perspectives confirm these findings as outlined below.

- "Kids said I wasn't black and kids kept saying you're white and my mom explained to me about the 1 drop rule." (K-8, Student)
- "Social emotional relationship determines what child will learn. It's indirect sometimes because kids see how their teacher treats other children. Teachers need to be sensitised to their impact on all of our children's learning. Today more than any other time in history...One thing we talk about is special needs - how they're evaluated. How parents are talked to after their child is 3 years old. Our process is more respectful for families. The 3-5 yr old side is a different experience for white families and families of color compared to the process we go through...it's disrespectful. Specifically the IEP with 12 professionals and a parent who is told what's going to be done to their child. Parents of color don't know they can say 'no.'" (Family Center, Adults)
- "Stereotypes - you can't get rid of them. Always gonna be there. A kid calls me '*a stereotypically ethnic food*' everyday. It started as a joke but annoying now. Me and my friends make jokes how I am Asian but sometimes very aggravating that he doesn't know my actual name...Friend groups have stereotypes i.e. all Black people eat chicken. Friend teasing is OK but outside you need permission. It depends on who you're with...I can relate because a friend called me 'my favorite Mexican' or 'the best Mexican friend.' It's annoying that people ask me if I'm Syrian, Indian or Mexican...My dad said in this country you have an opportunity to do many things and going to school is a blessing. He said be careful in life - 1 mistake for your color ruins the opportunity. So 1 terrorist...1 person shoots school then...1 illegal immigrant ruins reputation for everyone. Wish you could be yourself. Used to go to Chicago school and didn't care about skin color but when I transferred to Willard and went to all white class, I stood out. I was gonna be in TWI but saw I was darker and worried about middle school " (6-8, Students)

- “Our White students get services faster especially in special education. White parents are catered to. Not just squeaky wheel, but entitlement as well. While we have Black parents who speak up, with white parents it's ‘I'm gonna make your life terrible till I get what I want.’ Teachers show more concern when a white student isn't performing as well as they think they should and they bring it forth faster. When a black student has a concern, you're told to wait a few days. I've had that experience several times...‘give it a couple days’ when it’s right away with a White student. ‘We'll take them right away.’ It's true White students get attention quickly. Also in discipline. If it's the same situation and a White student does something, it's a talk but a Black Student loses privileges and it's dealt with differently.” (K-5, Adults)
- “ODRs and disproportionality of Black males for example when two kids are involved but I end up seeing the Black male. If I don't follow up I don't see White kids. The consistency with which that happens indicates something is going on. PBIS data also shows that disproportionality and perception of unfairness. Kids feeling they're not being heard. Kids feeling they're the only one. A mindset causes that practice which has been nurtured over decades.” (6-8, Adult)



These charts show the overwhelming majority of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that it's important for students and adults to be able to talk about race in schools which speaks to the need for racial literacy.



- “D65’s greatest challenge regarding racial equity is the education piece - it's hard to move forward unless everyone is well informed about where biases come from and how it's built into our system. Social Studies is lacking because it’s not ‘tested’ so kids don't know. If we don't teach kids history of our country then they can't understand. Have to hit it hard where all this comes from but I don't see any meat in it. Need to talk about history of how races were created. This is where fear comes from. Parents need training too. “ (K-5, Adult)
- “Not welcome - always getting yelled at by kids and grown-ups. It would be better if there were nicer staff and people..Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are similar to me - same skin color.” (K-8, Students)
- “When a family can't advocate, D65 says this is what you're going to do. If you have a lawyer and can advocate, you have options. “ (K-8, Teacher)
- “What it means to be ready coming in at kindergarten. What is ready at 5 years old? From SEL perspective they're not ready across all cultural, ethnic, SES, racial backgrounds. Now we're away from what kindergarten used to be. Kindergarten is an academic site. Kids don't have chance to learn through play because of academic demands. Some come with nothing. Many can't sit in a chair for a full day. Kindergarten teachers criticized for play and have to teach writing, when kids don't have fine motor skills to write. Our delineation of grades denies that there's a range, a spectrum. We find kids are different. They grow and mature in different ways at different times.” (K-5, Adults)
- “Race comes up in classroom a lot when I’m teaching the youngest group of kids especially because of the election. It's a challenging topic. A Black student constantly says he wishes he was White and I try to support him i.e. liking who you are, being really positive. Self-image and race are big.” (K-8, Adult)

## **2. Address the Detrimental Impact of Math Placement**

The basis for this recommendation comes from District 65 adults who’ve expressed frustration by having to teach the same material to classes of students that are racially different due to parent advocacy. This has a ripple effect throughout the school on scheduling. Parents also expressed frustration in being met with resistance when it comes to having their children of color placed into “higher” math classes.

- “In math we try to get students to construct viable arguments and it pushes them to cultivate a mindset of differing viewpoints. Cultivating different social identity groups not for universal agreement but for respect of differences. i.e. Algebra 1 & Algebra 8 now CMP3 and now exactly the same but difference is who's who in the classroom... Changing name “Sam” to “Shaniqua” isn't equity.” (6-8, D65 Adults)

- “Equity impacts discipline and areas where there's greater subjectivity/bias for example placement in math or reading.” (K-5, Parent)
- “Regarding the achievement gap, it was shocking based on the report that came out. You'd think resources and income would have everyone at same level. It's upsetting and disappointing...There was an element of relief from the report because we knew...finally in writing an acknowledgement that we need to do something. Our experience is that it's more overt. There are a certain number of seats in White classes and both administrators and teachers are aware of that. In 4th grade the teacher said our son was gifted. That's when we first moved here. In 5th grade he started to do poorly. He was bored and not doing well in math. 2 yrs of White teachers telling us our Black son is remedial and continues in middle school. “ (K-8, Parent)
- “The District's greatest challenge is that racial equity hasn't been addressed. It's never been a conversation. Looking at range of Black students and the disproportionality in SpEd, math tracking. When people say "I don't see color" or "color doesn't matter" Kids see it and it's an issue/challenge/disconnect. Teachers can't adequately support them if they don't see the kids. It dismisses students and their backgrounds.” (6-8, D65 Adults)

**3. Devise an enrollment management strategy that minimizes the disproportionate impact of busing on Black and Latinx students and increases parent/family access to schools within walking distance of traditionally underrepresented students' homes.**

This recommendation is closely linked with recommendation #4. See below.

**4. Develop and implement a plan that addresses the following goals with regard to TWI and ACC:**

- a. Address racial disproportionality among English dominant TWI students
- b. Strengthen and fully integrate ACC & TWI (e.g., creating schools where TWI and ACC are combined into a single instructional approach)
- c. Dispel the myth that ACC is only for Black students
- d. End isolation of TWI teachers/students
- e. Develop and strengthen TWI in 6th-8th grade

The basis for recommendations #3 & #4 come from

- 1) the impact of busing on Black/Brown students from the 5th ward;
- 2) the pattern of isolation in the TWI and ACC programs;
- 3) the district's practices regarding placement in both programs;
- 4) the disproportionate placement of homeless students in the ACC program; and
- 5) the fact that TWI is considered to be the most effective program model for dual language literacy with potential to close the achievement gap.

