

## EVERGREEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Equity Audit Report

Mary Martinez-Wenzl, Manuel Vazquez, Sun Young Yoon

**December 2020**

---

## Executive summary

Evergreen Public Schools (EPS) is in the process of a district-wide equity transformation. As part of this effort, EPS partnered with Education Northwest to conduct an equity audit.

### DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

- Surveys of district leaders
- Interviews with human resources
- Staffing data
- Student-level data

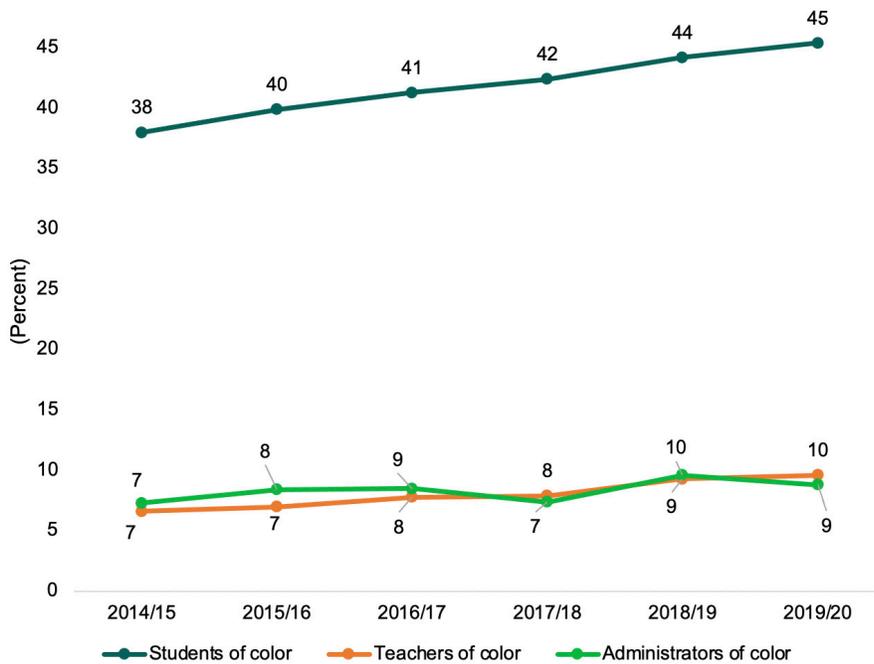
This audit explored equity at EPS in two areas: **1) recruitment, hiring, and retention of staff members of color and educator quality and 2) student access to learning opportunities and achievement.** We expanded on traditional approaches to equity audits by examining diversity among all district staff, not just among classroom teachers. Furthermore, while we centered race and ethnicity in our analysis of student data, we also explored how race and ethnicity intersect with other characteristics—including income, special education status, and classification as English learners—to impact student experiences within EPS.



## EQUITY IN DISTRICT RECRUITMENT, HIRING, AND EDUCATOR QUALITY

EPS has made an explicit commitment to increase the diversity of its workforce, and EPS leaders generally support these goals. However, EPS leaders had varying perspectives on how well the district’s current practices and strategies support this goal. They also identified many opportunities for improvement in this area.

*The demographics of EPS employees do not reflect the demographics of the students and families they serve.*



Source: Authors’ analysis of Washington S-275 personnel data from 2014/15 to 2019/20.

