Full Report

Mansfield ISD
TASA-CMSi Equity Audit

Dr. Kimberley Cantu
Superintendent of Schools

Mansfield Independent School District
605 East Broad Street
Mansfield, Texas 76063

MISD
Mansfield Independent School District

TASA
INSPIRING LEADERS

CMSi
This Report is Comprised of Two Sections:

• The Executive Summary provides an overview of the audit findings and recommendations in a condensed, graphic format.

• The Expanded Report gives a more complete discussion of audit methodology and discusses the findings and recommendations at length. The Expanded Report also presents the extensive data analyzed and an explanation of what those data demonstrated in the context of the audit.
Executive Summary

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DIVERSITY
of people, perspectives

EQUITY
in policy, practice & position

INCLUSION
via power, voice & organizational culture
30 interviews conducted with over 100 staff, administrators, students, and parents

100+ documents collected for review

1,446 student survey responses

2,393 survey responses from parents, teachers, and district staff
Introduction: The TASA-CMSi Equity Audit

Why Equity?

This document is an Executive Summary of the Equity Audit of the Mansfield Independent School District. The equity audit was requested by the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kimberley Cantu, subsequent to the approval of the Board of Trustees. The project was performed both on- and off-site. Interviews and document review were done virtually, off-site, but the auditors did visit the district in-person on October 20-21, 2020, to interview administrators and focus groups of parents, teachers, and campus administrators. The off-site work was performed between October 1 and December 31, 2020. Data were gathered from interviews, surveys, documents, and samples of student work.

This equity audit focused on the following central question: to what extent is Mansfield ISD supporting and assuring equity and equality in its treatment of and services to students? To determine the answer to this question, the auditors examined extensive documents, data, and feedback from interviews and online surveys. The equity audit is an unbiased, objective review that provides not only feedback regarding the status of equity and equal access in school districts, but also a plan with detailed actions and recommended steps to establish goals and processes to assure equity, monitor it, and thereby, improve every child’s learning experience and achievement.

Equity is the state or condition of treating others in accordance with need. Since no two people are exactly alike, their needs and preferences are many times different. Making decisions and instituting practices or services based on need is one form of equity. In some cases, however, equality is warranted, such as in providing access to programs or curriculum. Districts that serve students most effectively balance equity with equality, depending on the demonstrated need of its students. In these effective school districts, leaders examine data from a variety of sources, such as achievement data, enrollment data, and disciplinary data, to determine whether equity and equality exist in the district. Such information assists leaders in determining if subgroups of the population are accessing services or benefits at a rate below that of other student groups, or to see if a certain group is persistently lagging behind its peers on assessments. This information allows leaders to examine areas of weakness and determine solutions, so these students can experience success. Monitoring equity in districts is only part of the challenge; the greater challenge is in determining causes for inequities and inequalities and successfully intervening on behalf of those students who are affected.

The equity audit looks at various aspects of a district’s operations that impact and influence equity in the system. In the Mansfield Independent School District, the auditors were asked to review plans, policies, district curriculum guides, program enrollment data, discipline, retention, dropout data, and student achievement data to see if trends showed any evidence of unequal access or performance by any student groups.

The analyses used throughout the audit are all based on the foundational principle that student learning, although impacted by factors related to the home environment, is still most influenced by teachers and classroom environments. The classroom context is still the most significant predictor of a student’s learning success, and this is central to the rationale behind an equity audit. So is the belief that all students are capable of high-quality learning and achievement. However, unless district leaders are committed to assuring that those students with greater needs are
provided additional resources and supports, and unless teachers are supported with the curriculum, tools, and training needed to deliver the highest quality instruction in their classrooms, not all students will have the opportunity to learn at high levels.

The audit collects data and information on those areas of concern as well as on areas that may represent gaps in opportunity in the system. Auditors then compare this information to the equity audit standards and to the district’s own expectations and guidelines for equity. The auditors determine where weaknesses or gaps exist related to equity, formulate findings that note the strengths and weaknesses, and provide supporting data. These are presented in the Findings section of the report. The standards, derived from the original curriculum management audit, include:

1. **Vision and Accountability**
2. **Direction and Curriculum**
3. **Consistency and Equity**
4. **Feedback and Evaluation**
5. **Productivity and Efficiency**

The five standards for the Equity Audit are described in greater detail in the full report. The final section of the audit report is a detailed set of recommendations. These represent the auditors’ best judgment concerning what actions are needed to resolve system weaknesses, eradicate gaps, and improve the learning and achievement of even the lowest performing students.

**Background of the Audit**

The equity audit is a process derived from the original Curriculum Management Audit, first performed in Columbus Public Schools in 1979. The audit is based on generally accepted principles pertaining to effective curriculum design, development, and delivery, often referred to as “effective schools research.”

The audit process is one of objectivity, independence, and candor. It is a systems-level approach to educational improvement, recognizing that no matter how many students and schools may be in the district, all aspects of the organization must work in a coordinated and cohesive manner if student learning is to improve and the district’s vision is to be achieved. The audit considers the school district as a whole, rather than as a collection of separate, discrete parts. The integrated nature of the system’s components plays a part in how equity is evaluated throughout the audit—no department or entity “stands alone” in a school district.

Three main sources of data were collected and reviewed as part of the audit process. These included: documents, including samples of student work, test results, enrollment data, district policy and plans, and curriculum documents; interviews, virtual and in-person; and online surveys. These sources were reviewed and compared against the standards and their indicators to formulate findings. The findings were organized under five focus areas, related to the audit standards but specifically aligned to tenets of equity.

The Equity Audit does not examine any aspect of the school system unless it pertains somehow to the mission of delivering learning to Mansfield ISD students and the context in which that mission occurs. The methodology used throughout the process is explained in detail in the appendices of the full report.

"**Mansfield** is...such a rich and special place. We have every walk of life. Everyone has the opportunity to succeed across the system. What are our blind spots? Where can we improve? In everything we do we have to ask those questions.” —MISD Parent

"You can be intentional about inclusiveness. As we move forward—let’s shore that up. Because our teachers truly love their students. Our teachers love our kids and want to do right. We want to make that even better and connect with the students in a way [we] haven’t before.”

—District Administrator
Mansfield ISD Strengths

Mansfield Independent School District is located southeast of Fort Worth, Texas, serving a district of over 35,600 students and 45 campuses. Mansfield ISD has a history of educational excellence, having been rated an “A” district in recent years and meeting the state’s standards for accountability for a decade. As a growing district, the student population has changed over time, becoming more diverse, both ethnically and economically, especially in the last decade. The 10-year changes are highlighted in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual/ESL</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mansfield ISD has increased its percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch by almost 40% in the last 10 years, but despite the demographic changes, Mansfield students continue to score above the state on the STAAR and are still scoring at similar or increased levels on the ACT and SAT. A district of undisputed high academic performance, the district has multiple strengths, equipping it to respond to future challenges.

1. Actively Supportive, Engaged Community

2. Strong Ethic of Caring by District Personnel

3. Committed and Experienced Leaders and Teachers

4. High Student Achievement

5. Effective System for Managing Curriculum Delivery

6. Richly Diverse Student Population
1 Mansfield ISD is in a very supportive and active community that appreciates the district and all the opportunities and services it provides their children. Parents report moving to Mansfield because of the school district and its reputation for excellence.

“It’s a good district. People come here and move into an apartment just to get into the district.” —Parent

2 The district has a strong, explicit mission centered on improving student learning and a strong ethic of caring about students. The core values of the system, expressed in Vision 2020, include:
   1. Students First
   2. Continuous Improvement
   3. Integrity
   4. Communication
   5. Positive Relationships
   6. Resiliency

3 Personnel in Mansfield ISD demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement and a willingness to “do whatever it takes” to raise the bar on student learning. This is evident in the district’s commitment to strong early literacy programming, ongoing professional development for all teachers, and a variety of extra-curricular, STEM, and Career and Technology Education programs.

“We developed a literacy academy—every K-2 teacher must attend.”
—District Administrator

4 The positive characteristics of the district are fully evident in the most critical results: the district’s high student achievement. The majority of students, even those who are economically disadvantaged, regularly outperform the state’s average performance at the elementary level on STAAR in math and English language arts and reading. Mansfield students perform at high levels despite its demographics, with the majority of student groups scoring above the state on the SAT and ACT.

5 The district has implemented an extensive and well-developed system for curriculum design, development, and delivery. The district’s very comprehensive written curriculum is revised and improved on a regular basis, and there is a strong focus on supporting teachers at the campus level in the delivery of that curriculum. The sophistication of this system exceeds that which is seen by auditors in the majority of districts statewide. Building leaders are encouraged to be true instructional leaders on their campuses, supporting the delivery of curriculum through coaching and professional development. Strong literacy programs have been prioritized at all elementaries.

   Through ever-increasing alignment of the written, taught, and tested curricula, district leaders have the most reliable and valid assessment data to drive instructional decision making and improve student achievement. The district has recently begun modifying and improving its system of assessment, working to have better data to inform instruction.

6 Mansfield ISD has an economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse community that brings a richness to the district and that reflects global society in a unique way, coupled with overall high achievement rarely seen in districts with similar demographic characteristics. Despite its size, district stakeholders report a “small town feel” to the community, and many appreciate the opportunity to live in such a tight-knit community of vibrant, culturally diverse people.

“A great place to live, learn, and teach”
—District Motto

This Equity Audit reveals areas of great sensitivity to the stakeholders of Mansfield ISD. Issues related to equity, bias, race, and discrimination are deeply felt and can be deeply personal, since they are rooted in perspective and culture. Perspective and culture are a part of what makes people who they are, so they can be difficult to understand if they differ from our own. Therefore, the findings and data, much of which reflect the perceptions and input from all types of Mansfield families and staff, tell a composite story. This is a story about all stakeholders, not any one. The challenge is to reflect deeply on the feedback and decide, collectively, how this information can guide Mansfield in its ongoing mission to serve its students well and continue its tradition of excellence.
A Destination District

Committed to Excellence
Vision and Policy: Vision is foundational for establishing a framework for all decision making throughout the district and for ensuring that those decisions move the district in the same direction, toward its established mission and goals. These goals and expectations must be defined in policy to assure accountability at all levels. For equity, a clear vision that is rooted in research is necessary to ensure that all students have equal opportunities and access to programs and learning, and that they are treated in accordance with their need.

Academic Achievement: When equity is present, experiences and learning environment of the classroom are what impact student achievement, not demographic factors that typically predict academic success. Academic achievement is an area that is reviewed to determine whether any student groups that are identifiable by characteristics are not as successful as their peers.

Equity and Access: All students in the system should have equal access to programs and services, and no students should be excluded from the regular classroom environment at rates that aren’t commensurate with their peers. Equity refers to students being treated in accordance with need, rather than the same as everyone else. Allocating resources and supports equitably is necessary if all students are to be equally successful, academically. Under Access and Equity, auditors also consider the diversity of the teaching, administrative, and support personnel and rates at which students are retained, drop out, or are disciplined.

Culture and Climate: Culture and climate are terms used to describe the affective environment of schools. Learning is an academic exercise that nevertheless takes place within the context of human relationships, and those relationships and affective supports have a profound impact on learning. Under this focus area, the audit examines the perceptions from district stakeholders concerning culture and climate.

Curriculum: Written curriculum, as the most critical tool to support high quality teaching and learning, is essential in not only assuring high levels of student learning, but also in supporting teachers with suggestions on how to deliver differentiated, student-centered instruction that is responsive to needs, backgrounds, and perspectives. A strong curriculum assists teachers in meeting the needs of their students more effectively by prioritizing and defining in measurable terms the essential learnings.
What We Found

The findings highlight the four main areas where weaknesses or gaps were found. These areas fall under the standards of Control, Direction, Equity, and Feedback and Evaluation.

Vision and Policy

Mansfield ISD, as a district of great diversity, needs a clear vision regarding the value that diversity and equity have in its ongoing mission for excellence, what district expectations are for inclusion, and what a bias-free educational experience looks like for its students. The district has comprehensive local and legal policy around providing students with equal opportunity and assuring them of freedom from harassment, discrimination, and bullying, but the value placed on the linguistic, cultural, and economic diversity of district families is not clear. Therefore, the role these play in assuring academic excellence for all students also is vague. The finding for Focus Area 1 is:

Finding 1.1: Policy should more clearly define expectations and direction for equity and inclusion and the work require to eliminate opportunity gaps.

Policy does not require processes or plans for monitoring equity and inclusion efforts, nor for determining whether or not expectations around discrimination, harassment, and bullying are enforced. There is no clear direction in district plans on how to monitor issues of equity and how to support it across all departments and schools, nor for evaluating the district's efforts in providing equal access and a non-discriminatory environment in its services for all students. Current policies that do outline expectations for discrimination and bullying are not consistently followed, based on survey data from parents, students, and teachers.

Current plans do not have goals or expectations specific to diversity and the variation in backgrounds, perspectives, and needs that students bring to the classroom. No policy or plan notes the metrics needed to identify gaps in achievement across student groups and methods for disaggregating data to ensure that the lowest-performing students are receiving the supports necessary to experience the greatest gains.

Policy also is silent on expectations concerning the allocation of resources to areas where need is greater, such as on campuses where students are economically isolated.

Academic Achievement

The auditors looked at student achievement by ethnicity and by different groups, comparing performance over time. The three findings related to Focus Area 2, Academic Achievement, follow:

Finding 2.1: District performance, overall, exceeds state averages, but students of color consistently score below their peers, with the exception of Asian students.

Student achievement in Mansfield is, overall, quite strong when compared to the state, particularly at grades 3-8 and when looking at the percentage of students that meet or master the required skills on the STAAR. However, the performance of some student groups lags behind their district peers; Black/African American students and Hispanic/Latino students consistently score below their peers, indicating that the educational program is not serving these students as effectively.

Finding 2.2: Economic need in Mansfield ISD is a strong predictor of performance on state tests. Not all students have equal access to effective learning environments.

When examined by the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged in the schools, those campuses with the greatest need have the least academic success on state performance measures. This trend is consistent over time, although most campuses still outperform the state average.

Finding 2.3: For the most at-risk students, opportunity gaps are evident and are not consistently narrowing over time. For some groups, without extreme intervention, the gaps will never narrow.

At high school, the performance of Black/African American students consistently lags behind average students. Current policies that do outline expectations for discrimination and bullying are not consistently followed, based on survey data from parents, students, and teachers.

When I was in third grade, I got bullied for my ethnicity.... The bullies would tell me to go back to China, make ‘funny Asian jokes,’ cuss at [me], and much more. Everyone must accept that everyone is different and realize they are being racist in a way they don’t even know.”

—Intermediate Student
statewide student performance, particularly on EOC, AP, ACT, and SAT assessments. Economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and English learners do not perform on level with their peers on any measure, and their performance does not consistently improve over time. Where gaps exist, they are persistent and not consistently narrowing; some have widened over the last four years. Gaps in special education are particularly persistent.

**Equity and Access**

Under Equity and Access, the auditors looked at whether all students have equal access to all programs and services and whether certain actions, such as disciplinary measures, retention, and dropout rates are proportional with student enrollment. The four findings under Focus Area 3 are presented here with narrative explaining the key information related to each.

“There is cultural blindness. People don’t know what they don’t know. You just don’t know—but when you become aware, you have the potential to change.” —District Administrator

**Finding 3.1: Economic isolation at campuses contributes to lower student performance and is compromising the benefits of the district diversity.**

Mansfield ISD has an extremely diverse student population that is ethnically, economically, and linguistically varied, representing people from all walks of life and all creeds and backgrounds. Certain schools, however, are less diverse from an economic standpoint; these schools are economically isolated from the “district average” in terms of the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged. Economic diversity correlates strongly with high student achievement; campuses that are economically isolated in poverty face the greatest challenges and in Mansfield ISD have correspondingly lower student performance.

**Finding 3.2: The diversity of the student population in Mansfield ISD is not represented in its personnel.**

The diversity of the student population has changed slightly over the last five years, increasing in the number of students of color but decreasing slightly in the number of White students. The diversity and ethnicity of teachers have also changed slightly, increasing in the number of teachers of color. However, the ethnicity of campus administrators has decreased, overall, in diversity, with every ethnic group decreasing in representation except for White campus administrators; the number of Hispanic/Latino campus administrators has remained the same. The ethnic representation of central office administrators also changed, with an increase in the representation of Black/African American administrators, but a decrease in Hispanic/Latino administrators. Although there is a slightly increasing number of teachers of color in the district, many students are not in schools with professionals who reflect their own ethnicity.

**Finding 3.3: Identification of students for special programs and participation in AP is not proportional with students’ representation in the district population.**

Students in Mansfield ISD do not have equal access to programs and services, and some student subgroups are more likely to be identified for special education. Students of poverty and students of color are not identified for giftedness, nor are they accessing Advanced Placement courses at rates commensurate with their representation in the student population. The over-identification of certain groups for special education has improved slightly, while the under-identification of students of color for giftedness has not improved over the last five years.

**Finding 3.4: The rates at which students drop out, are retained, or are disciplined, when examined by race/ethnicity, gender, and student group, are not proportional. Financial allocations to schools are not clearly linked to schools’ level of need.**

Students of color and students of poverty have higher rates of dropping out, being retained, or of being suspended from school. Males also have higher rates than females, except in the case of alternative education placement, which is highest for Black/African American girls. Dropout rates for some ethnic groups are several times what their enrollment suggests it should be, and participation in AP courses is lowest for Hispanic/Latino students.
Resource allocation across schools does not follow a clear and predictable pattern; staffing is allocated many times on a per-building basis, rather than according to needs of the campus, based on identified characteristics.

Culture and Climate

Auditors sought perspectives on district climate and culture from students, parents, and district personnel across the system. The key finding for this focus area is:

Finding 4.1: Organizationally, the Mansfield Independent School District has “cultural blindness” in addressing issues of bias and discrimination. Issues related to equity and discrimination are not openly discussed, nor have there been any comprehensive, long-term initiatives to train personnel and students in understanding diversity and culture. The need for training and improved understanding has resulted in a school climate that is uncomfortable for some students and actively hostile for others.

Survey and interview data reflect a concern over discrimination and bias across the system. Although there are exceptions, the majority of students, teachers, parents, and principals surveyed report observing racist or discriminatory speech or behavior by students and teachers. A number of students expressed an unwillingness to comment on issues related to discrimination in school because of a fear of reprisals, or indicated they have no platform to do so, since so few in authority provide a safe space for those conversations and model them.

Organizationally, the school district is, despite a balance of diversity, not acknowledging the impact or importance of that diversity. There is a strong culture around improving achievement, but this is not discussed within the context of diversity, culture, or background. This is classified in the research literature as “color blindness,” a situation where differences and diversity are simply not acknowledged. Color blindness has the effect of negating the feelings and perceptions of the more than 16,000 students (and their families) who are of color in the district and who, at any time, may experience bias or discrimination based solely on how they look. While these situations may be the exception, they are nevertheless real and no less impactful for their infrequency.

Curriculum

Curriculum and the management of its design and delivery is a strength in Mansfield ISD. Curriculum documents are extensive and comprehensive and offer strong support for instruction. Minimum components of CMSI’s expectations for quality written curriculum are consistently evident. The key finding for Focus Area 5 is:

Finding 5.1: The written curriculum, although comprehensive in scope and quality, is weak on offering sufficient suggestions and resources that support differentiating instruction for diverse learners with a variety of needs.

Suggestions in how to differentiate and support the diverse needs of students in Mansfield classrooms, especially in terms of student work, are needed to improve students’ connection to content and their overall learning. While Tier I instruction is strong, integrated suggestions for differentiating content and instruction are needed to support teachers who are meeting the needs of very diverse student populations.

The suggested resources and materials in the curriculum are not consistently reflective of the needs and backgrounds of the district’s diverse students, particularly in social studies, although improvements have been made in other content areas in recent months. Teachers and principals report insufficient support in the curriculum for differentiating instruction and for integrating diverse perspectives that reflect their students’ backgrounds.

The richness and diversity of the Mansfield ISD community is its greatest strength. The auditors found great capacity among the parents, leaders, and teachers of the district and an amazing ethic of caring for the district’s students. With a commitment to serving all students equally in a bias-free environment of trust, respect, and high quality learning, the district will be positioned for even greater achievement for every single student in the months to come.

“The richness and diversity of the Mansfield ISD community is its greatest strength.”

—Report Findings
“As an African American male, I understand that I will come off as rude or disrespectful even though I am silent, but I feel teachers should make some effort into at least asking before making the assumption [that] I am stupid or incapable of doing what others can.” - High School Student

“If making fun of someone because of their sexual orientation is bad, then our school is bad, and, honestly, I don’t think anyone really cares, and that is disappointing.” - High School Student

“Mainly [in] students being very ignorant, homophobic, or even blatantly racist, disguised as jokes. [It] makes me very uncomfortable.” - High School Student

“When they walk in at fifth grade, this is where the division begins. It’s having a huge impact on our kids—pre-AP and non Pre-AP that begins at intermediate. There’s no entry level test, no academic standard for getting into it. It’s either a teacher or parent.” - Teacher

“By and large, people are good intentioned. If folks have bias or prejudices, it’s implicit. It needs to be worked on.” - Teacher

“I still see homophobia and racism everywhere, and it tires me that I don’t see anyone standing up for the victims. I wish people were held accountable for their wrong doings, instead of [being] praised.” - Middle School Student
Recommendations

Based on data from documents, samples of student work, interviews and surveys and from an extensive and ongoing review of research on best practice, the auditors have developed a set of recommendations to address the gaps and weaknesses identified in the findings of the Equity Audit. These recommendations represent not only the knowledge to be found in the research literature, but also the professional judgment of seasoned educators who themselves have worked in multiple districts with ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse learners.

The recommendations are presented in the order of priority for initiating system-wide improvements. The recommendations also recognize and differentiate between the policy and monitoring responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, and the administrative and operational duties of the Superintendent of Schools. As such, the recommendations are divided into two sections: one directed at the policy-making authority and one directed at administration. Therefore, there are overarching goals for the Board of Trustees and for the Superintendent, followed by specific actions needed to meet those identified goals.

Recommendation 1: Adopt a Clear Vision and Specific Expectations for Equity

Why it matters: Having a clear vision establishes what the “ideal” looks like. Related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the vision establishes for all personnel, parents, and, most importantly, students, what a bias-free, inclusive, diverse educational experience looks like. The vision should derive from a set of beliefs, firmly rooted in research, that establishes what the Board of Trustees believe should characterize the school and classroom environment. From this vision, all expectations, goals, plans, defined roles and responsibilities, and related processes are derived.

Currently, the lack of vision concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion has resulted in inconsistent adherence to policy that exists related to equity and discrimination. Students, teachers, and administrators all report experiencing discrimination, bullying, and racism to varying degrees without it being consistently or satisfactorily addressed. There is a need for clear language, from the very top, about why all students matter and why every single child should be assured a positive, welcoming, and inclusive educational environment.

Who is responsible: Board of Trustees, with input from the Superintendent and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council. The council is charged with addressing aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion for policy, planning, and processes.

Tasks to accomplish:

1. Define the district’s beliefs and philosophy related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Address what a bias-free educational environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students and their families looks like. Specify in policy, from these values, what the core beliefs are and the vision that is desired.

The district does not have current policy that defines diversity, equity, and inclusion, nor does it have policy that communicates what the leaders’ expectations are related to equity and inclusion in Mansfield ISD schools. These policies would establish the philosophical framework within which decisions at all level of the system are to be made and would assure congruence of these decisions with the vision the district has for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Training for the Board of Trustees and the DEI Council around issues of cultural sensitivity and bias should be completed prior to engaging in discussions around the vision and expectations for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This training is described in greater detail in Recommendation 3.

2. Define expectations for critical areas that need improvement in order for the vision to become reality.

In order to assure that the vision and philosophy of 1.1 are implemented district-wide, the board must clearly articulate expectations for what an equitable, bias-free, and inclusive environment looks like in all areas of the organization, particularly areas where gaps and inequities have been noted in this report. These areas include:

A. Expectations for school and district climate and culture:

The auditors found that almost one-fourth of high school students who responded to the survey do not feel safe at school, and an even higher percentage do not feel like they are accepted for who they are. Almost one-third (31%) of high school students who responded do not feel like they belong at school, and over 40% report having experienced discrimination or bias at school. This includes racial slurs, harassment, and bullying for a variety of issues,
including sexual orientation and transgender issues (see Focus Area 4). The following are recommended for board expectations related to school climate and culture:

**School and classroom:** specify expectations for unbiased, respectful, and inclusive interpersonal relationships between and among all students and school personnel throughout the school. This includes student-student, student-personnel, and personnel-personnel relationships. Note how these expectations are to align with and complement those of the Social/Emotional Learning program and restorative practices throughout the district. Note also expectations for pro-active parental outreach and involvement at each school site, including outreach for parents who do not speak English. With these expectations, explicitly communicate that every child and every child’s family should feel equally valued and important to his/her teachers and all other school personnel, and that each child (and family) feels that his/her background, culture, language, and perspectives are valued and appreciated by all personnel in the school.

These expectations should explicitly include respectful interactions when addressing behavior management or disciplinary issues. Have clear expectations for behavior management and disciplinary issues in congruence with the philosophy and vision. Require that all disciplinary issues related to “violating code of conduct” be investigated for implicit bias, due to variability of perceptions of disrespect.

**B. Expectations for instructional delivery**

Within the context of the expectations outlined above around culture and climate, specify expectations for instructional delivery that reflect this vision, but that also outline specific expectations for meeting all students’ needs in the classroom with differentiated (curricular as well as instructional), culturally responsive, and cognitively demanding approaches and activities that intentionally develop language and vocabulary and high levels of reading and writing. These components represent the most critical characteristics of effective instruction for student populations that are linguistically, economically, and ethnically diverse.

A philosophical shift that allows students greater voice and choice in classroom work not only increases the personal relevance of that work, but also renders it immediately meaningful to the student. District leaders should clearly define expectations that outline for teachers what the non-negotiable guidelines for all strategies, approaches, and student activities are. This will create a framework within which teachers have flexibility to choose suitable approaches, so they are not only aligning their teaching to the vision and philosophy of the district, but are also granted flexibility in their teaching style, as well. These expectations should be firmly rooted in the goals and requirements of social emotional learning and the Multi-tiered System of Supports/Response to Intervention. They must be fully integrated in every respect, both in guidelines to teachers as well as in the curriculum, itself. These components should become foundational to the Curriculum Management plan and be reflected in that plans’ goals around curriculum design, development, delivery, and assessment (see Recommendation 4).

“**Within the classroom, students need to know you care about them... if they know you are fair, help everyone, teach everyone...; when they [feel] accepted...they are more successful.”** —Teacher

The following are key components related to expectations for instructional delivery that must be clearly defined and expanded on for integration into both curriculum design and delivery. Design means that there must be support in the written curriculum for these components, and delivery means there must be specific training for teachers in how to incorporate these elements into their instruction within the context of a fully inclusive classroom environment. Again, all components must be addressed from an integrated framework—the needs of English Language Learners, Gifted students, students of economic disadvantage, and students who receive special education services must all be considered when the expectations are developed. There is considerable overlap
in what effective instruction for all of these students should look like.

1. Framework for strategies and approaches

The framework for the strategies and approaches specifies the approaches and strategies a teacher selects from to use with students. These approaches are what the teacher does, as in the case of direct instruction, shared practice, or modeling. This framework should include and address:

• Culturally responsive, student centered, hands-on (real world, simulated real world, authentic) approaches.
• Differentiation (curricular and instructional), specifically for students with special needs or who need additional scaffolding or supports (not tiers 2 or 3, but the differentiation and scaffolding needed for tier 1).
• Guidelines for flexible student groupings for direct instruction: lessons, mini-lessons, and targeted supports for small groups, pairs, or whole group.
• High cognitive demand that includes tiered questioning and open-ended questioning, to encourage students to think divergently, critically, and conceptually.

2. Expectations for student engagement

The expectations for student engagement address how district leaders wish to see students engaged or active in the classroom. These expectations are specific to students’ guided or independent practice—it is what the students are doing, not the teacher. Such expectations should minimally include requirements for:

• Language proficiency: a consistent, integrated focus on language and vocabulary development, with clear objectives for language structures and mechanics and an integrated focus on reading and writing across all content areas (and in assessment).
• Cultural responsiveness: students’ backgrounds and perspectives are always respected and valued, with additional consideration for their unique learning styles and experiences in all activities. Students are encouraged, wherever and whenever possible, to relate their learning to personal experience and interests.

Within the expectations for culturally responsive teaching, integrate expectations for student voice and choice in their activities. This component allows students of all ages to have not only some choice in what kinds of activities they prefer to practice or show evidence of learning, but also to incorporate their personal experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives into those activities. Voice and choice also directs that resources and materials reflect the diverse backgrounds, histories, and experiences of the students or allows them to source additional materials if such resources are inadequate.
• Authenticity: all activities should be relevant to the real world, as much as possible, and emphasize bringing in real world realia, artifacts, or experiences, or simulated real-world experiences. The focus is on authenticity and relevance. It should be noted that what makes something relevant to one child may not make it relevant to the next—“real world” is very personal for young children.
• Cognitive demand: assure that a high percentage of student work, even at the earliest grade levels, is cognitively demanding and of equal rigor across campuses. A lack of cognitive demand is the most pernicious characteristic of educational programs serving disadvantaged students. High levels of rigor not only improve achievement scores, but increase engagement of students, decrease truancy, and increase learning. Having clarity for what cognitive demand looks like, in terms of the tasks, activities, and assessments students are expected to complete, is needed in both training and the written curriculum.

3. Assessment and progress monitoring

Expectations for assessment and progress monitoring must be developed to assure that how students are assessed is congruent with the vision and expectations of the board for best practice. Assessment should equally reflect authentic learning experiences and be culturally responsive.
and rigorous. Current assessment measures, such as the STAAR, are cognitively low, and district performance on nationally normed assessments is indicative of this weakness. Having common formative tools that align to the curriculum, that are performance based, and that require high levels of cognition and integrated reading and writing skills will assist in raising the instructional expectations for all students across the district and move district performance to a nationally high level.