There is disproportionality among the English dominant learners in the TWI program where very few Black students participate even though the benefits to African-Americans in such programs are well documented by research. Mr. Thomas and Ms. Collier leading research experts in dual language education --

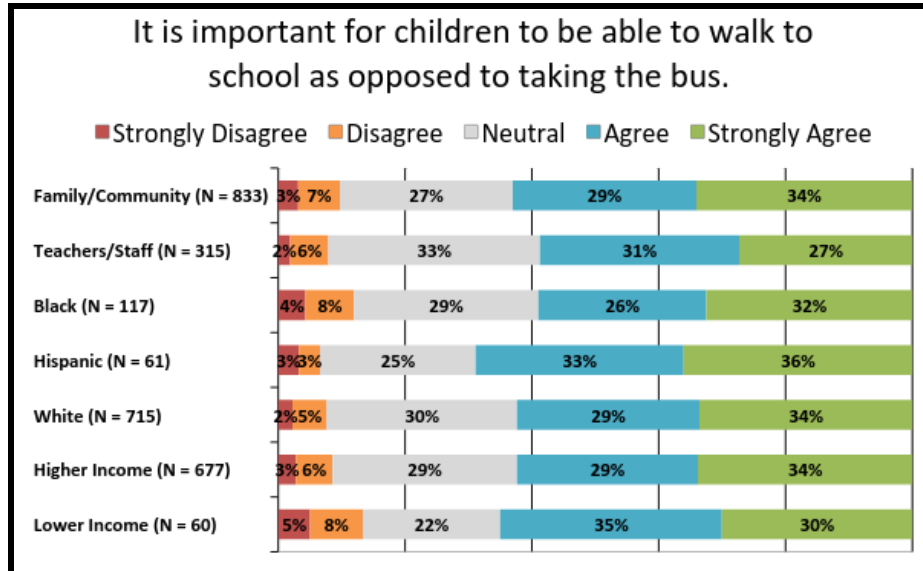
“found that African-American students in dual-language programs significantly outscore their nondual-language peers in reading in all tested grades. By the 4th grade, they are scoring ahead of their nondual-language peers who are a grade ahead of them. The pattern is the same in math. ‘The number one impact of this type of instruction is on their cognitive development, which is cumulative every year,’ Mr. Thomas said. ‘The other key factor is the level of student engagement. Those two things are adding up to a lot of positive effects for our most historically disadvantaged groups.’ The researchers have also conducted on-site interviews with teachers, students, administrators, and parents in the two-way, dual-language schools to get a better understanding of why achievement is strong, attendance rates are high, and students are engaged. In delving into why black students are performing at much higher levels in dual language than their peers who are not, Ms. Collier said teachers offer some revealing answers. For some African-American students who may speak a nonstandard form of English at home, learning in Spanish is making them more ‘metalinguistically aware,’ which teachers say develops their literacy skills in English, Ms. Collier said. ‘Teachers also tell me that their African-American students are so highly engaged,’ Ms. Collier said. ‘It’s like being in a gifted program where they are able to make leaps in learning and get to the more interesting stuff. They are not bored.’” *School Successes Inspire N.C. Push for Dual Language*, Maxwell [Education Week](#), 2014.

TWI/ACC schools will reduce teacher isolation, program “othering” for example students labeled as the “TWI” kids, the “Mexican” kids or the “ACC” kids, and more effectively use district resources such as bilingual reading specialists, social workers, special education service providers, bilingual libraries and materials. Dedicated representation from Curriculum and Instruction, Family and Community Engagement, Research and Accountability, and Communication will be required to ensure a smooth transition, minimal impact to students/families, resource allocation to support sustainability and to determine school locations that are accessible to underprivileged populations.

Many parents stated that they moved to particular neighborhoods in Evanston so that their children would be able to walk to school which is also confirmed by the online survey results where over 50% of all respondents regardless of role, race or income, value the ability for children to be able to walk to school. This speaks to the need for District 65 to further examine busing practices. Several principals and parents expressed concern about the ability for Black, Latinx and newcomer EL students to maintain friendships outside of school and participate in enrichment programs and clubs due to the challenge presented by geographic proximity. D65 teachers specifically expressed frustration about the impact that late bus arrivals have on students’ ability to achieve and parents ability to actively engage in the school community when it’s beyond walking distance from their home.

By creating fully integrated ACC/TWI schools where all students learn to speak, read and write at high levels in both Spanish and English while embracing the educational philosophy of the Afrocentric Curriculum embedded in collectivism and connections of the African diaspora to Latin America, District 65 will disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline by creating a pipeline of diverse students to receive the Seal of Biliteracy at ETHS. The Seal of Biliteracy originated in California and over the past several years schools in Illinois have followed suit by recognizing the value of high levels of proficiency in reading, writing and speaking multiple languages. This is an opportunity to build bridges among Evanston's ethnic communities by intentionally addressing the needs of marginalized student groups, strengthening the TWI program at the middle school level, investing in the ACC program as it was initially intended and truly cultivating students' cultural capital.

- “When you bus a kid from their neighborhood so that they can be the kid of color in the white school, they don't have the before/after school opportunities to participate in academic & enrichment programs because they have to go back home. That starts the achievement/opportunity gap and paints a narrative for white kids of ‘you go home and I'll play with you during school.’ It paints the narrative of having to go back home, you're not from here. It also informs parents' understanding and interaction that we're not good enough or we won't go to ‘that neighborhood.’ Always comparing - let's go to white school and it is damaging and contributes to racial gap at high school.” (6-8, Parent)
- “As a parent living a couple blocks away, it's huge. Feeling like school is in our community and can hang out on weekends/after school is great. Huge underlying factor which is so great. Feel so fortunate that our lines are drawn that don't do very much busing. Not sure who's on that bus. Maybe coming from special programs. My sense is those kids who are bussed may feel like they're missing out on opportunities. I imagine more isolating. Fortunately it's a smaller group...It's critical to be able to walk because I live across the street. I wouldn't come otherwise. My kids feel like this is their school. We come to the playground. My 4 yr old has a sense that this is his place. We chose not to go to King Arts and stay here so they can walk, trick-or-treat, see friends outside of the school day. It's a different experience if you bring in ‘different’ kids. I would only bus privileged children to underprivileged areas. If bussing is necessary, than move those with privilege versus at the expense of kids of color. Diversity is for white kids. kids of color learn how to code switch but the white kids are very racist in middle school.” (K-5, Parents)



