

# Preliminary Findings

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## **District Mission Statement**

To prepare each and every student, regardless of demographic or socioeconomic background, for post-secondary educational success, and educate all students to be responsible and productive members of the global society at large and especially:

- Caring, collaborative and ethical people
- Critical thinkers and problem solvers
- Effective writers and speakers
- Thoughtful consumers and producers of media
- Lifelong learners

## **Sage Vision and Mission**

- Sage Educational Consultants' mission is to establish a long-term collaborative relationship with the South Orange Maplewood School District for the purpose of developing and facilitating a quality review of educational programming and instructional practices specifically focusing on enhancing academic outcomes of minority students.
  - It is our vision to develop programming which will establish a culture of high expectations for all students, teachers, administration, staff and parents that inspires all students to reach their maximum academic potential in a nurturing and supportive environment that celebrates inclusion and collaboration while honoring one's culture, ethnicity and values.
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## **Description of the process**

During the months of March and April, the members of the Sage Consulting team have visited the schools and met with district personnel at Columbia High School, Maplewood Middle School and South Orange Middle School (see meeting agendas and calendars).

During those meetings, we had discussions using guiding questions (see guided questions) to frame the data and information we would be gathering during our visits. At the end of those meetings, we scheduled our follow up visits to each school. All staff was selected by the respective building administration. The school visits included meeting with administration, teachers and students (High school only). Several Students discussed their experience at Columba High School.

Central office staff met with members of the team and was also asked guided questions to gain an understanding of district support to the school and to determine the presence of vertical and horizontal alignment of district goals and school goals.

Two public forums were held to get feedback from the parents/community on areas that were in need of improvement.

## **Description of Data Collection process**

Data was collected from multiple sources, Central Office Personnel provided demographic data by school, race, free and reduced lunch status, Time in district/Time in school Data, NJ SMART data. Data was collected from the New Jersey Department of Education Report Card. Additional data collected at the school level a was primarily anecdotal. Discipline Data was collected from High school administration.

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## Demographic Data

### Student demographics

Count of LID Race/ Ethnicity	Gender		Grand Total
	F	M	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	6	6	12
Asian	146	105	251
<b>Black</b>	<b>1182</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>2429</b>
Hispanic	228	221	449
Multi	121	135	256
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	6	3	9
<b>White</b>	<b>1670</b>	<b>1776</b>	<b>3446</b>
Grand Total	3359	3493	6852

Count of LID		Grade Level							
Race/ Ethnicity	Gender	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
American Indian or Alaskan Native	F			1					1
	M		1		1		1	1	
American Indian or Alaskan Native Total			1	1	1		1	1	1
Asian	F	7	10	13	10	15	15	9	13
	M	11	9	15	5	7	9	8	7
Asian Total		18	19	28	15	22	24	17	20
<b>Black</b>	F	<b>79</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>96</b>
	M	<b>77</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Black Total</b>		<b>156</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>200</b>
Hispanic	F	17	16	21	15	17	22	14	15
	M	21	24	23	21	17	13	17	20
Hispanic Total		38	40	44	36	34	35	31	35
Multi	F	17	21	16	15	17	5	3	2
	M	19	18	13	22	23	9	2	2
Multi Total		36	39	29	37	40	14	5	4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	F		1		1	1			1
	M			1			1		
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Total			1	1	1	1	1		1
<b>White</b>	F	<b>147</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>127</b>
	M	<b>180</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>White Total</b>		<b>327</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>255</b>
Grand Total		575	573	544	549	514	548	533	516

Con't

African American students make up 35% of the overall district population and White students make up 50% of the overall district population. At the high school level the number of African American outnumber White students at every grade level.

Count of LID					
Race/ Ethnicity	Gender	09	10	11	12
American Indian or Alaskan Native	F	1	1		2
	M		1		1
American Indian or Alaskan Native Total		1	2		3
Asian	F	11	10	15	4
	M	8	4	6	6
Asian Total		19	14	21	10
Black	F	126	102	123	112
	M	121	111	102	108
Black Total		247	213	225	220
Hispanic	F	31	12	15	16
	M	9	14	10	8
Hispanic Total		40	26	25	24
Multi	F	1	1	3	2
	M	1	4	2	1
Multi Total		2	5	5	3
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	F			1	1
	M				1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Total				1	2
White	F	121	81	99	89
	M	122	107	81	93
White Total		243	188	180	182
Grand Total		552	448	457	444

## Staff Demographics

The district provided a staffing breakdown of employees by race. The breakdown did not disaggregate instructional staff from support staff. Central office staff, substitute staff and other categories not included in this count.

School	African American	White	Hawaiian	Other Hispanic	Asian	Amer. Indian
CHS	22	151	1	11	2	
Clinton	4	49	0	2	0	
Jefferson	4	41	0	2	1	
Marshall	9	34	0	2	0	
MMS	8	61	0	5	2	1
SOMountain Annex	0	10	0	0	0	
Seth Boyden	4	42	0	0	0	
SOMOUNT	3	32	0	1	1	
SOMS	12	53	0	8	0	1
Tuscan	6	42	0	1	1	
<b>total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>

The district conducted a “minority job fair” that was advertised in the Star Ledger in the Fall-2013-2014 school year. The information regarding how many staff of color were hired as a result of that fair was not readily available.

There is no active teacher recruitment/retention plan available at this time.

## Achievement Data- Overall District

### TIME IN DISTRICT(TID) / TIME IN SCHOOL (TIS) Data

Count of LID		Math: Most Recent Performance			
Time In District	Race/ Ethnicity	Adv. Prof.	Part. Prof.	Proficient	Grand Total
< 1 year	Asian	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%
	<b>Black</b>	<b>12.41%</b>	<b>48.18%</b>	<b>39.42%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	Hispanic	30.00%	30.00%	40.00%	100.00%
	Multi	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%	100.00%
	<b>White</b>	<b>55.56%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>44.44%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
< 1 year Total		19.67%	40.44%	39.89%	100.00%
1-2 years	Amer. Ind. Or Alaskan	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	Asian	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	100.00%
	<b>Black</b>	<b>10.11%</b>	<b>47.29%</b>	<b>42.60%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	Hispanic	20.00%	32.00%	48.00%	100.00%
	Multi	58.33%	8.33%	33.33%	100.00%
	Native Hawaiian or Pac. Isl	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
1-2 years Total		24.58%	34.32%	41.10%	100.00%
3 or more years	Amer. Ind. Or Alaskan	33.33%	0.00%	66.67%	100.00%
	Asian	65.75%	5.48%	28.77%	100.00%
	<b>Black</b>	<b>22.15%</b>	<b>32.77%</b>	<b>45.07%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	Hispanic	40.91%	18.18%	40.91%	100.00%
	Multi	66.32%	12.63%	21.05%	100.00%
	Native Hawaiian or Pac. Isl	33.33%	16.67%	50.00%	100.00%
3 or more years Total		48.62%	15.46%	35.92%	100.00%
Grand Total		44.86%	18.51%	36.63%	100.00%

There is a positive correlation between Math scores and time in district. The graph above shows performance for students who have been in the district for less than a year, 1-2 years and 3 years or more. The advanced proficient scores for students who have been in the district three years or more was higher than the other two categories. However, overall scores (advanced and proficient combined) for proficiency were lower for Black students than all other ethnic groups.



### Con't (English Language Arts)

Count of LID		LAL: Most Recent Performance			Grand Total
Time In District	Race/ Ethnicity	Adv. Prof.	Part. Prof.	Prof.	
< 1 year	Asian	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	100.00%
	<b>Black</b>	<b>5.11%</b>	<b>40.15%</b>	<b>54.74%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	Hispanic	5.00%	30.00%	65.00%	100.00%
	Multi	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	100.00%
	<b>White</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>&lt; 1 year Total</b>		<b>8.20%</b>	<b>34.97%</b>	<b>56.83%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
1-2 years	American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	Asian	16.67%	16.67%	66.67%	100.00%
	<b>Black</b>	<b>6.50%</b>	<b>41.52%</b>	<b>51.99%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	Hispanic	4.00%	24.00%	72.00%	100.00%
	Multi	8.33%	8.33%	83.33%	100.00%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	<b>White</b>	<b>19.20%</b>	<b>7.20%</b>	<b>73.60%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>1-2 years Total</b>		<b>9.75%</b>	<b>29.45%</b>	<b>60.81%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
3 or more years	American Indian or Alaskan Native	22.22%	0.00%	77.78%	100.00%
	Asian	28.08%	6.85%	65.07%	100.00%
	<b>Black</b>	<b>9.85%</b>	<b>25.52%</b>	<b>64.63%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	Hispanic	16.67%	18.69%	64.65%	100.00%
	Multi	14.74%	8.42%	76.84%	100.00%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	16.67%	0.00%	83.33%	100.00%
	<b>White</b>	<b>32.64%</b>	<b>3.89%</b>	<b>63.48%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>3 or more years Total</b>		<b>23.21%</b>	<b>12.39%</b>	<b>64.40%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>21.15%</b>	<b>15.14%</b>	<b>63.71%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The table above shows English Language Arts. There appears to be a positive correlation between time in district and proficiency. It shows performance for students who have been in the district for less than a year, 1-2 years and 3 years or more. However, for African American students the proficiency percentage is lower than all other ethnic groups in each category with the exception of American Indian or Alaskan, which may only be representative of a small number of students attending school in the district.