C. Expectations related to access and economic isolation

Access to all programs and the identification of students for specific programs and services should be proportional with their ethnic representation across the district, as well as within campuses. Assuring proportionality ensures that no student is overlooked due to economic factors, and that no student is identified as having a learning disability that simply needs more effective scaffolding or supports.

In addition to expectations related to access and identification, clarify what the district’s expectations are with respect to economic isolation in schools. Currently, several campuses exceed or fall below the district’s average free and reduced lunch (FRL) percentage by fifteen or more percentage points. Establish guidelines for a target level of economic representation at every elementary and intermediate school over the next three to five years and redraw boundary lines to assure these guidelines are met.

Assure that all students have access and exposure to campus personnel (professional) that reflect the diversity of their student body. This does not have to be a perfectly proportional representation, immediately, but ensuring that students have at least a minimum level of access (as established by the board) to diverse personnel is key to improving student performance. In addition to improving diversity of teachers and administrators at campuses, establish expectations that those teachers who do not reflect ethnic diversity have been trained and exhibit high sensitivity to and effectiveness with diverse student populations. With these expectations, assure the following:

1. Alignment with vision: access to programs, services, identification, disciplinary actions, administrators, and campus personnel should all be proportional with the diversity of the students and reflect the district’s vision and goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. Economic isolation: Identify what are reasonable expectations for assuring that no campus is economically isolated, such as a guideline that no campus should have an economically disadvantaged student population more than 5-10 percentage points from the district average rate. Proportionality of enrollment across campuses by Economic Disadvantage is one of the most significant factors in closing gaps.

3. Program/services access: Clarify what is meant by equal access to supports and services related to identified needs. Include within these expectations that specific programs define and institutionalize identification guidelines and practices and monitor these for consistency, to assure equal access and proportionality (consistency in implementation of special programs—see also Recommendation 2).

4. Equity in discipline: establish goals for ensuring that disciplinary actions are fair and consistent across campuses and not reflective of any bias. Monitor numbers (a goal of the Equity Plan in Recommendation 2) for proportionality and require disproportionalities to be addressed with specific and measurable actions at campuses. These actions should reflect a pro-active, student-centered, parent-centered approach that improves communication and builds relationships.

5. Parent and family engagement: Establish guidelines and expectations around parent communications, outreach, and responsiveness. Assure that all parents who have a concern or complaint are assured a hearing and are dealt with respectfully at every campus. Require the Student Services department to identify procedures, including procedures supporting parents who do not speak English, in communicating, supporting, and responding to parents or guardians. Have a clear line of authority to follow if campuses do not respond satisfactorily and parents share concerns or complaints.
D. Expectations for resource allocation: financial, material, human

1. Financial resources: develop guidelines in policy that address how funding should be consistently and fairly weighted and allocated to campuses to address the needs on those campuses. Include considerations for: the type of poverty present; special programming; diversity of the campus and personnel; language proficiency and type of language learners (newcomers, less commonly spoken languages vs. Spanish bilingual); and any additional factors. Funding should never be equal; funding must be equitably distributed so needs are sufficiently met. Therefore, there must be clear and specific rationale as to why funding is not equally allocated and why these differences exist. These guidelines should be stipulated in policy made and transparent to all campus leaders.

2. Staffing guidelines: assure that staffing allocations also follow areas of need. Not all campuses require the same number of counselors, social workers, or behavior interventionists. Establish how funding and supports for staffing will be weighted and provide campus leaders with processes to make requests for specific needs, such as an additional behavior interventionist or parent liaison. Allow for and support innovation and creativity in meeting the unique nature of the needs on each campus. Student-teacher ratios should be lower at higher-need campuses. Consider implementing a system for giving incentives to those campuses.

3. Hiring practices and employee compensation: working with campus administrators and the DEI Council, identify goals for what the most critical characteristics of the Mansfield ISD teaching and support personnel must be, respective of the diversity of the student population. Consider all types of diversity and identify the expectations related to hiring for these characteristics in recruiting and hiring guidelines. In addition to ethnic diversity, prioritize sensitivity to and experience with economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse populations and students with all kinds of special needs. The most important goal is to hire teachers (even from out of state) that reflect the vision and expectations for instructional excellence, strong positive relationships, and inclusion at all campuses. Develop clear policies and guidelines for employee compensation and require an annual review of compensation for equity and transparency.

4. Develop policy that specifies the district vision, addresses audit criteria, and that directs the revision of all related policies for alignment to the expectations developed under R2.

A. Define the vision, beliefs, and expectations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in policy.

Include in policy definitions of all key terms related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Specify all areas to be monitored for equity (see #2, above) and note what expectations are for each area.

B. Develop policies and revise existing policies to meet all criteria presented in Exhibit 1.1 and that direct planning to achieve the expectations set forth in R1.1 and R1.2 of this recommendation.

All expectations described above should be adapted into policy, to assure consistency in decision making across all campuses. Currently, policies that address discrimination, bullying, and bias do not include terms or concepts such as diversity, equity, or inclusion. Currently, policies do not communicate expectations regarding inclusivity, nor do they address the issues of culture and climate in buildings. Revise existing policies to include such language and develop new policies that address the vision and expectations of the board related to equity and inclusion—and that address all areas outlined in R1.2.

C. Require the development of an Equity Plan and the revision of related department plans to carry out the expectations of the board and to define goals, processes, timelines, roles and responsibilities, and budget considerations.

The Equity Plan components and purpose are addressed with specificity in Recommendation 2. Require the development of a plan over the next 6-12 months, in response to the needed policy. Allow all departments and campus leaders sufficient time to process through the results of the Equity Audit and to be informed of the new guidelines from the board related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Require all related departments (Human Resources, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, Advanced Academics, Special Education, Student Support Services) to revise current plans and to submit these to the DEI Council for review for their alignment to the goals and expectations of the Equity Plan and board. The Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is not responsible for facilitating and directing all the needed changes; this
department should function in a monitoring capacity, collecting the needed metrics and reports to assure that the goals of the Equity Plan are being met and responsibilities carried out. Frequent communication between this department and the Superintendent’s Cabinet will be critical in assuring needed change and to ensure accountability for the plan’s implementation.

In conclusion, clear and comprehensive direction from the board is critical to establishing the vision and philosophical framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This should be firmly rooted in the data from the Equity Audit as well as in research on best practices for diverse student populations. Attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and perspectives matter in the goal of educating children; relationships and the caring that is fundamental to the act of teaching should be explicitly valued and directed from the very top. Assuring that all students feel included, feel valued, and feel important to the mission of Mansfield ISD is not an unworthy goal and is a logical next-step for a district with a history of academic excellence and continuous improvement.

**Recommendation 2: Equity Planning**

**Why it matters:** Once the board has defined clear expectations for diversity, equity, and inclusion across the district that establish the framework within which the vision and mission are to be realized, a plan is needed to connect these expectations with clear and measurable goals and the processes and procedures needed to accomplish them. The plan will focus and coordinate the many efforts needed across multiple departments to erase opportunity gaps and improve student access and achievement.

Currently, the district has no plan or cohesive vision coordinating the various initiatives and programs that impact instruction. There are several programs and initiatives in place that, due to insufficient clarity in the non-negotiable aspects of those programs and initiatives, have inconsistent and inequitable implementation across campuses. Planning is needed to assure that not only the goals related to areas of inequity are met, but also to assure that current programs and initiatives that have plans in place can revise those plans, tighten implementation procedures, and eradicate existing gaps and disproportionalities in student access to programs and services.

**Who is responsible:** Superintendent or superintendent’s designee, with input and guidance from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council.

**Tasks to accomplish:**

1. Develop an Equity Plan that specifies all goals related to board expectations and that outlines processes, timelines, evaluation procedures, and roles and responsibilities related to the plan’s implementation.

An equity plan is needed to clearly define the actions required to fulfill each expectation identified by the board, superintendent, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council. A plan coordinates efforts across all departments of the district; something of critical importance in a district the size and complexity of Mansfield ISD and given the comprehensive nature of the equity issues identified. Equity touches every department and level, and will therefore require monitoring by all members of the Superintendent’s Cabinet and by the Board of Trustees. The plan will identify measures for monitoring and establish guidelines for how accountability will be achieved. The plan should include the following key components:

**A. DEI goals**

Goals for DEI should address all areas of gaps and inequities identified in the Equity Audit. These include all those outlined in R1.1 and R1.2, but be developed with measurable language. For example, with program access, specify that identification of children of color and poverty for Gifted and Talented programming should be proportional with the district’s diversity within three years, as well as enrollment.

These goals should address the following:

1. Program Identification (SPED and GT)
2. Retention and disciplinary practices
3. Recruitment and hiring practices
4. Economic isolation of campuses
5. Culture and Climate, parent outreach and engagement
6. Instructional effectiveness with diverse populations
7. Written curriculum that better supports differentiation and diversity

**B. Specific, measurable actions in support of the goals**

The actions should clearly connect to the related departments and responsibilities across the district. The actions are to be in
support of the goals listed above, and might include the following:

1. **Program Identification (SPED and GT):**
goal is to increase the identification of students of color and poverty for Gifted and Talented services and to decrease the percentage of males and males of color for Special Education. Require each department to develop clear and consistent guidelines (see R2.2) for these processes, especially in casting a wider and more frequent net in elementary, for identifying gifted students. Universal enrichment practices for all kindergarten and first grade students should be implemented that allow students to demonstrate unusual abilities in all areas of giftedness. Monitor, by campus, the percentages of students referred and identified. Require intervention when disproportionalities persist.

2. **Retention and disciplinary practices.**
Related actions might include:
   - **Discipline:** Implementation goals for SEL and restorative practices; training teachers in same, and monitoring disciplinary referrals for fidelity to expectations. When numbers are disproportional, have consistent interventions from the Student Services department to identify where problems persist and what training or supports are necessary.
   - **Retention:** Improve the system for formatively assessing and identifying learning gaps among students, particularly on campuses where performance is not consistent across student groups or with other campuses. Use multiple assessment instruments, including the MAP, to identify areas of weakness. Provide training to teachers and additional supports (as identified in the Curriculum Management Plan and MtSS/RtI Handbook) to assure student success before retention or test failure is probable.

3. **Recruitment, hiring, and human resources practices:** Actions should include developing new processes for recruitment and new guidelines for hiring. These hiring and recruitment practices should focus on increasing the diversity of the teacher cadre, but also improve instructional excellence. Deliberately seek to hire teachers with a sensitivity for and experience with diverse student populations. Monitor numbers accordingly; if diversity continues to be a problem, begin recruiting out of state and within the district, as well (future educators program). Develop programs and incentives to encourage the most experienced and effective teachers to serve at the neediest campuses.

4. **Economic isolation of campuses:**
establish expectations for ideal economic balance within schools; consider current boundaries and how to minimally adjust these boundaries or evolve more schools of choice to assure an economic balance (ideally within 5-10 percentage points of the district average) at all district campuses. Create or implement programs to allow campuses to compete for students across campuses, to allow more programs of choice, and to assure that the most disadvantaged students have access to the highest quality educational programming—as will be evident in their achievement.

5. **Culture and Climate:** within culture and climate, establish comprehensive training for board members, central office and campus administrators, to be followed by teachers and campus support personnel. The training should focus first on cultural sensitivity and understanding cultural lens and diversity. Specific targets for demonstrating the implementation of this training in classrooms should be developed at every campus, and then monitored for implementation (in classrooms, during walk-throughs as well as in samples of student work). Reports should be provided by every campus to the DEI department regarding success of implementation.

   Surveys should be administered annually to teachers, support personnel, and campus administrators regarding perceptions of the success of all training initiatives in making an impact on culture and climate and on students’ perceptions of safety and belonging. Where problems persist (as evident through complaints or from survey data), intervene with specific actions and require campus follow-up (crucial conversations, for example, with campus personnel where needed, write up with the appraisal process, etc.). Establish goals for parent outreach and engagement and provide resources to implement.

   Consider changes to staffing for those schools with unique needs (add/provide a parent liaison, translation services, behavior interventionist, social worker/therapists, etc.).

   Provide translation services and resources to all campuses with EL students.

   **6. Instructional effectiveness with diverse populations:**
Train all principals and teachers in culturally responsive teaching and sensitivity, and also in how to differentiate, scaffold, and provide effective Tier 1 instruction for diverse learners. See Recommendations 3 and 4 for additional guidance in this.

7. **Written curriculum that better supports differentiation and diversity:** see specific actions under **Recommendation 4**.

All seven goals and related actions should have the following accompanying detail:

a) **Personnel (departments) responsible for each action**

Specify who is to do what, within which department, and with what scope of authority. Note who is responsible for holding each role accountable for action completion.

b) **Evidence and reports**

This includes all data or evidence to be submitted to show that actions were completed, with any corresponding results (in terms of student achievement, survey responses, etc.). This may include specific data that should be collected, disaggregated, and reported along a specified schedule, or reports that are required to be submitted to the Superintendent, DEI council, and Board annually.

c) **Timeline, due dates**

Some actions may be a project to be completed (revision of a plan), while others are ongoing and require frequent monitoring to assure completion (monitoring disciplinary data, administering surveys).

2. **Identify other district plans and related processes that need revision in order to align with and support the Equity Plan**

There are multiple programs that serve either all students or specific groups of students in Mansfield ISD. Many of these programs have plans to direct their implementation. However, there is a lack of clarity around the latitude and autonomy for decision making related to program implementation that campus administrators possess. This must be clarified (in policy) and specific guidelines regarding the tightly-held vision, mission, and expectations for each specified. Update and revise all plans to assure alignment with the equity plan and newly revised vision, mission, and expectations from the board, focusing on removing the gaps and barriers that currently exist district-wide related to the programs’ respective implementation. These services and programs include, but are not limited to:

- **Curriculum Management Plan** (see also **Recommendation 4** for additional input regarding the Curriculum Management Plan)

- **The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (TTESS):** identify where culturally responsive teaching is expected and the incorporation of student perspectives and backgrounds.

- **ELL Academic Planning Guide:** include specific guidelines for program vision, goals, and implementation in response to the needs and populations served. Have clear guidelines for push-in or co-teach models and identify where campuses have flexibility in implementing these services and where they do not.

- **Gifted and Talented Program Guide:** for gifted programming, establish clear goals for increasing the identification of students of color and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Update all identification procedures to allow for giftedness to be determined using local norms and with non-verbal assessments. Establish specific goals for every campus for the targeted GT identification percentages by race/ethnicity and Economic Disadvantage. Establish clear guidelines for clustering GT students in classrooms and for meeting needs at every campus, in accordance with state guidelines. As with ELL programming, identify those areas of providing services where campuses have some flexibility and where they do not, to assure consistency in the implementation of services and equity for all students.

- **Special Education Program:** for special education, identify the system’s priorities and non-negotiable expectations for identifying students and for providing services. Communicate these to all campuses and include these expectations in the plan, connected to the Multi-tiered Support System and Response to Intervention (MtSS/RtI) Handbook and the Curriculum Management Plan. Consider having a comprehensive evaluation of the special education program, to audit the appropriateness and accuracy of IEPs, effectiveness and appropriateness of service delivery, and to ascertain the current weaknesses in the program’s implementation that are resulting in such low student performance. Having greater clarity around program implementation and the tightly held expectations for the program is essential; then monitoring for fidelity in practice is the next step in assuring improvements.
• **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** identify goals, expectations, and processes related to SEL and behavior management/disciplinary procedures. These must identify what are non-negotiable expectations for every campus and where campuses have flexibility in implementing the program and in carrying out positive behavior management practices.

• **Safe Schools:** identify within the Safe Schools requirements where overlap exists with all the above programs, initiatives, and procedures and how this works in congruence with the vision, goals, and expectations of the Equity Plan and related programs/initiatives. Replace redundant components with DEI-developed trainings and information. Safe Schools is included here to assure integration with all aspects of curriculum delivery and to more effectively meet the intent of that legislation within the context of equity and inclusion.

All of these programs and services support Mansfield ISD students, and several are areas with identified inequities and unequal opportunities for students. To every extent possible, the goals, vision, and expectations for each program for each population served by specific programs must be identified and assured of alignment with the vision, beliefs, and expectations related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion identified by the board. The programs, in addition to expectations concerning behavior management, maintaining safe schools, and evaluating teacher effectiveness, should be aligned in their priorities and guidelines.

There is considerable overlap in the implementation of these programs in district classrooms, and as much as is feasible, there needs to be a unified, clearly defined vision for instructional delivery that addresses differentiation and tiered models of support that is inclusive of all students and culturally responsive. Goals and guidelines specific to the needs (and legislated requirements) of each group may then be specified in the respective program plans, in support of this centralized, unified, and common vision. However, it is incumbent on all the separate departments that expectations are communicated in such a fashion as to condense requirements and eliminate overlaps and redundancies as much as possible, in an effort to make teachers’ responsibilities in implementing the vision for student engagement in their delivery of the curriculum more manageable.

A critical message to send to all campuses and campus personnel is that every student in Mansfield ISD, no matter their identified need or demographic characteristics, is to be treated as equally important and worthy of respect and consideration. Including and treating all students as our students is the primary goal, so that all feel a sense of belonging.

In conclusion, planning related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is essential to assuring that identified gaps and inequities are addressed across all campuses and departments in the next three to five years. With this goal is the additional focus on attaining educational excellence for all students, which will only improve Mansfield ISD’s academic standing in the state and nation.

**Recommendation 3: Professional Development and Coaching**

**Why it matters:** Once the Equity Plan is in place, the training that needs to happen to facilitate the implementation of the plan and the vision the board has established is critical. The expectations around school climate and culture, culturally responsive instruction, and the importance of relationships to the teaching and learning process require clarification and modeling by all leaders and coaching from principals and coordinators. Without this preliminary step of equipping its personnel, the district will not realize the goals and vision established by the board.

There has been no recent training on diversity and equity in the district beyond the minimum required from safe schools. As this is a very new, limited training, there is a widespread need for more comprehensive and coordinated training in cultural sensitivity, implicit bias, and culturally responsive instruction. There is also training needed in how to effectively address bias and discrimination, especially bullying and racist speech and behavior, in classrooms and schools.

**Who is responsible:** Curriculum and Instruction Department, with input and assistance from the DEI Department and Cabinet.

**Tasks to accomplish:**

1. **Establish goals and guidelines for professional development initiatives.**

Identify the training and supports needed to make the vision and goals of the equity plan a reality. From top to bottom, unpack the meaning and importance of culture, diversity, and perspective. Work to assist all Mansfield personnel in becoming aware of their own cultural lens and perspectives and how our personal lens influences how we perceive the world around us and process information. Through training, equip personnel to begin the work of modeling the culture and values of the Board of Trustees in support of the board’s new vision and mission of excellence for all Mansfield students.

**Integrate within all trainings:**

- Instructional “lens” of Culturally Responsive Teaching and the SEL framework
MTSS/Tiered instruction and differentiation

Classroom and behavior management, discipline practices, etc.

Replace Safe Schools content and components with DEI-developed content, components, and training.

How Culturally Responsive Teaching connects with and reinforces special program implementation: ELL, SPED, GT, etc.

Establish the phases for training. These phases would include:

**Phase I:** train the Board of Trustees and DEI Council in understanding cultural sensitivity and bias and the impact on student learning. Emphasize the role and importance this understanding has with students and their learning, specifically in creating accepting and safe environments in district classrooms.

**Phase II:** train all central office administrators and campus administrators in cultural sensitivity and cultural responsiveness. Include in this training the development of an awareness of one’s own cultural lens and how culture and our cultural lens impacts how we perceive circumstances, actions, and information around us. Develop goals for monitoring the implementation of culturally responsive practices in the classroom for the campus administrators as part of this phase, and train them first in these practices prior to rolling it out with teachers.

**Phase III:** train all teachers in cultural sensitivity and cultural responsiveness, as with district and campus administrators. With the teachers, connect all training components with aspects of SEL and behavior management principles and guidelines; use Professional Learning Communities on each campus as mini DEI committees to help facilitate more conversation and transparency about diversity and culturally responsive practices. Survey teachers annually about their perceptions regarding the training; give feedback to teachers and campus personnel when complaints are made or concerns shared by parents, and hold campus administrators responsible for supporting and monitoring the implementation of the training in classrooms.

**Phase IV:** train all administrators in proper practices when discrimination, bullying, or racism is witnessed. This training should support implementation of policy but also enforce a critical finding from research: racist speech and ideologies should not be “shut down.” Such an approach only serves to exacerbate them and drive them underground. Where racism exists, these attitudes and thoughts must be identified and clarified, and then processed against the district’s beliefs (and legally protected rights) regarding equality for and inclusion of all. Have specific processes for resolving such conflicts, communicating issues to parents, and for following up in every single case, so that such behaviors are not just blocked; rather, the fundamental mindset that is resulting in disrespect and unkindness to others is changed.

**Phase V:** train all teachers in the same processes and practices described in Phase IV, and monitor for implementation. Collect survey data from students and parents to determine if areas of concern remain and monitor complaints or concerns shared with the DEI department.

**Phase VI:** create a curriculum with specific objectives and model lessons for students related to cultural sensitivity, connected to the Social Emotional Learning program. These objectives and lessons should be fully integrated within the district curriculum and monitored for implementation. Use surveys and survey data to collect data for evidence of increased sensitivity to others.

Define the timeline for each phase and how frequently related processes will be evaluated or monitored. Note the budget needed to carry out the training. Where possible, connect the goals and content of these trainings to related trainings for differentiated, effective instruction for diverse student populations (see Recommendation 4).

**Recommendation 4: Curriculum Design, Development, and Delivery**

**Why it matters:** Once the Equity Plan is in place, the training that needs to happen to facilitate the implementation of the plan and the vision the Board has established is critical. The expectations around school climate and culture, culturally responsive instruction, and the importance of relationships to the teaching and learning process require clarification and modeling by leaders and coaching from principals and coordinators. Without this preliminary step of equipping its personnel, the district will not realize the goals and vision established by the board.

**Who is responsible:** Curriculum and Instruction Department, with input and assistance from the DEI Department and related program departments (Special Education, Advanced Academics, English Learners, etc.)

**Tasks to accomplish:**

1. Revise the Curriculum Management Plan in response to the new vision and expectations
around instructional delivery and student engagement.

a) Include new criteria for curriculum format and components to ensure that all supports teachers require in delivering instruction are available.

b) Specify how curriculum design supports its delivery and expectations for that delivery. Note that lesson planning is the sole responsibility of teachers and that it should be responsive to students’ needs.

c) Expand the section on instruction to more specifically address meeting the needs of linguistically, economically, and ethnically diverse populations and to better reflect the vision for effective instruction adopted by the board.

d) Specifically require training in meeting the needs of diverse student populations for all incoming teachers. This training should address how to differentiate effectively for all learners, particularly in scaffolding learning so students can access grade-level content, supporting English learners effectively in all classrooms, and how to incorporate students’ personal learning styles, interests, and backgrounds into classroom learning activities. Build off of the expectations for MtSS/RtI. Connect this training, focused on the expectations for instructional delivery from R1.2.

“There seems to be more of an awareness now, but we have a lot of work to do. I want to be hopeful.”

—Campus Administrator

2. Revise curriculum structure to more effectively support flexibility in pacing, while noting where pacing must be tight to ensure students are making adequate progress. In the unit plans, include more targeted, integrated suggestions for differentiating Tier I instruction while using culturally responsive and engaging approaches and activities. Include specific suggestions for student activities and formative assessment tools that assure rigor and student voice and choice.

a) Specify expectations for unit plans in all content areas for bundling, sequencing, pacing, and prioritizing the content (the standards). Note which components should be included at what levels (pacing increments); definitions and clarity for content, depending on priority, belong at the unit and sub-unit levels, while suggestions for instructional delivery (strategies/approaches, student activities, and resources/materials) belong at the unit pacing increment that directs lesson planning.

b) Give guidance for pacing increments at different gradespans; specify expectations around daily suggestions. Keep daily expectations or suggestions minimal; “bundle” these suggestions for a week at a time (for example) to support flexibility in lesson planning and to allow teachers latitude in responding to student needs. Note expectations in the guide for how the suggestions are to be used for planning instruction. Models can be provided for sample lesson plans or approaches, or for a typical weekly or daily progression, but these are provided as examples. Lesson planning should be the responsibility of teachers (as noted in the Curriculum Management Plan), but the curriculum should offer plenty of suggestions for strategies, approaches, activities and resources and materials to plan from.

c) Specify in the suggestions for instructional delivery (strategies, activities and materials/resources) the scaffolds/supports, interventions, or extensions that are useful for students. These suggestions should be integrated into this section throughout and not “stand alone” or be a separate link to an external resource. Make these suggestions part of everyday, high quality instruction—rigor and engaging contexts with clear supports are good for all students, not just students of special populations. Make these suggestions very targeted: less is better. Include just a few of the very best suggestions for instructional delivery.

d) Include exemplars for student work. There is variation across campuses in what teachers consider “mastery” of the skills. Use exemplars and provide clear rubrics with the success criteria delineated throughout the curriculum to support teachers’ understanding of what high-level mastery of the concepts, skills, and knowledge looks like. This will aid in assuring greater consistency of student performance and also improve achievement.

e) Regularly collect samples of student work from campuses. Rotate through the content areas and gradespans. Have curriculum coordinators review the work with principals, highlighting where work is strong and where there are gaps. Use the information from these reviews to identify potential weaknesses and gaps in the curriculum and revise accordingly.

f) Make access to the curriculum more user-friendly and assure that all links included in the
guides are functional and high quality. Avoid generic, “menu-type” lists of resources or student activities. Only include the very best and wherever able, note what the suggested approach, activity, or resource is right in the unit plan (rather than a link). Links can be used for additional suggestions if teachers want more ideas than the few that are in the unit plans. Ensure that if a resource is referenced in the curriculum, all have access to it.

3. **Assure that all curriculum resources and materials are not only equally available to all students, but that they allow for representation of diverse, multicultural perspectives and support student choice whenever possible.**

   a) Identify the revised expectations for curriculum components in the Curriculum Management Plan and develop a rubric with which to review and evaluate the quality and alignment of all resources in the curriculum. Include in this rubric expectations specific to culturally responsive approaches, allowing student voice and choice, cognitively challenging activities, and relevance and authenticity. Develop criteria with which to evaluate the degree to which resources integrate and embed these priorities for student work.

Attention to these recommended steps will assure not only greater rigor and engagement in district classrooms, but will assist in creating learning environments that are inclusive and relevant for all students.

**Conclusion**

The human brain is an interconnected mass of neurons that fire, send messages, and process information in response to all types of stimuli, emotional and intellectual. It is impossible to separate the two; it’s not how the human brain works. Culture is embedded deep within the human brain at a level that is unconscious to most of us. It impacts how we receive and process information and influences how we react to specific situations and leads to judgments not necessarily based in fact.

Knowing what is now understood about how the brain responds to and processes information is critical. The strong academic reputation that Mansfield ISD holds and the achievement it enjoys is liberating in the most important way—the district is not prey to the sense of urgency and desperation other districts experience because of low scores. Mansfield also has advanced systems in place to support the teaching and learning process. But failing to consider the affective aspect of the human learning system is to undercut the heart of its effectiveness, and the affective realm is firmly rooted in both culture and identity. Unity is possible without uniformity; diversity needs not detract from a unified sense of purpose. The challenge is in maintaining unrelenting focus on what goals, what ideals matter most and then using the diversity of perspective, experience, and knowledge as foundational skills for attaining them.

Mansfield ISD is a district of excellence. It has systems and resources in place that other districts strive toward, and a culture that is noted for high expectations and putting students first. The district philosophy already communicates that students come first, that continuous improvement is prioritized, and that integrity, communication, and positive relationships are the means by which goals are achieved. But in the context of continuous improvement, effectiveness is measured by the degree to which all—every single one—benefit. The more students and families positively impacted, the more effective the initiative. The leaders of Mansfield ISD must decide what putting students first means within the context of the considerable diversity that exists in the system: diversity of background, perspective, and even opinion. Mansfield ISD is at a pivotal moment in time at an unprecedented moment in United States history. It has an opportunity to attain real unity, to identify values and principles all have in common, and to unite in what all hold to be truly precious: the right of children to a high quality, effective education and the right to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Representative democracy is never without struggle. Diversity of thought is the bedrock of democracy. As James B. Conant said, “Democracy is a small, hard core of common agreement, surrounded by a rich variety of individual differences.”
An Equity Audit of the Mansfield Independent School District

January 2021
Dr. Kimberley Cantu
Superintendent of Schools
Mansfield Independent School District
605 East Broad Street
Mansfield, Texas 76063
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<td>7th Grade Science: High and Mid-Level Poverty Schools</td>
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<td>5.26</td>
<td>Comparison of Cognitive Demand and Contexts for SPED</td>
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Approach

Central Question for the Equity Audit:

To what extent is Mansfield Independent School District supporting and assuring equity and equality in its treatment of and services to students?

Focus Areas

The auditors developed five focus areas based on the feedback and data requested by district leaders. Following are the five areas, with the specific feedback requested:

**Vision and Expectations**
Policy and plans were analyzed to determine what expectations, definitions, and direction exist for assuring and monitoring equity across the system.

**Academic Achievement**
Current and past performance of students in the district was analyzed to determine where opportunity gaps in performance exist across racial/ethnic groups, socioeconomic status, language status, and identification for special education services. Where gaps were evident, the number of years it would take to close those gaps (years to parity) was calculated.

**Access and Equity**
The district sought feedback on the representation of student subgroups in specific programs, whether or not campuses in the district are racially or economically isolated, and whether or not the diversity of the student population is reflected by the ethnicity of the teachers, staff, and administrators of the district.

**Culture and Climate**
Within the scope of culture and climate, the district sought feedback via interviews, focus groups, and online surveys regarding stakeholder perceptions on safety, acceptance, experiences with discrimination or bias, support, and any other equity-related issues.