- “We could have improved diversity in curriculum. Used to be all white men, not even women. We have support of principal to break away and focus on other things other than white male history....maybe other schools who have ACC do but not here. ...curriculum i.e. social studies is all about white people. A bit about natives. A colleague brings in a lot but it's not part of the curriculum. Is everyone seeing themselves in literature? Parents with money and resources get more. Having taught in several schools across the district, I couldn't believe what was here compared to a school across town but within the same district. “(K-5, Adult)

5. **Develop a plan to address racial representation of teachers and to increase recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals that have an equity mindset**
  - a. Create district-wide employee Affinity Groups

This recommendation is rooted in the need for students to see reflections of themselves in the adults who are responsible for their education, the concern for what is happening to the Black teachers in District 65 and the staff-staff relationships particularly between custodians and teachers. Throughout the equity walks adults talked about how District 65 used to have more Black teachers and they questioned why “good” Black employees are leaving. The chart below confirms this perception by showing that over the past decade the number of Black teachers has indeed decreased.



Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Am. Indian	0	0	0	0		0.2	0.5	0.5	0.2	0
Asian	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.5		2.4	3	3.4	3.7	3.8
Black	17.4	16.4	16.4	16.6		17	14.5	13.6	13.9	13.2
Hispanic	5.6	4.9	5.5	5.7		4.5	4.1	3.4	5	5.2
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0		0	0	0.2	0	0
Two or More	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0.5	0.9
White	75	76.6	75.9	75.2		75.8	77.8	78.8	76.7	76.7
N	516	534	553	567	578	594	594	608	616	617

In order to address this, hiring managers should undergo equity training, a survey should be given to staff of color to gather their perspectives and social identity affinity groups should be implemented to provide a space for staff of color to share their concerns and for human resources to learn how to better address their needs. It is important to note that simply having a staff that reflects the students' racial and ethnic demographic is not enough. Equity training as outlined in recommendation #1 is still an essential component.

Also, since District 65 is well known, there are often many online applications and there hasn't been a need to go out and recruit employees. However, the district's commitment to equity requires that the hiring process be more intentional in order to clearly articulate criteria for hiring with an equity mindset. Building upon the work done during the 2016-17 school year with principals and the District 65 Equity Leadership Team regarding equity questions used in screening and interviews, protocols around building a hiring committee, supporting current employees, and piloting an LGBTQ affinity group are good places to begin addressing this recommendation. Furthermore, providing district-wide employee affinity groups will prevent the isolation felt by adults in varying roles throughout D65 schools. Particularly those whose positions are not as highly regarded within the organizational hierarchy and who experience microaggressions which are often normalized and not addressed.

- "D65's greatest challenge is balance within schools racially among students, with teacher recruitment as well...Af-Am teachers are retiring and not being replaced. Now education isn't their only option. Black teachers are gone. Looking at DEC meeting yesterday it's so different. HR needs to recruit more Af-Am educators. I covered a recruitment fair at Chicago State years ago. There were 4 strong candidates, but they never were interviewed." (K-5, Adult)
- "Staff is the problem. Very few non-white teachers. Ironic that in our huge Headstart program, not 1 Black teacher. In special services very few across district - 5 only. King Arts may have 4 Black teachers. We need more Latino teachers, positions become available and they keep hiring white women. Often hire out of Northwestern. Even TA positions. In IEP mtgs w/non-white parents I sense intimidation and lack of compassion." (Early Childhood/JEH, Adults)

- “Staff recognizing that every position is equal and essential. I see things in kids after school that teachers might not see during the day. If we can work together and realize each job is important then everyone can get in touch with each other. I know some things before teachers know and can impact behavior in classroom.” (K-8, Before/Adult)
- “Some people look down and talk down to me because all I do is clean toilets, but if your kid is out getting hurt, then you want help. It's about communication...common sense.” (K-8, Adult)
- “It’s predominantly white. Teachers of color would be a great improvement. I’d love a Black math or science teacher. If kids see an adult model it would be helpful.” (K-5, Parent)
- “A kindergartener said he's going to send me back to Africa. I just laughed and walked away. He doesn't know what he's saying. He’s just a little White boy.” (K-5, Adult)
- “In November the issue started and no gender neutral bathroom in the building. Why don't all schools have at least 1 gender neutral space?” (K-8, Adult)

**6. Create inclusive “welcoming” spaces and opportunities throughout District 65:**

- a. Create a Parent Welcome Center
- b. Pilot parent/family SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) and develop district-wide parent Affinity Groups
- c. Create a Parent Mentor Program
- d. Employ Bilingual Family Liaisons, ideally who have Interpreter Training

Based on the data collected in the equity walks this recommendation aims to build upon the work done by school climate teams to develop relationships and cultivate the cultural capital of District 65’s diverse students and their families, starting with consistency in translated Spanish-English communication. Evidence from the walks speaks to a disconnect between the district and families from the moment they enter JEH. With growing numbers of parents and families whose primary language is not English, having to walk into the building and use a telephone to connect with the person who can help you that’s on the second floor of the building, is extremely intimidating and cumbersome.

This disconnect between home and school can begin to be addressed by creating a Parent Welcome Center, implementing district-wide affinity groups based on social identities, investing in Family Liaisons with interpreter training as necessary based on language needs, and inviting family members to participate in a Parent Mentor Program. This would be a way to make meaningful connections between our schools and our students home lives through intentional outreach and by empowering parents as their child’s first teacher. The models for such programs are easily accessible in Chicago as described in Soo Hong’s book *A Cord of Three*

*Strands* that gives an account of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association’s parent mentor program which was the foundation for the Niles Township Schools’ ELL Parent Center’s PMP program. Many parents expressed a desire to engage in deeper equity work beyond the one-time-workshop and a parent SEED group is an excellent place to begin strengthening relationships and understanding throughout the Evanston/Skokie school community. Building upon the multiracial family affinity group and the Black/Latino parent advisory winter meeting, are good places to begin addressing this recommendation as well.