### New Jersey State Report Card Data

The New Jersey State report card is an annual report done for every school in the State of New Jersey. Data is collect for every school in the State of New Jersey. The following charts show data on the 13-14 report card for the elementary and middle schools in the South Orange Maplewood School District. The data is reported for the middle schools and elementary schools. The data reported is based on the last scores on the NJASK. The scores show the disparities in scores between Black students and White students in the district. In all of the schools, there was no reporting of other ethnic groups because the number of students was not statistically significant.

Language Arts –NJASK scores-Proficient and Advanced Proficient							
<b>Clinton Elementary</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Seth Boyden</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>
Black	37%	36%	52%	Black	66%	54%	74%
White	89%	85%	88%	White	87%	94%	97%
<b>Jefferson</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>South Mountain</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>
Black	71%	73%	49%	Black	75%	64%	78%
White	95%	93%	100%	White	78%	91%	97%
<b>Tuscan</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	*These scores are proficient and advanced proficient scores combined.			
Black	75%	55%	64%				
White	89%	94%	92%				

*No Black students score advanced proficient in Language Arts Scores for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade at Tuscan School. No 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Black students scored advanced proficient at South Mountain.*

Math –NJASK scores-Proficient and Advanced Proficient							
<b>Clinton Elementary</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Seth Boyden</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>
Black	56%	40%	52%	Black	63%	56%	76%
White	77%	96%	97%	White	80%	97%	97%
<b>Jefferson</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>South Mountain</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>
Black	71%	73%	71%	Black	75%	55%	81%
White	93%	95%	100%	White	94%	92%	96%
<b>Tuscan</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>	*These scores are proficient and advanced proficient scores combined.			
Black	75%	63%	64%				
White	90%	94%	98%				

*No Black students scored advanced proficient in 4<sup>th</sup> grade at South Mountain School.*  
 During the Spring 2015, only the middle schools and High school were visited. The elementary schools will be visited during the Fall 2015-2016 school year.

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**Key Question: Why is it important for these scores to be included in this report?**

**Although the agreement specifically targeted the disparities at the High School level, it is important to see where the disparities begin. In order to do this we must look at achievement data at all levels.**

## **Middle School Findings**

### **Maplewood Middle School**

The visits occurred from early April through June. The team met with school administrators prior to the school visits. The administration of Maplewood Middle School discussed the challenges of being a school in “focus” status. The priorities for Maplewood Middle School for the 2015-2016 school year are:

- Mentoring programs
- Adoption of a new discipline policy
- Instructional interventions (Achieve 3000)

During the school visits, the team met with **nine teachers, 2 Child study team members and 2 guidance counselors**. The staff were chosen by each building administrator. The teachers represented all disciplines (English, Math, Social Studies and Science). During each visit we asked a series of questions (see appendix) and the staff members expressed the following:

- limited collaboration with teachers and administration
  - limited professional development
  - limited professional development for the Middle Years International Baccalaureate
  - Implementation and roll out of IB was poor
  - limited parental involvement from African American parents
  - limited afterschool activities for students
  - limited central office support
  - building administration does not evaluate teachers; district supervisors do (will change in 2015 school year)
  - There was inconsistency as to how students were placed in various levels in classes
  - Were not fully aware of what the “focus” designation meant and what the building goals relative to their focus status were.
  - More input in building-based planning. They expressed optimism as there was new leadership (New administrator began October, 2015).
  - The teachers interviewed believed that the school would benefit from having a dean on staff or an additional counselor.
  - Professional development should be more focused in the future.
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- The school would benefit from more technology. The teachers would like to have more professional development on how to implement differentiated instruction.

### **Classroom Visits**

During the first visit, five to six classrooms were visited for 5-7 seven minutes. The team visited content area classes. During the second middle school visit, eight to nine classrooms were visited.

#### **OBSERVATIONS:**

- Two advanced placement classes were visited. Class A had three students of color and Class B had two students of color.
- In the two Math classes visited, one class was a Project Ahead class and there were 11 students and 10 were African American and one student was White.
- The Social Studies class and Science classes were more racially balanced.
- The accelerated classes and honors classes, were less racially balanced than the classes that were lower level classes (College Prep).
- Many of the classrooms have technology (SMART Boards, ELMO projectors, and chromebooks, overhead projectors).
- Although technology was available in most classrooms, the chromebooks were used for basic word processing while the SMART Boards were used primarily as overhead projectors to magnify teacher-created worksheets
- limited rituals and routines in place.
- Although rituals and routines were observed on a limited basis, student behavior was consistently appropriate during classroom visits.
- Some teachers had objectives written on the board, however, it was inconsistent throughout the building

*\*It should be noted that three part objectives are not a requirement for teachers at the school.*

### **South Orange Middle School**

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During our visit at South Orange Middle School, the team met with the **3 school administrators**, support staff (**2 guidance counselor and 2 CST members**) and **five core subject teachers**.

The assistant principals shared information relative to their areas of responsibility. The support staff and teachers reported the following concerns:

- All parents do not feel welcomed in the school
- Teachers were not included with any decision making for the MYIB program
- Limited afterschool activities for students; There are students who have to catch the shuttle, they are unable to participate in afterschool programs
- Students who have afterschool responsibilities (e.g. caring for younger siblings) are unable to participate in programs
- Very little celebration of diversity within the school
- No cultural programs being done
- Guidance department not included in scheduling and placement decisions
- “top down” leadership; very limited collaboration with the faculty as a whole
- “favoritism”; same teachers are chosen as the school leadership team but do not necessarily reflect the thoughts of the faculty
- staff did not participate in FOCUS school activities; if they did it was the same selected staff
- No open forum in faculty meetings
- Little follow through from administration

The faculty expressed that they needed more professional development in differentiated instruction. They also wanted more support with inclusion students.

## **CLASSROOM VISITS**

The team visited five classrooms. During those classrooms visits, the team observed the following:

- Learning objectives
- Student engagement
- Racial composition
- Level of instruction

## **OBSERVATIONS**

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- Racial makeup of the classrooms were less obvious, however, no visits were made to advanced level classrooms at the South Orange Middle School.
  - Instruction was more teacher-centered with limited student engagement. Most classes were set up in traditional rows and aisles.
  - Two classes had students “turn and talk” during the visits.

**Key Question: What was the rationale for the classroom visits and looking at instructional practices within the classroom?**

**It is important to observe instruction at all levels if the eventual goal is to move students from college prep to honors or advanced placement. If students are not exposed to a certain level of rigor at the college prep level, they will face difficulty with the demands of honors and advanced placement work.**

## **DISCIPLINE**

No discipline data was provided from either middle school.

## **High School Visit**

The team visited Columbia High School on four occasions. During the first visit, we met with the administrative team (**Principal and three assistant principals**), **guidance department chairperson**, **disciplinarians (2)**, **students (20 students)**, and visited classrooms. All personnel that the team met with were chosen by the principal.

## **STUDENTS**

During visits with the students, they expressed the following:

- Infrequent contact with guidance counselors
- Some teachers not helpful during class; they expect students to “figure it out themselves”
- Sometimes have difficulty getting information about important dates (e.g. course selection, changes of classes prior to drop date)

## **GUIDANCE**

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The team met with the guidance **staff (10)** and administration together. The guidance staff described how their caseload is divided:

Two guidance counselors cover 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and then the others cover 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. However, this caseload distribution may change for the 2015 school year. There was limited data on students per caseload by grade, race, gender, and special education, ELL/LEP. The team received data on post-secondary statistics for the Class of 2013.

The guidance counselors presented information regarding how the guidance department operates. The following information was shared:

- Students use Naviance; majority upperclassmen
- There are many students that are having difficulties but there is no alternative program to refer them to at this time; each guidance counselor was unsure how many from their respective caseload would benefit from an alternative program
- There are two guidance counselors that see 9<sup>th</sup> graders, however, the principal was considering changing all guidance counselors to have a 9-12 caseload

There was limited data on student contact (i.e. how many students counselors saw per day, per month, by grade, and types of contact). The Head of Guidance provided the district post-secondary outcome report for the 2012-2013 school year. This report is compiled from the Clearinghouse. This report does not come back to the district until the following year and at this time is the only mechanism used to track where students were attending school at the end of the academic year.

There were 455 students that graduated from Columbia High School.