**Curriculum**
The design of curriculum and support for its delivery were addressed, including an analysis of curriculum documents for evidence of support for culturally responsive teaching and differentiation, as well as inclusion of multicultural perspectives in suggested materials and resources.
Methodology

The methodology used by the auditors included the following:

**Documents**

These sources included curriculum guides, state reports, assessment data, enrollment data, district policy and plans, student work artifacts, discipline reports, performance data for *EOC* and *STAAR* tests, and any other source of information or data that would reveal district expectations for diversity, equity, and inclusion and any possible inequities of opportunity for any student groups.

**Interviews**

The equity auditors conducted interviews and met with focus groups to shed light on diversity and equity issues and perspectives. In-person interviews were held with the superintendent, top-level administrative staff, and focus groups of parents, teachers, and principals. Virtual interviews were conducted with student focus groups and district administrators.

**Online Surveys**

Surveys were offered to students in grades 5-8 and 9-12, parents, teachers, support personnel, and campus and district administrators. Surveys covered a variety of issues, centering around the following categories: Student/Family Background information, School Culture (climate, bias or discrimination, behavior expectations and discipline), and School Supports (student experiences, program and resource access, expectations for student performance). Surveys for personnel included: School Culture (diversity, climate, bias and discrimination experiences, parent interactions), and Instruction (curriculum and resources, differentiation, training). A full list of survey questions is in the Appendix.
**FOCUS AREA 1**

**FINDINGS—FOCUS AREA 1: VISION AND POLICY**

*Why Vision and Policy Matter*

Policy is elemental to establishing a framework for decision making. Policy defines what expectations and goals are tightly-held across the system, and provides direction for decision making that assures alignment of all goals and initiatives across the system. Policy defines the vision, establishes the mission, and identifies priorities for all stakeholders in their accomplishment of assigned responsibilities. Policy, when augmented by specific plans, is the means by which all disparate moving parts of the system are assured of working in concert with one another to attain a desired goal or reach a specific destination.

Within the context of assuring, supporting, and monitoring equity within school systems, policy serves a critical role, since equity involves every aspect, department, and level of a school district. Policy must define not only what equity is, but also identify the research and rationale for requiring it, goals for attaining it, and plans for achieving, monitoring, and evaluating it. Policy is the foundation upon which plans are developed and must be specific enough to assure fidelity to the board’s vision and intent, but broad enough to allow for flexibility in implementation and longevity in relevance to the system. Policy supports and guides administrative actions, but also serves to identify the philosophical parameters within which those actions should occur. This is essential to the management construct of having a tightly-held framework within which district personnel have great latitude to operate, and flexibility in meeting the needs of a diverse population of students.

**Finding 1: Policy should more clearly define expectations and direction for equity and inclusion and the work require to eliminate opportunity gaps.**

Clear goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion are needed, as well as a specific policy that outlines the board’s philosophy and beliefs related to equity and related expectations for attaining and supporting it district-wide. The district has elements of equity guidelines in current policies, but needs better direction for decision making.

Policy criteria to address equity and opportunity gaps system-wide are presented in Figure 1.1.

The auditors found that although there are strong local and legal policies in place that establish guidelines for multiple aspects of curriculum design and delivery, policies specific to diversity, equity, and inclusion were inadequate. No policies outlined a clear vision and related mission and expectations for equity, especially as it relates to student academic performance.

The auditors present the criteria in Figure 1.1, to enable district leaders to see what guidance policy must offer related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The auditors have also noted relevant policies that address, in part, aspects of the criteria.

Additional guidance on some of the criteria is outlined in additional district plans and documents; these are referenced in the narrative discussion that follows the exhibit.
### FOCUS AREA 1

#### Figure 1.1: Quality Criteria for Equity Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Clarifies vision and mission for equity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Defines philosophical beliefs and values related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Defines goals and plan expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Specifies expectations for roles and responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Defines equity goals specific to the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Curriculum Design: format, structure, components;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Delivery: instructional expectations (best practice), student engagement and cognitive demand, behavior management, program access, and implementation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluation: purposes, philosophy, alignment to delivery expectations, instruments and grading practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery and Consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Clarifies processes for monitoring goal achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Defines guidelines for supports to enable work: professional development, monitoring, appraisal, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Specifies expectations for alignment and coordination of all district plans (and related goals) with strategic and equity plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Requires definition of vision, mission, and implementation for special programs, in alignment with equity plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Specifies expectations concerning managing behavior and discipline and monitoring fidelity to policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Notes expectations for system-wide communication of goals and required actions and results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback and Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Specifies guidelines for evaluating student progress, in alignment with vision and philosophy statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Outlines all data to be monitored regularly related to equity and what reports are required (with what frequency).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Notes specific expectations for data disaggregation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget and Productivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Specifies guidelines for financial allocations and budgeting practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Defines expectations for procedures to take when current measures are not productive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### FOCUS AREA 1

#### Exhibit 1.1: Criteria Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control: Criteria Partially Met</th>
<th>Relevant Policies:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Several policies address vision, access, and discrimination, but no policy specifically defines and describes a vision for equity and inclusion. There is no direction for how to address opportunity gaps, no district philosophy for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and no reference to best practices for disadvantaged students.</td>
<td>AE (LEGAL, LOCAL), FB (LEGAL), FB (LOCAL), FFH (LEGAL), FFF (LEGAL, LOCAL), FFI (LEGAL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction: Criteria Partially Met</th>
<th>Relevant Policies:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Although local policy is strong directing curriculum management, no policies address goals and planning for achieving and monitoring the district’s vision for equity. Policy should also address how curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation will support equity.</td>
<td>EH (LOCAL), EHBA (LEGAL), EHAA (LEGAL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery and Consistency: Criteria Not Met</th>
<th>Relevant Policies:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The auditors found no policy that specifically addressed monitoring and supporting a vision for equity at all levels and departments of the system. There was insufficient direction for professional development, both in how PD will support this vision and the overarching vision for instructional excellence for all students.</td>
<td>EH (LOCAL), EHBA (LEGAL), EHBAA (LEGAL), EHBB (LEGAL, LOCAL), EHBE (LEGAL), FNG (LEGAL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback and Evaluation: Criteria Not Met</th>
<th>Relevant Policies:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No policies were found that outlined any expectations that meet the criteria for feedback and evaluation. Auditors also found no expectations for what instruments are required to monitor equity, what data need to be disaggregated, and what reports must be generated for whom.</td>
<td>EH (LOCAL), EK (LEGAL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget and Productivity</th>
<th>Relevant Policies:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current policies are in place regarding budgeting, but no policy or plan specifically outlines expectations for allocating resources according to need. Such policies should address how need is to be determined, evaluated, and weighted so budgetary allocations can be appropriately responsive.</td>
<td>CE (LOCAL, LEGAL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although district policy has strong language assuring all students of a discrimination and bias-free environment, as well as safety from bullying, evidence of active discrimination and bullying was found in district schools (see Focus Area 3, Finding 5). Students and parents shared experiences that indicate school personnel are not adequately or consistently enforcing policy. Several reported discrimination to be coming from staff, themselves.

Exhibit 1.2: The district has a clear definition for diversity, equity, and inclusion

In response to the statement that the district has a clear definition for diversity, equity, and inclusion, responses across personnel groups differed somewhat. Administrators were evenly split in their disagreement with this statement, with just under half of all disagreeing. Teachers and support personnel had higher agreement; 80% of all White teachers agreed, but only 58% of teachers of color agreed with the statement.

Comments on the need for policy:

On the survey, several teachers and even students commented on the need for more inclusive and specific policies. These comments included:

- “We need clear policies, including explicit wording that provides protection for sexual orientation and sexual identity. We need training for our staff that is meaningful, not just SafesSchools presentations that we click through.” (Teacher)
- “We need clearly defined procedures for reporting racist and biased behavior on the part of staff members, and clearly defined responses to such behavior. Policies, procedures, and training must reflect a true commitment to diversity and acceptance.” (Teacher)
- “We really need policy protections and clear language in our policy so that everyone knows this behavior is unacceptable and reportable. Nothing has changed, [there is] no policy clarification.” (Teacher)
- “We must update district policy to include protections for LGBTQ students and staff, and put procedures in place for reporting that ensure discriminatory behavior is addressed.” (Teacher)
Exhibit 1.3: The district is effective at supporting and monitoring equity in its policies and practices

In response to the statement that the district is effective at supporting and monitoring equity in its policies and practices, there was higher agreement among White administrators than among administrators of color, with only 42% of administrators of color agreeing compared to 57% of White administrators agreeing with the statement.

Key Takeaways for Focus Area 1

*Overall, Mansfield ISD has several policies that exceed what the state of Texas requires and that add specific local expectations concerning curriculum design and delivery. This sets the district apart from the majority of other districts across the state. However, the district needs to define the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion in its policy; identify and define what the vision for what bias-free education looks like for each child; and specify goals for monitoring and assuring equal opportunities for every child. Currently, a considerable percentage of students and parents report incidents of discrimination and bullying, indicating that school personnel are not enforcing current policy and guaranteeing all students a safe and secure learning environment.*
FOCUS AREA 2

FINDINGS—FOCUS AREA 2: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Why Achievement Matters

In the United States, the most reliable and consistent predictor of performance on almost any measure of student progress that is standardized (or based on cut-scores) is economic background. Poverty and indicators of poverty continue to significantly correlate to student achievement on standardized measures. The reasons for this are complex and involve multiple factors, not the least of which is the impact of secure home environments (less mobility, safe and secure communities), high quality childcare and nutrition, and vocabulary and language development prior to entering school. These social factors, while too often correlating with student academic achievement, nevertheless have little to do with school experiences. Schools that work with high percentages of students of poverty have a heavier burden than schools that do not, and programs such as Title I were developed as a means of assisting schools that have greater needs as a result of socioeconomic factors.

Understanding the impact of students’ economic background on their performance is key, but it is not an excuse. Many schools do an amazing job in preparing students for success on any and all academic measures, despite demographic predictors. This includes many schools in Mansfield ISD. If anyone can be successful in preparing students for success on tests, then all can be successful. What happens in classrooms and the interactions between teachers and students can and indeed does predict students’ performance on an assessment; this is foundational to the purpose and rationale for schooling.

The examination of achievement data for the Mansfield ISD Equity Audit was primarily performed in response to the request to see how the district is doing, as a whole, compared to the state, followed by how specific student groups within the district are doing, when compared to one another. Such comparisons allow stakeholders to determine if all groups are benefitting equally from classroom instruction or if opportunity gaps exist. The following narrative addresses three findings related to academic achievement.

Finding 1: District performance, overall, exceeds state averages, but students of color consistently score below their peers, with the exception of Asian students.

Overall, Mansfield ISD has a history of strong academic performance. Its students do well on multiple measures of academic progress, and it is classified by the TEA as an “A” district. Performance of Mansfield students has improved over time, particularly when compared to the state at grades 3-8. However, certain student groups do not perform as well as others. For students of color, most notably Black or African American students, classroom instruction is the least effective in Mansfield ISD.
**FOCUS AREA 2**

**STAAR Performance**

**Exhibit 2.1:  Student Group Performance in Reading on the STAAR, 2016-2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
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</table>

Source: MISD Texas Academic Performance Report, tea.texas.gov

All student groups outperformed the state’s average percentage of students scoring at meets grade level standard.

Despite this strong performance when compared to the state, gaps persist among the ethnic groups represented. Black/African American students were the least prepared; they had the lowest percentage of students scoring at meets standard, almost 20% fewer than their Asian peers.

All groups showed an increase each year in the percentage of students that scored at meets standard except Asian students; this group remained static over the four-year period. The gaps across the three largest ethnic groups (Black/African American, White, and Hispanic/Latino), with the consistent gains these groups demonstrated, remained static, as well.
Exhibit 2.2: Student Group Performance in Math on the STAAR, 2016-2019

Exhibit 2.2 displays the consistent gains made by district students, as a whole, over the four years. Although four ethnic groups began in 2016 at or below state average performance, all groups finished with a higher percentage of students scoring at meets grade level standard than the state average percentage of students.

All groups made gains, although Black/African American students had the greatest increase (19 percentage points) in the percentage of students scoring at meets standard. Other groups increased between 7 (Asian students) and 17 (Hispanic/Latino students) points.

Source: MISD Texas Academic Performance Report, tea.texas.gov
Exhibit 2.3: Student Group Performance on the English I EOC, 2016-2019

As with grades 3-8 on the STAAR, the percentages of all student ethnic groups that scored at meets grade level standard exceeded the state’s average percentage, with the exception of American Indian/Alaskan Native students in three of the four years.

The gains over the four years resulted in gaps narrowing slightly for Black/African American students and Hispanic/Latino students. Students of Two or More Races outperformed all their peers except for Asian students.

The span in the percentage of students meeting standard in 2019 was 28 points, a decrease from the span of 38 points in 2016.
Asian students had the highest percentage of students meeting the standard in Algebra I, but only recognized a 1 percentage point gain over the four years. White students and students of Two or More Races had the second-highest percentage of students meeting the standard.

Black/African American students comprised the only group with an equal or lower percentage of students that scored meets standard than the state average for all four years. This group also made an impressive gain in the percentage of students meeting standard; an increase of 10 percentage points.

The span, overall, in the percentage of student groups meeting standard in Algebra I in 2019 was 13 percentage points, a significant decrease from the 25-point span between groups in 2016.
YEARS TO PARITY:
The Process

Gaps among student groups are frequently observed on assessment data. Although the gaps themselves might not be large, in any case, they are indicative of a student group that the system is not serving as effectively as their peers. The degree to which gaps narrow or widen over time is important; the most effective districts are those who achieve impressive gains for their most underperforming students and can sustain them over time, thereby closing the gaps. One analysis that is used to gain perspective regarding gaps is Years to Parity. Years to parity is an analysis that calculates existing gaps in performance between two groups of students and monitors that gap over time for the same groups. Using the observed rate of change in the gap and hypothesizing that if all remains constant, the observed rate of change would apply to the future, as well. This is a means of using past performance to propose future achievement. For example, if a gap exists between two groups that narrows from 12 percentage points to 3 in four years’ of testing, that means the gap narrowed 3 points a year (four years of tests, but a time lapse of three years). If all things remain constant, one could calculate that the existing gap of three points would be eradicated in a single year (see Appendix L).

Note: See Appendix L for the calculations used to create all YTP charts in the report.

Years to parity was calculated for the groups who had the highest percentage meets standards with the groups who had the lowest percentage meeting standard, based on the STAAR and EOC data in previous exhibits. If the current rate of change in the achievement gaps across ethnic groups remains constant for the future, all gaps will close over a range of time periods, from just over four years (for Algebra I) to 21 years (Biology I). The gap for US History would never close.

This analysis is neither statistically reliable nor scientific, and in this instance, the groups of students each year are different, but it does show that modifications and interventions are needed to ensure all students will be equally successful on state assessments.

Exhibit 2.5: Years to Parity for Ethnic Groups: STAAR and EOCs, 2016-2019

Number of Years to Close 2019 Gap for Students of Color (At Current Rate of Change)
FOCUS AREA 2

High School AP, ACT, and SAT Performance

Exhibit 2.6: AP Performance for Student Ethnic Groups, All Tests, 2015-2019

Unlike the EOC and STAAR exams, Mansfield students did not outperform the state on AP exams. Asian students outperformed the state in 2019, with a slightly higher percentage of students scoring the required 3 or more points on the AP tests (out of 5 total points possible). Students of Two or More Races and White students also had a slightly higher percentage of students meeting the criterion than the state.

African American students had the lowest percentage of students scoring the minimum required score of “3;” overall performance for this group declined by almost two percentage points over the five years. Hispanic/Latino student performance also declined by over five percentage points.

AP participation is voluntary; rates of participation varied greatly by student ethnic group. These rates are presented in Finding 3. Hispanic/Latino students had the lowest rates of participation, overall. Mansfield students, however, have a higher average rate of participation than the state average: 35% for the district compared to 26% of all students across the state in 2019.
Exhibit 2.7: SAT Performance for Student Ethnic Groups, Composite Scores, 2015-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
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<td>1316</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>1014</td>
<td>1003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
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<td>1367</td>
<td>1060</td>
<td>1048</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1538</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>1135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1557</td>
<td>1511</td>
<td>1143</td>
<td>1163</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: MISD Texas Academic Performance Report, tea.texas.gov

Over the five-year period, all scores dropped considerably from 2016-17, possibly due to new norming on the test. The state average score suffered similar decreases. Overall, from 2017 to 2019, all student groups except Hispanic/Latino students experienced a slight increase, with students of Two or More Races earning the greatest gains.

Asian students had the highest scores, while Black/African American students had the lowest scores, with a gap of 58 points, overall, in 2019. All groups outperformed the state with the exception of African American students, who scored below the state average.
FOCUS AREA 2

Exhibit 2.8: ACT Performance for Student Ethnic Groups, 2015-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MISD Texas Academic Performance Report, tea.texas.gov

Although SAT and ACT participation is voluntary, and participation varied across groups, of those students who chose to take the ACT, Exhibit 2.8 shows that Asian and White students consistently attained higher scores. Black/African American student performance fell below the state average each year, as did Hispanic/Latino students in 2016. The gap in scores on the ACT remained static—narrowing only one-tenth of a point over the five years (from 4.5 to 4.4 points), demonstrating a persistent opportunity gap for these students.

Key Takeaways for Focus Area 2, Finding 1

Overall, when academic performance is examined in the district as a whole, all student groups perform above the state in reading and math, when analyzed for all students in grades 3-8. Despite high overall performance, students of color, in particular Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students, are not experiencing the same academic success and test preparedness as their peers. Black/African American students, with a few exceptions, have the lowest performance on all measures and are the only student group that scored below the state on multiple assessments, showing they are the least successfully served group in the district. Gaps for some student groups are not closing over time and will never close without significant intervention.
Finding 2: Economic need in Mansfield ISD is a strong predictor of performance on state tests. Not all students have equal access to effective learning environments.

Overall, schools with higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students consistently score lower than schools with lower percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Current supports are not adequately meeting the needs of students in economically isolated campuses to bring their performance on par with the district average. This information is of critical importance in allocating supports and resources to these buildings.

The auditors examined performance of schools, comparing schools with the highest percentages of Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) to those with the lowest percentages of students receiving FRL. This was done to determine to what extent poverty is influencing test preparedness in the district. Note that such considerations are not to excuse lower performance of any student groups. Rather, the information should be used to inform curriculum development, delivery, and assessment planning and implementation in order to address gaps.

**Elementary Schools’ Performance**

Exhibit 2.9: Five Highest FRL Schools and Five Lowest FRL Schools 2019 STAAR Performance

Exhibit 2.9 shows that schools with the highest percentages of students in poverty score below their low FRL counterparts. Glenn Harmon has a significantly higher percentage of FRL students and has the smallest percentages of students meeting grade level standard. The impact of poverty on performance is evident; Mansfield schools, when compared to the state, are still performing well, overall, but elementary students in poverty are not performing on par with their peers. Despite falling so far below their peers, the high FRL schools still perform well compared to the state; Glenn Harmon scores just below the state at Approaching Grade Level, which is uncommon for campuses with such high FRL percentages. Ponder and Morris both outperform the state average for the percentage of students in all subjects, all grades, that Meet Grade Level.
**Intermediate Schools’ Performance**

Exhibit 2.10: Two Highest FRL Intermediate Schools and Two Lowest FRL Intermediate Schools 2019 STAAR Performance

![Graph showing performance comparison between FRL intermediate schools](image)

No intermediate school has a FRL percentage higher than 55%, unlike the elementary schools. The data show that as schools’ proportion of economic disadvantage goes down, scores go up on every measure. As with the elementary schools, both Cross Timbers and Della Icenhower have similar percentages of students scoring at meets grade level as the rest of the state, with Icenhower slightly above.

*Source: MISD Texas Academic Performance Report, tea.texas.gov*

**Middle Schools’ Performance**

Exhibit 2.11: Two Highest FRL Middle Schools and Two Lowest FRL Middle Schools 2019 STAAR Performance

![Graph showing performance comparison between FRL middle schools](image)

The lowest FRL schools perform the highest on the STAAR. It is interesting to note, however, that although Howard Middle School has the highest percentage of FRL students, it has very high percentages of students meeting grade level in ELA, math, and science—higher than Coble and almost as high as Wester MS and Jones MS in mathematics. Both Howard and Coble outperform the state in the percentage of students meeting grade level in all subjects, all grades.

*Source: MISD Texas Academic Performance Report, tea.texas.gov*
**High Schools’ Performance**

**Exhibit 2.12: High School 2019 End of Course Performance**

Summit High School has lower performance in ELA, mathematics, and science, but does better than average in social studies. Lake Ridge is the lowest performing high school in math. The impact of poverty is evident, but not universal. All Mansfield high schools outperform the state, on average. As noted, poverty can be a major predictor but does not have to be—as Summit social studies teachers have demonstrated.

**Exhibit 2.13: High School 2019 Performance by Ethnicity**

Not all student groups are experiencing equal academic success at different campuses. Asian students are the highest performing group at all but Legacy; American Indian students are the lowest performing group at Timberview and Legacy but the second highest performing group at Lake Ridge. This group has the most erratic performance, as well as the highest dropout rate in the district (see Finding 3).
Key Takeaways for Focus Area 2, Finding 2

Poverty is powerful and can have a long-lasting impact on students’ learning. Children in poverty have many challenges, and those children who attend schools that are the most economically isolated have more challenges than most. Diversity, especially economic diversity, is a positive factor in leveling the playing field for the most disadvantaged students (see Appendix E). Mansfield is no exception; despite areas of great affluence, there are schools where more than two-thirds of the students are economically disadvantaged, and their performance falls consistently below other schools with greater economic diversity. Among the grade-level campuses, the higher the need, the lower the scores. Additional supports and interventions at these campuses are needed to level the playing field for their students.

Finding 3: For the most at-risk students, opportunity gaps are evident and are not consistently closing over time. For some groups, without extreme intervention, the gaps will never close.

A cohort is a group of students tracked over time to monitor that group’s performance on assessments across multiple years. Rather than looking at third grade reading data for five years, for example (which means looking at a different group’s results every year), it is more informative to follow a group of students who started third grade five years ago and track their performance at each subsequent grade level over time. This allows district leaders to see if a group of students makes gains over time—the desired result.

The Cohort Data Process

Data were collected for members of specific groups and compared to non-members’ data. These four groups included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Economic Disadvantage</th>
<th>English Learner Status</th>
<th>Special Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohort 1:</strong> 3rd-7th grade</td>
<td><strong>Cohort 2:</strong> 4th-8th grade</td>
<td><strong>Cohort 1:</strong> 3rd-7th grade</td>
<td><strong>Cohort 1:</strong> 3rd-7th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math and ELAR</td>
<td>Math and ELAR</td>
<td>Math and ELAR</td>
<td>Math and ELAR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each group, two cohorts’ data were collected and compared over a five-year period, and then years to parity was calculated for each. The results from the first cohort for each group and the years to parity for both cohorts are presented in the subsequent exhibits. In each exhibit, the students’ performance on the STAAR is reported for each subsequent grade level for five years, in both reading and mathematics. All exhibits include the state average performance for that grade level, that same year.
Exhibit 2.14: Cohort I Reading by Ethnicity: Grades 3-7, 2015-2019

*scores in this exhibit represent % scoring advanced in 2015 and 2016, and the % scoring at Meets Grade Level in 2017-2019. 
Source: http://txreports.emetric.net

Exhibit 2.15: Cohort I Math by Ethnicity: Grades 4-7, 2016-2019

*scores in this exhibit represent % scoring advanced in 2015 and 2016, and the % scoring at Meets Grade Level in 2017-2019. 
Source: http://txreports.emetric.net

The reading and math cohort I data, for students who were in grade 3 in 2015 and ended 2019 in grade 7, shows that as these students began testing in 2015, all experienced a drop in the percentage
meeting grade level standard between 2016 and 2017, due to changes in STAAR reporting at the state level. All student groups showed growth from the period between 2017 and 2019. Black/African American students had the lowest percentage of student meeting grade level standard; these students, as well as Hispanic/Latino students in math, frequently fell below the state average but ended the year in 2019 above the state. Asian students from this cohort had the highest performance in mathematics, but alternated with White students for the highest percentage meeting grade level standard in reading. Overall, gaps for several groups remained static but for others widened.

Exhibit 2.16: Years to Parity for Ethnicity Cohorts I and II, Reading and Math

The gaps for the ethnic groups in Cohorts I and II, in reading, will never close. In mathematics, the gaps will close in 11 and 2.5 years, respectively, for Cohorts I and II.

Note: See Appendix I for the calculations used to create all YTP charts in the report.
Economically Disadvantaged Students’ Cohort Data

The following charts present data for cohorts with economically disadvantaged students.

Exhibit 2.17: Cohort I Economically Disadvantaged and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Student Performance in Reading Grades 3-7, 2015-2019

Exhibit 2.18: Cohort I Economically Disadvantaged and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Student Performance in Math Grades 3-7, 2015-2019

The economically disadvantaged students from Cohort I consistently scored below their non-economically disadvantaged peers in both reading and math over the five years, 2015-2019. The gap in the percentages of students meeting grade level standard in reading and math each year widened over the five-year period.
FOCUS AREA 2

Exhibit 2.19: Years to Parity for Economically Disadvantaged Students Cohorts I and II: Reading and Math

For this years to parity analysis auditors used the gap from 2017, given the dramatic changes from 2015 to 2017. If all things remain constant, for Cohort I, the gap between economically disadvantaged students and their non-economically disadvantaged counterparts will never close. For Cohort II, the gap in reading would close in 22 years. In math, the gap would close in just 1.5 years. Both cohorts demonstrate that for economically disadvantaged students, access to the quality of instruction needed can assure their academic success at the same level as their peers.
**FOCUS AREA 2**

**English Learner Cohort Data**

The following charts present data for cohorts with English learner students.

**Exhibit 2.20: Cohort I English Learner and Non-English Learner Student Performance in Reading Grades 3-7, 2015-2019**

![Exhibit 2.20: Cohort I English Learner and Non-English Learner Student Performance in Reading Grades 3-7, 2015-2019](image)

Source: [http://txreports.emetric.net](http://txreports.emetric.net)

**Exhibit 2.21: Cohort I English Learner and Non-English Learner Student Performance in Math Grades 3-7, 2015-2019**

![Exhibit 2.21: Cohort I English Learner and Non-English Learner Student Performance in Math Grades 3-7, 2015-2019](image)

Source: [http://txreports.emetric.net](http://txreports.emetric.net)

English learners in Cohort I consistently scored below their English-speaking peers every year, with gaps widening each year.
Exhibit 2.22: Years to Parity English Learners’ Cohorts I and II: Reading and Math

For English learners in Cohorts I and II, in reading, there would be no closing of the gap if performance continues as it has over the last five years and all is held constant. In math, the gap would close in 2.5 years for Cohort II, but never in math for the English learners in Cohort I. As with economically disadvantaged students, English learners, many of whom are included within the economically disadvantaged group of students in Cohorts I and II, are not making desired gains over time.

Note: See Appendix L for the calculations used to create all YTP charts in the report.
**Special Education Cohort Data**

The following charts present data for cohorts with special education students.

**Exhibit 2.23: Cohort I Special Education and Non-Special Education Student Performance in Reading Grades 3-7, 2015-2019**

![2015-2019 Reading Performance Grades 3-7](http://txreports.emetric.net)

**Exhibit 2.24: Cohort I Special Education and Non-Special Education Student Performance in Math Grades 3-7, 2015-2019**

![2015-2019 Math Performance Grades 3-7](http://txreports.emetric.net)

As can be seen in **Exhibits 2.23** and **2.24**, special education students from Cohort I have considerably lower percentages meeting grade level standard in reading and math on the STAAR over time, from 2015 to 2019 in grades 3-7. Over the five-year period, the gap between students receiving special education services and those who do not widens in both reading and math.
FOCUS AREA 2

The projected years it would take to close gaps, based on former rates of change to the gaps between students who receive special education services and those who don’t are presented in Exhibit 2.25.

Exhibit 2.25: Years to Parity for Special Education Students

For special education students in the two cohort groups, if all things remain constant, the gaps between their performance and non-special education students’ performance will never close. Interventions and instructional changes are needed to improve student performance.

Note: See Appendix L for the calculations used to create all YTP charts in the report.

Comments from Personnel on Academic Achievement

Despite satisfactory ratings by the state, administrators commented on the existing gaps in student performance. The school rating process was seen as contributing to a fear of effecting change.

- “We have some gaps. Not only by color, but by socioeconomics. And with that comes challenges.” (District Administrator)
- “We’re trying to have some of those hard conversations. We are an A-rated school. We are needing to close the gaps. Just looking at that really bothered me.” (Campus Administrator)
- “One of our threats is the need to do the work and not be as driven and pressured by the rating.” (District Administrator)
- “The community is now a minority majority district. Decision makers need to wake up and realize it before it’s too late. The majority is not being served adequately.” (District Administrator)
Key Takeaways for Focus Area 2

Achievement in Mansfield ISD has two distinct and almost contradictory interpretations. On one hand, the district is very high achieving, in almost every respect, when compared to the state. As such, the district has earned and maintained high ratings for many years. This is confirmation of the extensive and sophisticated systems to support high quality literacy and instruction in all district classrooms and affirms the systems and structures in place. On the other hand, however, there are definite weaknesses in how well the district is currently serving certain groups within its student population, particularly students of color, students of poverty, and students receiving special education services. For many students within these groups, opportunity gaps are clear, and their performance is not improving as they progress through the grades within the system. Although many of these students outperform peers from similar student groups across the state, within Mansfield ISD, they are not as successful as they should be—nor as they could be.