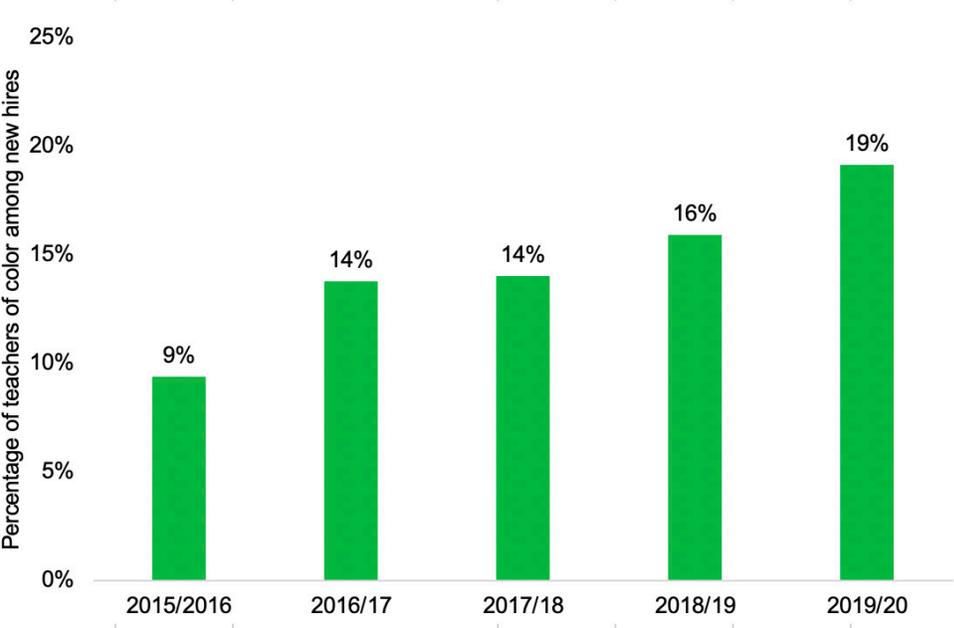
Nearly half of EPS students (45%) are students of color, but more than 90 percent of their teachers and administrators are White. Additionally, school leaders struggle to retain educators of color.

**45%**  
of EPS students  
are students  
of color

**90%**  
of their  
teachers and  
administrators  
are White

EPS has made some progress in increasing the diversity of its applicant pool and its staff in recent years.

***The proportion of teachers of color among new hires has doubled over the past five years.***





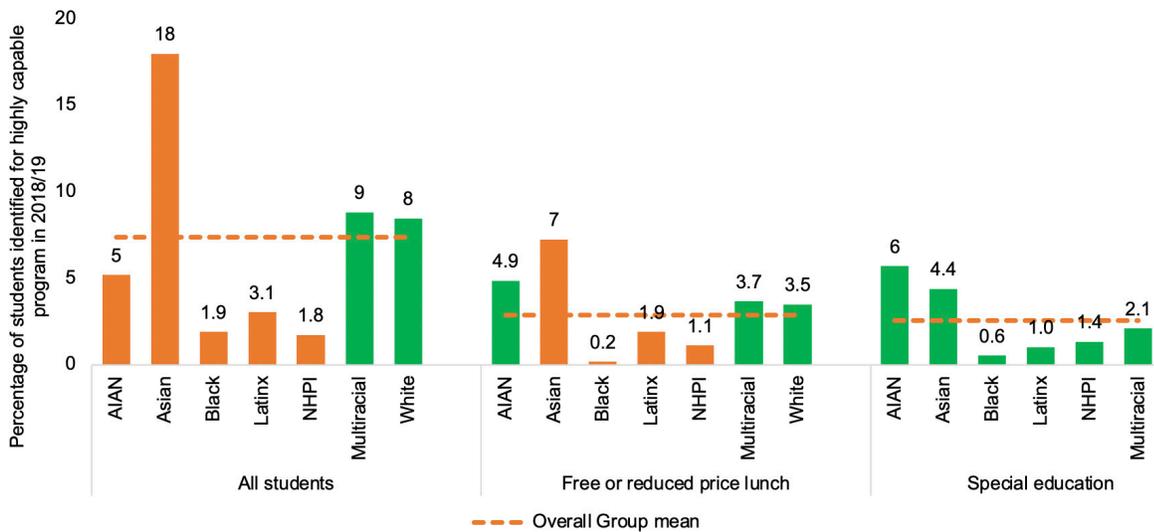
## EQUITY IN STUDENT ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND ACHIEVEMENT

Within EPS, Asian and White students were more likely to have regular attendance and to access rigorous learning opportunities, compared to American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, Latinx, Multiracial, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students. Other demographic characteristics and participation in special programs accounted for some of the variation in outcomes between student groups. However, many of the racial gaps persisted even when looking within gender and participation in special programs.