- “I feel welcome in school yes, but by District 65, no. At school things get done...I feel welcome at King Arts but not in my Grandson's class...He's been diagnosed w/PTSD and has issues and they're not handling it properly. A therapist comes in 1x/wk to work with him but the teacher is not supportive. I'm ready to pull him out of there. At Kingsley where my other grandchildren go, the teachers care more about educating children than King Lab...My mom taught for 40 years. These teachers aren't teaching because they love to have kids learn - it's for a paycheck. My son was at Haven and came home in 8th grade saying that the teacher said 'have you been doing that stuff before school?' I called the school and requested a meeting and asked about what my son told me. I asked why do you think that he's high?...They don't know how to handle black kids. Some kids parents are on drugs. Ask the kids how are you doing today, instead of what are you doing before school. This white teacher at Haven just judged him and it was swept under the carpet...those are the 1st words you say instead of how he is? Haven is a mess. It brought down his self-esteem...The teachers at Kingsley they keep trying with him so he was able to get it through summer school and bridges. He's graduating in June and going to middle school and his math/reading and doing Books & Breakfast is helping. Helping me build up my son's self-esteem. If more teachers took time to do that, they'd turn out CEOs and presidents. Teachers spend lots of time with children during the day. No idea what a teacher can do to a child's self esteem.” (Family Focus, Parents/Grandparents)
- “It’s not always accessible due to language -- when registering child no place to put Hispanic. They can't mark themselves but have to choose white. We fought a lot to get translation page translated to Spanish and it's complicated, but when you have to register your child, when we say every child everyday whatever it takes, from the beginning in registration, it's contradictory.” (Family Center, Adults)
- “Feels like an island sometimes...when is their story told? What they're dealing with, their family issues/concerns/values a part of what happens here. Making those home to school connections is important. Telling kids no you can't talk or speak like that. It's not right. Instead of bridging home and friends.” (K-5, Adult)
- “This team is responsive but we don't always have a trained interpreter to support Spanish speaking parent population...parents feel afraid because 5th and 1st grade there are a lot of problems. There’s a gap between wanting to do right but their (principal/Asst principal) hands are tied regarding inappropriate lunch lady...there's discrimination and we need to address it.” (K-5, Parents)

- “So thankful to be included on survey. Usually an afterthought and/or forgotten unintentionally.” (K-8, Adults)
- “Yes feels welcome at Walker which celebrates diversity. Walking in the door secretary is warm and open walking in the door. PTO welcoming as a kindergarten parent and kinder mixers. 1st day of school very welcome. Strong sense of community in Walker. Always lots of parents from all walks of life. Lots of volunteers. Feels like people are looking out for each other. D65 not welcome. I feel we're forgotten - that school around the corner.” (K-5, Parents)

**7. Institutionalize the district’s commitment to equity and empowerment through dedicated staffing** and organizational structures (e.g., an equity and empowerment office) to maintain a focus on equity and the implementation of the equity plan.

**8. Develop an implementation plan by October 31, 2017**

## Appendix A

### D65 Racial & Educational Equity Statement

#### *Declaración de equidad racial y educativa del Distrito 65*

District 65 recognizes that excellence requires a commitment to equity and to identifying and addressing practices, policies, and institutional barriers, including institutional racism, that perpetuate opportunity and achievement gaps. The district must work proactively to acknowledge racial and cultural biases, and eliminate institutional structures and practices that affect student learning and achievement. District 65 commits to:

*El Distrito 65 reconoce que la excelencia requiere un compromiso con la equidad y con identificar y enfrentar prácticas, políticas y barreras institucionales, incluyendo el racismo institucional, que perpetúan las brechas de oportunidad. El distrito tiene que trabajar de forma proactiva para reconocer los prejuicios raciales y culturales, y eliminar las estructuras institucionales y las prácticas que afectan el aprendizaje y el éxito de los estudiantes. El Distrito 65 se compromete a:*

**1) Raising the achievement of all students while eliminating the racial predictability of achievement.**

- *Elevar el aprovechamiento de todos los estudiantes a la vez que también elimina la previsibilidad racial del éxito.*

**2) Raising the achievement of all students while eliminating the predictability of academic achievement based upon family income, disabilities, gender identity, and status as an English language learner.**

- *Elevar el aprovechamiento de todos los estudiantes al mismo tiempo eliminar la previsibilidad del éxito académico en base a los ingresos familiares, discapacidades, identidad de género, y el estatus/clasificación de “aprendiz del idioma Inglés”.*

**3) Ensuring that all board members and staff examine and change educational practices, policies, and processes that contribute to and perpetuate racial disparities, and the disparities of those who have been marginalized in society by their identity, cultural, or economic status.**

- *Asegurar que todos miembros de la Junta Directiva de Educación y los empleados examinen y cambien las prácticas educativas, las políticas y los procesos que contribuyen*

*y perpetúan las disparidades raciales, y las disparidades de aquellos que han sido marginados en la sociedad por su identidad o por su condición cultural o económica.*

**4) Honoring and building upon the strengths and assets of every student.**

- *Respetar y desarrollar las fortalezas y los recursos de cada estudiante.*

**5) Providing all students with resources, opportunities and supports needed to ensure preparation for success in high school and beyond.**

- *Proveer a todos los estudiantes con recursos, oportunidades y apoyos necesarios para asegurar la preparación del éxito en la escuela preparatoria y después de ella.*

**6) Attracting and retaining a workforce that is diverse in skills and experience and reflects the demographic diversity of our students.**

- *Atraer y retener una fuerza laboral diversa en habilidades y en experiencia y que refleje la diversidad demográfica de nuestros estudiantes.*

**7) Implementing culturally relevant teaching practices that reflect the contributions and perspectives of all people.**

- *Implementar las prácticas de enseñanza culturalmente relevantes que reflejen las contribuciones y perspectivas de todas personas.*

**8) Ensuring that all board members and staff receive training that promotes an understanding of racial identity and cultural competencies, and identifies and addresses implicit and explicit biases.**

- *Asegurar que todos los miembros de la Junta Directiva de Educación y los empleados reciben el entrenamiento que promueva la comprensión de la identidad racial y competencias culturales, e que identifica y dirige prejuicios implícitos y explícitos.*

**9) Welcoming and engaging families as essential partners in their students' education, school planning, and district decision making.**

- *Recibir a las familias y hacer que participen como asociados fundamentales en la educación de sus hijos, en la planificación escolar y en las decisiones que toma el distrito.*

**10) Involving community members including parents and families, civic and faith-based leadership, and the community at large, as active collaborators and problem-solvers on acknowledging and addressing racial and educational equity.**

- *Involucrar a los miembros de la comunidad, incluyendo padres y miembros de la familia, a los líderes cívicos y religiosos, y a la comunidad en general, como colaboradores*

*activos y solucionadores de problemas en el reconocimiento y atención de la equidad racial y educativa.*

## Appendix B

### Questions

#### Teachers/Staff & Parents/Community

1. When you hear "equity" or "racial equity" what comes to mind?
2. How is race talked about in this school?
3. Have you heard the saying "every child, every day, whatever it takes?" If so, what are our thoughts on it?
4. Have you heard or seen D65's Racial & Educational Equity Statement? If so, what are our thoughts on it?
5. Do you feel valued & respected in this school? In D65?
6. What groups of students are best and least served by this school?
7. Is the amount of diversity/multiculturalism in the curriculum appropriate?
8. How does bussing impact students in this school? How important is it for children to be able to walk to school?
9. When you hear "5th ward" what comes to mind?
10. When you hear "achievement gap" what comes to mind?
11. What's most important, raising test scores or raising the racial consciousness of students/staff/community to support the whole child & their success both inside and out of the classroom?
12. Is there anything else that you think is important to mention about this work that would help us understand equity in D65?