Mansfield ISD is a system dedicated to student success with amazing capacity and solid systems of instructional support. It is also a district that has not yet unlocked the secret of serving its most disadvantaged students effectively in every school. As noted previously, the necessary solution is as complex as the problem itself, but absolutely possible. If any school can do it, every school can do it. As Ron Edmonds, pioneer of effective schools research, said in the mid-70s, “We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do this. Whether we do it or not must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we have not done it so far.”
Why Equity and Access Matter

POVERTY | Diversity among students is a real strength. The highest performing districts are those that effectively engage all students in the learning process, acknowledging differences in perspectives, backgrounds, learning styles, beliefs, languages, and culture—all aspects that make a child who he or she is. Poverty and the impact of poverty (see Appendix E) have been evident for decades in the American education system, whether in public, charter, or even private schools. Poverty is a constant in our society; how we address and deal with it does not need to be. Students of poverty enter schools with a lower lexile range and with fewer academically beneficial experiences than students from more financially stable or affluent backgrounds. These key characteristics have tremendous impact on student learning, not due to innate capacity, but due to sheer content knowledge. The more a child knows, the more a foundation they have for attaching new learning. Some children have had very diverse and broad experiences prior to entering school, but these experiences have not focused on letters, the sounds they make, or numeracy skills. These differences in experiences lead some to perceive children from a deficiency mindset. This mindset can unconsciously affect expectations and beliefs about student potential that are in stark contrast to actual potential and that result in opportunity gaps. It may lead to students being referred to special education for behavioral issues when they are actually struggling with content, or a student not being identified as gifted and talented because he or she is not behaviorally compliant in the classroom.

CULTURE | Adding to the complexities related to poverty is the issue of culture. Students have a cultural lens, as all humans do. Culture is a broad concept that encompasses not only lived experiences and viewpoints, but also deeply held perspectives on spirituality, relationships, concepts of time, and even accessing and processing information. Culture impacts the way the human brain is wired.

In this section, the auditors look at the gaps, inequalities, and inequities that exist across schools, programs, and services. They then unpack the perceptions shared by students, parents, and district personnel about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, overall. The data and discussions are presented in the following findings, noted below.

Finding 1: Economic isolation at campuses contributes to lower student performance and is compromising the benefits of the district’s diversity.

In Finding 1, the auditors highlight the diversity that exists across the district. There is great variation, however, in how this diversity is apportioned to specific campuses, most notably economic. The auditors found economic isolation at several district campuses, particularly at elementary schools. These campuses have additional challenges and needs that other campuses do not. Poverty has a strong relationship with achievement in the district (see Focus Area 2), making economic isolation an issue of even greater import. The district, on average, enjoys a balance of diversity in ethnicity, economics, and languages.
Just under one-third of Mansfield ISD students (the largest student group identifiable by race/ethnicity) is Black/African American, at 31%; 30% of its students are White, and just over 26% are Hispanic/Latino. Just about 8% of Mansfield ISD students are Asian, and another 5% identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander, or Two or More Races. Just over 43.6% of the district’s students are economically disadvantaged, a far lower percentage than the state average of 58.8%. Despite the balance across ethnic groups and economic characteristics that exist district-wide, the schools do not reflect a similar balance.

Exhibit 3.2: Economic Disadvantage in Elementary Schools, 2019-20
The auditors found economic isolation in several elementary schools. Only one elementary school has a percentage of economically disadvantaged students that exactly matches the district average. All other schools either exceed or fall below the average (43.6%), some far above or below. Glenn Harmon Elementary School, in particular, has the highest percentage (86%) of economic disadvantage—almost twice the district average. The next highest percentage is 72%, at D.P. Morris and the Early Learning Academy, a gap of 14%. Seven of the 23 elementary schools have student populations of at least two-thirds economically disadvantaged students. Likewise, seven of the elementary schools are less than one-third economically disadvantaged, while only 15% of Daulton Elementary School’s population is economically disadvantaged.

Exhibit 3.3: Economic Disadvantage in Intermediate, Middle, and High Schools, 2019-20

The range in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at intermediate, middle, and high school campuses is also considerable; economic isolation exists in certain intermediate and secondary campuses, as well. Cross Timbers is the only intermediate school that has an economically disadvantaged population of almost two-thirds of its students. Della Icenhower Intermediate is close behind, with 58% economic disadvantage. Donna Shepard is the third intermediate school to exceed the district average percentage of economically disadvantaged students. Mary Lillard has only 22% of its students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, almost 15% less than the next highest percentages at Asa Low.

T.A. Howard Middle has the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students, at 66%, and Jerry Knight STEM Academy, a self-contained program on the Brooks Wester Middle School campus, has the lowest percentage of economically disadvantaged students, at 1%. Danny Jones Middle School has the next lowest percentage, at 22%. The high schools, where students don’t report as frequently their economic need, nevertheless have a great range in their percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Just under two-thirds of Summit High School’s students are economically disadvantage.
disadvantaged, while only one-fourth of Mansfield High's students are economically disadvantaged. Economic disadvantage is a strong correlate of lower test scores in Mansfield ISD (see Focus Area 2).

Comments regarding the schools’ reputations and boundary issues

The auditors heard comments from several stakeholders about the issues facing schools that are economically isolated. Parents and students noted negative perceptions of low income schools.

- “I want to pay attention to what is considered North Mansfield ISD. The students are excelling, but don’t feel as if they are included in the district.” (District Administrator)
- “When those opinions get formed, it’s hard to get past them. My children went to Timberview. Timberview’s nickname is Timberhood. That’s probably the only one racially based. Because Lake Ridge they call Fake Ridge. Summit—is Scummit.” (Parent)
- “It’s hard...knowing that the kids call each other these names. Timberview scores really well; my son got a great education—they have a fast track college program there, the early college high school. [But] that perception exists. And we are the feeder pattern...the “north” Mansfield, south Arlington feeder pattern. More people are inclined to take their kids out and put them somewhere else.” (Parent)

Others commented on the need to redraw boundaries in an effort to address issues of crowding and balance:

- “Like I said before, this is a pervasive community issue that bleeds into our schools. Our high school lines are drawn based on outdated, and frankly racist, ideologies. I grew up in this district. I graduated from this district. Nothing has changed and this all needs to be addressed. Certain high schools fare differently than others.” (Parent)
- “We need to redraw the boundaries. There are some campuses that are overcrowded and some that are half full. If you look at the district population map, you will see the student clusters across the schools.” (District Administrator)
- “We need to redistrict, but board members take a deep breath and no one wants to deal with it because of the anticipated community reaction and push back.” (District Administrator)
- “I am all for neighborhood schools, but I also think that it is important for kids to be able to interact with diverse populations.” (District Administrator)
- “It [re-zoning] is a difficult issue because nobody likes to change schools. It would mean losing peer group and friends. It is hard to have kids re-zoned in the academic core.” (Board Member)
- “I don’t think people understand that there are poor children in every school in Mansfield. Many teachers come from very privileged backgrounds. The negative comments against schools like SHS really bother me.” (Teacher)
FOCUS AREA 3

Key Takeaways for Focus Area 3, Finding 1

Diversity in Mansfield ISD, one of its greatest strengths, is not equally distributed. Poverty, as a significant correlate with student performance, nationally, is heavily concentrated in some schools but correspondingly light in others. This leaves certain campuses with far greater challenges than others and in need of more intensive and comprehensive supports. These campuses have the greatest opportunity gaps, as well, showing the reality of the need and the ineffectiveness of current initiatives.

Finding 2: The diversity of the student population in Mansfield ISD is not represented in its personnel.

Having the ethnic diversity of personnel reflect that of students has been shown to have positive effects on graduation rates, college attendance, and overall achievement of students of color. Having a diverse teaching and administrative staff also increases the likelihood of increasing cultural awareness and responsibility of teachers with their students. The auditors reviewed whether or not the ethnicity of district personnel reflected the diversity of the student population, first for the district as a whole, and then for specific campuses.

Some schools have better representation than others, but the auditors found no documented approach to assure that teachers and administrators more closely reflect the student population. District personnel had varying perceptions regarding the district’s commitment to diversity in its hiring practices, with strong disagreement that such a commitment is in place among personnel of color.

Exhibit 3.4: Gender and Ethnicity of Students Compared to Staff, 2019-20

Current ethnicity of staff across the district does not reflect the ethnicity of the student population. Overall, the percentage of males of color in administration and in the teacher cadre falls far below their percentage in the student population.

Source: TEA TSDS PEIMS Reports
FOCUS AREA 3

Females of color have slightly better representation; there is a higher percentage of Black/African American female campus administrators than the percentage of Black/African American females in the student population, but for every other group, the ethnic distribution of the district staff does not match that of the students.

The majority of staff at every level—faculty, campus administration, and central administration—in Mansfield ISD are White females.

Teacher Diversity

Exhibit 3.5: Changes in Students’ and Teachers’ Ethnicity Over Time, 2015-2020

Note: Scale for each group differs due to quantities represented. 
Source: TEA TSDS PEIMS Reports

Student diversity has changed slightly over the last five years. Both Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American student groups increased slightly while White students decreased. Asian students also increased, very slightly, while students of Two or More Races stayed at the same percentage.

In comparison, teacher diversity also increased slightly, with the exception of teachers of Two or More Races. The percentages of Black/African American teachers increased from 14.1% to 17.4% in 2019-20, and Hispanic/Latino teachers also increased from 8.9% in 2015-16 to 11.3% in 2019-20. However, these percentages still fall far short of reflecting these student groups’ enrollment in the district population.

The percentage of Asian teachers increased only slightly, and the number of White teachers decreased by 5.5%.

Overall, given the increase in diversity among students, there has been very little improvement in the diversity of the teacher cadre to more closely reflect the diversity of the student population.
Administrator Diversity

Exhibit 3.6: Changes in Campus and District Administrators’ Ethnicity Over Time, 2015-2020

The diversity of campus administrators has changed very little over the last five years, with all ethnic groups but White and Hispanic/Latino experiencing a decline. White campus administrators increased from 56.9% in 2015-16 to 58.8% in 2019-20, and Hispanic/Latino campus administrators increased just .1% (a tenth of one percent) over the same time period.

The diversity of central office administrators did improve for Black/African American administrators and those of Two or More Races. However, no Asian administrators were hired over the last five years, and the percentage of Hispanic/Latino central office administrators decreased from 8.8% to 5.9%, although Hispanic/Latino students increased their representation by 1.5%.

The percentage of central office administrators who identify as Two or More Races more than doubled, increasing from 2.2% to 5.9% over the five years.

Source: TEA TSDS PEIMS Reports
Although White students at every campus made up less than 15% of the total student population, White teachers made up more than 50% (well over 50%, on a few campuses) of the total teacher population. No campus had more than 25% of its total teachers who were Black/African American, and a few campuses had less than 6% of their teachers who were Black/African American. A few campuses, such as Morris and Jandrucko Early Learning Academy, had a much higher percentage of Hispanic/Latino teachers—almost matching the percentage of Hispanic/Latino students in the population at the Early Learning Academy. However, no school had a majority of its teachers who identified as representing minority ethnic populations.
In Exhibit 3.8, the color of the bar corresponds to that group’s representation among students and teachers at a specific school. It can be seen that at these five elementary schools with the highest percentages of economically disadvantaged students, there is no clear pattern in the degree to which teacher diversity reflects student diversity. Glenn Harmon has the highest percentage of Black/African American students, but also the highest percentage of White teachers. Kenneth Davis has the second-highest percentage of Black/African American students and also the second-highest percentage of White teachers, but also the highest percentage of Black/African American teachers (of these five schools). The Early Learning Academy has a teaching cadre that comes closest to reflecting the diversity of its students.
Exhibit 3.9: Diversity of Intermediate Schools

This exhibit shows the diversity of students compared to the diversity of the teachers in the intermediate schools across the district. The schools with the highest economic disadvantage have the highest percentage of minority teachers. However, Lillard Intermediate has the second-highest percentage of Black/African American students, but only about one-fourth of its teachers are minority.
The diversity of middle schools' student populations and teacher populations varies greatly. The two middle schools with the greatest percentage of economic disadvantage, and also the highest percentage of minority students, also have the highest percentage of Black/African American teachers. Linda Jobe and Rogene Worley Middle Schools have the highest percentage of Hispanic/Latino students, but no commensurate increase in Hispanic/Latino teachers. Linda Jobe has the second-lowest percentage of Hispanic/Latino teachers but the highest percentage of White teachers of all the middle schools, despite a student population that is over 58% minority.
Exhibit 3.11: Diversity of High Schools

No clear pattern is evident in the diversity of the teaching cadres at the high schools when compared to the diversity of their student populations. Some schools have teacher diversity that more closely reflects the student population, while others do not.

Exhibit 3.12: Diversity of Police and Athletics Departments

Although the district is 70% students of color, both the Police and the Athletics Departments have personnel that remain majority White, at 64% and 66%, respectively. Latino/Hispanic police and athletics personnel are the most under-represented in the district.
**FOCUS AREA 3**

**Student and Parent Perceptions of Diversity on Campuses**

Parents and students were asked to share perceptions regarding ethnic/racial representation at their campus.

**Exhibit 3.13: Parent Survey Responses Regarding Diversity of Campus Personnel**

Parents’ agreement with the statement that they see teachers and administrators who reflect their child’s ethnicity/race varies by race. White parents’ agreement with the statement was highest, at over 88%. Asian parents had the lowest agreement, at less than 45%, followed by parents of Two or More races, Hispanic/Latino, and Black/African American.

**Exhibit 3.14: Student Survey Responses Regarding Diversity of Campus Personnel**

As with parents, Asian students had the lowest agreement with the statement that they see teachers and administrators who look like them, with only 35% agreeing. Almost two-thirds of Asian students disagreed with the statement. Conversely, less than 5% of White students disagreed. One-third of all Hispanic/Latino students disagreed with the statement, while 28% of students of Two or More Races and 23% of Black/African American students disagreed.
Comments Regarding the Diversity of District Personnel

Parents and students commented on the lack of racial/ethnic diversity of teachers.

- “Our teaching staff is not the most diverse they can be, but they do a really great job of incorporating diversity. They do not let that influence their teaching in a way that is negative.” (Student)
- “Additionally, there is a lack of people of color as teachers. We don’t have black teachers representative of the minorities in our school.” (Student)
- “Finally, Willie Brown Elementary, Mary Orr Intermediate, Worley Middle School, and Mansfield High School do not have enough teachers that represent the student body. Multiple teacher applicants have said they applied, but didn't get the job, applied multiple times and will not apply again or didn't apply because they knew they would not get the job and will not work in that type of environment where they didn't feel included.” (Parent)
- “I think that it does make a difference if students feel that there isn’t diversity where they see themselves.” (Student)
- “I do feel that my school is not very diverse. Honestly I see more white teachers/faculty than I do any other race. If you truly want us to be trusting and accepting with things at school perhaps a change should take place. I mean no disrespect but I feel as if this needed to be said.” (Student)

There were also comments from administrators regarding a need for increased diversity.

- “Stop the ‘good ol’ boy’ system, stop nepotism, actively seek diversity and hire competent people.” (District Administrator)
- “The teaching staff does not align with the student population. Mansfield’s diversity has changed in terms of families, but the discriminatory beliefs of the parents/some staff members from the last district to be integrated are subtle but noticed.” (Campus Administrator)

A few students commented positively. One said, “I think there is a pretty good...diversity among staff.”

Others feel diversity among teachers is too great on their campus:

- “Staff is too diverse to the point it is disproportionate to the student population.” (Teacher)
Personnel Perceptions of Diversity

Exhibit 3.15: Teacher and Support Personnel Response to Statement Regarding Campus Diversity

Overall, 80% of teachers and campus-level support personnel who responded to the survey agree that their campus is racially diverse, but this percentage varies across the ethnicity of the respondents. White personnel had the highest agreement, at 86%. Those from All Other ethnic groups (American Indian, Pacific Islander, or others) had the lowest agreement, with almost 80% disagreeing that their campuses are racially diverse. Black/African American and Two or More Races personnel had 32% disagreeing that their campuses are racially diverse.
**District Commitment to Diversity in Personnel**

The auditors asked on the equity survey whether there is a system-wide commitment to equity and inclusion in its hiring and recruitment practices. This was done to determine if the diversity of school-level personnel is a result of a coordinated, system-wide effort to improve diversity at all levels or an idiosyncratic result of individual principals’ intent.

**Exhibit 3.16: Campus and District Administrator Perceptions Regarding District’s Commitment to Diversity**

The exhibit shows that administrators of color had considerably different perceptions of the district’s commitment to diversity in its hiring and recruitment practices. Over 60% of Black/African American administrators disagreed, and half of Hispanic/Latino and those of All Other ethnicities disagreed. Administrators of color had the highest disagreement overall that the district is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its hiring practices. White administrators had the highest level of agreement with the statement, at 80%.
FOCUS AREA 3

Personnel Comments on Hiring and Recruitment Practices

District personnel commented on the lack of diversity across campuses and the need to be more intentional about hiring diverse personnel:

- “There is mainly White teachers. [There are] not enough teachers of color.” (Support Personnel)
- “There is not a push for diversity or for the training.” (Teacher)
- “I do think they are forgetting diversity and inclusion—this is kind of the caboose of the district. We’ve not kept pace.” (Principal)
- “That’s an area we can grow in, hiring people that look like the kids.” (Principal)
- “I feel the staff needs to represent a more diverse population.” (Teacher)
- “If you look at our campuses. These schools do not mirror their children, at all. We have to be intentional about hiring teachers that look like their kids.” (Principal)
- “Issues [of equity] include diversity of staff and the way we structure the lessons we teach.” (District Administrator)

Others commented that diversity has improved on their campus:

- “I am starting to see more diversity on some campuses.” (Teacher of color, survey)

Exhibit 3.17: Campus and District Administrator Perceptions of Recruitment Practices

The district is effective at recruiting personnel with a high level of sensitivity for and experience with diversity.

Administrators’ response to this statement varied considerably across ethnic groups. Total disagreement with the statement was at one-third, but for Hispanic/Latino administrators it was 100%. Almost three-fourths of Black/African American administrators disagreed and about 38% of All Other ethnicities disagreed. One-fifth of White administrators disagreed with the statement.
Personnel Comments on Hiring and Recruitment Practices

The auditors also asked about hiring and recruiting practices. Although there are procedures governing recruitment, Human Resources provides a pool of eligible teacher applicants to principals, who then select from the “pool” to hire. Principals reported feeling that teacher recruitment is not finding applicants with a strong sensitivity for diversity and poverty issues.

- “I am just very intentional at looking at their background, no matter the color. Although I do want varied representation in my building.” (Principal)
- “I don’t think our current questions get at that [sensitivity for diversity]. I went to a job fair at a college. I had a conversation with a principal there and what we were looking for, but that was not part of the regular [recruiting] questions. My questions elicit the background perspectives [that the applicants have for diversity and Title I issues].” (Principal)
- “I make up my own questions for applicants. For recruiting, I don’t think our questions reflect what we need.” (Principal)
- “The hiring process can be based solely on diversity and not the skills of the applicant. Our teachers need more training on dealing with diversity in students and parents.” (Campus Administrator)

Other administrators commented on a shift away in recent years from hiring for diversity, specifically.

- “When I was a principal I was told, you need to hire a person of color. That was bothersome at the time, not because I didn’t see the need for a person of color, but I also wanted to hire the best person we can. So I kind of feel like we got away from that... and now over the past 10 years, we are back to saying things like, you need the whole package. You need a really strong employee, and if they are a person of color, that’s a bonus.” (District Administrator)
- “That’s a challenge, getting people of color to the table in the first place....We’ve gotten away from saying you HAVE to hire this person who is a specific ethnicity.” (District Administrator)

Comments about the lack of diversity and representation at central office:

- “We still lack a lot of Title I representation at central office.” (Principal)
- “Look at the district offices. There is definitely a lack of color there.” (Teacher)
- “I struggle when I look at the top, and it’s all the shiny pennies. It’s going to be hard with [my teachers] to listen to them—[teaching and learning] don’t’ represent the kids.” (Principal)
Personnel Comments on Hiring and Recruitment Practices (continued)

Comments about the lack of diversity and representation at central office (continued):

- “Three teachers with Dr. degrees that applied to the specialist positions didn’t even get interviews. Some of the people who got the job, they didn’t work in a MS before. I would like the district to do a lot better.” (Campus Administrator)
- “Some people have to interview, and some just get put into positions.” (Campus Administrator)
- “Clearly when we are interviewing we are looking for a skill set. And that skill set can present itself in different ways.” (District Administrator)
- “HR [human resources] doesn’t necessarily send us candidates (for hiring within central office), but they are responsible for posting the position and making sure that it is public and everyone is made aware of it.” (District Administrator)
- “I see the way our hiring practice is here, the last 5-10 hirings, we predicted who it would be. We kind of knew that. It’s very unfortunate; it’s very predictable. There are some very talented teachers out there, and they don’t feel like they’ve got a shot [to work at central office].” (Campus Administrator)
- “There have been multiple circumstances where I have seen inequitable practices in hiring and [in] staff relations across the campus and district.” (Campus Administrator)
- “Make Equitable hiring practices. Pay among Elementary and other level principals [is] not equitable.” (Campus Administrator)
- “I think leadership gets nervous when too many people of color are in positions of power.” (Campus Administrator)
- “The number of administrators, department chairs, or individuals that are given leadership positions are mainly Caucasian in my school.” (Teacher)

There were also comments from personnel who feel that hiring for diversity and hiring for a skillset are mutually exclusive. These comments included:

- “Select a person for experience not [for] color of their skin.” (District Administrator)
- “MISD is more interested in ethnic diversity than in hiring qualified employees.” (District Administrator)
- “Hire the best candidate, not just based on race.” (Teacher)
FOCUS AREA 3

Exhibit 3.18: Campus Administrator Perceptions of Support for Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Teachers

Responses were again highly variable across ethnic groups. The majority of administrators of color disagreed, while White campus administrators had a very low level of disagreement (less than 20%).

Exhibit 3.19: District Administrator Perceptions of District’s Effectiveness in Retaining and Supporting Teachers of Color

Less than 20% of White administrators disagreed with the statement, while all other district administrators from non-White ethnicities had between one-half (Black/African American) and two-thirds that disagreed with the statement.

The auditors heard and read several comments regarding perceived inequities in compensation of administrators in the district. They examined the salary schedule and determined that although there is a clear range for salary at specified steps, the criteria for assigning steps and for determining where along the range a person’s job would fall were not specified. Without clear criteria, assessing equity in compensation is not possible.

The auditors did examine compensation for campus principals by race/ethnicity. There was a wide range in the years of experience for all campus administrators. The information is presented in the following exhibit.
It can be seen in the exhibit that all high school principals receive almost the exact same compensation, although years of experience varied widely. Black/African American middle school principals were compensated at a higher rate than White principals, while White principals at elementary and intermediate schools had a higher rate of compensation than any principals of color. Again, there were differences in the rates of compensation, but the auditors were unable to determine if this is, in fact, an inequity. There was no apparent correlation between compensation and years of experience. There were comments made that indicate many personnel believe that such inequities in compensation exist. One principal commented, “They put him at the same level as other principals even though he’s brand new. He would probably tell you... there was a $10,000 gap in how much they were making...so there was a $20,000 disparity in the same people doing that job.” Others commented on the fact that administrators with advantageous skills, such as being bilingual, are not compensated at a higher rate than other administrators, even though their workload may be greater with translating and serving a community with more English learners.

**Key Takeaways for Focus Area 3, Finding 2**

*Mansfield ISD has been successful in attaining strong achievement for the majority of its students (see Focus Area 2), but gaps among certain student groups are not closing. Given that performance strongly corresponds with economic disadvantage on campuses, being intentional about hiring for sensitivity to and experience with diversity is a critical factor in assuring the district’s continued success with these populations. The auditors found that some schools have strong diversity and have leaders who have prioritized not only hiring for diversity that is reflective of their student population, but also hiring those who are sensitive to and have experience with working with diverse student populations. Such sensitivity is critical in assuring student success; understanding cultural and contextual diversity of students is foundational to building effective, mutually respectful relationships in classrooms. Greater consistency in assuring that all personnel in Mansfield ISD have the lens of cultural responsiveness will support increased student achievement.*
Finding 3: Identification of students for special programs and participation in AP is not proportional with students’ representation in the district population.

Ensuring equity means making sure that all students have equal access to programs and services. It also requires vigilance in making sure that certain students are not mistakenly identified as needing services that they actually don’t. In education, the most successful academic supports are always those that are provided within the regular classroom, for all students with all needs. There are some guidelines for this, but the more students can be in their regular classroom with a classroom teacher who provides the supports they need for success, the higher the achievement. There is also a need to assure that those who are economically disadvantaged are not inadvertently identified as special education or denied gifted or advanced programming, as is typically the case, nationally. This requires explicit intent within the system to use multiple means of identifying giftedness, including the use of local norms to evaluate achievement, rather than regional or national norms and using non-verbal means of assessing ability.

In Mansfield, despite the overall high level of achievement when compared to the state, identification of giftedness is low, overall, at 6.83% of the total district population identified. This is almost 1% lower than the state average. The identification of giftedness differs from actually being gifted—a student may be gifted even if not identified; likewise, there are students identified who are high achievers but not necessarily gifted. The reality is that intelligence and cognitive ability are fluid, not static, and both are responsive to intellectual stimuli (see Appendix F).
**FOCUS AREA 3**

**Identification of Students for Special Programs: Special Education**

**Exhibit 3.21: Special Education Identification by Ethnicity, 2015-2020**

Black/African American students are over-identified for special education services; the over-identification has decreased slightly over the last five years.

In 2019-20, Hispanic/Latino students are likewise over-identified for special education services; their over-identification has increased over the last five years.

Students of two or more races are now over-identified for special education, and White and Asian students are under-identified. Asian students, in particular, now are identified at a rate less than half what their enrollment suggests.

The auditors were unable to examine special education identification by gender and ethnicity; boys, however, are typically over-identified, and usually boys of color at greatly disproportionate rates. The identification of certain student race/ethnic groups for special education in Mansfield ISD is not proportional with their representation in the student population, and the disproportionality has persisted over time.

**Source:** TEA TSDS PEIMS Reports
FOCUS AREA 3

Comments Regarding the Special Education Identification Process

Teachers, principals, and administrators shared concerns about identification of students needing special education services and students whose needs are not being adequately met in the general education classroom. One comment reflected the perception that neither these students nor their teachers have adequate support in meeting their needs.

- “I know that our campus RtI Team has identified many SPED students who slipped through the cracks of previous campuses.” (Teacher)
- “Seems to be inconsistencies about qualifications into SPED, Dyslexia, and other special programs. How can we be equitable when different campuses and professionals have vastly different interpretations of data?” (Support Personnel)
- “SPED needs to work faster to identify problems that students have. It takes so long to get anything done and get them help.” (Support Personnel)
- “In my opinion, students are being put into a general education classroom setting without adequate support for the student and teacher. I feel as if it is difficult for them to be successful when almost a whole school year is wasted with the requirements of documentation, several ARDs, reviews, etc.” (Teacher)
- “Special Ed students are being placed into gen ed classrooms without the support they need to be successful. This is having an impact on the gen ed teacher’s ability to teach and the other students’ ability to learn, as well as the success and mental well-being of the special education student. Some students that are being placed in gen ed settings are not appropriate for them, and because there isn’t enough room in other self-contained programs, it is taking months to get them placed appropriately.” (Teacher)

Comments on Special Education Program Implementation

When asked specifically about special education services, the auditors learned that individual campuses have considerable latitude in how students are served. Although the district special education department has a vision for the desired type of program implementation, the reality varies greatly from campus to campus.

- “There are some campuses that say we are a total inclusion campus and we don’t do any pull-out.” (District Administrator)
- “We do have procedures. We do have a model for inclusion. We use the co-teach model. We call it co-teach but it’s not true co-teach. I think we would like to be there and have that type of co-teach model [consistently].” (District Administrator)

Others commented on a growing trend in the district of not keeping special education students on their home campus. One administrator said, “If I could change one thing today about special programs, it would be] keeping the kids on their home campus. We bus a lot. And we keep adding self-contained classrooms.” Added to this was the sense from administrators that special education students are not considered the primary responsibility of the general education teacher. “There is a mindset in MISD that SPED is still a SPED problem. They’re not general ed, first, they’re special ed kids, period.”
Concerns about special education were echoed by parents during interviews and on the survey. The following are comments from the survey:

- “MISD needs to do better regarding special education and parents not having to fight so hard to get the accommodations their children are legally entitled to.”

- “This district cares about the ‘gifted’ but not the ‘special needs.’ It is my opinion all have gifts and all have special needs. Let’s help them all when they need it, not just when the district thinks it will make them look good.”

- “I feel there is discrimination for students who qualify for special education services from either attending certain schools or participating in certain programs in MISD. The adults should not create more barriers to certain programs or schools because these students already have many obstacles they are already encountering. We should be building bridges, not walls for all students, regardless of the programs they qualify for!”

- “There should be more support for special education, extracurricular activities like dancing and drama or acting.”

Other parents were positive about their experiences with special education. One parent commented, “We have two special needs kids and have not experienced discrimination with our family. We feel supported 100% by their teachers, as well.”

**Gifted and Talented Programming, and AP and ACT/SAT Participation**

**Exhibit 3.22: GT Identification by Ethnicity, 2015-2020**

Students of color, with the exception of students of Two or More Races, are all under-identified for gifted and talented services. This under-identification has increased slightly for Hispanic/Latino students and decreased very slightly for African American/Black students over the last five years.

Students of Two or More Races, White, and Asian students are all over-identified for gifted and talented services. The rate of over-identification has increased for two of the three groups over the last five years.

The district has not improved the identification of its students of color over the last five years.
Exhibit 3.23: GT identification at Elementary Schools

The exhibit shows the six elementary schools with the highest percentages of economically disadvantaged students with their percentage of GT students, compared to the seven elementary schools with the lowest percentages of economically disadvantaged students and their percentage of GT students. Although the trend is not always consistent, the higher the economic disadvantage of a campus, the lower the percentage of GT students identified at that campus. Research shows that giftedness is just as present in high poverty schools as in low poverty schools; the identification of those students is the problem.
FOCUS AREA 3

Exhibit 3.24: Highest % GT Elementary Schools: Ethnicity and Economic Disadvantage

The four elementary schools with the highest percentage of GT students also happen to be schools with the lowest percentage of economically disadvantaged students. The district averages for GT and Eco. Dis., as well as for ethnic representation, are presented on the far right of the chart. As can be seen, only Daulton Elementary has ethnic representation in its GT program that most closely reflects the district’s ethnic representation. At the other three campuses, White students are heavily over-identified.