### WHAT IS REGRESSION ANALYSIS?

We used regression analysis to isolate the unique relationship between individual student factors and the probability of receiving a discipline incident. Regression is a statistical method that allows us to study the unique relationship between two variables. This allows us to estimate the extent to which a variable is related to a specific outcome while also accounting for other factors, such as socioeconomic disadvantage, eligibility for special education, and eligibility for the federal school lunch program.

**Asian students are much more likely than students of any other race to be identified for highly capable programs; English Learner students are rarely identified**



● Indicates a statistically significant difference at the .05 level between the student group and White students. AIAN is American Indian/Alaska Native. NHPI is Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Source: Authors' analysis of student-level data.



Discipline rates were high for American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students, as well as for students who were experiencing homelessness, receiving special education services, or were male. This was especially true at the secondary level. Discipline rates were much higher for students who were both American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and received special education services. Discipline rates varied across EPS schools, as did the number of days that students were excluded from the classroom for the same type of infraction.

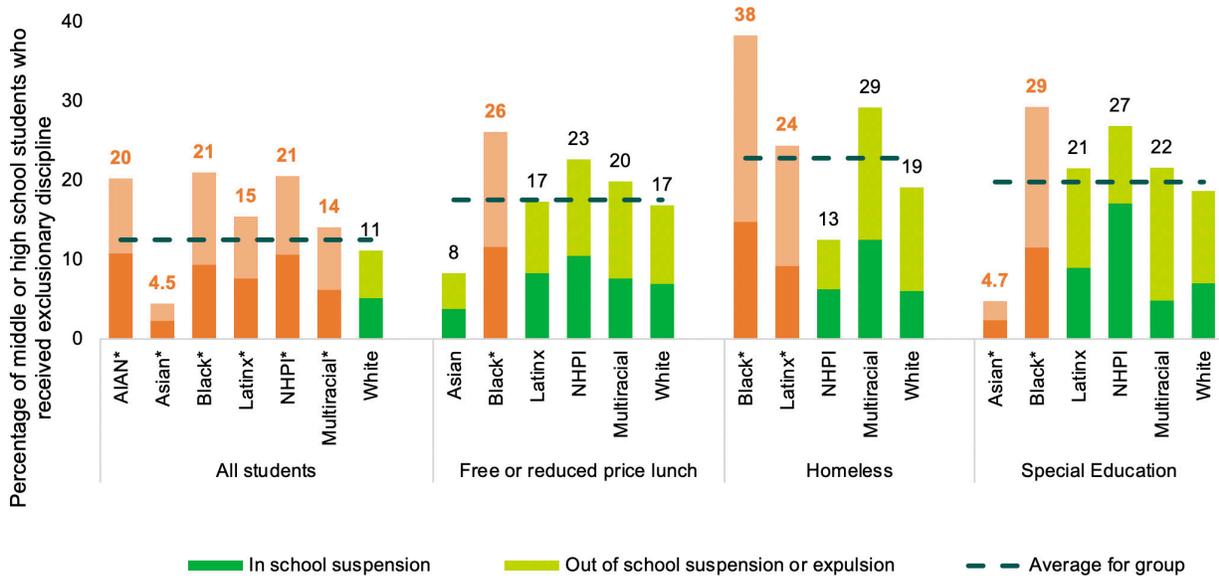
**50%**

of EPS students met the ELA standard

**39%**

of EPS students met the math standard