#### Teachers/Staff

1. What is D65's greatest challenge when it comes to racial equity?
2. What type of leadership is needed to support equity work in this school/D65?
3. How does equity inform your instructional delivery in the classroom? How do you decide what to teach? Can you give examples of inclusive language that you use with students/families/colleagues?
4. How do the students, colleagues & families you work with know that you value and respect them?
5. When it comes to racial equity & diversity initiatives, what has been the most meaningful PD you've done?
6. What conferences do D65 employees usually attend? What's the outcome/impact on students/classrooms/teaching & learning?

#### Parents/Community

1. Do you feel welcome in this school? In D65?
2. Why do you live in this community? Why do you send your child to this school?



3. Who do you talk to when you have a concern about your child? What's the first thing you do? How comfortable are you talking to your child's teacher/principal?
4. What does success look like for your child?
5. Do you feel teachers/school leaders are prepared to teach and support your child/children? What would help teachers/school leaders better meet the needs of your child/children?

### **Students**

1. Do you feel welcome in this school? In D65? What do you like most about this school and what do you wish were different about this school?
2. When you have a problem at school, what's the first thing you do? Who do you talk to?
3. When you think about your friends, how are they the same and how are they different from you?
4. Have you ever heard of the words: identity, stereotypes, discrimination, equity? Do you know what they mean?
5. When was the first time you became aware of your skin color/race? If you never thought about it before I asked this question that's ok. There's no right or wrong answer, but if there's a time that stands out and you feel comfortable talking about it, please share.
6. What are some stereotypes about people who are similar to you? Where do those stereotypes come from? Are they positive or negative?
7. Other than skin color, what piece of a person's identity is most often discriminated against?
8. Do you think all students have the same opportunities in this school?
9. Do you see any difference in the way students are treated in this school? If so, when and where? Are all students treated with the same level of respect by students and adults in this school?
10. Are some students more likely than others to get in trouble in this school? Without sharing names, who are "these" students, what do they have in common & why do you think they get in trouble?
11. What piece of your identity is most important to you? Why? When you think about yourself and what makes you unique, what are you most proud of? What do you wish teachers and classmates knew about you as a person?
12. Do you learn about people from your racial or ethnic background in your classes?
13. Is there anything else that you'd like to say or share?

## Appendix C

### Site Based Stakeholder Overview

School	Stakeholder Touch Points		School TOTAL	Focus Groups
	Parents	D65 Adults		
Bessie Rhodes	17	26	43	27
Chute	7	45	52	9
Dawes	10	21	31	18
Dewey	22	15	37	16
Early Childhood/JEH	6	15	21	6
Family Center		9	9	1
Grandmas/Family Focus	11	1	12	1
Haven	1	13	14	9
King Arts	3	12	15	7
Kingsley	1	25	26	11
Lincoln	8	31	39	14
Lincolnwood	4	19	23	16
Nichols	10	44	54	11
Oakton	11	24	35	12
Orrington	8	15	23	13
Park	0	13	13	
Rice	0	7	7	9
Walker	23	25	48	18
Washington	15	16	31	12
Willard	14	20	34	23
	<b>171</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>233</b>

## Appendix D

### Common Responses and Comments

Students are saying...

- They notice differences (skin, hair, eye color – especially K-2)
- They see who goes to which class (math & TWI)
- 6th-8th graders comfortable talking about social identities
- Early recognition of self (how theirs fits w/their families; ways they experience their skin color; how stereotypes about people of my social identity group play out for me personally)
- Use of language (religion, culture, darker/lighter skin, background)
- School is a place of peace ie. outside of school with family, in sports or at other schools noticed differences
- Overall students feel welcome in their schools and enjoy coming to school.
- They appreciate teachers who are patient and don't hold grudges.

Teachers are saying...

- We feel pressure to focus on academics over social emotional student needs
- They're hungry for equity training to address growing diversity (Special needs, ELLs, immigrants, refugees, LGBTQ, race)
- Desire consistent message from leadership who's knowledgeable, self-aware, brave, courageous & willing to do what's best for kids even when unpopular
- There are too many initiatives & too little time
- Innovative in terms of introducing relevant topics not provided by mandated curriculum
- School as connected community (there's no 1 way/district-wide way to address race when it comes up in classroom)
- Need & want to incorporate families of all students but aren't reached b/c well resourced parents monopolize time
- Insufficient resource distribution (presence of diverse resource materials, staff that reflects students, PD is a "beat down")
- Way things used to be v way things are now in terms of integration, lack of hope, degree of social reputations of schools/teachers the way schools function. With more students overall it's more diverse now than it was before

Parents are saying...

- We feel more comfortable in our kid's school than at district
- We're concerned about organic "diversity" v "created" diversity via bussing
- We're ready to take a deep dive into equity training
- We want to know what the plan is to bring consistency in our school across classrooms regarding teacher equity professional development

- Parent-curriculum disconnect
- Proximity to school (organic diversity v “created” diversity via busing)

## Appendix E

### Accomplishments

In addition to the equity walks, several other equity initiatives were initiated and implemented by district leadership in parallel to ensure that actions were being taken across District 65 to address some of the known gaps in order to lay the foundation to build a more equitable learning environment. These equity initiatives are outlined below.

- Creation of DELT (D65 Equity Leadership Team)
- *Despite the Best Intentions*, Diamond-Lewis Principals' Book study
- Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings Opening day video & discussion
- SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Pilot
- Adoption of Racial and Educational Equity Statement
- Development of D65 Equity Website and Calendar
- Equity Training and Workshops
  - Principals and Assistant Principals
  - New Staff Orientation and throughout the year
  - Special Services
  - Cabinet
- Equity Professional Learning Opportunity Exploration
  - Regional Summit for Courageous Conversation About Race
  - Race Forward's Racial Justice Leadership Institute
  - National Summit for Courageous Conversation About Race
  - Teaching Tolerance's Confronting Bias Training
- Black/Latino Parent Advisory Meeting
- Equity Advisory Fall and Spring Meetings
- Beyond Diversity training and accompanying pre/post meetings
- HR collaboration/support
  - Principal Meetings → Equity Interview Question Development
  - HR Employee satisfaction survey w/equity questions
- Equity Institute ½ day (District-wide all staff)
- CCSJ (Cultural Competence for Social Justice) Self-assessment Pilot
  - DELT
  - Dawes
  - Bessie Rhodes
- Middle School Student ETHS SOAR conference at Northwestern