Exhibit 3.25: Intermediate and Middle School GT and Economic Disadvantage

In general, higher economic disadvantage schools have a lower percentage of GT students identified. Likewise, the lowest economic disadvantage intermediate and middle schools have higher percentages of gifted and talented students. There are some exceptions; Cross Timbers has a fairly high percentage identified given the high percentage of economically disadvantaged students on the campus.
FOCUS AREA 3

Exhibit 3.26: GT and Special Education Enrollment at High Schools Compared with Special Education Enrollment

The exhibit shows that for the five main high schools there is a relationship between the percentage of students identified for gifted and talented programming and the percentage of economic disadvantage on that campus. There is also a relationship between economic disadvantage and the identification of students for special education services.

STEM Middle and High School Enrollment

The auditors also looked at the enrollment at Frontier High School, the STEM high school, and at the Jerry Knight STEM Academy. Students must apply to and meet certain criteria to be enrolled at Frontier. The student enrollment information, by race/ethnicity, is presented in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 3.27: Student Enrollment at Frontier STEM High School by Race/Ethnicity

As can be seen in the chart, enrollment at the school has been disproportional for the last three years, although the disproportionality has decreased over time. White students have represented the largest group at the school, but by 2019, Black/African American students and White students were both slightly over-represented, as are Asian students. Hispanic/Latino students remain under-represented, as are students of Two or More Races.
As can be seen in the exhibit, the middle school STEM academy is a majority White student population, with 13% more White students than are represented in the total district. Black/African American students represent just over 30% of the student population in the district, but only 20% of the STEM academy. Hispanic/Latino students represent 27% of the district’s enrollment, but 18% of the students enrolled at Jerry Knight. Asian students represent just over 7% of the district’s enrollment, but 14% of the STEM academy’s enrollment. There are no ELL students enrolled, and the percentage of economically disadvantaged is at 16%. Over 44% of the district’s student population is economically disadvantaged. Students of poverty and students of color do not have equal access to the STEM academy programming.

**Advanced Placement and ACT/SAT Participation**

Advanced Placement courses are another form of advanced academics. Although Advanced Placement (AP©) is not specifically intended to be a gifted program, it provides college-level coursework that can transfer with the student to a higher learning institution of their choice. These courses are accelerated; the intent is to teach more content in less time, as students would experience in college. AP© participation in Mansfield ISD begins at the Intermediate level, with Pre-AP© courses. The auditors did not receive any data concerning Pre-AP© enrollment, but were informed that there is no formal process for referring students to Pre-AP©. Instead, students and parents may self-select, but teacher input in this process is vital.
Although AP® participation is technically voluntary, teacher support and encouragement are vital for traditionally underperforming student groups. Overall AP® participation has increased slightly for all groups from 2015 to 2019. However, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students have the lowest rates of participation all five years.

Mansfield student participation in taking college entrance exams varies considerably across ethnic groups. Participation for most groups has decreased very slightly over time, although the rate of participation across the state has increased slightly. Participation in taking the exams is fairly consistent across groups, except for Hispanic/Latino students, who have a considerably lower rate of participation. Asian students have the highest rate of participation.
**District Personnel Responses Regarding Special Education and Gifted/Advanced Academics Identification**

Given the inequitable identification of students for GT and SPED, and the uneven participation rates across student groups in AP© and ACT/SAT exams, the auditors asked district stakeholders about the equity and effectiveness of the identification of these students on the equity survey. The responses from two key groups, teachers and campus-based personnel and administrators and district support personnel are presented in the following exhibits.

**Exhibit 3.31: Campus-based Personnel Perceptions of Equity in Identification for Special Programs**

Agreement with this statement varied considerably across teacher and support personnel ethnic groups. Over two-thirds of White, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino teachers and campus support personnel agreed, and all Native American members agreed. Agreement of Black/African American teachers and support personnel was at just one-third, and half for those of Two or More Races. For those whose race/ethnicity is unknown, less than 45% agreed.
FOCUS AREA 3

Exhibit 3.32: Administrator and District Support Personnel Perceptions of Equity of Identification for Special Programs

Variation in agreement was also high among district-level support personnel, district administrators, and campus administrators. Agreement of White and Hispanic/Latino members of these groups was not quite as high as with campus personnel, at under two-thirds. Again, Black/African American had the highest levels of disagreement with the statement that identification for special programs is equitable and effective, at 69%. Almost 43% of All Other races disagreed with the statement.

Personnel Comments Regarding Identification for Special Programs

Multiple comments were made regarding inequities in identifying students for special education services or for the gifted and talented program.

Comments about special education indicated a belief that students of color are over-identified for various reasons.

- “The lack of diversity amongst teaching staffs contributes to minority students being labeled.” (Principal)
- “I think black males are disproportionately labeled as special education when they simply have behavioral problems.” (District Administrator)
- “This is simply the means by which the district is segregating students based on access and education level within the familial setting. These programs have served to exclude students rather than their stated goals.” (District Administrator)
- “Black male students are more likely to be tested and placed in SPED and less likely to be placed in GT programs in our district.” (Teacher)
- “[There are] way too many kids being put in SPED that really don’t need it.” (Teacher)
FOCUS AREA 3

Personnel Comments Regarding Identification for Special Programs (continued)

Regarding practices for identifying students for gifted programming, even more comments were made, indicating a belief that such practices aren’t equitable.

- “When I taught Prep-AP and AP, the diversity was not always present in my classroom.”  
  (District Administrator)
- “GT identification is lacking. Not all kids are gifted academically. Some are gifted in the arts, and our testing process does not take this into account.”  
  (Teacher)
- “Students really only receive the identification in early childhood and are never reevaluated.”  
  (Teacher)
- “Mansfield ISD has a lot of diversity in the student population, but not a lot of diversity in advanced classes and academic opportunities.”  
  (District Administrator)
- “When I taught Prep-AP and AP, the diversity was not always present in my classroom.”  
  (District Administrator)
- “It is almost impossible to get students identified anything anymore, except SPED. Systematic bias, generational inequality affect this area.”  
  (Teacher)
- “There is not enough effort made to reach out to low income and ELL families to identify their children for GT programs. Spanish-speaking families are under-identified.”  
  (Teacher)
- “Gifted kids are overlooked; special ed labels are too often handed out to kids who don’t want to work.”  
  (Teacher)
- “Some students are not identified because of language or attention issues.”  
  (Teacher)
- “Students of color are not provided the same push for Advanced Placement classes and Pre-Ap because the teacher has no interest in finding those students or pushing them into those classes. This occurs because some teachers do not build quality relationships with students of color. Students of color are pushed to stay in special education, have low expectations, and are not provided the same push to exit programs as their white peers. This is problematic across the district at all levels.”  
  (Teacher)
- “The process for identification of gifted students is only limited to IQ scores. It does not take into account musical, artistic, or athletic talents. Mansfield ISD’s GT assessment does not test the area of creativity. Many students of color who are likely GT in that area are overlooked and underserviced, as a result.”  
  (Teacher)
- “The gifted and talented program is not diverse. Students that transfer in from other districts are not accepted into MISD’s GT program, which decreases the number of African American students in the program.”  
  (Teacher)
FOCUS AREA 3

Personnel Comments Regarding Identification for Special Programs (continued)

- “I have some concerns on acceptance into the STEM Academy. There are populations of students who are not gaining access into the STEM Academy.” (Teacher)
- “GT is often forgotten or a throw-together.” (Support Personnel)
- “The GT ‘survey’ is very complex. It requires parents to provide specific examples for lots of situations, which is hard to do in the time frame requested.” (Support Personnel)
- “Low SES populations are under-represented in GT.” (Teacher)

One support person commented on the positive, “It’s getting better at identifying minority sub pops with GT characteristics,” and a few others reported finding the process to be equitable. However, as the survey responses indicate, there was low agreement among personnel of color that the processes for identifying students for special education or gifted and talented services are equitable and effective.

Key Takeaways for Focus Area 3, Finding 3

In summary, the identification of students for advanced or gifted programming and for special education services is not purely objective. If so, the identification of students for these programs would be proportional to their enrollment in the total student population. Disproportionality indicates problems or issues in the identification processes themselves, rooted in misunderstandings or biases that may be unconscious on the part of educators.
Finding 4: The rates at which students drop out, are retained, or are disciplined, when examined by race/ethnicity, gender, and student group, are not proportional. Financial allocations to schools are not clearly linked to level of need.

Examining rates at which students drop out, are retained, or are disciplined can reveal if certain groups are experiencing more gaps or problems than their representation in the student population suggests. For example, if a group of economically disadvantaged students represents 40% of the district population, than no more than 40% of students who are retained should be economically disadvantaged. The data for dropout, retention, and disciplinary rates were analyzed in this finding, along with the financial allocations for individual campuses.

**Dropout Rates by Ethnicity and High School**

One indicator of the success of any student group is the rate at which they stay in school. Dropout rates in Mansfield ISD are low relative to the state but vary widely across high school campuses and student groups. Dropout data are presented in **Exhibits 3.33 and 3.34**.

**Exhibit 3.33: High School Dropout Rates by Ethnicity, 2017-18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Black/African American</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Amer. Indian</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Eco Dis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summit High School</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timberview High School</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacy High School</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Ridge High School</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield High School</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TEA TSDS PEIMS Reports

Legacy High School has the highest dropout rates for Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, and students of Two or More Races; the rate for American Indian students at Legacy and Lake Ridge is more than eight times the district average rate.
Exhibit 3.34: High School Dropout Rates by Characteristic/Special Populations, 2017-18

Dropout rates for economically disadvantaged and ELL students are highest at Legacy High School, and for special education students at Summit and Mansfield High Schools. Timberview had the lowest dropout rates for these student groups, overall. In almost all cases, economically disadvantaged students drop out at a rate higher than the district average; the exception is Mansfield High School, which also has the lowest percentage of economically disadvantaged students.
Retention Data

Exhibit 3.35: Retention Rates by Student Ethnic Groups, 2018-19

White and Asian students and students of Two or More Races are all retained at rates lower than the district average (1.9%).

Black/African American students are retained at the same rate (1.9%), but Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students are all retained at rates higher than the district average.

American Indian/Alaskan Native students are twice as likely to be retained as any of their peers.

Exhibit 3.36: Retention Rates by Program and Characteristic, 2018-19

Students who are identified for special education, ESL, or are classified as being at-risk or homeless are more likely to be retained. The rate of retention for homeless students is three times the district average. At-risk students’ rate of retention is almost twice the average, and students receiving special education services are retained at a rate just over twice the district average. GT students and bilingual students are retained at rates below the district average.
There is great disproportionality in retention rates when examined by economic status and gender.

Males are more likely to be retained than females; 2.3% of males are retained compared to 1.4% of females. The district average (all grades) is 1.9%.

Students who are economically disadvantaged are retained at a rate three times that of the rate for students who are not economically disadvantaged, suggesting that these students are experiencing far less academic success than their non-economically disadvantaged peers.

### Disciplinary Action Data

Disciplinary actions are subject to human perception and action, as well. Since disciplinary actions can result in being excluded from the classroom, the impact of these measures is profound. Research has shown a long-established correlation between suspension and dropping out of school, and an even stronger correlation between dropping out and being in the prison system. This research calls the relationship the “school to prison pipeline,” the connection is so great. Financially, in most states it costs less than $10,000 per year to educate a child, but over $30,000 (sometimes $60,000) a year to incarcerate them.

Exhibits 3.38 and 3.39 present the disciplinary infraction data by ethnicity and student group.

### Exhibit 3.38: Rates of Disciplinary Infractions by Ethnicity, Compared to District Average, 2017-18

African Americans have the highest rates of suspension or being assigned to an alternative program. All ethnic groups receive disciplinary measures at rates below the district average except for Black/African American students.

Black/African American students are disciplined at rates over 40% higher than the district average.
Exhibit 3.39: Rates of Disciplinary Infractions by Student Group and Gender, Compared to District Average, 2017-18

Males are suspended at a rate twice that of females and almost 25% more than the district average.

Special education, economically disadvantaged, and students classified as at-risk are disciplined at higher rates than the regular population; at-risk students have the highest rates of all student groups.

The most frequent violation for which students are disciplined is “violation of the code of conduct.” This non-specific category can include disrespect—an action that is rooted in cultural values and perspectives.

Exhibit 3.40: Student Assignment to DAEP by Ethnicity, 2015-2020

Students’ assignment to DAEP is disproportional with their overall representation in the student body. Black/African American students’ assignment is the most disproportional; they are over-represented every year, at a rate at least 1.5 times their enrollment.
As seen in the exhibit, Black/African American females represent just under 30% of all females in the district, but they represent almost 50% of all females assigned to DAEP. Hispanic/Latina females are also over-represented among females who are assigned to DAEP; they represent just over one-fourth of all females in the district, but over 30% of all females assigned to the DAEP program.
**FOCUS AREA 3**

Perceptions of District Personnel Concerning Behavioral Expectations and Discipline

In light of the disproportionalities evident in disciplinary actions, the auditors asked district stakeholder groups about their perceptions of the fairness and consistency of expectations for student behavior. These are reported in the following exhibits.

**Exhibit 3.42: Teacher and Campus Support Personnel Perceptions of Expectations for Student Behavior**

![Bar chart showing perceptions of expectations for student behavior across different racial groups.]

Just under 50% of Black/African American campus personnel disagreed with the statement that personnel at their school have consistent and fair expectations for student behavior, while only 17% of White campus-level personnel disagreed with the statement. Teachers who identify as Two or More Races or a less-common or unknown race/ethnicity had the next highest level of disagreement: over one-third for All Other ethnic groups and over one-fourth of Two or More Races. Asian and Hispanic/Latino had the lowest levels of disagreement with the statement. These two groups also have the most proportional or under-represented rates of discipline of all ethnic groups.

**Exhibit 3.43: Campus Administrator Perceptions of Fairness and Consistency of Expectations for Student Behavior**

![Bar chart showing perceptions of fairness and consistency across different racial groups.]

It is evident that there is wide variation in agreement that personnel have consistent and fair expectations for students. Over one-third of Black/African American campus administrators disagree with this statement, while Hispanic/Latino and All Other groups agree 100%. Just over 10% of White campus administrators disagreed with the statement.
Personnel Comments on Disciplinary Actions

Many comments from all stakeholder groups regarding inconsistencies in disciplinary actions and expectations were made during interviews and on surveys. Comments examined along ethnic lines revealed differences in perception. Comments about inconsistencies included:

- “I have seen black students disproportionately punished or identified for having problematic behaviors. We need to address that black students may respond differently in certain situations, but it is not always a show of disrespect.” (Teacher)
- “There is a difference on how students of different ethnicities are taught/treated.” (Teacher)
- “A student’s discipline depends on their race. I believe this is wrong.” (Teacher)
- “Our curriculum and discipline practices need to be audited on every campus.” (Teacher)

The following were comments noting the challenges inherent in applying discipline consistently in diverse school settings:

- “Student behavior is often excused or not appropriately addressed because teachers and/or administrators want to avoid conflict with parents. Sometimes parents accuse staff of having biases when they are contacted about misbehavior issues, even if a class is 50% children of color who never have problems.” (Teacher)
- “I believe most have consistent and fair expectations. Although I have heard our assistant principal say that our White teachers do not know how to teach Black male children. This is disturbing because it seems like she wants us to have a lower behavior and academic expectation for our Black students. This wouldn’t seem to benefit anyone who we would like to succeed in the world today.” (Teacher)
"Student and Parent Perceptions of Fairness, Disciplinary Actions, Safety, and Bullying"

Exhibit 3.44: Student Perceptions of Fairness and Conflict Resolution Guidance

Agreement with the statement about fairness was just under two-thirds. Over one-third of all students disagreed that discipline at their high school is fair. For intermediate or middle school students, disagreement was lower, at just over 21%.

The question regarding a process for resolving conflict was only offered to high school students. Exactly 30% stated there is no process for resolving conflict.

Exhibit 3.45: Parent Perceptions of Fairness in Discipline Practices and Procedures

The exhibit shows that parents of color have the lowest agreement that discipline policies and practices at their child’s school are fair. Just over half (54%) of Black/African American parents agreed with the statement, 13% disagreed, and one-third didn’t know. Native American parents had a similar percentage that reported not knowing, and a slightly higher percentage that agreed. White and Asian parents had the highest agreement, at 76% and 79% agreement, respectively. Parents of two or more races had the highest percentage of disagreement with the statement, with 16% disagreeing.

Perceptions of fairness in disciplinary practices and procedures varied somewhat along racial/ethnic lines for parents, although they did not for students."
**Financial Allocations: Schools**

Using Texas Education Agency data regarding individual school budgeting, the auditors determined per-pupil allocation by campuses when special education allocations are excluded. Special education program allocations were excluded because funds follow students, so if an individual campus has a specific program on their campus that serves a specific population of students from multiple campuses, this can skew the financial allocation data considerably—in some cases, by over $2,000 per student. In analyzing the data, the auditors sought to determine if a pattern exists in how funds are allocated to schools when they are grouped according to need (based on economic disadvantage at each campus). Economic disadvantage is not the only need that should drive the allocation of funds, but the district has no clear process for allocating funds by specific programs such as these. It was reported that this allocation is left to the directors over these programs. **Exhibit 3.46** shows for each school in the district (for which data were available) the per pupil funding the school received and the percentage of economic disadvantage on that campus. Although the auditors do not expect to find equal allocation, they do expect to find intent behind unequal allocations.

**Exhibit 3.46: Total Per Student Expenditures by Campus, Excluding SPED Funds, 2018-19**

The graph does not include Frontier High School (per pupil allocations of $40K+) and The Phoenix Academy, since allocations for those programs are skewed. It can be seen from **Exhibit 3.46** that while the 10 elementary campuses with the greatest economic need, on average, have a slightly higher average allocation, this is not consistently true. Glenn Harmon (far left), whose percentage of
economically disadvantaged students exceeds the level of financial allocation on the chart, has the highest need. This school has an allocation below that of other schools with less need. Accordingly, some elementary schools with less need in the economic status of their population have some of the highest allocation of funds. Elementary campuses receive the greatest funding of all the grade spans. The auditors found no clear trend that funds follow need with intentionality behind the differences in allocation.

*Perceptions of Funding Equity*

**Exhibit 3.47: District Personnel Perceptions Concerning District Support for Most Disadvantaged Students**

District personnel responded to the statement that the district adequately supports the needs of its most disadvantaged students. One fourth of campus teachers and support personnel disagreed with the statement that the district adequately supports the needs of their most disadvantaged students. However, disagreement was even higher among administrators, with one-third of campus administrators and over 38% of district administrators disagreeing that the district adequately supports its most disadvantaged students. There is a need for greater clarity and direction in how funds should be and are allocated to level the playing field for the neediest students.
Personnel Comments Regarding District Support for Disadvantaged Students

Many comments made during interviews and on the survey revealed concerns regarding whether or not the district diverts additional resources to areas of greater need, a tenet of assuring equity. The budget process has no clear guidelines for weighting allocations; individual departments at the central office decide how much to allocate to campuses. Schools with the greatest need, based on economic disadvantage, language proficiency, and other factors, are not receiving more funding than other campuses with less need. Comments regarding the distribution of resources included the following:

- “This district often caters to only one race, unfortunately; here, my skin color does not matter.” (Teacher)
- “There are little to no crisis counselors, dyslexia help, etc., [for our neediest campuses].” (District Administrator)
- “The funds are often misallocated and not used in an efficient or effective manner.” (District Administrator)
- “Technology has been really difficult to obtain, which obviously affects the disadvantaged students the most.” (Teacher)
- “I think Title 1 and virtual students should have had access to technology before other more affluent schools. It should have been on a need basis moreso than if you want a school device, come and get one.” (Teacher)
- “Our dual language department has been understaffed, which makes it difficult to effectively meet the needs of our English Language Learners.” (Teacher)
- Does the district adequately support the areas of greatest need? “ABSOLUTELY NOT! MISD supports the students who live ‘on the right side of the district.’” (Teacher)
- “More staffing [is] needed to assist disadvantaged students.” (Teacher)
- “As someone who works with disadvantaged students, I do agree with this statement (that the district allocates resources to areas of greater need).” (Teacher)
- “Our district supports needs when the district seeks out who is in need. The district frequently is not seeking out that information, though.” (Teacher)
- “Our wealthy schools have way more resources.” (Teacher)
- “Not in all cases [do disadvantaged students receive adequate support].” (Teacher)
- “At my school, we have a lot of resources. However, I know it’s not this way everywhere.” (Teacher)
Key Takeaways for Focus Area 3, Finding 4

The teaching and learning experience for students in Mansfield ISD varies considerably when examined by race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage, and gender. Students of color are far more likely to drop out, be retained, or receive a disciplinary action. Behavioral expectations are not consistent and are subject to the cultural lens of the personnel implementing them. There is no clear direction in the district for assuring that funds follow and address need. No formulas are in place beyond per-campus allocation of staffing that take into account the specific and varied needs of campuses.

Cultural Lens: Understanding One Another

To better understand issues of bias and discrimination, it is important to keep two key elements in mind. The first is the cultural lens that each of us possesses. The second is that unity is never to be equated with uniformity. Cultural lens is the lens through which we perceive the world around us, and it is irrevocably impacted by our own lived experiences, values, and system of beliefs. This includes elements of our background that may be beyond our awareness; yet they color how we perceive the actions of others and even how we learn and process information. Cultural norms go as deep as the roots of an ancient oak tree and can be just as far-reaching and invisible to the eye.

The second element is just as critical. While we all possess our personal “cultural lens” that filters how we perceive the world around us, we cannot deny that each person’s own lens is just that: their own. It is as irrevocably tied to their own personal culture, experiences, and values as ours is to us. There will be fundamental differences in our lenses and there should be – this is the quintessential beauty of the diversity of the human race. We are all different in these critical respects, yet so similar in others. Since we are all fundamentally unique, there cannot be (and should never be) uniformity. To be uniform is to be intolerant of differences, to erase what makes us unique and individual. There is always an “average,” but there is nothing that is completely uniform. Variation is at the core of the human condition. Unity can and does exist within variation: a sense of cooperation and coordination that seeks to appreciate common goals and ideals that still allows for differences in other areas. Unity is to be valued and promoted, but uniformity must be avoided. Total uniformity despises “otherness” and devalues human uniqueness. With unity, variation and difference can co-exist with shared purpose, goals, and even values. Unity does not assign a value of good or bad to differences – differences simple are. Unity also recognizes that from differences come diverse perspectives with the potential to enrich interactions and better attain goals in ways that might not otherwise occur.
Finding 1: Organizationally, the Mansfield Independent School District has adopted cultural blindness in addressing issues of bias and discrimination. Issues related to equity and discrimination are not openly discussed, nor have there been any comprehensive initiatives to train personnel and students in understanding diversity and culture. The need for training and improved understanding has resulted in a school climate that is uncomfortable for some students and actively hostile for others.

In Mansfield ISD, a strong ethic of caring was communicated by district stakeholders. This ethic is evident in high student achievement, strong parental support across the district, and in the comments and commitments made by school leaders every day. It is evident in the emphasis given by multiple teachers, principals, and administrators to the building of strong relationships in every district classroom. This ethic of caring is characterized in Mansfield ISD by a number of stakeholders from every group, as existing separately from culture, identity, and race. There is the perception that one doesn’t need to “see” race, to “see” culture or ethnicity; that those elements of students and their families are not germane to the business of teaching and learning. There is a central message in Mansfield ISD that student achievement and the business of teaching and learning exist separately from race, from culture, and from systems of belief. In an ideal world, such a view would be valid, since it would greatly simplify the teaching and learning process. However, what we now know is that learning is a fundamental cognitive process that is as firmly rooted in culture as it is in physiological health and well-being. Race and culture are part of human identity that one cannot separate from the learning process. Therefore, through the act of denying the relevance of culture and personal experiences and all that is related, there is an increase in the perception of otherness, of difference,
and an increase in the sense of separation from those whose backgrounds, values, beliefs, and experiences differ most from our own. It validates suspicion and fear and undermines our own sense of security in what we value and connect with, since it fundamentally invalidates the very idea of culture and diversity.

The auditors made online surveys available to all district groups, including parents, students in grades 5-12, teachers, campus-based support personnel, district-level support personnel, and all administrators. With these surveys, the auditors sought information regarding representative perceptions of bias, diversity, and inclusion. The auditors found that the district is characterized as tolerating diversity, but not understanding or accepting it, let alone embracing it. Diversity is acknowledged, even noted as a strength, but is fundamentally not celebrated as an integral part of everyday business. The discrepancies across ethnic groups regarding how district personnel perceive discrimination and bias within the district are great, and representatives of all stakeholder groups report feeling that certain students are excluded or marginalized across multiple campuses. High percentages of students report experiencing discrimination, harassment, and a fundamental lack of acceptance for who they are.

**Belonging, Acceptance, and Safety at School**

Research is clear that students who feel that they belong at school and that they are accepted there have higher achievement. Feeling safe at school is also critical to creating a learning environment where students feel affirmed and able to take risks. When students do not feel safe, their cognitive functioning is impaired. Strong, caring relationships help students feel safe at school and create environments most conducive to learning. The auditors asked students and parents about perceptions of belonging, acceptance, and safety at school.

**Exhibit 4.1: Students’ and Parents’ Perceptions of Belonging and Acceptance at School**

This exhibit shows that over 30% of high school students who responded to the survey reported not feeling safe at school, and 20% of intermediate and middle school students. When asked if they feel accepted for who they are at school, agreement was somewhat higher for high school students;
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74% reported feeling accepted and the same percentage, 20%, of intermediate and middle school students agreed that they feel accepted for who they are at school. However, one in four of all high school students neither feel accepted nor that they belong at school. One in five middle school and intermediate school students feel the same.

Student Comments on Feeling Accepted or Safe

Students commented on the survey regarding their feelings of being accepted or not accepted at their school. Comments from student who do not feel accepted, by students or by teachers, included:

- “I have been told my counselor is specifically for academic purposes instead of personal reasons. At my old school (Mansfield High) I was able to talk to my counselor when I had anxiety attacks. But when I got to Legacy, I did not have that safe place to get myself together. I felt that there was no safe place for me.” (Student)
- “Teachers need to be more inclusive and trained how to be more accepting and respectful of different students. As an online student I feel as though I am disadvantaged despite putting my best foot forward. I don’t feel accepted by my teachers.” (Student)
- “Many are accepting of different races and backgrounds, but not very accepting of other’s sexuality etc.” (Student)
- “I left my middle school because I didn’t like I felt included.” (Student)
- “People are not very accepting of different religious beliefs.” (Student)
- “I have never once had a teacher confirm or ask for pronouns or anything of the sort at school, it may seem extra but I think as the world is changing and more people are learning how to express themselves it’s important to slowly try and normalize these kind of things and educate students on simple things such as pronouns so people don’t feel singled out. Obviously not everyone is as accepting to new things they don’t understand yet, but I think some sort of steps are necessary in order for students to feel like school is a place they are comfortable in.” (Student)
- “Throughout the school I feel as though people of different backgrounds that are not predominantly white are not as accepted or [are] silently discriminated against.” (Student)
- “Teach students to be accepting.” (Student)

Several students had very positive things to say about the acceptance they experience at school:

- “I think that Summit is very accepting towards everyone.” (Student)
- “I have talked about my sexuality in an assignment before and felt accepted by my teacher.” (Student)
Parents were also asked if their child feels engaged and connected at school.

**Exhibit 4.2: Parents’ Perception of Their Child’s Engagement at School**

This exhibit shows that parents have slightly higher agreement that their children feel engaged and connected at school, with Asian, White, and Parents of Two or More Races having the highest agreement (92%, 84%, and 84% respectively). American Indian parents had the lowest agreement, at 76%, with 10% reporting they don’t know, and 78% each of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino parents agreed. When asked if their child feels accepted for who he/she is at school, agreement was higher. These responses are presented in the following exhibit.

**Exhibit 4.3: Parents’ Perception of their Child’s Feeling Accepted at School**

Parents had slightly more responses indicating they didn’t know if their child feels accepted for who he/she is at school, with almost 8% of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and parents of Two or More Races reporting they don’t know. Over 80% of all groups agreed with the statement, and about ten percent of each group reported disagreeing. Fewer Asian and American Indian parents disagreed; just 7% and 5%, respectively, of these parents disagreed.
The auditors then asked students if they feel safe at school.

**Exhibit 4.4: Student Perceptions of Safety at School**

Roughly one-fourth of high school students and just over 14% of intermediate/middle school students report not feeling safe at school. Many comments were made about harassment at high school campuses, with common mention of harassment of students who are LGBTQ, who are newcomers from other countries, who are overweight, or who have learning difficulties. Harassment was described as occurring for any number of reasons, with the same negative impact on the victim. Students who do not feel safe at school, physically and emotionally, will have increased challenges in multiple areas. This is not limited to a negative impact on learning. Students’ perceptions of safety at school varied across grade levels.
Experiences with Bullying, Discrimination, and Racism

The auditors also asked students, parents, and personnel about their experiences with bullying and discrimination. A high percentage of respondents affirmed having experienced both. Responses to questions about bullying are presented in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 4.5: Bullying as Reported by Intermediate, Middle, High School Students and Parents

Bullying was reported by just under one-third of parents, but by over 36% of high school students and 31% of intermediate/middle school students.