**At the secondary level, students of color were more likely to experience a discipline incident**

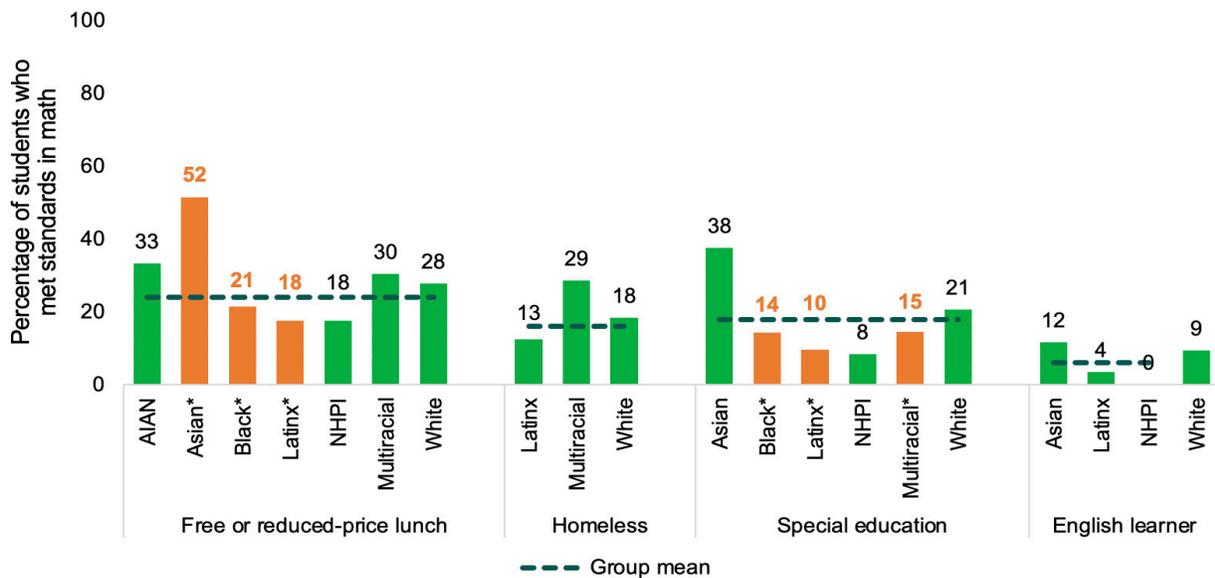


● Indicates a statistically significant difference at the .05 level between the student group and White students. AIAN is American Indian/Alaska Native. NHPI is Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Source: Authors' analysis of student-level data.

In 2018/19, most EPS students did not meet grade-level standards on state assessments. Overall, 50 percent met the ELA standard, 39 percent met the math standard, and 40 percent met the science standard. These proficiency rates were lower than the statewide rate by a range of 6 to 10 percentage points. Across grade bands, a lower percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, Latinx, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students met grade-level standards in English language arts (ELA) or math, relative to Asian, Multiracial, and White students. Student characteristics, such as eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch, partially explained differences in achievement; however, some achievement gaps persisted even when accounting for these differences.

### Very few middle school students met grade-level standards in math



● Indicates a statistically significant difference at the .05 level between the student group and White students. AIAN is American Indian/Alaska Native. NHPI is Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Source: Authors' analysis of student-level data.



In 2018/19, EPS served 3,611 students (14% of all students) who were developing English proficiency. During the same year, 45 percent of English learners in EPS made progress toward English language proficiency: This was on par with the statewide rate of 45 percent.