## Monthly Overview of Equity Initiatives

<b>May 2016</b>	Creation of DELT (D65 Equity Leadership Team)
<b>June 2016</b>	Cabinet Equity Workshop #1 Regional Summit for Courageous Conversation About Race
<b>July 2016</b>	<i>Despite the Best Intentions</i> , Diamond-Lewis Principals' Book study Race Forward's Racial Justice Leadership Institute
<b>August 2016</b>	Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings Opening day video & discussion SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Pilot begins Adoption of Racial and Educational Equity Statement New Staff Orientation Equity Training #1 Special Services Equity Training
<b>September 2016</b>	Development of D65 Equity Website and Calendar Principal Equity Training #1 National Summit for Courageous Conversation About Race Beyond Diversity training & accompanying pre/post meetings
<b>October 2016</b>	Asst Principal Equity Training #1 Cabinet Equity Workshop #2 Equity Advisory Committee Fall Meeting Beyond Diversity training & accompanying pre/post meetings
<b>November 2016</b>	Equity Institute ½ day (District-wide all staff) Beyond Diversity training & accompanying pre/post meetings
<b>December 2016</b>	Principal Equity Training #2 Asst Principal Equity Training #2 Equity BOE Report CCSJ (Cultural Competence for Social Justice) Self-assessment → DELT
<b>February 2017</b>	Principal Equity Training #3 Asst Principal Equity Training #3 Racial & Educational Equity Draft Policy discussed Black/Latino Parent Advisory Meeting New Staff Equity Training #2 Teaching Tolerance's Confronting Bias Training Middle School Student ETHS SOAR conference at Northwestern

	HR & Principal Meetings #1 & #2 → Equity Interview Question Development
<b>March 2017</b>	Equity Advisory Committee Spring Meeting CCSJ (Cultural Competence for Social Justice) Self-assessment → Dawes
<b>April 2017</b>	New Staff Equity Training #3 CCSJ (Cultural Competence for Social Justice) Self-assessment → Bessie Rhodes HR & Principal Meetings #3 → Equity Interview Question Development
<b>May 2017</b>	Beyond Diversity training & accompanying pre/post meetings HR Employee satisfaction survey w/equity questions

**D65 Equity Leadership Team**

In the spring of the 2015-16 school year, the D65 Equity Leadership Team was formed with representatives from each of the 18 schools. The 1st meeting was spent examining the strategic plan, our values, how we spend our time, and our hopes and fears around equity in the district. DELT members are not necessarily traditional school leaders as defined by seniority or popularity but individuals with the will to gather monthly with the purpose of: 1) Engaging in a process of investigation to explore how race impacts personal/professional attitudes & behaviors; 2) Guiding key decision makers to examine individual and institutional culture as related to equity and anti-racism, 3) Establishing a professional learning community for participants to develop essential skills and knowledge to improve student performance and work toward eliminating racial achievement disparities; 4) Making recommendations to key decision makers.

In December 2016 the DELT merged with the *WCC (Whole Child Council)* in an effort to align the myriad initiatives while maintaining a student centered focus. The DELT operates using the working agreements listed below which are *adapted from CCAR (Courageous Conversations About Race) protocol, Glenn Singleton & Harwood Institute for Public Innovation*

1. Stay engaged
  - Help keep the discussion on track; try not to ramble.
2. Speak your truth → use “I/me”
  - There are no "right answers". Draw on your own experiences, views and beliefs; you do not need to be an expert.
3. Experience discomfort

- It is okay to disagree, but don't be disagreeable.
4. Accept/Expect non-closure
- Have "kitchen table" conversations. Everyone participates; no one dominates.

### **Despite the Best Intentions, Diamond-Lewis Principals' Book study**

During the summer of 2016, principals read and discussed the book and made connections to their respective schools and District 65. One of the authors, John Diamond, visited in the fall to answer questions.

### **Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings Opening day video & discussion**

Opening day of school began with principals leading conversations with their staff around the reframing of the "achievement gap" as "education debt."

### **SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) Pilot**

Below are some of the responses from the 60 individuals who were interested in participating in D65's inaugural SEED seminar. The goal was to gauge interest in hopes that of the 1400 employees there would be 24 interested in meeting for 3 hours once a month to learn about systems of oppression and intersectionality in order to strengthen culturally relevant pedagogy and improve overall climate. Due to an overwhelmingly positive response, there are currently 2 cohorts, with plans to expand for the 2017-18 school year, which are currently underway. The comments below are from D65 adults who applied to participate in the inaugural SEED pilot as well as current SEED participants:

- "I am hoping to become more aware, sensitive and informed about educational equity and diversity. I want to become more sensitive to the students in my classroom and as my community becomes more diverse in this ever changing global world I want to change with it."
- "I have been feeling an increasing sense of urgency about issues of injustice, inequity, and hate, and their impact on our students in Evanston. I also have had an increasing realization that my own implicit biases affect everything I can do, so I have been making more effort than ever to understand complex issues, and strive to be an ally. I have been to many one-off trainings or short series of workshops, but I've been hoping to find a more intense experience that is especially focused on our children in Evanston, as that is where my heart is. I'm excited about this opportunity!!"
- "I would like to explore ways to create equity in my classroom, my practice, and in my relationships with my peers."



- “I feel it will help me be a better teacher to all of my students”
- “I just wanted to take a moment to say thank you for your time and efforts as it relates to the equity work you're doing in D65, and particularly the SEED training from which I've had the opportunity to participate and benefit. I am learning so much from you three and from my D65 colleagues, and without this venue in which to learn I simply don't know how I could have gained any level of insight, knowledge, or heard the extent of experiences that I am from those around me. I generally tend to be a more vocal participant, but I truly find value in just shutting the hell up and listening to each of you and the members of this group...potentially something I should have done long ago...I just wanted you to know that in this weird, unsettling, and uncertain time at a local and global level, I'm finding a great deal of value, both personally and professionally, from the work you are doing and the leadership you are demonstrating.”

### **Adoption of Racial and Educational Equity Statement**

At the August board meeting, this statement was adopted.