Exhibit 4.6: Perceptions Concerning Bullying Issues Being Addressed

When asked if bullying is dealt with effectively, there were again varying perceptions. Parents reported a high degree of uncertainty. Over one-third reported simply not knowing if bullying issues, when reported, are dealt with quickly and effectively. Just over 15% disagreed that it is. In contrast, almost 47% of high school students reported that bullying is not dealt with quickly and effectively on their campus.
“Bullying is brushed off especially in pre-k and kindergarten. My daughter has experienced bullying both in prek and now in kindergarten. I have seen bullying in person when volunteering and teachers just respond with raised voice, ‘get in line, and we will talk in the classroom’. I don’t like the fact that the child that is bullied gets moved around in class instead of the one that is the bully.” (Parent, survey)

Parent Comments Regarding Bullying

Following are other comments from parents who shared their concerns and experiences related to bullying:

- “My daughter has been harassed by several ethnicities for several years in school here. She, along with a small group of her peers, were also bullied at a school dance and there was very little supervision going on that evening. We will not be attending any dances in the future.”
- “[Our Intermediate School] is terrible with handling bullying, while other schools have a better approach.”
- “The administration has not been supportive of concerns regarding bullying. Regarding the lack of attention that is being given. But they are worn out by having so many expectations so high. They can barely reach them.”
- “The administration is setting a precedent that bullying due to political beliefs is okay and will go unaddressed. Multiple times my child has expressed concern for her safety by supporters of certain political parties. Rumors have been spread regarding supporters of a particular party and what will happen regarding election results. Those all went basically unaddressed.”
- “My straight child has not been bullied but has witnessed bullying by students and teachers of her transgender friends. This bullying has not stopped.”
- “My child was bullied once and he defended himself and both were punished, and I don’t believe that is the correct way to handle a situation like that.”
- “My son was bullied, and while it was dealt with, my son had to stop using the bus to get to school, because the bully was still able to ride the bus and harass my son. It was never ending, so I had to take action to get it to end, not the school.”
The auditors then asked students and parents about their experiences with discrimination. The following exhibits present their responses.

**Exhibit 4.7: Students’ Perceptions of Discrimination or Bias**

![Graph showing student experiences with discrimination or bias]

At high school, over 42% of students who responded to the survey report having experienced discrimination or bias from other students, and just under 30% of intermediate and middle school students.

When asked if they had experienced discrimination or bias from teachers or other school staff, less than 10% of high school students reported they had, compared to over 22% of intermediate/middle school students.

**Exhibit 4.8: Parent Perceptions of Discrimination or Bias Against Their Child**

![Graph showing parent perceptions]

Disagreement with the statement that their child has experienced bias or discrimination ranged from 50% (Black/African American parents) to 80% (American Indian parents). Agreement with this statement was highest for Black/African American parents, at 32%, and they also had the highest percentage of not knowing if this is the case. Almost 20% of Hispanic/Latino parents reported not knowing. Parents of two or
more races had the second-highest level reporting that their child has experienced discrimination or racism.

The survey data suggest that two in five students at high school feel discriminated against. How frequently is unknown, although student survey comments indicated that for some children, it is an ongoing, even daily, occurrence. For others it was a one-time situation that is forever burned into their memory.

Many comments were made by students, parents, and district staff regarding experiences with perceived discrimination. These covered general discrimination, concerns specific to the LGBTQ community, and issues related to the school dress code.

### Student Comments on Discrimination

Students commented on many incidents of discrimination and harassment.

- “I feel like it is more like a culture thing with the school in general. They [school staff] definitely look at Black people different than White people walking in the hallway. I have noticed that over the years.”
- “No, I feel that they [school staff] definitely portray Black people a certain way, like we are always the trouble makers. I see that a lot in school.”
- “I believe that people should get punishment for saying slurs, but obviously it happens all the time.”
- “I am a forgetful teenager, and sometimes I leave my ID in the car. I walk around the halls, and I never get called on it. If someone of color was to do it, that’s different.”
- “After all that happened a staff member came and talked to the football team. Our administration and staff expressed to them that we are not accepting of the action [of kneeling during the anthem]. And the same people that hate on them for it [kneeling during the anthem], they turn around and say they have freedom of speech. So, why are you trying to take away someone else’s?”
- “At this school it is freedom of religion until it is not Christianity. It is freedom of speech until it doesn’t comply with current thinking.” (Student)
- “It kind of sucks (racism, microaggressions). Management will say, ‘Well no one was hurt,’ and they seem to dismiss it.”
- “It’s almost 2021 and we are still struggling with equality for women, LGBTQ+, and minority groups. :( I just wish the world could become a much better place!”
- “I’ve been attacked relentlessly on false accusations by the people who claim themselves to be the most accepting. I’m so sick and tired of all the hate going around and the ‘if you’re not with me you’re against me.’”
- “[There are] a lot of open[ly] racist [students] at school. Every time I’m in a big crowd at school I feel like somebody is going to bust out shooting everyone. You can’t really be who you are or express yourself. I don’t belong.”
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Student Comments on Discrimination (continued)

Students commented on many incidents of discrimination and harassment. Sample comments included (continued):

- “I get [made] fun of being a Pakistani a lot. As well as a Muslim. People are always making stereotypical comments and calling me a terrorist. They say I smell like curry when I really don’t. They make fun of my looks, etc. I went through severe depression because of my peers.”
- “I think racism is very normalized towards South Asians [and] no one speaks up for us. We go through many silent battles with little support from anyone. Especially since most of us are kids of immigrant parents which makes it hard to gain understanding from them.” (Student)

Parent Comments on Discrimination

- “Racism? It’s not any one thing. It’s a thousand tiny cuts every day.”
- “I’ve had a disappointing experience with the way Legacy has handled diversity and inclusion. It’s something that can be improved if the Legacy staff and faculty are laser focused and actively promoting a no tolerance policy for racism (including microaggressions), sexism, bigotry and bullying.”
- “There are some toxic things happening here. Having put one [child] all the way through—and children don’t always have the words for the microaggressions that come their way.”
- “My child who attends Legacy High School hates the fact that White students can be racist and use the N word freely without any consequences, especially students in the baseball program.”
- “My daughter has been bullied on two separate occasions due to her parents’ religious beliefs.”
- “My nephew, who is Black, has had many accounts of racism in MISD. They did nothing, even after reporting to school administrators.”
- “I hope this changes to help Brown [and] Black kids feel equal. Racism is real and words and behaviors matter!”
- “My husband is White, [and] when he calls, the school the staff is very nice. When I go to school, they assume I need a translator because I am Hispanic. I am a science HS teacher for 23 years. I don’t need a translator. I went to sign out my daughter, and they asked if her parents know and what is my relationship [with her]. I am her mom.”
- “Racism and discrimination needs to be addressed for the minorities of MISD - the Asians!!!! They receive racial comments and slurs aimed at them regularly. They have been spat upon and insulted numerous times. Teachers have isolated them and also told them to open their eyes when my kids were looking directly at the teacher. Total disrespect.”
- “It’s not racism if you’re White’ is thrown around a lot.”
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Quotes Specific to LGBTQ Discrimination and Concerns

Many comments regarded discrimination specifically against the LGBTQ population. Several parents expressed concern that their LGBTQ child is not safe at school. Others reported incidents of harassment and discrimination, at times by school staff.

- “Those of us with children who are LGBTQ are just looking for ways to know they are safe. There is no agenda here. Just love. I haven’t been able to speak at board meetings because I worry if I am public about it, my child will be targeted by the hatred that runs through this community. It hurts.”

- “My freshman will likely be transferring out of the district next year. We have had terrible experiences with bullying related to LGBTQ issues in MISD in the past. One of my children is not currently attending public school; we home school because it was so bad in intermediate school a couple of years ago, and the staff doesn’t know how to deal with it.”

- “Our District must start to provide better protections for teachers and students who are LGBTQ and should specifically state that policy of inclusion. We know students and teachers who are afraid that they will be persecuted rather than protected within MISD and we agree.”

- “I would like to see MISD include LGBTQ+ wording in our discrimination statement. Too many LGBTQ+ teachers are discriminated against by their own school. This is embarrassing.”

- “I am a straight teacher at MISD and I have witnessed my own colleagues and administrators ostracize, make fun of (privately), roll their eyes, call a student ‘him’ when her preferred pronoun of ‘her’ has been mentioned to them repeatedly. My heart breaks for these students.”

- “There needs to be specific training for staff. A counselor told my LGBTQ child the way other children treated them was their fault. So not okay. Very disappointed, as we moved here for the schools, and looking into other options (other districts) for this child’s future so that they can feel safe at school, too, because MISD isn’t providing it.”

Others commented on the need to specifically protect children of the LGBTQ community.

- “Please, please add policies and procedures to protect LGBTQ kids. Please educate students and staff in the area of systemic racism/White privilege as well as empathy, kindness, and celebration of diversity.” (Parent, survey)

- “PLEASE began supporting LGBTQ students and staff as well of systemic racism in MISD.” (Parent, survey)
FOCUS AREA 4

Quotes Specific to LGBTQ Discrimination and Concerns (continued)

Others commented on the need to revise language in current policy to specifically include LGBTQ students and staff. Several perceive the refusal to include it a message conveying less concern for these individuals.

- “We need anti-discrimination policies, and the board refuses to include it. Including it doesn’t exclude anyone; it doesn’t hurt anyone.” (Parent)

- “I feel there should be a greater system-wide focus on diversity and inclusion and that the discussion/policies/academic study should be expanded to include not only the history and experiences that are race and disabilities related but also sexual orientation and LGBTQ families and individuals.” (Parent)

- “Mansfield discrimates against LGBTQ staff and students. The school board doesn’t care about them and refuses to add in language to show that they care.” (Parent)

- “Mansfield needs to care more about LGBTQ students, families, and staff.” (Parent)

- “I think the only prevalent issue I can see is for Mansfield ISD to adapt some kind of policy regarding LGBTQ students.” (Student)

- “Not having clear cut protection, administration can’t do much [for LGBTQ] because there is no clear set policy. It is such a gray area.” (Student)

- “I would like to push for that [clear policy] district-wide and for our school.” (Student)

Personnel Comments and Concerns Regarding Discrimination Against LGBTQ+ Community

- “As a counselor who sees many LGBTQ students and staff members, I feel that their community does not feel that same acceptance from our district.” (Teacher)

- With TASBE polices and Supreme Court ruling on the inclusion of LGBTQ staff members. Although, I don’t identify as such we need to stop our practice of being the last district to adopt polices of inclusions. Just as we were the last district to desegregate our board needs to think beyond their personal views and be role models of inclusion of all not tolerance.” (Campus Administrator)

- “The following conversation occurred at a school meeting during school hours. An intermediate district employee when talking about a trans student said the following - ‘He/She/It...it should look down the front of its pants and whatever it has it is.’ An intermediate teacher said the following – ‘you know what is wrong with him, he is being raised by 2 moms’” (Teacher)

- “The LGBTQ population is actively ignored in policy and anti-bullying programing! One of our Jr. High schools has denied a trans student the ability to form a GSA group. Intermediate students asked about a group and received resistance and discouragement.” (Teacher)

- “We don’t feel safe here and they (the school board and upper admin) want us to know that. They want us to know our place and stay there. It’s very archaic and sad.” (Teacher)

- “A teacher took down a poster about starting a GSA club at a Jr. High.” (Teacher)
Parent and Student Comments on the Dress Code

On the survey, parents and students both commented on the discriminatory nature of the school dress codes. Several mentioned that the enforcement of dress codes is biased, as well. Student comments included:

- “Black girls are dress coded and reprimanded for things that White girls could get away with.” (Student)
- “I feel like the exclusion of durags in the dress code is a step back for us. A durag is functional for African Americans and the health of their hair. We have just made that functionality a fashion so it is more commonly accepted. It’s not a hat. Yes, it is a piece on your head but it’s more like a headband than anything else. Just a couple of considerations from a concerned student.” (Student)  
  “The dress code in the district is conservative and sexist. The rules are a ploy to control young girls from fully expressing themselves. It a whispered message to the students that their skin showing is a distraction to others....” (Student)
- “This school (along with other schools in the district) is very sexist when it comes to dress code and restrictions. That absolutely needs to change. We come to learn, not to be sexualized.” (Student)
- “They enforce dress code on females more than on males. Boys wear booty shorts and don’t get dress coded.” (Student)
- “Dress code is unfair; guys can wear whatever and girls have very strict dress code, ‘no stomach, no shoulder, no rip, no back, no leg.’” (Student)
- “[The] dress code is gender-biased.” (Student)
- “Dress codes are completely and utterly unfair to the female and male population. Stop teaching us to cover up. Start teaching the guys and girls to be respectful.” (Student)
Parent and Student Comments on the Dress Code (continued)

Parent comments regarding the dress code:

- “The dress code is sexist and teaches a rape culture, that what a female wears makes a difference [whether or not they are harassed].” (Parent)
- “I do not like the dress code policy at the middle schools/intermediate schools. It is handled inconsistently and is frankly ridiculous in this day and age.” (Parent)
- “Dress code is NOT enforced fairly between social status within the school.” (Parent)
- “We should refrain from a dress code policy that punishes girls for knees or shoulders so that boys don’t look. Teach the boys that the human body is not to be objectified rather than teaching our daughters to be so ashamed.” (Parent)
- “Dressing modestly doesn’t seem modest enough for some teachers. My daughter wore a T shirt to her fingertips and leggings on a field day. I was called to get her (my commute was an hour), and she had been forced into shorts (showing more skin not less) to satisfy a teacher who sexualized my academic youngster. Not okay and not logical.” (Parent)
- “The current dress code currently targets young women due to the ‘inability’ of the opposite sex to learn effectively.” (Parent, survey)

Exhibit 4.9: Observations of Biased or Racist Speech at School by Personnel

As can be seen in the exhibit, more than half of teachers and campus administrators report having observed racist or biased speech or behavior among students in their school; this percentage is two-thirds for campus administrators. Forty percent of support personnel report having observed it among students.

Regarding observed racist or biased speech or behavior among teachers, the statistics are equally concerning. Nearly 60% of campus administrators report having observed racist or biased speech or behavior among teachers. This was reported by one-third of teachers and just over one-fourth of support personnel.
**Perceptions of Discrimination or Bias and Related Concerns Being Addressed**

Racist comments and behavior must be addressed and processed to prevent such behavior in the future. Student and parent perceptions of how well these issues are being dealt with, discussed, and resolved are presented in the following exhibits.

**Exhibit 4.10: Student Perceptions of How Well Schools and Teachers Address Discrimination and Bias Issues**

High school students are split in their agreement that their school works to address discrimination and bias and deals the incidents quickly and effectively, with 53% agreeing and 47% disagreeing with this statement. Intermediate/middle school students were not asked this question.

When asked if their teachers teach them to be understanding of others and their differences, and to be kind to one another; 37% of intermediate and middle school students disagreed with this statement; over 30% of the high school students also disagreed. This is surprising given the high level of diversity in the system and the strong ethic of caring communicated by district leaders and teachers.
Exhibit 4.11: Parent Perceptions of How Well Schools and Teachers Address Discrimination and Bias Issues

In response to the statement that their child’s school works to address discrimination and bias, agreement was highest among Asian parents, second-highest among White parents, and lowest among Black/African American parents, those of Two or More Races, and American Indian parents.

The auditors asked district personnel if they feel the district works to address issues related to discrimination and bias. Responses to this statement varied considerably along ethnic lines. Exhibit 4.12 presents this information.

Exhibit 4.12: District Personnel Perceptions of Whether Discrimination or Bias Issues Are Addressed

Overall, personnel of color had the lowest agreement, with almost two-thirds of Black/African American personnel disagreeing and one-third of Hispanic/Latino personnel. Half of personnel of other ethnicities disagreed, while around 20% of Asian and 25% of White personnel disagreed that the district addresses issues related to discrimination and bias.
The auditors then asked campus personnel if they perceive a strong commitment to equity and inclusion on their campus.

Exhibit 4.13: Campus Personnel Perceptions of School Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

The exhibit shows that about one-third of all campus-based personnel disagreed that their campus has a strong commitment to equity and inclusion, with the exception of Asian personnel, of whom more than half disagreed.

Exhibit 4.14: All Personnel Perceptions of the District’s Commitment to Addressing Discrimination and Bias

As with many other questions, responses to this question varied considerably across racial/ethnic groups. White and Asian personnel had the highest level of agreement, with 80% of Asian and 76% of White personnel agreeing that the district works to address issues of discrimination and bias. Black/African American and personnel from all other race/ethnic groups had the lowest agreement, at 37% and 50%, respectively. Exactly one-third of Hispanic/Latino personnel disagreed. The district is not perceived as having a strong commitment to addressing discrimination and bias issues in the district, a perception that was confirmed by interview and survey comments.
Comments regarding the district’s commitment to addressing discrimination and bias

Personnel commented on the lack of attention to discrimination and bias issues in the district. These comments included:

- “We need help with recognizing the issues in the district and on our individual campuses.” (Campus Administrator)
- “Our district needs to acknowledge the pain and injustices many of our students face. We need to acknowledge that our realities are not the same. We need to have trainings with teachers on how to have appropriate race conversations with students.” (Teacher)
- “The district puts up a great facade to the surrounding community and taxpayers saying they care about diversity, but within the buildings talk of equity and diversity fall by the wayside.” (Teacher)
- “Implicit bias is pervasive within the organization. People are just unaware of their biases and how that shows in policy.” (Teacher)
- “This does not pertain to my school, but the district as a whole. I graduated from Summit in 2007 and grew up in MISD. Nothing has changed in my years as a student and a teacher. We do not tolerate diversity as a whole - just look at our high school district lines. We have a long way to go before “inclusive” is something we can include in our tagline.” (Teacher)

Exhibit 4.15: Parent Perceptions of How Quickly and Effectively Incidents of Racism or Discrimination Will Be Dealt With

The exhibit shows that a high number of parents who simply didn’t know if incidents of racism or discrimination would be dealt with quickly and effectively: more than one-third of all parents, overall, and more than 40% of Black/African American parents. American Indian parents had the highest percentage of disagreement with the statement, with one-fourth of all parents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Parents of Two or More Races had 20% that disagreed, the second-highest percentage. White parents, although they had the highest level of agreement, also had a high percentage—more than 26%—who reported they didn’t know if incidents of racism or discrimination would be dealt with.
**Parent Stories**

Parents shared stories of incidents where their concerns were not heard.

- “Last year...when my child was being harassed daily by a few other students in his class, [the discipline director] blew it off and claimed that he was blowing it out of proportion when, in fact, a child was sticking their hands down his clothing. My child made himself sick to avoid going to school and started talking about how he hated his life. I had to threaten to report the molestation to police to get [the director] to do anything to protect him. We received no support from the school and the discipline person (the assistant principal) refused to allow my son to talk to a counselor because he lashed out at the children abusing him.” (Parent)

- “Since the kids are at home I am able to hear how teachers interact with students, and I am not okay with it. Teachers need to learn about unintentional bias and also need to be taught that all students’ home lives are different. It is very evident that most of these teachers have not been exposed to anything more than what they’re used to. It is evident in how the teachers treat these students, and it’s very distasteful.” (Parent)

- “My son, upon entering high school at orientation, a teacher did not acknowledge us and ignored us even after we spoke. The teacher was selling t-shirts; when I said, ‘Hi, what are these t-shirts for?’ no answer came and he started speaking to a younger teacher assisting him. She looked at us, and she continued to listen to him. When they finished talking, I asked what was the cost of the shirt. No answer came, and he started helping another parent behind me, not acknowledging me.” (Parent, survey)

- “A few years ago, MISD sent my then elementary school-age children home with a “Police are your friends” flyer. This was during the Ferguson time frame. This was clearly taking a side AGAINST needed criminal justice reform and racist policing. That’s a fact. That’s a stand AGAINST Black people and minorities. I do not trust that everyone,... just because they are a teacher or a police officer, has my Black children’s best interests at heart.” (Parent, survey)

- “My eighth-grade daughter is inundated with sexual microaggressions (and occasional sexual harassment) each and every day. There is a culture of ‘boys will be boys’ that has seriously affected her emotional health this school year...my daughter does not feel that school is a ‘safe’ place for her to learn.” (Parent)
Student Comments on Discrimination and Insensitivity from Teachers

There were many comments from students regarding their experiences with discrimination and insensitivity from teachers. Sample comments included:

- “I am a virtual student this year and I was looking forward to staying home and being safe but my teachers don’t do anything with us. All we have is Edgenuity and they don’t even help us with that. They tell us what assignments to do then we log off. I feel like my grades aren’t the best this school year because of my teachers. I feel like I haven’t been challenged this school year or learned much at all.” (Student)

- “I am pregnant and my teachers expect me to remain at my desk at all times. I feel like they have no understanding that I do get sick or have to use the restroom way more often than a regular student. And that I do have to snack about every hour which requires me to have to leave my computer. I just wish teachers would try to understand my circumstances rather than just dismiss them.” (Student)

- “There’s something fundamentally wrong with the way teachers at this school go about teaching in their classes. Especially when a room full of people of color, undocumented kids, gay kids are encouraged by their white history teacher to ‘think and look outside of our bubble’ regarding the history of our people, and things that are still affecting some of us. A teacher should not feel comfortable enough to say on a school-recorded interview that ‘LGBTQ community people are overreacting.’” (Student)

District Personnel Perceptions of Training

The auditors asked personnel about what training they have had on dealing with incidents of racism or discrimination that they observe at school. These comments are presented below.

Exhibit 4.16: Teacher Reports Regarding Training in Dealing with Racism or Discrimination

The majority, about 75%, of all groups, except for Black/African American teachers, agreed that they have been trained. Most cited the 55-minute safe schools training as having met the question. Less than half of all Black/African American teachers agreed.
Exhibit 4.17: Administrator Perceptions of Training on How to Handle Reports of Discrimination or Bias

Administrators’ responses to the statement that they’ve received training in how to handle issues of discrimination or bias in Mansfield ISD were notably lower in agreement than those of teachers. Over three-fourths of all administrators of color disagreed, and 42% of White administrators disagreed.

Personnel were then asked if the professional development they receive is adequate.

Exhibit 4.18: Campus Personnel Perceptions of the Adequacy of Professional Development in DEI

There was mixed agreement to the statement that professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion is adequate, with Black/African American campus personnel having the lowest agreement, at just over one-fourth. About one-fourth of Asian and Hispanic/Latino campus personnel, about one-third of White personnel, and half of those of all other ethnicities disagreed.
Exhibit 4.19: Administrator Perceptions Concerning the Adequacy of Training

Administrators’ agreement with the statement that there is adequate professional development in Mansfield ISD on diversity, equity, and inclusion was much lower than teacher and support professionals. Just 38% of White administrators agreed, 18% of Black/African American administrators agreed, and 10% of All Other race/ethnic groups. No Hispanic/Latino administrators agreed. There is clear agreement that training in this area is not adequate.

Comments on Training in DEI

Numerous comments related to the need for professional development were related to diversity, equity, and inclusion that were made by district administrators, teachers, and support personnel.

- Diversity training? “Not beyond what is required.” (Teacher)
- “I have never been trained.” (District Administrator)
- “Watching a 13-minute video in Safe Schools is not sufficient training.” (District Administrator)
- “Safe Schools is not adequate training. It is a box to check that administration has done their due diligence.” (District Administrator)
- “Very few teachers are trained on cultural sensitivity and, in fact, do not know what to do with their changing demographics.” (Campus Administrator)
- “Cultural sensitivity is very much needed, but there is no training on it.” (Principal)
- “More training needed in cultural competencies and in identifying internal bias structures.” (Teacher)
- “We also need intensive sensitivity training. And I mean the real, in person kind. With open dialogue. Our district has many strengths, but is failing spectacularly on the diversity and equity front.” (Teacher)
- “Where can teachers find different training to address students’ diverse perspectives and backgrounds during instruction?” (Teacher)
FOCUS AREA 4

Comments on Training in DEI (continued)

There were many comments related to the need for professional development related to diversity, equity, and inclusion that were made by district administrators, teachers, and support personnel. These comments included:

- “We have so many different cultures, [we need to] continue PD on diversity and equity.” (District Administrator)
- “More training [is] needed in cultural competencies and in identifying internal bias structures.” (District Administrator)
- How can the district improve? “Teacher level training and support.” (Campus Administrator)
- “We need training in dealing with racial inequities.” (Campus Administrator)
- “Our teachers need more training on dealing with diversity in students and parents.” (Campus Administrator)
- How can the district improve? “Providing training in having straightforward, positive discussions about diversity.” (Campus Administrator)
- “We receive no education in diversity and equity. This should not be an added module to Safe Schools either. We need to have serious, tough conversations instead of never addressing it and not supporting all of our students.” (Teacher)
- “[I] would love to see the feedback forge the needed actions to impact change.” (Campus Administrator)
- How can the district improve? “Cultural relativity trainings, SpEd trainings, Social Justice Sensitivity Trainings, Diversity hiring and promotion practices.” (Campus Administrator)
- How can the district improve? “Training- open conversations.” (Campus Administrator)
- How can the district improve? “Trainings need to be done with fidelity and intention.

Members from all stakeholder groups, administrators, teachers, parents, and even students, commented on the need for training.

- “[We need] a class on diversity—have you talked with your family about the George Floyd death? Have you talked with somebody of a different race about these issues?” (Parent)
- “There are a couple teachers who are very kind and encouraging to students. All others are very brash in their approach and really need some sensitivity or unconscious bias training.” (Parent)
- “An area to grow—is diversity training. We are lacking in that.” (Principal)
- “We had a total of 55 minutes on safe schools.” (Principal)
Comments on Training in DEI (continued)

Members from all stakeholder groups, administrators, teachers, parents, and even students, commented on the need for training. (continued)

• (Training in diversity?) “Safe schools. We haven’t had safe schools that long. Before that [there was] nothing.” (Teacher)

• “Diversity training does occur, but [it’s] not well received by the staff on the campus. The principal was a big advocate of diversity—brought in a few of the folks to do the training, and the teachers said, how dare she bring that here?” (Teacher)

• “We had conversations around let’s try not to squash a conversation that might come up organically in the classroom, but where is the appropriate place to tie in current events with what they might be studying in the sequence of the course.” (District Administrator)

• “I’d like to see parents included in any diversity discussion, activity, etc., and have a piece of that as much as possible.” (Central Support Staff)

• As a growing, diverse community, we can always improve our ability to have conversations from race relations to gender equality.” (District Administrator)

• “Diversity training is great for the people who have an open mind and open heart. But the people who are set in their ways—no matter what, they are still set in their ways. [We need] more of the diversity and equity training.” (Principal)

• “Maybe you could focus it [diversity training] where needed, and it doesn’t need to be a blanket thing for the entire district.” (Student)
District Personnel’s Personal Experiences with Discrimination or Racism

This next section highlights what district personnel reported regarding their own personal experiences with discrimination in the workplace. The first exhibit presents the data for all key positions surveyed, followed by a breakdown by ethnicity of the teacher group. This was done to highlight the considerable differences in perceptions of bias across ethnic groups.

Exhibit 4.20: District Personnel Experiences with Discrimination or Racist Behavior

Campus administrators had the highest percentage of respondents agreeing (over half, almost 53%) that they have personally experienced racist behavior or discrimination in the workplace, followed by district support personnel at 29%. Campus support personnel had the lowest percentage agreeing with the statement, and 23% of teachers agreed. When broken down by ethnic group, there was considerable variation among teachers.

Exhibit 4.21: Teacher Experiences with Discrimination or Racist Behavior, by Ethnic Group

It can be seen that Black/African American teachers had the highest percentage of respondents agreeing that they have personally experienced discrimination in the workplace, just over 45%. The second-highest group was native American/American Indian teachers, followed by Asian and Hispanic/Latino teachers (28.58% and 28.57%, respectively).
FOCUS AREA 4

Conversations about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The auditors sought to determine how frequently conversations and discussions around race, discrimination, and bias are happening, including training taking place on the same. The auditors found that among personnel, perceptions of the frequency of these discussions and their effectiveness vary considerably.

Exhibit 4.22: Student Perceptions of Teachers’ Comfort and Frequency with Discussing Race and Diversity

More than 80% of students in intermediate and middle schools agreed that teachers are comfortable discussing issues related to race, diversity, and culture and that they do so often. High school students, however, were almost split in their agreement with this statement. 54% agreed but 46% disagreed, demonstrating that they do not believe teachers are comfortable with having these discussions. This was commented on frequently during interviews and on the survey.
FOCUS AREA 4

Student comments on willingness of school personnel to address discrimination and equity issues in the classroom

Students also commented on teachers’ lack of willingness to address discrimination and equity issues in the classroom. They mentioned their own concerns that issues of diversity, equity, and race are not discussed in school, or are not discussed constructively. They expressed frustration and sadness at the lack of a constructive platform for these issues.

- “We should have some way to discuss [diversity and equity] topics respectfully.”
- “I feel teachers don’t want to address it [issues of racism or bias] because they don’t want to get fired or reported. If little Kevin goes over there and says that his teacher is for gay rights, they might get put on leave.”
- “I haven’t had one teacher say anything about Black Lives Matter.”
- “We need teachers to back us up. We were having a debate, and something was said that was targeted, and the teacher did and said nothing.”
- “They are important topics, and if they were discussed more often in class, people would be more accepting of diversity. Instead of just pretending like it is not happening.”
- “I am in a debate class. It is the first class that I have been in where we discuss current topics, and it can get heated. There are certain times the teacher will let it happen, and it can get uncomfortable.”
- “If the district pushes it [hard discussions] a little, maybe teachers will be more inclined to give more for students.”
- “But where else are we supposed to talk about it [race, diversity, bias]? We go here. If we can’t talk about it with the people we are with everyday, who are we supposed to talk about it with?”
- “It [topics of race, culture, and diversity] never really comes up. It is one of the topics they [teachers] don’t want to bring up because they don’t want to start anything.”
- “Students are bringing them [issues of race, diversity and bias] up in class, but when they do, teachers say they don’t want to get political.”
- “Having opportunities for more openings to have discussions like these will definitely benefit the students as well as the staff.”
- “Even when I approach a teacher I feel I have a good relationship with, they just say, ‘Oh well, you know hang in there.’”
- “Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter. The teacher was not accepting of what we were trying to tell her. The discussion just fizzled out.”
Student comments on willingness of school personnel to address discrimination and equity issues in the classroom (continued)

- “It is not just the issue of teachers trying to tiptoe around and be neutral and not take a side. It is also an issue based on what is happening in our society.”
- “It should not be a debate as to whether Black people or LGTBQ have been discriminated against; it should just be a topic of how to deal with our differences.”
- “I understand that obviously the district has an image that it wants to protect, and I don’t want to reveal all the district secrets. I feel students and teachers need a better way to express their grievances so that it is not going to come back on them.”
- “My teachers don’t talk about racial injustice or other issues because it is seen as ‘political,’ but in reality it’s a matter of being a decent human being and treating others with the respect they deserve, no matter the sexuality, skin color, religion, or ethnic background.”
- “I feel the school should also be comfortable talking about movements like the BLM movement and be open to letting kids express interest in that type of activism.”