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- Of the 455 the National Student Clearing House was able to locate college enrollment records for 364 students.
- The remaining 91 students either attended a college that does not participate with the National Student Clearing House or did not matriculate into college

Graduating Class of 2013 College Matriculation Data				
Ethnicity	2-year College	4-year College	Not Attending College	Grand Total
A	2	13	1	16
B	71	103	64	238
H	6	10	6	22
M	0	1	2	3
P	0	1	0	1
W	19	138	18	175
Grand Total	98	266	91	455

Graduating Class of 2013 College Matriculation Data				
Ethnicity	2-year College	4-year College	Not Attending College	Grand Total
A	13%	81%	6%	100%
B	30%	43%	27%	100%
H	27%	45%	27%	100%
M	0%	33%	67%	100%
P	0%	100%	0%	100%
W	11%	79%	10%	100%
Grand Total	22%	58%	20%	100%

Graduating Class of 2013 College Matriculation Data				
Ethnicity	2-year College	4-year College	Not Attending College	Grand Total
F	42	154	30	226
M	56	112	61	229
Grand Total	98	266	91	455

**Question: Why is it necessary to track secondary outcomes of students?**

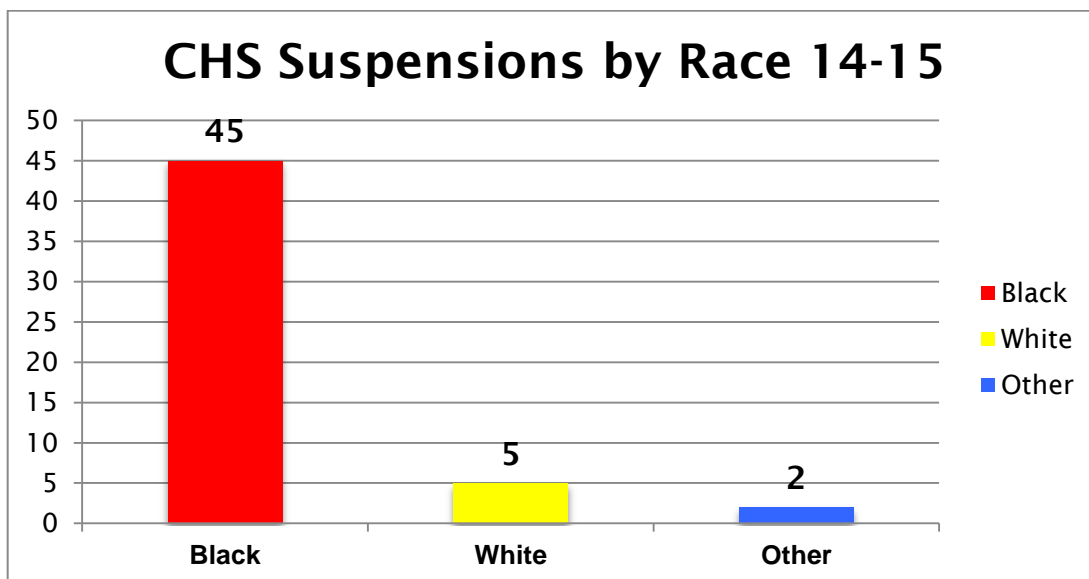


*It serves multiple purposes; 1) to determine trends, i.e. two-year vs. four year colleges, trade school, career, and/or military, 2) racial, gender breakdown by secondary outcomes, 3) special education outcomes, 4) graduation rate (although SOMSD consistently has a graduation rate of 90% and above, what happens to the 8-10% per year that do not graduate with their cohort—GED, 5<sup>th</sup> year students, Dropout)*

**DISCIPLINE**

The team met with the disciplinarians/deans of the school. There are two deans and they each service two grades. They are responsible for attendance data as well as issuing disciplinary actions (i.e. student conference, detention, suspension). The deans maintain data from a handwritten referral form, the secretary then inputs the referral in Powerschool; the deans then will conference with the students and issue a consequence. The data for suspensions is reported via the monthly Violence and Vandalism report. However, the school currently does not have a mechanism for keeping trend data (e.g. multiple referrals, types of referrals, etc.)

Columbia High School reported that 52 students accounted for 73 incidents of suspension. They represent a very small percent of the total population of students that attend Columbia High School, however, the majority of students suspended were students of color.



**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Discipline referrals are done manually on a triplicate form and is then submitted electronically by the secretary that works with the deans of students.

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- **It is difficult to observe trends (e.g. teacher referral trends, referral types, gender, special education) when referrals are hand generated.**
  - **Interventions for students who have frequent referrals are not tracked**
  - **Correlation between students referred to Intervention and Referral Services and referral to alternative programs is not apparent**

There was not an opportunity to meet with a group of teachers during either visit to the high school. The team conducted classroom visits. During those classrooms visits, the team observed the following:

- Three-part objectives
- Student engagement
- Racial composition
- Level of instruction

### **OBSERVATIONS (Classroom Visits)**

- There were very few classrooms that had an objective posted.
- Activities of the day were posted.
- There was absence of rituals and routines within the classroom.
- There was loss of instructional time with process oriented activities, i.e. passing out materials, handouts, rulers, etc.
- The style of instruction was primarily lecture style. Students were attentive and asked clarification questions. Teacher-centered instruction
- There was limited higher-order thinking questions noted during visits (“wh” questions)
- Several teachers used overhead projectors and the SMART Boards were used to project the activity or assignment.
- Use of technology during instruction was noted but was not infused in instruction (i.e. student using technology during instruction).

Upon entering several classrooms, it was immediately apparent as to which classes were higher-level based on the racial composition of the class. There were several classes that had small enrollments. The principal explained that those small classes were due to scheduling irregularities. *It should be noted that teachers are not required to write three part objectives.*

### **RACIAL MAKEUP BY COURSES**

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The table to the below illustrates the racial makeup of classes at three levels at Columbia High School. This is a duplicated count meaning that students are not counted once but counted for every course they have at a particular level.

### COURSE ENROLLMENT BY LEVEL

<b>Honors</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>white</b>
Algebra	60	106
Algebra 2	51	88
Calculus	2	20
Precalculus	38	62
Precal Functions	1	2
Topics in Cal	3	4
English I Honors	93	184
English II Honors	72	218
English III Honors	89	127
Geometry Honors	49	46
Biology	97	213
Chemistry Adv	6	44
Chemistry HN	53	82
Physics Honors	59	86
US 1 Honors	107	86
US 2 Honors	150	110
World Hist. 2 Honors	93	211
Adv. Topics in math	4	24
Cal. III	2	16
Alg. 2 Adv.	1	45
Alg. Adv. 9	2	37
Precal adv	13	25
Geom adv	6	39
Linear Alg.	1	3
Precal 10	2	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>1054</b>	<b>1904</b>

<b>College Prep</b>	<b>black</b>	<b>white</b>
Algebra	84	34
Algebra 2/Trig	43	5
Algebra 2	54	29
Calculus	1	2
English I	108	26
English II	112	33
English III	115	17
English Essentials	72	4
Geometry	36	18
Precalculus	11	8
Biology	114	29
Chemistry	78	27
Environmental Sci	2	0
Physics	3	1
US 1	84	17
US 2	55	5
World History 2	124	31
<b>total</b>	<b>1096</b>	<b>286</b>

Con't

<b>Advanced placement</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>
Calculus AB	21	40
Calculus BC	8	31
Statistics	7	32
English Lang Comp	14	52
Engl Lit	11	31
Biology	9	30
Chemistry	12	17
Environmental Sci	9	29
Physics	5	16
Europ. History	9	25
US History 1	25	84
US History 2	25	69
Gov. Politics/Comparative	5	9
Gov. Politics -US	10	30
<b>total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>495</b>