### **Development of D65 Equity Website and Calendar**

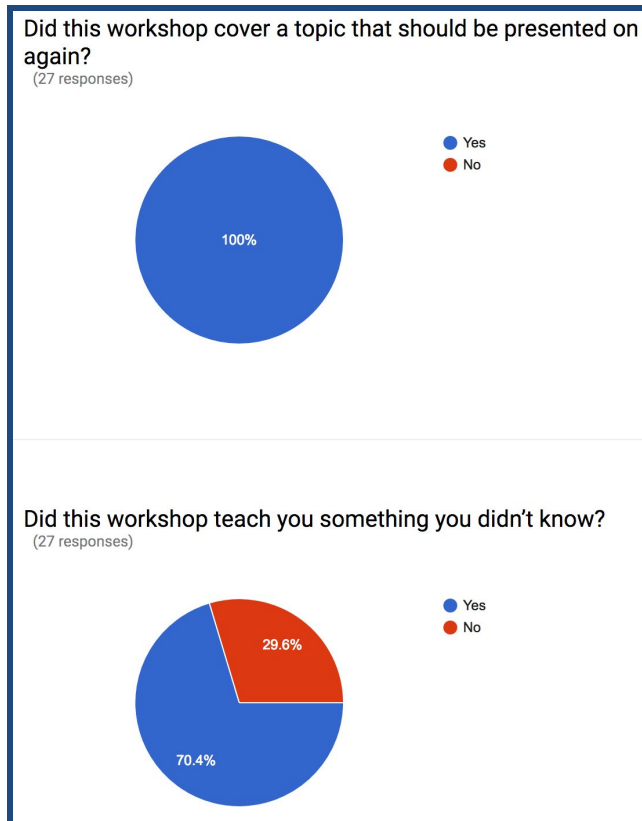
In the fall of 2016, Ismalis Nunez & Melissa Messenger worked together to create an easily accessible place on the District 65 homepage to share updates on equity initiatives and related work. The calendar is constantly updated with information on events in Evanston and the surrounding suburbs. The page is easily accessed by googling District 65 and clicking on the “equity info” button in the top right corner of the District 65 homepage.

### **Equity Training and Workshops**

Building leaders, new staff, members of the student services department, the superintendent and his cabinet participated in equity workshops throughout the school year as an introduction to moving from colorblindness to color consciousness.

### **New Staff Orientation Equity Training Feedback:**

This introduction to equity workshop was the second part as a follow up to District 65 Consultant, Biz Lindsay-Ryan’s training.. Based on the feedback below, people felt that it was a good use of their time. There were two additional equity workshops in February and April which were also well received according to participant feedback.



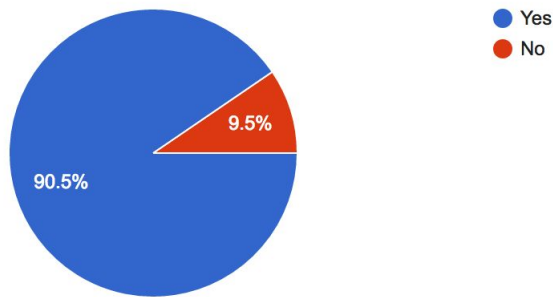
### **Special Services Equity Training Feedback**

The 2016-17 school year began with this workshop as an introduction to equity. While the evaluation responses were low (only 21 of about 100 attendees responded) the chart below provides a snapshot regarding the significance of this work.

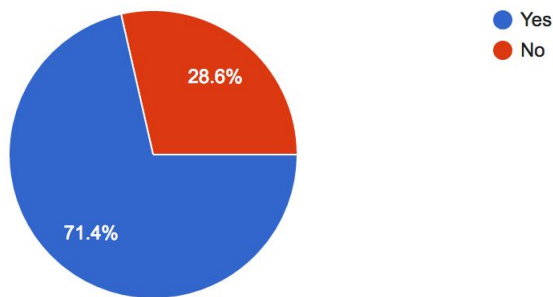
- “It needed to be shown to regular education teachers especially those schools located in the most affluent areas. The presentation should have been made in a smaller more intimate setting. There is still a lot of hypocrisy in the district. The district caters to white, affluent parents who have access to lawyers who can dictate their child's education plan often at the expense of children whose families do not have those resources.”

### Did this workshop cover a topic that should be presented on again?

(21 responses)



### Did this workshop teach you something you didn't know? (21 responses)



### **Equity Professional Learning Opportunity Exploration**

Groups of educational leaders participated in the Regional and National Summits for Courageous Conversations starting with the superintendent and then a team of administrators, a teacher and a board member. They experienced the 2-day Beyond Diversity training as part of the summits which lead to almost 50 people experiencing the training by the spring of 2017.

A small team of administrators, board members and two OPAL members attended Race Forward's full day Racial Justice Leadership Institute. The combination of stakeholders provided an opportunity to strengthen school-community relationships via this shared experience. The board members expressed an immediate desire to take action by committing to keep equity at the forefront of each board meeting, especially when there would be large community turnout so that people would not have to stay late and wait until the end. The statements below were made during the post training debrief meeting and set the tone for future equity work.

- “I didn’t say this work would be easy, I said it would be worth it”
- “What would it mean for us as a district to have equity at the forefront for the next 10 years?”

A principal, teacher and the Family and Community Engagement coordinator attended Teaching Tolerance’s Confronting Bias training held at the Illinois Holocaust Museum. The K-12 Anti-Bias Framework was shared as a resource to support curriculum alignment with social justice.

### **Human Resource Collaboration/Support**

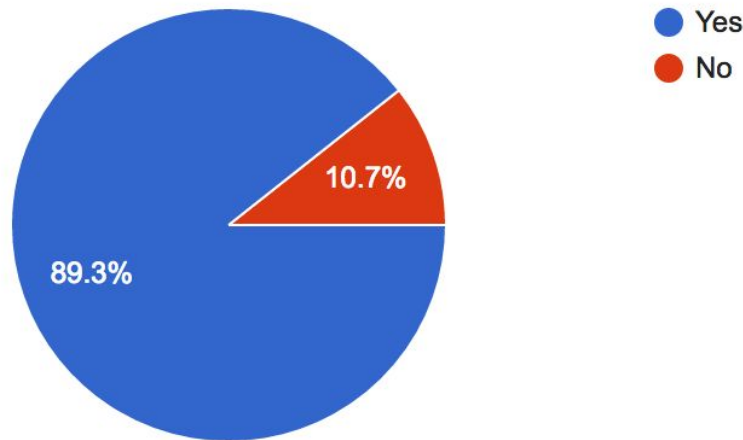
There were three principal meetings dedicated to exploring what it means to hire an individual with an equity mindset, to determine essential equity interview/screening questions and to identify what to “listen for.” The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Beatrice Davis, then was able to create a standardized screening/interview rubric which included a required equity question. Continued work on hiring criteria and interview committees is underway.

### **Equity Institute ½ day (District-wide all staff)**

On November 8, 2016, hundreds of faculty, staff, and administrators from schools across District 65 came together for a full day of professional learning centered on equity. This is one of the District's key areas of focus this school year, in addition to fostering high quality teaching and learning and ensuring the district’s financial sustainability. The morning consisted of keynote speakers and breakout sessions led by a mix of individuals from District 65 and the Evanston/Skokie community who are committed to increasing equity in schools and communities. Staff and faculty had the opportunity to engage in one of four professional learning strands: 1) Students at the Center, 2) Family and Community Engagement, 3) Leadership, and 4) Teaching and Learning. [Detailed information about workshop descriptions and presenter information.](#)

- "What made this morning so powerful was seeing a diverse learning community coming to life. Educators from around our community and our schools came together to learn from one another and have deep discussion around the importance of creating an equitable learning environment where all learners feel fully supported," said Superintendent Goren of the day's events.