One student expressed what he wished to see result from the Equity Audit. He acknowledged the challenge teachers face in discussing issues related to diversity and equity: “Being able to open up the topics and talk about them. Sometimes teachers are uncomfortable opening up these topics and feel uncomfortable, not wanting to offend their students or get in trouble, maybe.”

Comments by District Personnel on Discrimination Observed

- “For years Mansfield has operated where everybody has to the do the same thing and everybody is equal, and it’s not.” (District Administrator)
- “The comments from teachers about students in the workroom are sweepingly general of an entire population, bigoted, and contain racial slurs.” (Teacher)
- “The coach...called one of our athletes a “street thug,” and nothing was done about it.” (Teacher)
- “If we [district administrators] are not speaking that language and are not holding ourselves to building relational capacity, how can we ask principals to do that with staff and then push down to students and to parents.” (District Administrator)
- “They [schools] are finally also seeing and recognizing that we need to take care of all kids and not just in academics.” (District Administrator)
- “Individuals of minority ethnicities are openly racist toward the majority, and it is not addressed.” (White Teacher)
- “Teachers of color are treated differently than teachers of non color.” (Teacher)
Exhibit 4.23: Effectiveness and Frequency of School-level Discussions Around Diversity, Bias, and Inclusion

When asked about the effectiveness and frequency of discussions around equity and inclusion, all ethnic groups of the teachers, except for Black/African American teachers, had at least 60% agreement that their campus leaders were effective at engaging personnel in discussions around diversity and equity. Only 35% of Black/African American teachers agreed.

When principals responded to the statement that their schools frequently have these discussions, agreement was low: 28% of White respondents, 16% of Black/African American, none of the Hispanic/Latino respondents, and 15% of all other ethnic groups.
Exhibit 4.24: Campus Personnel Perceptions of the Need for More Conversations Around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The majority of all teachers and campus support personnel agreed that they need more discussion about racism, discrimination, and racial identity at their school, with the highest levels of disagreement among Hispanic/Latino, Asian, White, and Native American, and those of Race/Ethnicity unknown. Black/African American and those of Two or More Races had the highest levels of agreement, at 80% and 76%, respectively.
Parents’ responses were equally varied along ethnic groups. Parents’ agreement with the statement that we need more discussion about racism and racial identity at their child’s school was largely in the majority, with the exception of American Indian parents and White parents. Forty percent of White parents agreed, 45% disagreed, and 15% didn’t know. At least 60% of all other groups agreed, with Black/African American parents having the highest percentage of agreement, at 81%.
Personnel Comments Regarding Willingness to Address Discrimination and Equity Issues

District personnel commented on the unwillingness of others to discuss diversity and equity issues. Comments reflected a desire to have leadership lead these challenging conversations:

- “As a growing, diverse community, we can always improve our ability to have conversations from race relations to gender equality.” (District Administrator)
- “Personnel (generally) are afraid of addressing these issues because they are seen as controversial. They are afraid of parent retaliation for ‘indoctrinating’ the students. They also do not feel confident in sharing their own thoughts.” (Teacher, survey)
- “Race, diversity, and race issues have seldom been discussed. I can NEVER recall ever hearing LGBTQ diversity ever discussed.” (Teacher)
- “I think most do not feel comfortable talking to African Americans about race issues.” (White Teacher)
- “One year, English I didn’t even want to teach To Kill a Mockingbird because it included discussions about race. It’s an issue.” (Teacher)
- “We teachers address race issues but are met with discrimination from parents and administrators about our stance. We do address them in our classes but are worried about the backlash of taking a specific side.” (Teacher)
- “[DEI] issues are here, but they are not addressed.” (Teacher)
- “[Teachers] are aware, but I don’t feel they are comfortable addressing them.” (Teacher)
- “I have never heard anyone in my building discuss race and diversity issues, especially in relation to racist practices that are perpetuated by our discipline and grading system. The only time it was discussed was in a restorative practices training, one time.” (Teacher)
- “It all starts with building that relational capacity, and we have to get all campuses on board with that. Especially the campuses that are higher needs and our kids are struggling. Campuses where we see a high number of our special education kids put in ISS.” (District Administrator)
**Parent Comments on Discussing Issues Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Many comments were made about discussing issues of diversity and race, on both sides. On the survey, parents shared the following comments in favor of increasing discussions about this issue:

- “There should be more education on racism and equity taught within the schools by qualified teachers/professionals. Growing up in Mansfield and influenced by racial ideals within my home/community, it took leaving the city to see the world differently. It is one of my main concerns moving back to Mansfield. I would love to see it taught in school so that it doesn’t take leaving to have an unbiased view.”

- “I feel like more discussions about racism and inclusivity of all lifestyles is a necessary part of making all students and staff and their families feel welcome. Accepting everyone regardless of race, gender, identity, etc., should be a no brainer. I know the district (as good as it is) has struggled with these issues.”

- “Some kids at our school repeat racist things their parents tell them, and those parents are leaders in the community. We need to strongly and consistently engage in real and beneficial ways of discussing racial justice, including being honest about systemic racism in government and the police.”

- “As usual, racism is dealt with in only one color direction. Hasn’t changed since I was in school 40 years ago. We just deal with it. No help from weak leaders and teachers.”

- “While we all know racism is real (and horrible), there are also a lot of comments that appear to hint at all Whites being racist or if a White person has an accomplishment, it is only because they are White. I think education should focus on respect for all rather than just focusing on race. Anyone ‘left out’ can be discriminated or treated poorly and that being ‘left out’ may be due to race, athletic ability, economic differences, or any number of issues. I would love to see an education system that teaches that our differences, whatever they are, do not make us enemies, and we should respect others, even if we don’t agree with them.”
Parent Comments on Discussing Issues Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (continued)

Others were decidedly against such discussions, most from either a sense that they are unnecessary or that such discussions only cause divisiveness.

- “As a Hispanic, I have experienced racism many times in my life. However, I really do not believe the issue of racism needs to be discussed in our schools, especially at the elementary level. I really truly, honestly believe this causes more division in students at a younger age.”
- “Further discussion about racism/discrimination will only create a victim mentality. We should be focused on ALL families, not putting certain races on a pedestal. Dr. Martin Luther King wanted ALL people to be treated equal, not one person put above another based on race. ALL races, ALL people ONE nation UNDER God.”
- “Racism is alive because we keep it alive by discussion and hate. Bringing the issue to a child’s attention that is unaware it exists or is a concern sparks a curiosity that I feel is unneeded.”
- “STOP talking about racism and discrimination! It does not exist anymore! All this talk makes things worse and divides us more. You are going down the wrong path. We are all equal. STOP turning these students into racially divided people.”
- “Stopping racism isn’t the school’s job. Just teach my kid and treat everyone fair. Don’t let teachers indoctrinate my kid with their personal beliefs.”

Personnel Comments Regarding Race

There were several comments from personnel who do not feel there is discrimination and who shared a perspective that addressing or singling out “race” creates division. These comments included:

- “Everyone is treated equally.” (Teacher)
- “Starting with recognizing that we need to continue to build a unified identity as MISD - with a common mission, vision, and goals - is more important and vital to growth than to divide by race, color, or creed; (Teacher)
- “Can we PLEASE start emphasizing that we are ALL ONE RACE?” (Teacher)
- “A person’s ethnicity should not be an advantage nor disadvantage.” (Teacher)
- “We need a focus on teaching how we are all HUMAN. All one race. “Racial divisions” are a social construct.” (Teacher)

There was also a comment that specially addressed the culture fair that is hosted in the district:

- “A culture fair is not going to do much. That is an old fashion solution and as someone from a different cultural background, I actually find more offensive than inclusive. Cultural awareness is a daily practice, not something a fair covers.” (District Administrator)
FOCUS AREA 4

Key Takeaways for Focus Area 4

Mansfield ISD has a strong, student-centered culture that is, for the majority of students, academically successful. Students do well compared to their peers around the state, but performance begins to lag at secondary, and many student groups are not as equipped for performance as are their peers. Gaps exist at all levels of the district, not only in achievement, but also in experience. School is not a welcoming, engaging place for all students. There is a segment of the population that feels such a priority is unnecessary—that school should be about learning, not “feelings.” However, research is clear that effective teaching and learning does not happen in an emotional vacuum; it is a relationship. Students who feel accepted, affirmed, and engaged are better equipped to learn, and their achievement is higher. Students who feel personally engaged and who are cognitively challenged at high levels achieve at even higher levels—what some call being a “warm demander.” Personally connecting with students requires a relationship—it requires understanding and accepting the student as they are, appreciating differences as part of their unique make up. Responsibility for this type of personal engagement must begin with the teachers and administrators on campuses, as the persons in authority and responsible for modeling the behavior and attitudes they wish to see in their students.

This type of engagement is unfortunately not happening for a considerable segment of the Mansfield ISD student population. At various schools around the district, students report experiencing discrimination and racism on a regular basis. For some, this may be tolerable since they are connected to friends or activities in areas of interest. Others have moved to a different school to remove themselves from untenable situations. How district leaders wish to respond to these realities is the question at hand—it goes beyond race, beyond politics. This is actually a question of the fundamental philosophy in the district around what constitutes the most effective learning environment for all its students. All.

Not all teachers and support personnel respond to all students in a similarly welcoming and affirming manner. Parents and students both report incidences with Mansfield staff that were racist or discriminatory in nature. There are front office personnel who have been rude or unkind, parents who have been ignored when they walk into a school. The district’s policies on discrimination and bullying are not enforced; parents report not hearing back from campus administrators when specific complaints are made or are sometimes made to feel like they themselves are the problem. There is a prevailing attitude of “color blindness” reported by many teachers—stating they don’t “see color,” that color doesn’t matter to them. This position has the effect of negating the feelings and perceptions of the more than 20,000 students who are of color in the district and who, at any time, experience discrimination and treatment solely based on how they look. While these situations may be the minority, they are nevertheless real.
FOCUS AREA 5

FINDINGS—FOCUS AREA 5: CURRICULUM

Why Curriculum Matters

Curriculum is the most essential tool for supporting teachers in delivering the right content with effective and engaging strategies. Curriculum provides a focus on the concepts, skills, and knowledge that students need to learn and provides guidance in what mastery of those skills looks like. It also offers teachers suggestions for high quality, aligned student practice activities, resources and materials, and suggestions for supports and extensions for students who need differentiation. A high quality, comprehensive written curriculum is a teacher’s best tool for meeting the needs of a classroom of diverse learners and erasing the opportunity gap, ensuring that students are offered cognitively challenging and personally engaging classroom experiences that improve their learning. This involves a balance of defining for teachers in clear and measurable terms what students must learn, tools for measuring that learning, and suggestions and resources for delivering that learning. The following findings present information specific to the curriculum and evidence of learning collected from Mansfield ISD.

Finding 1: The written curriculum, although comprehensive in scope and quality, is weak on offering sufficient suggestions and resources that support differentiating instruction for diverse learners with a variety of needs.

The Mansfield Independent School District leaders have made considerable strides in providing teachers with a comprehensive, valid district curriculum that supports instruction across the district’s campuses. The guides have most of the essential components of quality curriculum and provide teachers with extensive resources. However, not all content areas are at the same level of specificity and quality; some content area curriculum guides are missing key components to support differentiation and to address cultural diversity in district classrooms. Not all components directed by the curriculum management plan were found in all guides at all grade levels and content areas. In keeping with the district’s focus on guaranteeing that every child is reading on level by 3rd grade, the English language arts curriculum documents were found to be the most comprehensive, detailing suggested lessons, activities, resources and assessment tools at the daily and weekly level.

Auditors reviewed guides for five gradespans across the core subject areas of English language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. The Curriculum Management Plan was used to determine what expectations the district has for the design and content of district curriculum guides. The auditors reviewed the guides for three key requirements:

1. Content Delineation and Specificity
2. Support for Instruction and Differentiation
3. Curriculum Structure and Pacing

Content Delineation and Specificity refers to the extent to which the curriculum specifies, in measurable terms, the concepts, skills, knowledge and vocabulary students are expected to master at the conclusion of a specified amount of time. Support for Instruction and Differentiation refers to the suggestions that the curriculum has for delivering instruction to students and for differentiating the content, process, or product of learning for students. Curriculum Structure and Pacing is the
requirement that the curriculum pace, sequence, and prioritize the content in a feasible, user-friendly structure that supports flexible pacing, while noting non-negotiable pacing expectations (such as at the unit level). Structure is important since the level at which instructional guidance is offered typically impacts a guide’s usefulness. For example, suggestions for strategies made at the unit level, when the unit is a longer increment of time (6-8 weeks), are less helpful than suggestions made closer to the level from which teachers plan instruction (at a sub-unit or weekly level).

Within each of these three areas, the auditors identified those expectations outlined in the Curriculum Management Plan (key expectations are presented in Figure 5.1). A detailed analysis of each component for every gradespan for the four content areas can be found in Appendix G. A summary of the findings is presented here.

Summary of Key Findings Related to Each Content Area

English Language Arts

English language arts curriculum documents were the most comprehensive and detailed of all the guides. The resources were extensive at K-5, and the pacing/structure of the guides has modules, sub-units, and daily pacing. Ratings for the expected components clustered under Content Delineation and Specificity and Instructional Support and Differentiation are presented here. Specific analyses and comments are provided in Appendix J.

Exhibit 5.1: English Language Arts Curriculum Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Delineation and Specificity</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Overall, the English language arts guides had the most refined statements for student learning with “we will” statements that restate the TEKS in learner-friendly terms. Most guides provided these objectives at the sub-unit level; 6th-8th grade guides were an exception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Question</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>All guides had essential questions; some had big ideas. Essential questions were provided at the sub-unit or unit level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Assessment was adequate to strong at the elementary level, with several different tools provided to monitor progress. Secondary levels only noted unit-level CBAs, with some quizzes at high school, although there was no clarity if these were required. No formative tools were provided for students or teachers to use for monitoring progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Vocabulary is noted in every unit, consistently. Vocabulary is not linked to the sub-unit level, except at the primary level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Strategies or Approaches</strong></td>
<td>Adequate to Strong</td>
<td>At primary and elementary, there are scaffolds and supports for strategies in the guide at the sub-module level, and specific intervention strategies that can be accessed via the RtI manual. At 6-12, suggestions for strategies are generic and included only at the unit level; there are additional links to mini-lessons for interventions tied to specific skills at grades 5-8, but not at high school. The auditors did not note any suggestions specifically addressing a culturally responsive approach, nor how to address students’ diverse backgrounds in connection with the content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Materials and Resources</strong></td>
<td>Adequate to Strong</td>
<td>Primary again has the most comprehensive materials and resources provided, by daily lesson plan or sub-module. Suggestions are fewer for 5-12, particularly for differentiating for student needs/preferences and backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Student Activities for differentiation</strong></td>
<td>Adequate to Strong</td>
<td>Primary was again strong, with concrete examples of student tasks provided, and at the sub-module (weekly) level. Secondary had fewer suggestions and exemplars; most were attached to units and not sub-units or smaller increments. Activities were mostly “generic” with suggestions for interventions to improve mastery of the TEKS, but not the “we will” statements. Specific scaffolds or supports tied to discrete skills or clusters of skills were not noted at upper grades.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Curriculum Structure and Pacing

The auditors also examined the structure and pacing of the guide. The overall structure of the curriculum is important, since bundling and sequencing are a critical part of gradual release of responsibility and assuring student mastery of the most essential skills. Not all skills require the same amount of time; therefore, certain skills need greater emphasis and more time than others. This impacts the pace of instruction. The structure of a guide also helps inexperienced teachers know how much time is needed for a set of skills and concepts, so they can balance attending to individual student needs and rates of learning while ensuring that students are staying on grade level, overall, with their learning. This is the tight/loose pacing balance. Guides that are built using only daily lesson plans that are scripted in nature do not sufficiently bundle the content so teachers see how certain skills overlap or connect, or how the content is conceptually linked for deeper learning. A scripted daily pace also negates the role of the teacher in planning instruction in response to student need, a critical part of differentiating effectively and providing the scaffolds and supports so many students require to be independently successful.

In Mansfield ISD, all curriculum guides are structured around a unit format. Units range from three to seven weeks in length, with shorter units at primary and longer units at secondary. In English language arts and reading, the structure is clear and pacing is reasonable; both support flexible daily planning and pacing except at primary. All units have a sub-unit increment, typically a week to two weeks (called modules or sub-modules at elementary). Sub-units are important and helpful in outlining a suggested pace and sequence for the content instruction within the larger, tightly-held increment of time (units). At primary, in addition to the sub-modules, there are daily lesson plans that are extensive and scripted. The district has trained teachers and principals extensively on using the curriculum, emphasizing that the script is a suggestion, only, but the auditors found it overwhelming.
FOCUS AREA 5

A daily pace is suggested for the foundational phonics/phonemic awareness and word-building skills, which is necessary at elementary. Daily pacing and sequencing suggestions for discrete skills (such as phonics) can be helpful, but overly scripted lessons can stifle teachers’ planning their instruction in response to students’ needs. While the overall structure of ELAR curriculum was strong, the daily scripted lessons at primary and the embedded background and professional videos for teachers were overwhelming. At times, these teacher resources and suggestions eclipsed the definition of what student performance of the most important skills should look like for that week.

Mathematics

The mathematics guides were strong in providing most components consistently and offered many supports to teachers via links to external resources. However, links were not always functional and many suggestions were generic in nature, rather than tied to a specific concept, skill, or cluster of skills. The following exhibit shows a summary of the ratings for the key components.

Exhibit 5.2: Mathematics Curriculum Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Delineation and Specificity</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Adequate to Strong</td>
<td>This was the strongest component in the mathematics guides, with “I will” or “Students will” statements included at the unit and sub-unit level for most gradespans. Sub-unit level objectives are important to more clearly support daily planning; these were not noted at grades 3-6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Questions</td>
<td>Inadequate to Adequate</td>
<td>Guiding questions were included at the unit level in grades K-6, but not at secondary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Approaches Adequate to Adequate</td>
<td>The specificity of assessment varied the most across the grade levels. At some grade levels, there were pre-assessments for each unit, Curriculum Based Assessments, unit assessments, and quick checks or exit tickets. However, no grade level had all present in the curriculum, consistently. The guides consistently included released test items from the STAAR and EOC tests, something that can undermine deep alignment and teaching for rigor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Vocabulary was presented with units. A few guides included vocabulary development activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Focus Area 5

### Support for Instructional Delivery and Differentiation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Strategies or Approaches</strong></td>
<td>Adequate to Adequate</td>
<td>Clarity around strategies and approaches varied widely, with the greatest specificity offered at primary with linked videos, but all suggestions are provided at the unit level, rather than the sub-unit level. As units were from 1-5 weeks long, this would make it difficult for inexperienced teachers to connect specific approaches with discrete concepts, skills, or bundles of skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Materials and Resources</strong></td>
<td>Adequate to Strong</td>
<td>This component was one of the strongest of all components included in the math guides. There were references to the adopted texts and other supplementary materials included in the curriculum, in most cases attached to the specific TEKS. Many were at the unit level, rather than the sub-unit level (the level from which teachers should/would lesson plan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Student Activities for differentiation</strong></td>
<td>Adequate to Strong</td>
<td>There were multiple links in most documents for activities that support needed skills or that enrich the content for advanced learners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Curriculum Structure and Pacing

The mathematics curriculum had the shortest units of all content areas; units ranged from one to five weeks long, and all units had sub-units to provide pacing and sequencing suggestions for instructional planning. The sub-units were from one to six days long, an acceptable increment from which to plan lessons. Units, however, were sometimes too brief to support conceptual mastery and the connection of concepts across domains. In mathematics, supporting conceptual mastery and deeper understanding of algorithms and computation is critical to improving student learning and achievement. Units at high school, where one would expect the greatest demand in terms of cognitive complexity and conceptual mastery, were the shortest, from one to three weeks. Guides did provide some support for lesson planning, and no unit plans included scripted lessons, although the high school guide did link to scripted lessons in the resource/textbook.
Social Studies

The social studies curriculum documents rated the lowest of all the curriculum guides reviewed, had the fewest of the recommended components consistently included, and had the least up-to-date resources. Social studies, an important content area in ethnically, economically, and linguistically diverse school systems, provides excellent opportunities to connect content with personal backgrounds and experiences and to prepare students for participation in the U.S. democratic system.

Exhibit 5.3: Social Studies Curriculum Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Delineation and Specificity</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Inadequate to Adequate</td>
<td>Most units do not have refined versions of the standards and use the identical verbiage in the curriculum documents. Use of “we will” or other language to describe students’ required learning occurs in less than half of the guides across all gradespans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essential Questions</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Only a few guides were found to have essential questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Inadequate to Adequate</td>
<td>Assessment was randomly included in the curriculum; this varied by grade level. When included, the quality of assessment varied, and at times assessments were provided in a separate folder but not linked to any specific unit or content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Approaches Adequate to Adequate</td>
<td>The inclusion of vocabulary also varied from grade level to grade level, with the 5th and 6th grade including the component most consistently. Even within a grade level, not all units included key vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for Instructional Delivery and Differentiation</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suggested Strategies or Approaches</td>
<td>Approaches Adequate</td>
<td>Almost all the curriculum guides had some generic suggestions for strategies and approaches, but most were generic in nature and not tied to specific skills, concepts, or clusters of skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suggested Materials and Resources</td>
<td>Approaches Adequate to Adequate</td>
<td>The primary text or resource for each grade level was referenced across almost all guides. Additional resources were only referenced with links, and a large percentage of the links were not functional. Resources were not provided that supported differentiation of the curriculum (content) or of instruction (contexts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suggested Student Activities for differentiation</td>
<td>Inadequate to Adequate</td>
<td>A few guides included suggestions for student activities that could be differentiated to meet individual needs, but these were inconsistent or even nonexistent at some grade levels and for some courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Curriculum Structure and Pacing

The overall structure for the social studies curriculum was good at the unit level; there were six, six-week units at almost every grade level (grades 7 and 8 had 13 and 9 units, respectively). However, for some units, there was no internal pacing or sequencing of the content. Some units had only one sub-unit, while others had up to 6. There was no guidance or support for how to plan instruction using the guide; nor any suggestions for an instructional model.
FOCUS AREA 5

Science

Science curriculum guides were fairly consistent across the grades. Most components were found in the guides, as expected, and were strongest (after English language arts/reading) at providing suggestions for differentiation and student activities.

Exhibit 5.4: Science Curriculum Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Delineation and Specificity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Support for Instructional Delivery and Differentiation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Strategies or Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Materials and Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Student Activities for differentiation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Curriculum Structure and Pacing

Most units were six weeks in length and most also had from 2-7 sub-units. A few units had only one sub-unit. Sample lesson plans or models were provided to support teachers’ planning from the guides.

Overall, the curriculum was found to inconsistently meet the expectations delineated in the curriculum management plan. The curriculum in Mansfield ISD is adequate, overall, with the exception of social studies. There is solid support for teachers’ instruction, particularly for Tier I instruction. However, support for differentiation was weak in several areas and there were almost no suggestions that focused on culturally responsive approaches, and few suggestions for supports or scaffolds. Resources had varying levels of integration of diversity; ELAR had some authentic literature with diverse characters, but social studies in particular had few if any connections to diversity or to students’ personal perspectives and backgrounds. In most cases, the curriculum relied on the adopted resource to assure diversity of representation in the content area, and with varying levels of success.
Supports for differentiation were weak across almost all content areas; in almost all cases, teachers need to go to a separate site or link for suggestions in how to scaffold, accommodate, or enrich the content or instruction for students. These suggestions were most often made at the unit level and not tied to the specific skill level of daily or weekly instruction. Although at times the suggestions were strong (as with the RtI interventions and supports), the need to click on multiple links (many of which were not functional for the auditors) can discourage teachers from pursuing these supports, especially when the links take them to generic menus of ideas, rather than targeted suggestions. ELAR was the only content area that consistently included suggestions for differentiation of content at the sub-module (weekly) or even daily level. Social studies did not have any suggestions for differentiation.

Interview and survey data supported the auditors’ findings with regard to support for diversity in resources and for differentiating instruction. These data are presented in the subsequent exhibits.

**District Personnel Perceptions of Curriculum and Resources in Supporting Differentiation**

**Exhibit 5.5: District Curriculum’s Effectiveness at Suggesting Ways to Address Diversity**

Auditors asked personnel about the curriculum and its support for differentiation. Campus administrators reported strong disagreement that the district curriculum is effective at suggesting ways to address diversity during instruction.
Exhibit 5.6:  Teacher Perceptions Concerning Curriculum’s Effectiveness at Addressing Diversity

Teachers varied considerably in how they responded to this statement, across ethnic groups. Teachers of Two or More Races and All Other ethnicities had about half disagreeing, while almost 70% of Black/African American teachers and 57% of teachers of Two or More Races disagreed. White and Asian teachers had one-fourth of teachers disagreeing with the statement. Less than 20% of Hispanic/Latino teachers disagreed, showing strong differences in perceptions of the written curriculum.

Exhibit 5.7:  Teacher Perceptions Concerning the Adequacy of Resources to Support Diversity

When asked if the curriculum provides resources that reflect the backgrounds and cultures of their students, responses from teachers were less positive. More than half of Black/African American teachers, 60% of teachers of Two or More Races, and 44% of teachers of All Other ethnicities disagreed. Just over 20% of Hispanic/Latino teachers disagreed, and one-third (33%) of White teachers disagreed that they have resources that reflect the backgrounds and cultures of the students in their classrooms.
Exhibit 5.8: Campus Administrator Perceptions Concerning Adequacy of Resources to Support Diversity

Campus Administrators: We have resources that reflect the backgrounds and cultures of the students in our classrooms.

Only 37% of all Campus Administrators agreed that their teachers have resources that reflect the backgrounds and cultures of students.

Exhibit 5.9: Principal Perceptions Concerning Role of Student Culture/Background for Instructional Planning

Teachers in my building consider their students' culture(s) and backgrounds when planning instruction.

Principals were asked if the teachers in their building consider students’ backgrounds when planning instruction. Agreement was quite low across all ethnic groups.
Exhibit 5.10: Teacher Perceptions Concerning Role of Student Culture/Background for Instructional Planning

Teachers were also asked if they consider their students’ culture/background when planning instruction. There was much higher agreement across all ethnic groups. Teachers of Two or More Races and Hispanic/Latino teachers had the highest agreement, at 95%. White and Black/African American teachers had the lowest agreement, but still close to 85%. Ninety percent of All Other Races agreed.

Comments from District Personnel Related to Curriculum

There were a few comments made regarding the curriculum and its weaknesses, including perceived weaknesses in differentiating in classrooms.

- “The social studies Scope and Sequence was supposed to be about authors of diverse backgrounds and they included random African American names that were not known for being authors. i.e.: Harriet Tubman.” (Teacher)
- “We need to do a better job of developing lessons that are as diverse as our student population.” (Principal)

One teacher commented on what is perceived as unreasonable demands for differentiating instruction:

- “The district is misguided if they are going to expect us to differentiate instruction based on special ed, 504, ethnic differences, gender differences, sexual orientation, religious differences, etc. This type of thinking is making a mockery of education.” (Teacher)

Key Takeaways for Focus Area 5, Finding 1

*Developing and implementing a sound written curriculum has been a priority for many years, with great results. The district has a plan that outlines expectations to manage curriculum and its delivery throughout the system. However, work is needed to improve the curriculum format so that is more effectively supports differentiating for the varied student needs and backgrounds in district classrooms. There is insufficient clarity in the plan and in the curriculum around what the most effective instruction with ethnically, economically, and linguistically diverse populations looks like. The majority of teachers and campus administrators report that the curriculum does not provide resources that reflect the backgrounds and cultures of their students or that the curriculum is effective in supporting differentiation.*
Finding 2: Student work artifacts showed higher cognitive demand than lower, particularly in certain content areas. The contexts of artifacts were not highly engaging. Disparities exist between high poverty and low poverty schools in the levels of cognitive demand and in the types of engaging contexts. There were few examples of culturally responsive content and activities across the grade levels and content areas reviewed. Teachers’ expectations for students’ levels of performance vary, with higher expectations observed for students at low poverty schools and for regular education students. Lower expectations were observed in artifacts from high poverty schools and for special education students.

Student work artifacts—the activities students are asked to complete to demonstrate mastery of curriculum objectives—provide valuable information to district personnel about how the written curriculum is being delivered. Student work represents the content students are actually learning, in what contexts, and at what level of cognitive demand. Artifacts must address the same content as the assessment, but if the student work artifacts don’t exceed the contexts and cognitive demands of the external tests in use, then students will be less equipped to perform well on those assessments. Increased cognitive demand and metacognitive development are shown to significantly impact student learning and achievement. Artifacts can also reveal whether district expectations for student learning are being met; whether students are being given engaging, challenging work requiring critical thinking skills, and whether that work is differentiated and responsive to students’ needs, backgrounds, and personal experiences.

Methodology for this analysis included the following: schools were asked to select artifacts from the four core areas of language arts, math, science and social studies in grades 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, and End of Course Exam (EOC) courses in grades 9-10 (US History, English I and II, Algebra I, Biology). Collected artifacts are meant to be activities that assess mastery of a standard without being “tests” (such as a 50-question multiple choice exam). Auditors also asked that some of the artifacts be from recognized subpopulations: English Language Learners (ELL), Special Education (SPED), and advanced students (GT). Altogether, auditors evaluated 628 artifacts from language arts, math, science, and social studies classrooms, with samples from GT, SPED, ELL, and Bilingual classrooms. Auditors note that the time period for collection occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic and schools in Texas were in varying stages of reopening or employing a variety of mitigation strategies to try to prevent the spread of the virus. Because of the unique nature of the time period during which the artifacts were collected, any observations made by auditors on the content, cognition and context of artifacts may not be fully representative of “normal” student work in the district, nor are they meant to be. However, the analysis still provides insight into what work teachers are asking students to complete to demonstrate their mastery of the concepts, skills, and knowledge. These samples reveal possible areas of weakness with how curriculum is being delivered in district classrooms and the differences in cognitive demand and contexts across programs (ELL, Bilingual, SPED, GT) and campuses.