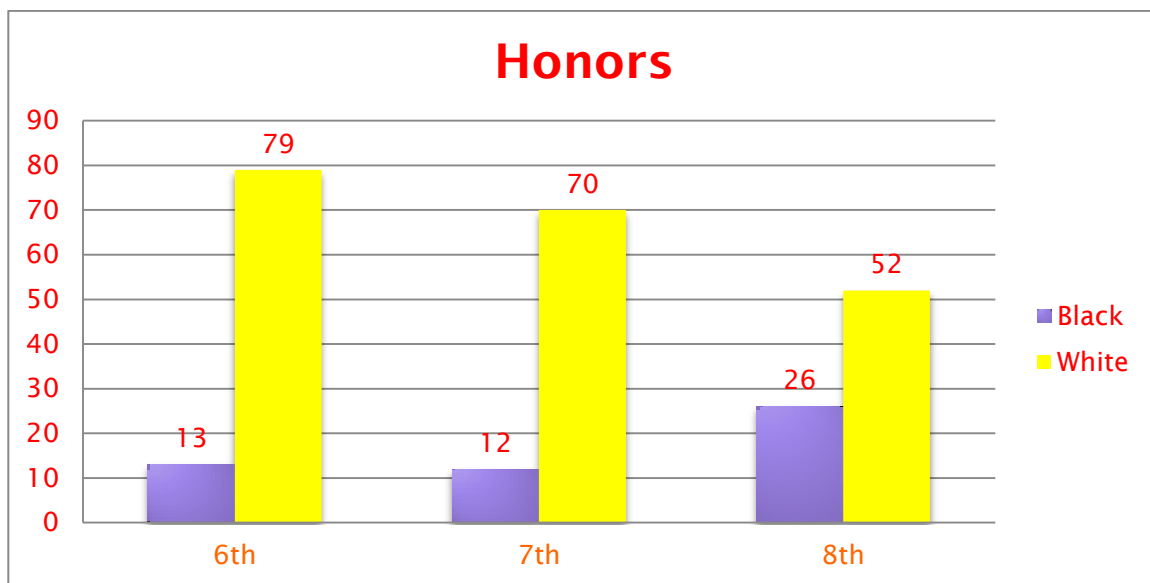
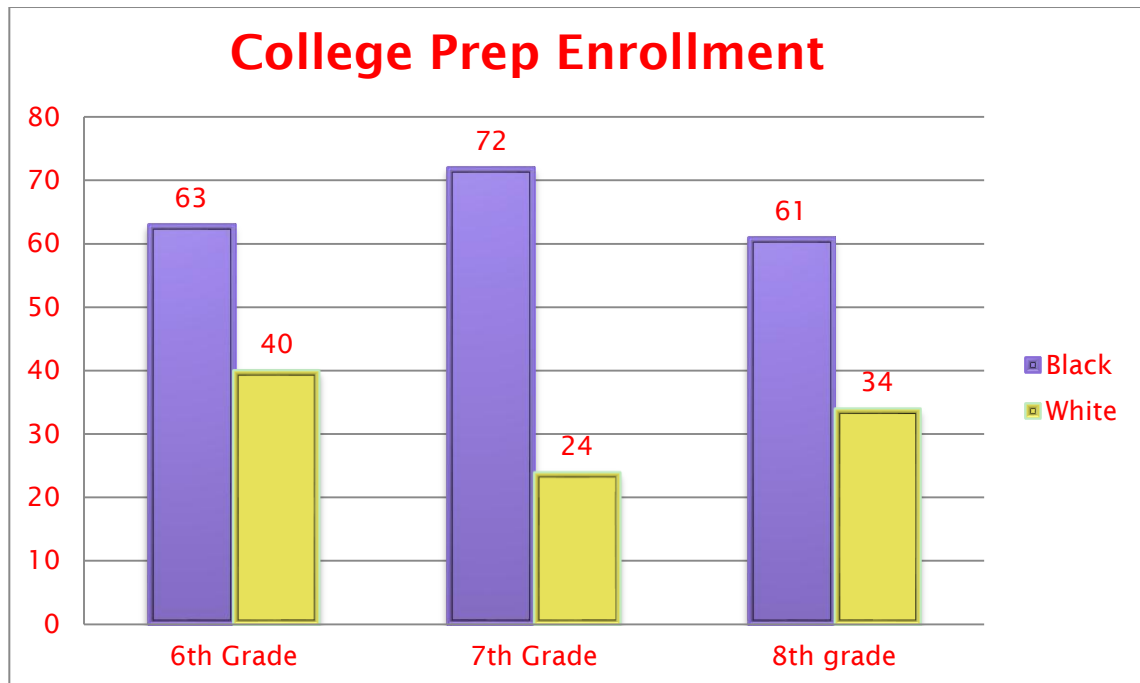
The AP count by class is unduplicated.

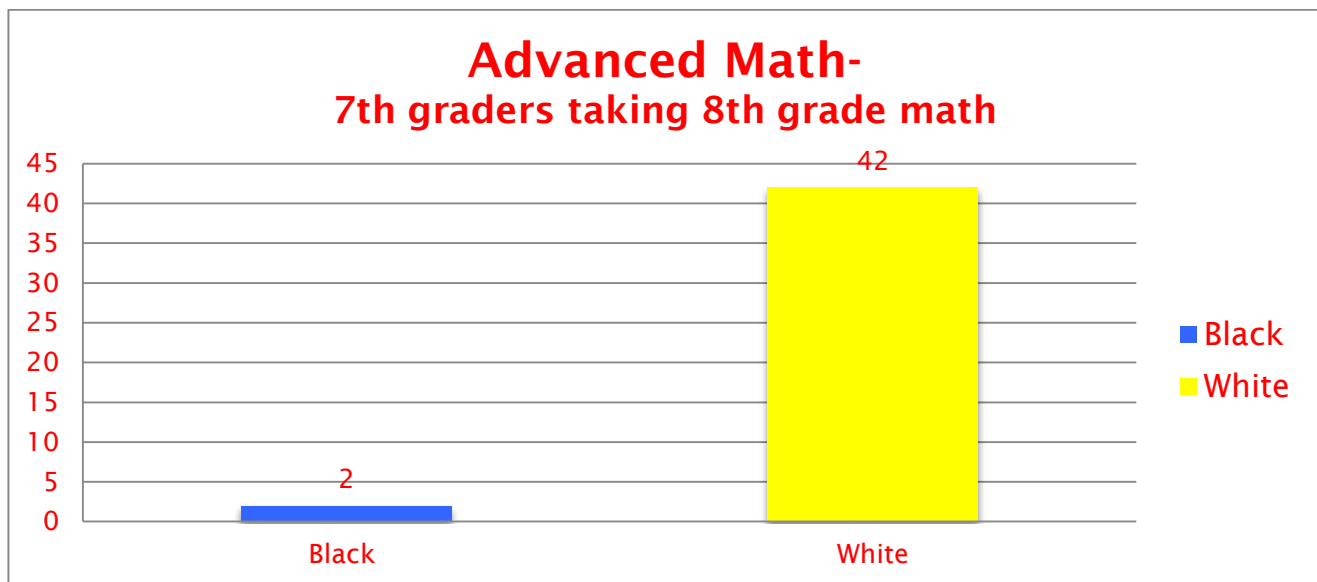
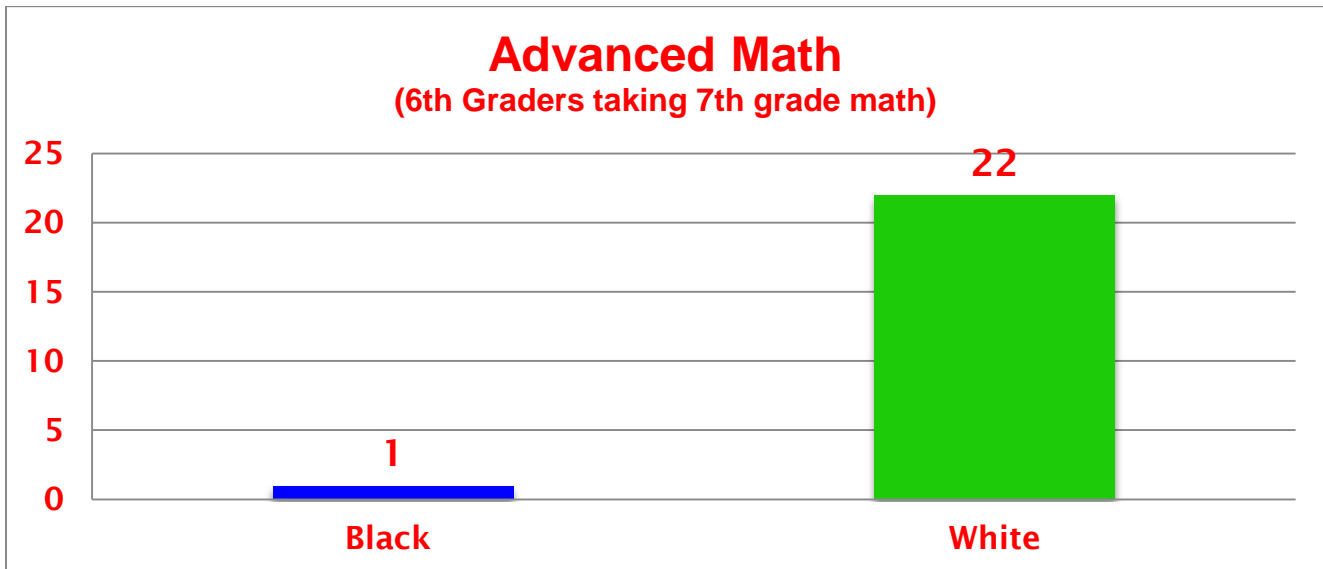
<b>Course enrollment</b>	<b>1 course</b>	<b>2 courses</b>	<b>3 courses</b>	<b>4 courses</b>	<b>5 courses</b>
Black	166	23	19	3	
white	411	106	54	5	1

The chart above shows the total number of students taking 1 course to five courses. The AP numbers represented only are for core academic courses; the Arts/Humanities Courses are not reflected in the AP enrollment numbers.