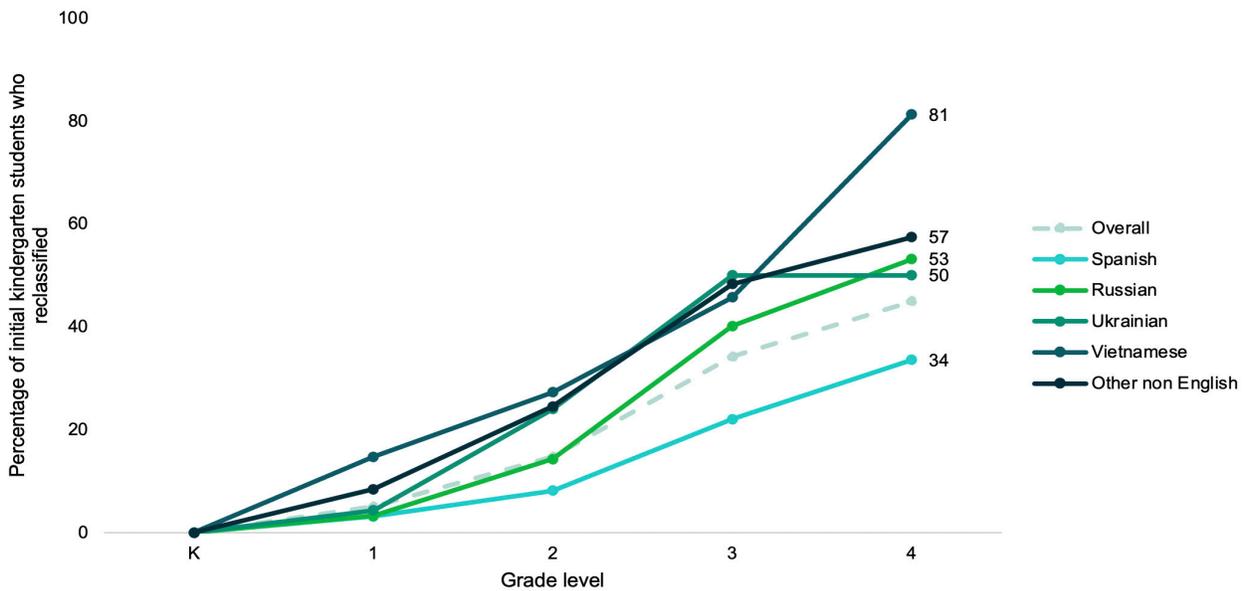
**Students who were Latinx, spoke Spanish, were in high school, or received special education services demonstrated lower rates of progress on the annual English language proficiency assessment in 2018/19.**

**Spanish-speaking English learners reclassified in the early grades at lower rates compared to English learners who spoke other home languages.**

**Female students reclassified at higher rates than male students.**

**English learners in the secondary grades tended to develop English language proficiency at lower rates.**

**Spanish-speaking English learners were reclassified in the early grades at lower rates compared to English Learners who spoke other home languages**



Source: Authors' analysis of student-level data.



The equity audit team also considered achievement in terms of high school grades, college entrance exams, and graduation. Key findings demonstrated that:

In 2018/19, the average GPA for EPS high school students was

**2.8**

Asian students had the highest average GPA

**3.4**

While students experiencing homelessness and Latinx English learners had the lowest

**2.1**

While Asian students were most likely to take a college entrance exam

**66%**

Fewer Latinx seniors took these exams

**34%**

Black, Latinx, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students had **lower mean SAT scores compared to Asian, Multiracial, and White students.**

**95%**

Graduation rates in EPS were higher than the statewide average for almost all racial/ethnic groups. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students had the highest graduation rates overall.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our analysis and findings, we offer the following recommendations:

### ***Short-term recommendations:***

- Review EPS equity audit report with the Equity Advisory Committee.
- Clearly articulate the district’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout EPS communications.
- Revise, finalize, and adopt a district affirmative action plan.
- Review and revise job descriptions applying an equity lens.
- Require all hiring managers and hiring committee members to complete a self-evaluation of bias.
- Revise certificated interview questions to require an equity-focused question.
- Develop internal capacity for continuous review and reporting of diversity analytics among job applicants.
- Apply an equity lens to identify and select employees to participate on hiring committees.

### ***Medium-term recommendations:***

- Adopt an equity policy and transformation plan to guide efforts throughout the district.
- Engage the Equity Advisory Committee in internal monitoring and reporting related to affirmative action.
- Continue district-wide professional learning focused on equity.
- Review and update the process used to identify highly capable students.
- Review and update the process used to refer linguistically diverse students for special education.
- Set goals to ensure that all students are accessing academic opportunities that prepare them for college.
- Investigate possible barriers to college preparation and admission.
- Complete Phase 2 of the district equity audit.

### ***Long-term recommendations:***

- Strategically expand recruitment efforts to strengthen relationships with Hispanic-serving and emerging Hispanic-serving institutions in Washington state.
- Develop a Grow Your Own teacher pathway program.
- Analyze district and school processes for reporting and responding to incidents of hate, bias, and discrimination.
- Continuously monitor discipline rates for evidence of disproportionality.
- Expand access to culturally and linguistically responsive education.
- Develop and strengthen trust and relationships with community partners to support students and families of color.