## Did you learn something that you can apply in your work? (300 responses)



### **CCSJ (Cultural Competence for Social Justice) Self-assessment Pilot**

DELT members and staff from Dawes and Bessie Rhodes learned about and took Diane Goodman's CCSJ self-assessment which was adapted by Marta Esquilin. The model is outlined below.

1. Self-awareness → consciousness of our social identities, cultures, biases, and perspectives. It entails the ability to understand who we are and what we bring to relationships and situations.
2. Understanding & valuing others → Not only is self-knowledge and awareness needed to enact cultural competence for social justice, so is knowledge and appreciation of the social identities, cultures, and worldviews of other people.
3. Knowledge of societal inequities → We cannot understand ourselves or other people, or create greater equity without considering the larger socio-political and historical context of which we are part. We need to have a grasp of different forms of privilege and oppression and how these they affect people's experiences, opportunities, and access to social power. It is also critical to appreciate the interlocking nature of different types of inequality and how they intersect in people's lives.
4. Skills to interact effectively with a diversity of people in different contexts → In addition to understanding self, others, and society, we need the ability to adapt to and work collaboratively with diverse people in a range of situations. People's social identities affect their interpersonal, communication and work styles, as well as their views of conflict, notions of leadership and sense of time (among many other things).

5. Skills to foster equity & inclusion → Cultural competence for social justice requires more than just understanding the impact of social inequality. It entails being able to identify and address inequities and choose appropriate interventions to create environments, policies, and practices to ensure diversity and fairness.

**Middle School Student ETHS SOAR conference at Northwestern**

About a dozen 7th and 8th graders attended the 2-day SOAR (Students Organized Against Racism) conference at Northwestern hosted by the ETHS SOAR executive board. Students debriefed and some shared what they learned at the spring equity advisory meeting. Understanding microaggressions as they relate to bullying and school climate were key takeaways that the students suggested District 65 build upon in years to come. They wanted more time and wished more of their peers could have shared in the experience.

Appendix F

### D65 Racial & Educational Equity Implementation Plan: Sample Template

To address the findings and recommendations, this template has been created for planning purposes.

Recommendation	Task	Responsible Party	Due Date	Planned Evidence of Success

## Appendix G

### Roadmap

To address the findings and recommendations, this roadmap has been created for planning purposes in alignment with the Racial and Educational Equity Statement. *(The numbers in the objective column correspond to the guiding principles of the D65 Racial & Educational Equity Statement).*

Implementing the recommendations and executing the plan using the existing annual and quarterly reporting processes will go a long way to ensure that when District 65 says *Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes*, people know that it is more than just a great slogan or words on a page.

### Recommendations and Corresponding Action Plan

**1. Increase the level of Racial Literacy, Social Emotional Learning, and Culturally Relevant Teaching throughout District 65:**

- a. Require Equity Training for all Employees starting with BD (Beyond Diversity) including pre/post meetings & SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity)
- b. Identify a means for incorporating racial literacy into the curriculum such as aligning curriculum with K-12 Anti-Bias Framework
- c. Interrupt Disproportionality in Special Education, Discipline and Math

**2. Address the Detrimental Impact of Math Placement**

Objective	Strategy	Success Metric(s)
<b>Implement CRT</b> #1, 2, 4	Use ambitious culturally relevant instruction, teacher collaboration and effective leadership to grow student’s learning beyond their expected academic trajectory.	- Test scores (ie. reading, MAP) - Math placement reflective of student demographics - 2 Fully integrated ACC/TWI schools geographically accessible to traditionally marginalized student populations
<b>Develop</b> #5, 7	Implement a K-12 anti-bias and literacy framework that leads to high school readiness.	- % of 8th gr students needing reading - Percent of 8th graders who are ETHS ready - Social Justice project fair
<b>Train &amp; Support</b> #8	Provide professional learning opportunities so that D65 adults can address the social emotional needs of	- 95% of D65 employees Beyond Diversity trained by 2019 - 75% of D65 teachers trained by



	students to maximize student learning, collegial relationships, family engagement and improve overall climate	2020 - CCSJ (Cultural Competence for Social Justice) Self-Assessment Annual Report - regular equity focused customer service training for JEH staff/D65 employees who are first contacts for potential D65 families
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3. **Devise an enrollment management strategy that minimizes the disproportionate impact of busing on Black and Latinx students and increases parent/family access to schools within walking distance of traditionally underrepresented students' homes.**
4. **Develop and implement a plan that addresses the following goals with regard to TWI and ACC:**
  - a. Address racial disproportionality among English dominant TWI students
  - b. Strengthen and fully integrate ACC & TWI (e.g., creating schools where TWI and ACC are combined into a single instructional approach)
  - c. Dispel the myth that ACC is only for Black students
  - d. End isolation of TWI teachers/students
  - e. Develop and strengthen TWI in 6th-8th grade

Objective	Strategy	Success Metric(s)
<b>Improve #3</b>	Pilot, assess and implement a racial equity impact assessment tool for major policy decisions. Use as a guide for authentic engagement and conversation among decision makers versus as a checklist.	- decrease in busing of Black/Brown students from the 5th ward to "diversify" schools - TWI classrooms with English dominant students that reflect demographic diversity

5. **Develop a plan to address racial representation of teachers and to increase recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals that have an equity mindset**
  - a. Create district-wide employee Affinity Groups

Objective	Strategy	Success Metric(s)
<b>Employ &amp; Retain #6</b>	Strengthen recruitment, hiring practices and provide affinity group spaces according to the unique intersecting	- D65 teaching staff that reflects demographic diversity of student

	identities of employees.	population -Employee satisfaction survey given annually - Staff of color survey
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**6. Create inclusive “welcoming” spaces and opportunities throughout District 65:**

- a. Create a Parent Welcome Center
- b. Pilot parent/family SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) & develop district-wide parent Affinity Groups
- c. Create a Parent Mentor Program
- d. Employ Bilingual Family Liaisons, ideally who have Interpreter Training

Objective	Strategy	Success Metric(s)
<b>Engage &amp; Involve</b> #9, 10	Involve families through social identity affinity groups and provide individualized interventions to raise healthy students in a safe, culturally inclusive environment where every student has a meaningful connection with at least one adult and one activity.	- % of students participating in extracurricular activities - School climate team data - Sustainable Parent Mentor Program - Family Liaisons - Welcome Center

**7. Institutionalize the district’s commitment to equity and empowerment through dedicated staffing** and organizational structures (e.g., an equity and empowerment office) to maintain a focus on equity and the implementation of the equity plan.

**8. Develop an implementation plan by October 31, 2017**

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