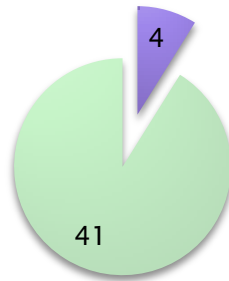
## Placement by race

### Maplewood Middle





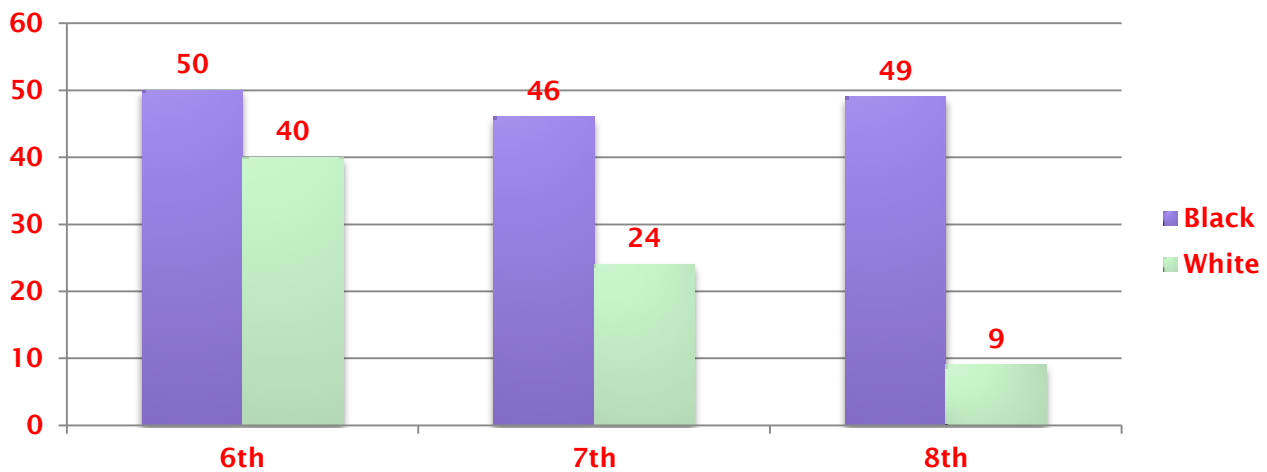
### MMS # of students taking Advanced ELA

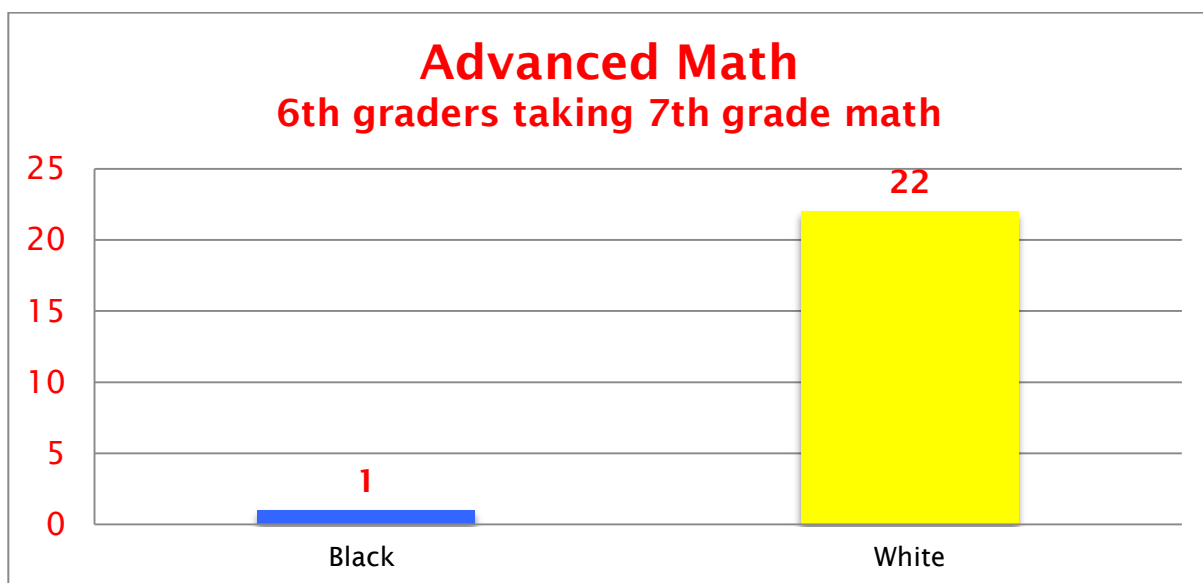
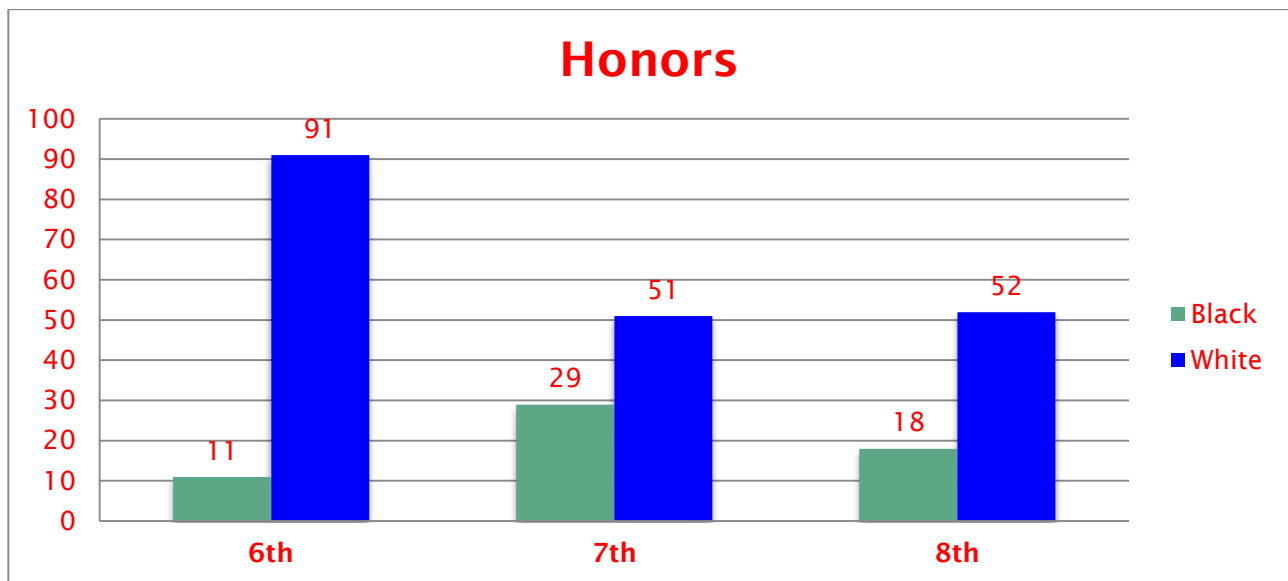


■ Black ■ White

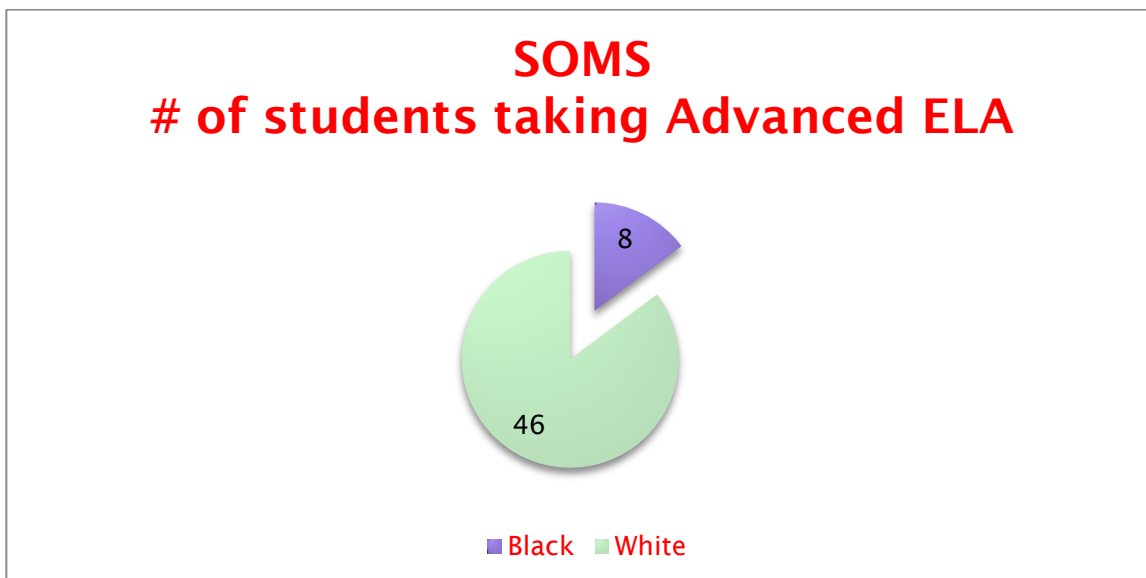
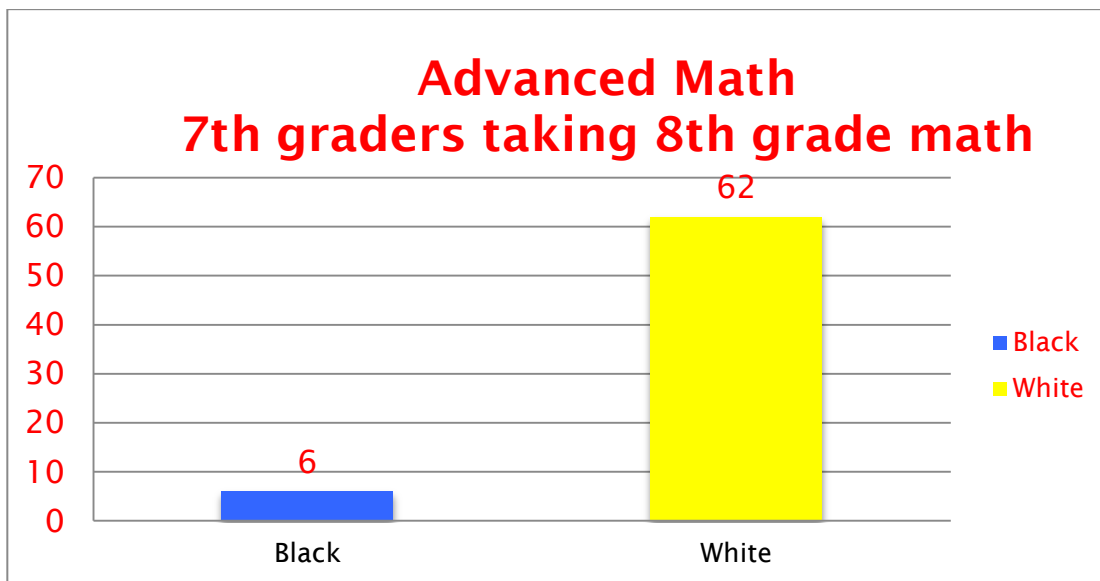
### South Orange Middle School

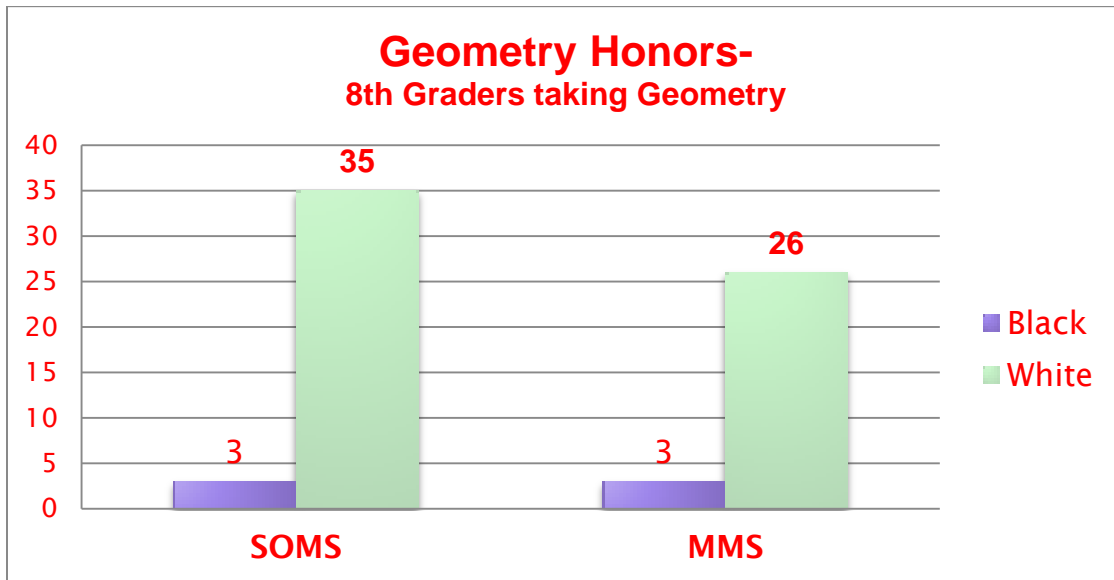
### College Prep









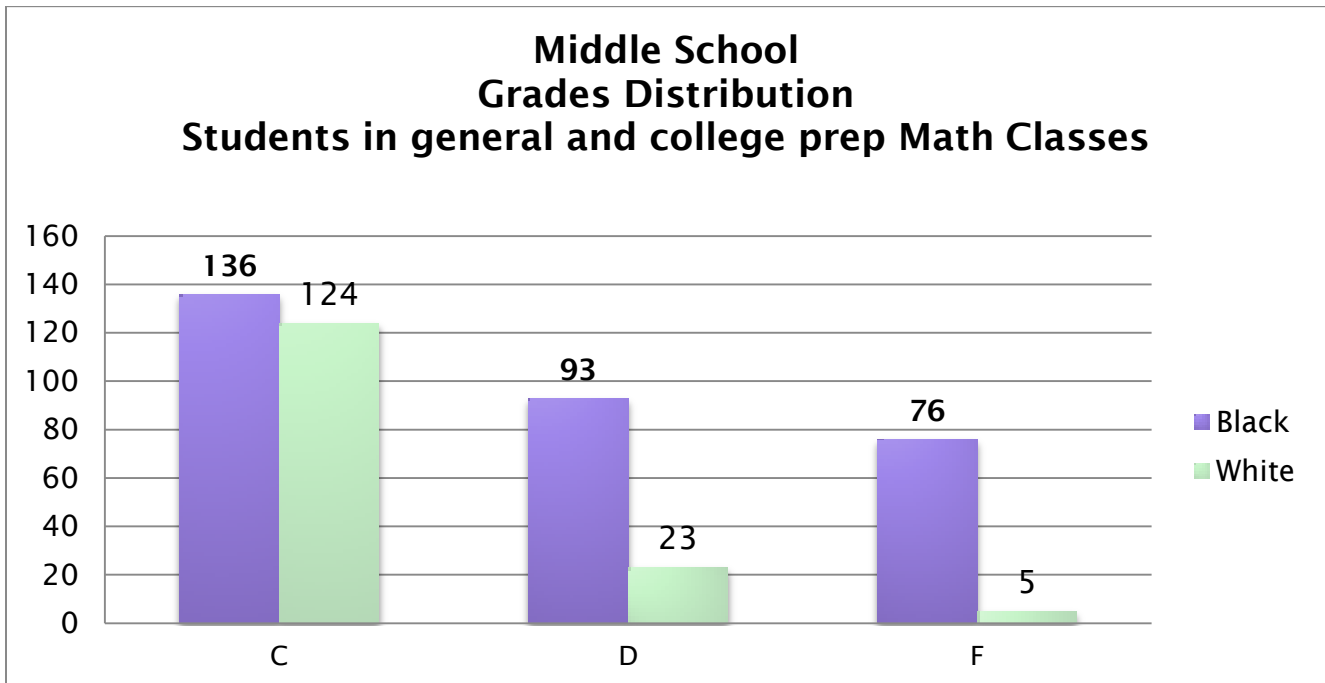


\*No students failed in the honors classes at either school, the lowest grade in both Geometry Honors and Advanced English Language Arts was a B-.

### Grades and failure rates

Black students may have a difficult time moving to the next level if they are in a general math or college prep level class. Most of these students are already in Project Ahead classes. There are many students that failed the intervention class as well as the regular math class. There are students who passed Project Ahead with an “A” or “B” but did not pass their regular math class.

The chart below illustrates the number of students, by race, who received grades of C, D (+ or -) and F. According to *one* of the criteria in the board policy, a “C” grade would allow you to remain in your current level. Earning a “D” or an “F” would require one to move down a level. This would possibly effect the students below:



**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Black students in General Math and College prep would have a very difficult time moving up a level.
- The intervention class may not have a positive effect on assisting a student with attaining the skills necessary to move up a level in Math

**KEY QUESTIONS**

- IS THERE A CORRELATION BETWEEN THE INTERVENTION CLASS AND THE REGULAR MATH CLASS?
- DO THE REGULAR MATH TEACHERS AND INTERVENTION TEACHERS COLLABORATE AND/OR CO-PLAN?

## Levels

In Board policy R2314 (page 4), the table illustrates the course levels and course level definition:

Levels	Course Level Definition	Numeric System
Level 6	An “advanced placement” level designed for students who are doing college level work in a particular subject area	6000
Level 5	An “advanced honors level” designed to students with exceptional academic ability in a particular subject	5000
Level 4	An “honors” level	4000
Level 3	An academic “college preparatory” level	3000
Level 2	An academic general level for students in need of additional skill development	2000

The Board policy delineates how students move from one level to the next. For example, In English a student must maintain a certain grade to remain in a level and if the grade drops can be moved down to a lower level.

The English Department offers courses at levels 3(College prep), 4 (Honors), and 6(AP). (pg. 4)

*During the 2014-2015 school year, the middle school had an “advanced Language Arts” class.*

In Math, the policy is written as follows:

“Level placement in mathematics classes at Columbia High School is primarily contingent on the student’s performance in the previous developmental mathematics class. Generally, students remain in their assigned level if they have a “B” or “C”, move up a level if they have an “A”, or are recommended to move down a level in the subsequent year if they have a “D” or “F”.

The level change process in math can be initiated by the student, parents, counselors, or teachers, provided the student’s average in his/her current class meets the criteria identified above. **Students may move up and down based on their early performance in a mathematics class based upon performance (pg. 6)**

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*The Curriculum and Instruction department changed the criteria to move up a math level during this summer. Parents were mailed letters during the summer to inform them that their child(ren) had been moved up a level based on their performance during the 2014-2015 school year. Fifty-seven students were able to move up based on this new criteria; 19 were Black students*

## **ACADEMIC PLACEMENT**

Placement in advanced classes (for both departments) is made based on teacher recommendation and student performance as outlined in board policy (pgs. 8-11):

*The process for students being placed in Honors and AP classes, which is based on a graded writing sample and maintaining a certain grade for the year. This criteria is used to remain in current level. In order for a student to move to a higher level, they are allowed to take Non-AP English electives or complete an “English Department Advanced Placement Application” and teacher recommendation form, which can be obtained in from:*

- 1) *Current English teacher*
- 2) *English Writing lab*
- 3) *English Department office*

*For those students who do not meet the AP entry grade criteria they must sit for the AP qualifying exam (pg. 5 of board policy # R2314)*

## **KEY TAKEAWAYS:**

- **BOARD POLICY IS NOT USER FRIENDLY FOR PARENTS OR STUDENTS TO DETERMINE ALL OF THE REQUIREMENTS TO ACCESS ACCELERATED, HONORS OR AP CLASSES**
- **BOARD POLICY SPECIFIES DIFFERENT TIME FRAMES FOR SCREENING/ RECOMMENDATIONS IN EACH DISCIPLINE FOR MOVEMENT, REVIEW OF STUDENTS TO BE RECOMMENDED**
- **PARENT NOTIFICATION DOES NOT FOLLOW WHAT IS WRITTEN IN POLICY**
- **PROJECT AHEAD CRITERIA NEEDS CLARIFICATION**
- **School based personnel stated that students can move up or down a level at any time during the school year up until the last day of school**

## **KEY QUESTIONS:**

- **What assessment will be used in lieu of NJASK scores as one of the criteria for recommendation to move up a level?**
  - **If students decided to “opt out” of English or Math (PARCC) what criteria would be used in place of those scores?**
  - **How often are the assessments reviewed and revised (Common assessments)?**
-

- 
- **Are the common assessments aligned with Common Core?**
  - **Who is responsible for content/construct validity?**
  - **How are the Placement tests developed?**
  - **Are they aligned with the common core?**
  - **How is the data from the assessments used?**
  - **Is it only used for placement or is it a tool that can be used to make instructional decisions?**

## **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION MEETING**

The Sage Consultant met with the Assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the Supervisors from all of the departments in the district. The meeting was to be conducted to discuss instructional practices in each department with emphasis on the Core subjects (e.g. English, Math, Social Studies and Science).

The supervisors also outlined their roles and responsibilities and were as follows:

- Evaluate teachers within their discipline
- Implement professional development
- Assist with determining placement of students in higher level classes

The secondary math supervisor provided the most information regarding Math in regards to math placement and the difficulty that students are having moving to higher level math. Middle school students are given unit assessments that occur approximately every seven to ten days. At the middle school level, most students are given a quiz weekly and a unit assessment approximately every 3 weeks.

## **KEY TAKEAWAYS:**

- **As of 2015-2016 school year, principals will be evaluating teachers at their school.**
- **The supervisors will be centrally located at Columbia High School**
- **It is unclear how professional development is planned district-wide**
- **It is unclear if supervisors do regular walkthroughs**
- **The number of math assessments per grade needs to be reviewed**

## **KEY QUESTIONS:**

- **Who provides the professional development for the teachers, i.e. other teachers, supervisors, outside consultants?**
  - **How is instruction assessed on a regular basis throughout the district?**
  - **Is there an opportunity for test-reteach-retest to occur**
  - **How quickly are teachers able to use that assessment data to make instructional decisions?**
-

- 
- **Is the data from the assessments readily available to the teachers?**
  - **Do students have an opportunity to work on those areas of weakness prior to moving to the next set of skills/content?**

### **Community Involvement**

There were two community forums held during the Spring 14-15 school year. The format of the workshops were to introduce SAGE Consulting to the community, share some data and discuss what were some areas of concern were from the community. The first was held at Columbia High School. Approximately 40 parents and community members attended the first forum. The various participants were grouped and were asked to develop goals that they would like to see implemented in the district. The overarching themes during this forum were:

- Better communication from Central Office Staff/School-Based administration
- Improved communication regarding academics at the Middle School and the High School level.
- More information provided about Honors and Advanced Placement Courses
- Timely communication about school-based information (e.g. course selection process, timeline for requesting honors/AP placement)

All participants were actively engaged and wanted to know how they could assist with any efforts in in the future.

The second forum was held at South Orange Middle School and the format was similar, however, the focus was middle school and transitioning. The Sage consultant presented data on failure rates and levels. This forum was not as positive of an experience as the flyer was not representative of the information being presented and it lead to some confusion. Although the format was identical to the first forum, with the exception of the data presented, many audience participants felt as if they were misinformed regarding the subject matter for the evening.

The consultants also had the participants work in groups discuss district strengths and weaknesses and it what areas they could improve. The overarching themes from the second forum were:

- Understanding how a student transitions from elementary to middle school and middle to high school
  - Understanding the difference between “general”, “college prep”, “honors”, “advanced honors” and “advanced Placement”
  - Providing clearer communication between district and parents
-

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There are several levels of understanding the academic programs in the district
- There are several strong beliefs for and against the placement system within the district
- Although the policy of leveling has been changed, the practice remains and the data that it produced was not apparent to many parents that attended

## PARENT SURVEY DATA

The parent survey was sent out via the district messenger system. There were a total of # surveys returned. The surveys had a total of 36 questions. The questions required responses that were on a Likert scale (i.e. strongly agree, agree, don't know not applicable, disagree or strongly disagree).

The demographics of respondents were as follows:

<b>Race</b>	<b># of respondents</b>
Asian	2
Multi-ethnic	40
Black	56
White	266
N/A	3
No response	44
<b>total</b>	<b>411</b>

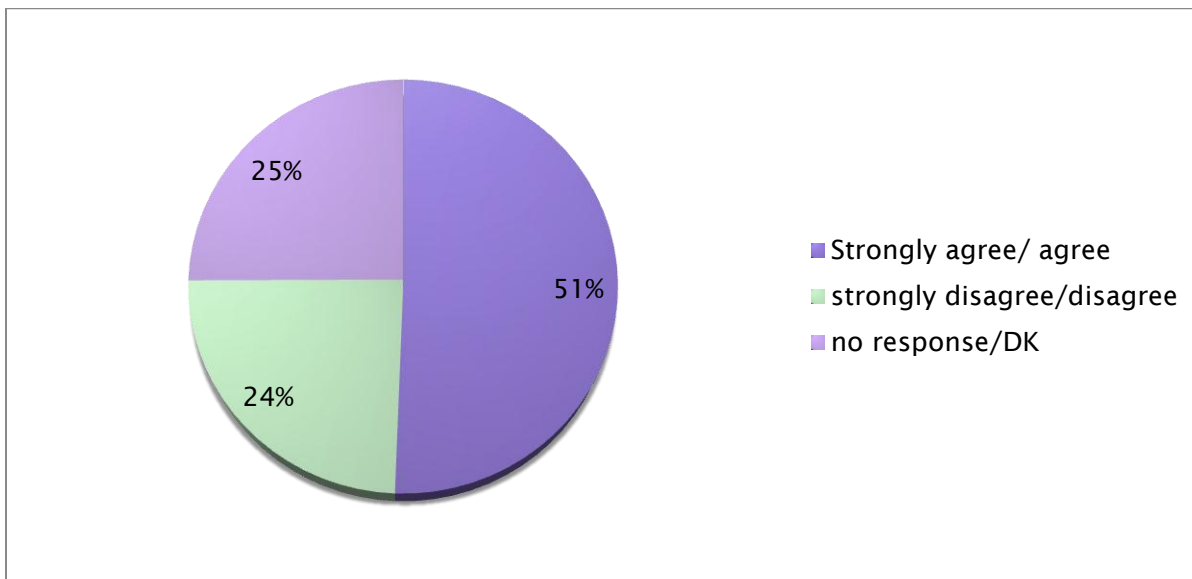
There were several respondents that did not answer several questions. The district has approximately 6000 students, however, information regarding how many families was not reflected in the survey responses.



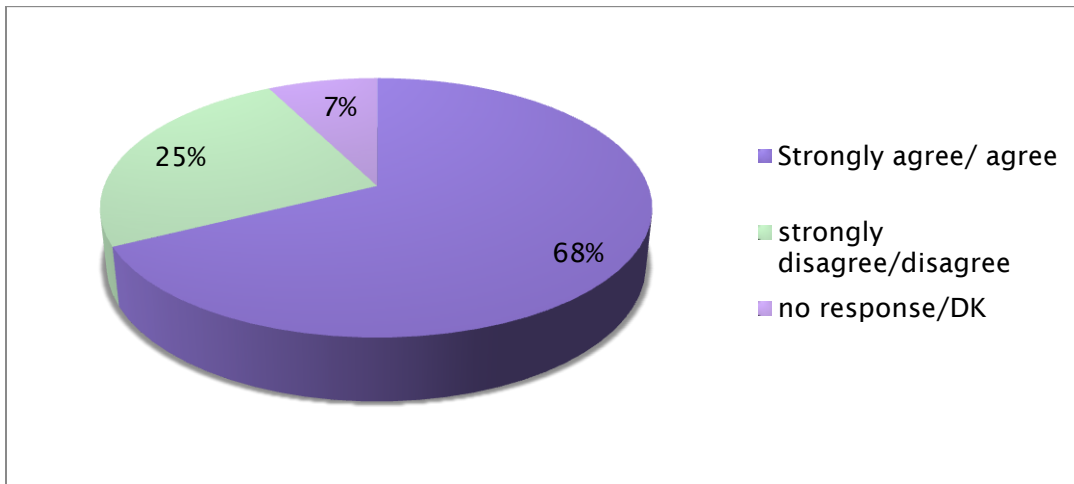
## Responses

Overall, the parents that responded to the survey are satisfied with the academic program and attention that their students receive within the schools. There were some issues with the survey as there were approximately four to five complaints regarding construction or survey. Another point that the consultant did not consider was there are some families that have children of a different ethnic background than the parents. The following is a sample of questions that reflect some of the initial concerns that the community expressed regarding the school district:

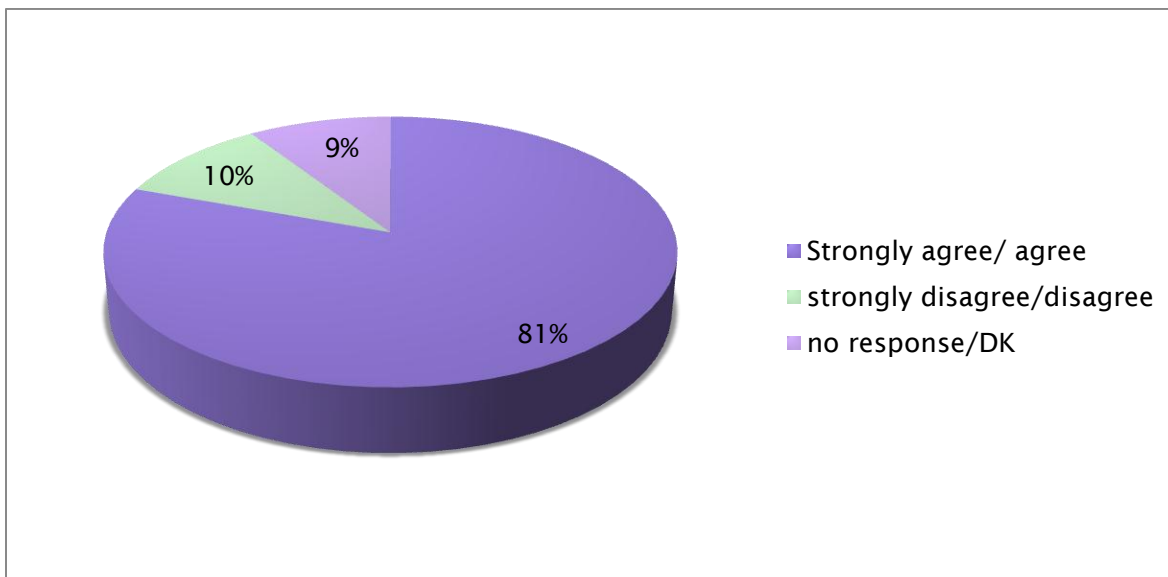
“the school promotes academic success for all students”



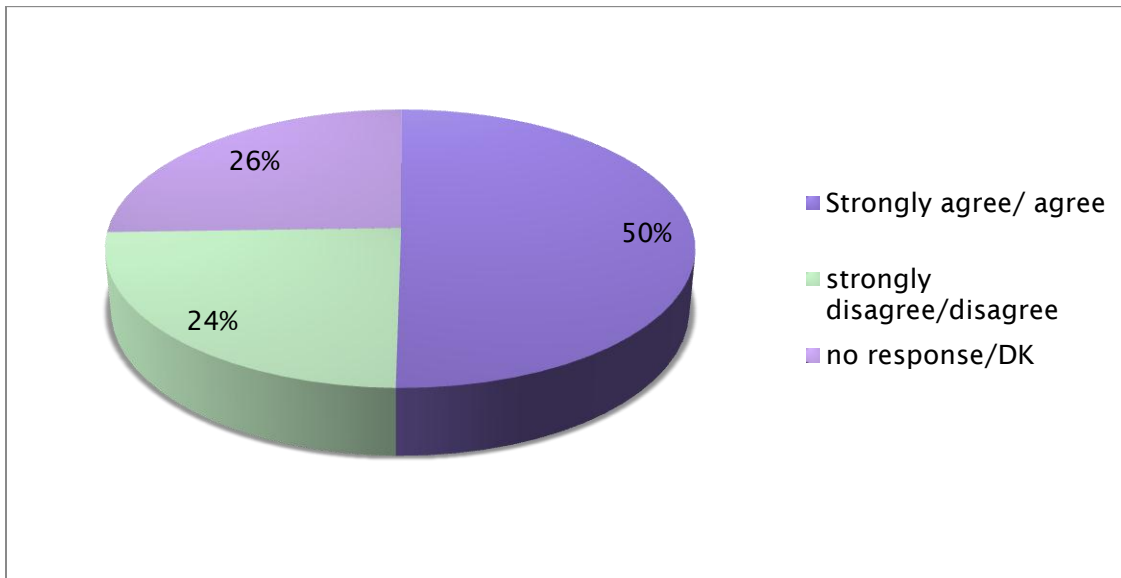
“The school treats all students with respect”



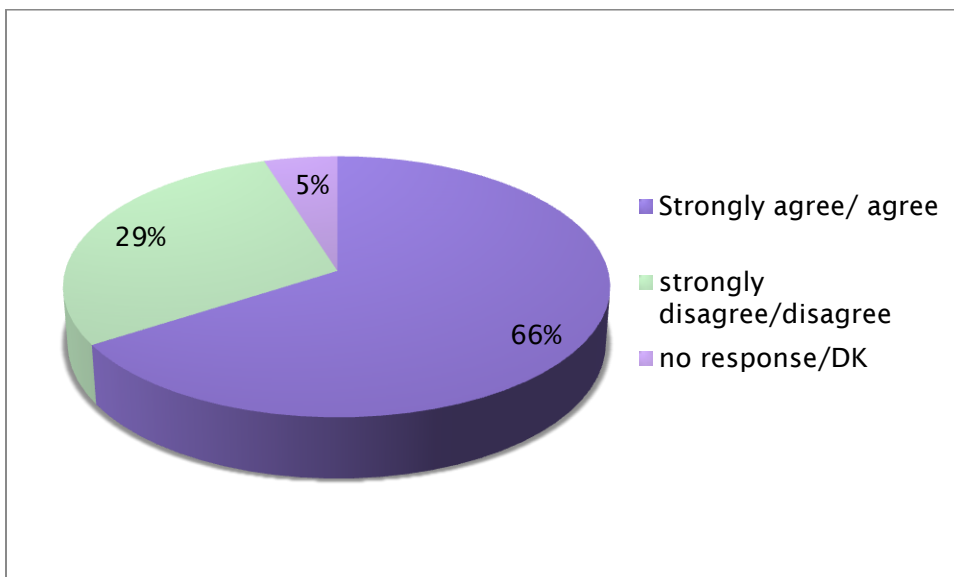
“The school communicates the importance of respecting all cultural beliefs and practices”



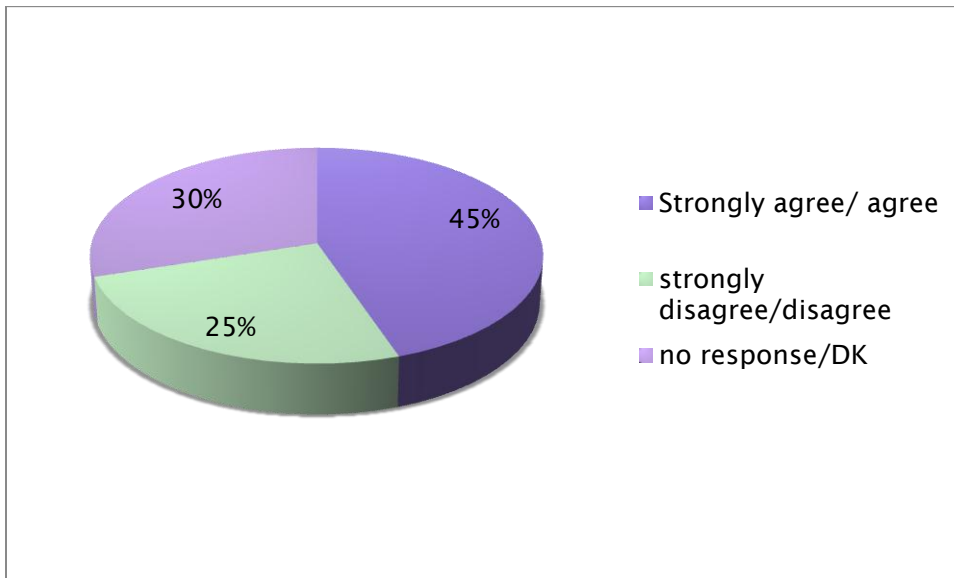
“The school encourages students to enroll in challenging courses regardless of their races, ethnicity, or nationality”



“the school promptly responds to my phone calls, messages, or e-mails.



“the school encourages all students to enroll in challenging courses regardless of their race, ethnicity or nationality”



With the assistance of the personnel in the district, the Sage Consultant group would like to construct a new survey with a committee and distribute it during the 2015-2016 school year.

## Key Takeaways

- The survey respondents are representative of the families that have a certain level of engagement.
  - It may not be reflective of those families or who are not as engaged in the school district or school community
-

## **Recommendations**

The following pages contain action plans in several major areas that need to be addressed for the remainder of the 2015-2016 school year. The action plans address board policies that are in need of review and recommendations that can be addressed in the areas of:

- 1) Curriculum and Instruction
    - a. Pupil Assessment
    - b. Academic Placement
  - 2) Guidance Policy
  - 3) Discipline Policy/Code of conduct
  - 4) Development of Data Teams
  - 5) Manual/Guideline development
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## APPENDICES

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