Key Findings:

- Based on the artifacts submitted, auditors found that with the exception of grade 1 ELA and grade 4 math, the artifacts showed adequate proportions of higher-order thinking skills, but the majority of contexts were the least engaging types (Classroom and Test-like). Several grade levels in certain content areas showed disparities between high and low poverty schools in the levels of cognitive demand and the types of engaging contexts.
FOCUS AREA 5

- Based on the artifacts submitted, evidence of cultural responsiveness and cultural diversity in content, resources, and contexts was low and opportunities for student agency (voice and choice) were infrequent across grade levels and content areas.

- Based on the artifacts submitted, expectations for student performance at high poverty schools were lower than the expectations at low poverty schools. Expectations for SPED students were lower than expectations for regular education students.

District Strengths

- In the elementary grades, about a third of mathematics artifacts required some writing, usually to explain how the student arrived at his or her answer. Writing in math uses a different set of thinking skills to consolidate a student’s conceptual understanding and is shown to increase achievement; it is also important in providing a way for students to justify the correctness of their solutions and is a distinctly positive feature in math artifacts.

- There was some evidence of content area integration between elementary social studies and English language arts/reading (ELAR), and between elementary science and ELAR. This is a positive way to condense, compact, and accelerate content and make the number of standards more manageable for teachers. This practice was not evident at every campus, however.

- Auditors noted several artifacts which exemplified good pedagogy, offering student choice and engaging activities and requiring higher-order thinking skills to complete.

The Lens of Culturally Responsive Teaching

One lens for examining student work artifacts is Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), a critically important method to help students learn better, learn more deeply, and move from being dependent learners to independent learners.

Culturally Responsive Teaching is an educator’s ability to recognize students’ cultural displays of learning and making meaning and respond positively and constructively with teaching moves that use cultural knowledge as a scaffold to connect what the student knows to new concepts and content in order to promote effective information processing. All the while, the educator understands the importance of being in relationship and having a social-emotional connection to the student in order to create a safe space for learning.

– Zaretta Hammond, Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain

Many schools and teachers have interpreted CRT to mean including cultural celebrations and decorations, but this is to miss the larger point: the end goal of CRT is academic success, and that academic success must embody the same high expectations for everyone.

A fair proportion of CRT lies in the relationship between the teacher and student and in the teacher’s knowledge and expertise in classroom interactions and culturally relevant techniques to consolidate learning such as storytelling and call-and-response, and the teacher’s own understanding of the cultural lens (his or her own and that of the student). These are not possible to see in student work artifacts. What can be seen in artifacts are the following characteristics of CRT:

- Activities which provide appropriate challenge in order to stimulate brain growth and intellective capacity. The artifacts require all students to use higher-order thinking skills.
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- Lessons and activities with Real World and Meaningful Writing contexts which are **relevant and applicable to students’ daily lives** and offer students opportunities both to make and express meaning from their learning and to see connections between what they learn and the real world.

- Culturally relevant curriculum that is appropriately **inclusive and representative of many groups and cultures** and affirming of the value of all students’ cultural identities. The curriculum should connect to culturally relevant examples and metaphors from students’ everyday lives through instructional materials, assignments, and texts that reflect students’ backgrounds and experiences. These types of materials are critical to engagement and deep, meaningful learning.

- Use of **multiple modalities** both for learning and demonstrating learning and student agency in selecting modalities. This is often referred to as “Voice and Choice” and is important in giving students opportunities for self-expression (agency) and in moving students toward becoming independent learners (sometimes referred to as “taking ownership”).

- High Expectations for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, program assignment, or socioeconomic status.

Auditors evaluated artifacts with these five attributes in mind: Appropriate Challenge, Engaging Contexts, Evidence of a Multicultural Curriculum, Evidence of Multiple Modalities and Student Agency, and High Expectations for All Students. These provide the overarching framework of the analysis. All of these attributes should be evident across schools and across programs so that economically disadvantaged, ELL, SPED, Bilingual, and GT students are all offered access to the same high quality curriculum and the same high expectations for academic success that all students have.

**Appropriate Challenge: Cognitive Type Analysis**

Cognitive Type is an indicator of the sort of thinking required to carry out a given task. Auditors expect the cognitive types of the written, taught and tested curriculum to be congruent so that students are not surprised by any of the cognitive demands placed on them in testing situations. The various assignments and activities collected in classrooms across the system should reveal a range of cognitive demand, so that students have ample opportunity to practice the cognitive skills they will need to be successful on national, state, and local assessments as well as in the real world. There is a strong body of research showing that students who are the lowest performing improve dramatically when they are engaged in problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making activities. In the simplest terms, the more students are asked to do cognitively, the more they achieve.

The cognitive demand of the student activities required by the artifacts is analyzed against Bloom’s New Taxonomy, which may be found in **Appendix K**, along with examples of the various cognitive types. The findings are grouped by higher-order thinking skills (Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating) and lower-order thinking skills (Remembering, Understanding, Applying).
The cognitive demand of artifacts was found to be the highest in ELAR and science, particularly at the upper grades in ELAR. First grade cognitive demand was low in ELAR. In science, cognitive demand was highest in 4th and 5th grade and in high school Biology. The cognitive demand was lowest in mathematics artifacts, with the exception of Algebra I at high school, which was predominantly higher-order thinking. Social studies had the highest cognitive demand at high school and 7th grade. It should be noted that in US History, more than half the artifacts were from AP US History and likely skewed the proportion of higher order thinking somewhat.

When examined by economic disadvantage, there are only minimal differences between high and low poverty schools and sometimes the level of cognitive demand for high poverty schools exceeded that of low poverty schools, though it should be noted that where this occurred the sample of artifacts for high and low poverty schools was very small. High Poverty was defined as 60% or higher Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL); Low Poverty was defined as 34% FRL or lower.

The results of this analysis are shown in the following exhibits.
Not all grade levels in all content areas had sufficient artifacts from both groups to conduct a comparison analysis and economic disparity across campuses is most evident in elementary and intermediate schools. In **ELA**, the demand for higher order thinking skills in high poverty schools exceeded that of low poverty schools in grades 1, 4, and 5. In **math**, grades 1 and 7 showed considerably lower proportions of higher order thinking skills for high poverty schools when compared to low poverty schools. In **science**, only grades 1 and 4 had sufficient sample sizes to permit comparative analysis. Higher order thinking skills were required more often in low poverty schools than in high poverty schools at these grade levels. In **social studies**, grade 1 showed a considerable disparity among levels of cognitive demand in high poverty schools versus low poverty schools, with high poverty schools requiring critical thinking much less frequently than low poverty of the artifacts submitted for social studies.

**Engagement and Relevance: Context Analysis**

Context is the way in which mastery of an objective is demonstrated—the *how* of content (the concepts, skills, or knowledge). A multiple choice item differs significantly from an essay question or a portfolio project. Context is also a powerful determiner of student engagement, with certain types of contexts providing more relevance and authenticity, and intrinsic engagement for students than others. In general, the more relevant and applicable the context is to the real world for a student, the more engaging s/he will find it and the more easily s/he will learn, retain, and transfer new concepts and information.
Auditors analyzed student work artifacts and categorized them by context type: Classroom, Test-Like, Real-World, or Meaningful Writing. Auditors would expect to see all context types in a body of artifacts, but a higher proportion of the more engaging artifacts (Real-World and Meaningful Writing) are more desirable because they produce better learning and better retention. Real World contexts give students relevant, applicable ways to learn and practice content while Meaningful Writing gives them opportunities to consolidate learning by making and expressing meaning. Meaningful writing also provides more opportunities for student voice. A fuller explanation of context types and their categories and the methodology for this analysis can be found in Appendix K.

Overall, auditors found that artifacts tended to incorporate the two least-engaging contexts, Classroom and Test-like, a majority of the time. The following exhibits show the distribution of contexts for the four core content areas.

**Exhibit 5.13: Context Distributions: All Content Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Test-Like</th>
<th>Real World</th>
<th>Meaningful Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eng. I</strong></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eng. II</strong></td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Algebra I</strong></td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biology</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US History</strong></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Auditors noted that overall, contexts tended to be of the least engaging types (Classroom and Test-like). Exceptions to this are ELAR at grades 5 and 7 and US History, which show high proportions of Meaningful Writing, and grade 1 science which had a high proportion of Real World contexts. It should be noted that in US History, more than half the artifacts were from AP US History and likely skewed the proportion of Meaningful Writing.
The following exhibits show a comparison of contexts in the artifacts submitted by low and high poverty schools.

Exhibit 5.14: Context Proportions by Economic Disadvantage: All Content Areas

Not all grade levels in all content areas had sufficient artifacts from both groups to conduct a comparison analysis, and economic disparity across campuses is most evident in elementary and intermediate schools. **ELAR** showed differences in contexts only in grade 5, where the percentage of engaging contexts in high poverty schools’ artifacts exceeded those of low poverty schools. Contexts for **math** were essentially the same proportions except in grade 7 where engaging contexts were used in many more artifacts in low poverty schools and not at all in high poverty schools. Contexts for both high and low poverty schools were generally of the least engaging type in math. In **science**, engaging contexts in high poverty schools exceeded those in low poverty schools in both 1st and 4th grade. In **social studies**, engaging contexts were employed less frequently in grade 1 in high poverty schools versus in low poverty schools.

Engaging contexts are important for all students but they are critical for students in poverty or from marginalized groups who may arrive at school in varying states of isolation and anxiety. Math in particular is a content area in which achievement is highly positional and students are well aware of their performance in relation to other students. Ensuring that all students are engaged in hands-on, relevant activities surrounding mathematical concepts is important to ensuring success for marginalized students or students in poverty.
Evidence of a Multicultural Curriculum

Multicultural curriculum has benefits for all students in developing empathy, working effectively with people from other races and ethnicities, and developing critical thinking skills. Multicultural curriculum must contain the following:

- Multiple points of view for historical events and literary periods presented in ways that do not relegate them to “other viewpoints” as opposed to the main (White) version, but as full participants with valid, important perspectives.

- Deliberate inclusion of a wide variety of people with varying skin colors and ethnicities, either as authors, characters, scientists, historical figures, or named subjects in math problems or situations. Children should have ample opportunities to see people who look like them in resources and assignments, and opportunities to explore multiple perspectives from a variety of ethnicities.

- Some definitions of multicultural curriculum include a stated focus on equity, designed to disrupt longstanding patterns of privilege that influence how certain subjects, primarily history but also literature, have been presented in the past.

It is only possible to see whether representation and inclusion are present in student work artifacts, not how they are employed in the classroom. Presence of multicultural curriculum characteristics does not necessarily denote either adequate representation or skill, empathy, and respect for the subject material. Using the above definition, auditors evaluated student work artifacts to determine if there was any evidence of multicultural curriculum. The results of that analysis are presented here.

Exhibit 5.15: Evidence of Multicultural Curriculum and Resources

Any evidence of multicultural curriculum was most evident in social studies, but auditors noted that nearly all incidences of inclusion were only superficial mentions of an ethnic group (such as Native Americans or African Americans) in the larger context of a history lesson such as the Alamo or Civil War. In elementary, there were several artifacts relating to Martin Luther King, Jr. and two relating to other African Americans who were not Martin Luther King, Jr., but overall, social studies artifacts did not offer depth or nuance related to other ethnic and racial groups, nor did it offer any breadth of coverage. ELA also had a few artifacts about Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as some books and projects with characters of color or by Black/African American writers and artists. Most of these characters/artists/writers were African American; there was almost no representation of other ethnic or racial groups. In math, multicultural curriculum was only evident in the occasional use of names that were identifiable as Hispanic or Asian. One math lesson used a picture book about multiplication with main characters who were Chinese. In science there was virtually no multicultural curriculum;
only one artifact from 1st grade used a picture book by a Native American author in conjunction with a unit on rocks. It is not known whether the teacher explicitly pointed out to the students that the book was by a Native American and that many of the sentiments of the book reflected Native American beliefs and values. If the teacher did not discuss that with the students, then there would be no discernible multicultural curriculum or resources among the collected artifacts in science.

One artifact from social studies stood out because it was the only artifact in social studies to include Asian Americans other than a fleeting mention of the Chinese Exclusion Act in AP US History. This artifact came from a mid-level poverty school (between 35%-64% FRL) and used two picture books, one fiction and the other non-fiction, and a writing assignment which allowed the student to consolidate what s/he learned and make connections to prior knowledge and experiences. This artifact from 1st grade is shown below in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 5.16: Inclusive Social Studies Artifact

Auditors noted that mid-level poverty schools submitted artifacts that reflected better pedagogy, in general, than either high or low poverty schools (see Evidence for High Expectations, below).
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Vetting Resources for Potential Bias

All resources districts uses should be vetted for potential issues with cultural sensitivity. Without this careful evaluation, a district can’t be sure that resources are free of bias. Auditors found some examples of artifacts which might be cause for concern when viewed with a lens for racial bias. The image in the following exhibit is of an artifact from English II. Beside it is the original, color image.

Exhibit 5.17: English II Antigone Artifact

The character of Ismene is represented as blond and fair skinned. This is a character who is described as beautiful in the play *Antigone*, but not given any physical description other than that. Her sister, Antigone, is also not given any physical description in the play, though she is described as troublesome. Her actions reveal her to be principled, brave, and loyal, so she is not a bad character by any means, but she is represented here with considerably darker skin and hair. Neither of these physical descriptions is supported by the text or stage directions of *Antigone*. What is concerning is that the “beautiful” character is blond and fair while “troublesome” Antigone is dark-skinned. Since ancient Greek didn’t have a word for blond, presenting Ismene this way is not defensible from historical accuracy standpoint. Use of an image like this can be subtle reinforcement of ideals of beauty rooted in whiteness.

The following exhibit shows two parts of an AP US History Assignment in which students created a magazine detailing various aspects of the Gilded Age (1877-1914) in the US. Students were required to write 5 full-page articles, each detailing one aspect of the changes and issues of the era. This is one student’s product.
Exhibit 5.18: AP US History: Gilded Age Magazine Project

The article on the left is written to inform the reader about Helen Hunt Jackson and her desire to “civilize” Native Americans so they could better assimilate into White society. The student explains that her ideas, as well as those of Richard Henry Pratt, led to the creation of the Carlisle School, a boarding school for Indian children where they could be Christianized and learn English. The article additionally cites the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 as a way for native tribes to have an easier time assimilating into American society, though it doesn’t clarify how this will ease assimilation. There are perspectives and content in this assignment that reflect a definite bias, which could be offensive and even painful for some students, considering the impact of these events on the Native American population of the US. The Dawes Severalty Act divided native lands among individual members of a tribe rather than allowing the tribe as a whole to hold the land communally, which was their traditional cultural practice. The requirements for a clear deed to the land were onerous, lasting 25 years, and the ultimate result of the act was that thousands of Native Americans were deemed unfit to hold their land and were disenfranchised by the American government and the land was sold to White settlers. The Carlisle School, like all Indian boarding schools, was intended to strip Native children of their culture—language, dress, beliefs. These schools were places of substantial abuse—emotional, physical, and sexual—and since children were far from home, they had no one to turn to. Some children ran away, some died of starvation because of inadequate provisions for students, others died from illness, and still other died from abuse suffered at the hands of their “civilizers.” The boarding schools and the Dawes Act were profoundly traumatizing for many Native American families. The article on the right is about the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which stopped the immigration of Chinese workers into the U.S. and prevented those already in the U.S. from becoming citizens, a ban that lasted until 1943. Chinese workers up until the Act passed had been subjected to extreme discrimination, including looting, robbery, and lethal physical assaults, and exploitation by unscrupulous businessmen who paid them far less than American laborers.
Issues to consider with an assignment like this:

- While the magazine project is a student product, it is an outgrowth of what the student has been taught, the source materials s/he was given to study, and how the assignment was framed. The common textbook for AP US History, *The American Pageant*, has come under sharp criticism for the language it uses when discussing non-White people groups; if this is the text students are using in the district, this raises concerns with regard to inclusion and representation.

- The framing of the assignment requires the student to assume the persona of someone who endorses all these activities; that in and of itself might lead one to question how these topics are being presented in the AP US History textbook or how the teacher is presenting them in class. Is there representation of how people of color felt about any of these acts in any primary source documents? Any discussion of the irreparable harm the Dawes Act did to tribal culture? How it felt to the Chinese laborers who couldn’t get citizenship or bring their families to the U.S.? Other AP US History artifacts only required the student to synthesize a description of the changes during this time period using a number of source documents. The tone of these pieces was more academic and neutral, though it should be noted that none mentioned Native Americans or the Chinese Exclusion Act.

- These are the only mentions of Chinese and Native American people in the US History artifacts, and almost the only mentions of these two groups in any of the social studies artifacts collected. For students who are Asian or Native American, how they see their ethnicity portrayed in curriculum and in resources can affect their sense of self-worth. Native American students in particular are often profoundly negatively affected by how their culture is portrayed in history texts. It is especially vital to amplify different perspectives and voices surrounding events that had such a major impact on people of color.

The overall incidence of multicultural curriculum and resources was low and there were concerns about how people of color are portrayed in some resources and activities.

**Evidence of Multiple Modalities and Student Agency (Choice and Voice)**

Multiple modalities both for learning and demonstrating learning give students agency in the learning process. Being able to select ways of learning and demonstrating mastery of that learning is important in developing metacognitive skills and in moving students toward being independent learners. This is often referred to as “Voice and Choice.” Curriculum with ample Voice and Choice also allows students to self-differentiate, accommodating their learning styles and needs through their selection of process and product. Voice and Choice also increases engagement for students, which in turn increases retention.

Auditors examined artifacts to determine the degree to which students were given agency in their own learning. Overall, opportunities for Voice and Choice were low across content areas and there were some disparities in rates of student agency (the ability to choose how to demonstrate learning or to have choice in topics and reading material or other resources) between high and low poverty schools. The rates for each content area are presented in the following exhibit.
Exhibit 5.19: Percentage of Artifacts Allowing for Student Choice

Opportunities for voice and choice in student learning and demonstrations of mastery were low across grade levels and content areas. The lowest was math, with only 5% of artifacts offering some opportunity for choice. The highest was in science, with 21% of artifacts giving students some agency in their learning and mastery demonstrations.

In the next exhibit, a pair of 5th grade artifacts from different content areas shows how “One-Pagers” were utilized with very different scope for student agency. These offer insight into the varying levels of understanding among teachers regarding how Voice and Choice should operate.

Exhibit 5.20: 5th Grade One-Pagers

The purpose of a One-Pager is to allow students opportunity to consolidate learning and make meaning of something—a story, a historical event, a process, a relationship. The act of deciding how to include elements and represent them graphically or artistically is part of this process and requires higher order thought to complete. Both artifacts come from a high poverty school. Although the artifact on the left gave the student elements to include, s/he had complete freedom to place the elements wherever s/he wanted and to emphasize some elements over others. The text and artistic representation of the subject matter (the novel Hatchet) were entirely up to the student. The context here is very engaging and the cognitive demand is high. The artifact on the right organized the elements and included all artwork representing the subject matter (the War of 1812). The student had virtually no decisions to make. Along with this template, the students were given a packet. Each space on the template corresponded to a sheet of the packet and contained the information needed to fill in that space. Any analysis or evaluation the student might have had to make about what to
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include and/or emphasize was eliminated. Cognitive demand is at the lowest level—Remembering and Understanding. With lowered cognitive demand and the removal of any decision-making, the engagement level of the activity also drops. Auditors noted the use of One-Pagers in many of the artifacts, with varying degrees of cognitive demand and student agency.

In elementary ELA, auditors noted that the amount of extended writing in high poverty schools exceeded that of low poverty schools in nearly every grade (see Evidence of High Expectations, below), students from high poverty schools had less choice in what they would write about than students from low poverty schools. Among high poverty writing artifacts overall, auditors noted that 20% offered some degree of student choice while among low poverty writing artifacts, 75% offered some degree of student choice. In grade 4, there were also disparities in the types of writing students were doing in low poverty vs. high poverty schools. High poverty schools did more writing than low poverty schools, but most of the writing was STAAR prep. Low poverty schools did more writing connected to literature and more fiction writing, which incorporated more student voice and choice. The exhibit below shows the types of writing offered in high and low poverty schools in grade 4.

Exhibit 5.21: Grade 4 ELA: Differences in Writing Types, Student Agency for High and Low Poverty Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>High Poverty</th>
<th>Low Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Essay: Should All Playgrounds Have Inclusive Equipment? (STAAR Prep)</td>
<td>Given topic, 1 page max, handwritten, informal style</td>
<td>Drafting Realistic Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Would You Do if Santa Were Stuck in the Chimney? (STAAR Prep)</td>
<td>Given topic, 1 page max, handwritten, informal style</td>
<td>Tri-orama with essay showing the struggles the characters faced and describing personal connection to the novel (Bridge to Terebithia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who I Most Want to Meet</td>
<td>Given Topic, no maximum length, handwritten, informal style</td>
<td>Imitating realistic fiction (SPED)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Narrative (STAAR PREP)</td>
<td>Student choice of topic, 1 page max, handwritten, informal style</td>
<td>Describe a change that one character experienced in this story. Explain the event and/or characters that influenced this change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Favorite Snack (SPED)</td>
<td>Given topic, No maximum length, informal style. Handwritten.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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From these samples, it’s not possible to state definitively that students in high poverty schools aren’t getting as many opportunities to make meaning of literature through writing. The artifacts submitted indicated an almost exclusive focus on STAAR-prep writing and no writing on literature in the high poverty schools. STAAR writing is heavily focused on personal narrative and opinion writing in an informal style, rather than on more formal, academic writing. Maintaining a single focus on STAAR-prep writing only does not offer students the opportunity to develop and practice this type of writing, allows for far less student choice, and are ultimately less engaging and less culturally responsive. Writing about literature and as part of literary analysis or for research is a type of writing critical for all students. Access to activities that allow for the development and practice of this key skill directly affects a student’s later choices and chances for success post high school. Omitting other types of writing may subtly indicate lower expectations for students in high poverty schools. A discussion of expectations follows in the next section.

Evidence of High Expectations for All Students

Auditors expect to see evidence of high expectations for all students across district campuses. This means that a high poverty school’s expectations for mastery should be the same as those of a low poverty school. Auditors noted that in ELAR, the amount (the quantity of artifacts requiring writing) of writing students were required to do was actually higher in High Poverty schools than in Low Poverty schools. This is shown in the next exhibit.

Exhibit 5.22: Writing in ELA by FRL

Given that levels of cognitive demand and contexts in ELAR were similar across high and low poverty schools (see Appendix K) and given that the amount of writing was higher in high poverty schools in 4th, 5th, and 7th grade and nearly the same in grade 1, but student performance on assessments in high poverty schools was lower than students in low poverty schools, auditors looked at the products students submitted to see if there were disparities in teachers’ expectations for mastery. Assignments can be common across campuses in the district, but if teachers’ expectations are not the same for what completion of those assignments looks like, students will not perform at similar levels on high stakes tests. Auditors concluded that in some artifacts, there were significant differences in the expectations teachers had for what completion of the assignments should look like, as a demonstration of mastery of the concepts and skills. One difference in mastery expectations is implied in the types of writing student were expected to do in grade 4 (see Exhibit 5.21, above). Other samples of disparities are shown below, beginning with the following exhibit.
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Exhibit 5.23: Grade 1 ELA Research Project

The above artifacts are first grade research assignments in which the student was to find information about an American president and write a paragraph using the evidence found. The low poverty artifact (left) utilized 4 complete sentences that convey facts about Washington’s life. The high poverty artifact (middle) was from a Special Education student and included a single sentence describing President Lincoln. There is no further information about Lincoln’s life or his contribution to the United States, no mention of any other historical contributions. Both of these artifacts were meant to measure mastery of the same standard: ELA 1.13: (13) Inquiry and research: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student engages in both short-term and sustained recursive inquiry processes for a variety of purposes. The student is expected to: (A) generate questions for formal and informal inquiry with adult assistance; (B) develop and follow a research plan with adult assistance; (C) identify and gather relevant sources and information to answer the questions with adult assistance; (D) demonstrate understanding of information gathered with adult assistance; and (E) use an appropriate mode of delivery, whether written, oral, or multimodal, to present results. In no way can the artifact from the high poverty SPED student be considered mastery of this standard; the expectations for mastery of the same standards for SPED students were consistently lower than expectations for regular education students (see Special Populations, below). This was not an isolated example. The artifact on the far right is from a regular education student in a different high poverty elementary school in which the research product was also not as developed as that from the low poverty school.

In grade 5, auditors noted disparities in expectations for similar assignments in low and high poverty schools. The low poverty schools’ requirements for the assignment were more specific and more rigorous and required both the knowledge and use of literary terms. The products from these assignments and their specifications are shown below.
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Exhibit 5.24: Grade 5 Poetry Assignment Specifications and Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Poverty</th>
<th>High Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Make sure you use imagery in your poem.</td>
<td>1. Poem must be written in free verse or have a rhyme scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The poem must have 3 stanzas.</td>
<td>2. Poem must have at least 1 stanza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Include a picture to represent what the poem is about.</td>
<td>3. Stanza must have at least 4 lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Share it with me.</td>
<td>4. Poet must read with expression while presenting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Poem must have a creative title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Include an image or illustration with your poem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Poem must include at least 2 literary devices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The low poverty artifact was required to be longer (at least 3 stanzas), leaving more room to develop ideas and themes. The high poverty artifact was required to use “2 literary devices” although there was no clarification on what literary devices might be appropriate to include. The TEKS specify rhyme scheme, sound devices, and structural elements such as stanzas (grade 3) and figurative language such as simile, metaphor, and personification that the poet uses to create images (grade 4, repeated in grade 5). The high poverty artifact received an overall grade of 94% and a 20/20 for the use of 2 literary devices, but auditors were only able to identify simile in the student’s poem. Although the TEKS list stanzas (plural) as a literary device, by only including one stanza, the student can’t be said to be employing stanzas, which are used to break up blocks of text for greater rhythm and/or impact. The low poverty artifact used simile in two places, as well as hyperbole and personification to create imagery. While it still reads like a 5th grade poem, it is more developed and more sophisticated than the poem from the high poverty school. The high poverty artifact doesn’t reflect equally high expectations as the low poverty artifact, although both received a high grade from the teacher.
Mid-Level Poverty Schools

One unique occurrence among artifacts was that some of the most engaging and cognitively demanding pedagogy seemed to come from mid-level poverty schools (between 35%-59% FRL), rather than from low poverty schools. **Exhibit 5.27** shows two artifacts from 7th grade science. The topic of both is Dichotomous Keys. The artifact on the left is from a high poverty school. Although the one on the right came without a label, auditors believe it came from a mid-poverty school since two sets of artifacts from mid-poverty middle schools came without either labels or lists of submissions and this particular artifact did not appear on any of the lists of artifacts from either low or high poverty middle schools. What is not known is whether this was from a special population like GT or part of a Pre-AP course.

**Exhibit 5.25: 7th Grade Science: High and Mid-Level Poverty Schools**

The high poverty artifact gives students lists of insects, leaves, and birds’ feet (on back) and also gives a dichotomous key for each category that students must use to determine the identity of each individual item. The cognitive demand of this artifact is Applying, and the context is not particularly engaging. There is no opportunity for Voice and Choice. The mid-level poverty artifact requires students to pick a non-scientific group that interests them and identify 8 members of this group. Students must then develop their own dichotomous key to help someone else classify the various group members by their characteristics. Once complete, they must find a classmate to test their dichotomous key to classify their chosen group members and evaluate how effective it is. If it isn’t very effective, they need to make changes until it works properly for classification. The cognitive demand of this artifact uses all three higher-order skills: Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. The context is Real World, requiring testing of solutions and peer interaction, and offers student agency and greater engagement. This artifact is going to promote deeper, more retained learning.
Other exemplary artifacts:

- **Grade 5 social studies: Lewis and Clark Journal Homework.** Students chose a member of the expedition and wrote a journal entry for that person that included a hand drawn map of the journey and a sketch of an animal seen on the way. No fixed length. Students were given examples from Lewis and Clark’s actual journals. Gives students opportunity to write in a voice other than their own, provided agency with regard to topic, included and African American and a Native American as choices.

- **Grade 5 math: Grocery Run.** Students used local grocery store newspaper ads to shop for food to prepare a dinner for their family. Each student has a $100 budget and must document each item bought and its cost, totaling up their amounts by adding and multiplying whole numbers and decimals and calculating the change from their $100 bill. Gives students a real world context that they can relate specifically to themselves and their families—foods everyone likes, how much to serve, etc. Students have a great deal of choice when constructing their shopping list.

**Expectations for Special Populations**

Auditors did not have enough artifacts for Gifted and Talented, ESL, or Bilingual to conduct comparisons across schools and to draw any conclusions, but there were enough Special Education (SPED) artifacts to compare cognitive demand and contexts with regular education artifacts in ELA, math, and science. Some SPED artifacts showed clear differences in expectations for mastery when compared to regular education artifacts (see Exhibit 5.23, above). The following exhibit shows the proportion of higher and lower-order thinking skills and the distribution of contexts for SPED as compared to regular artifacts for all grade levels combined.

**Exhibit 5.26: Comparison of Cognitive Demand and Contexts for SPED**

Auditors noted that for all content areas shown, the cognitive demand for SPED student assignments was lower than for Regular Education, and contexts tended to be of the least engaging type. Social studies had too few SPED artifacts to allow a comparison. Expectations for higher-order thinking are different for SPED students than for regular education, although research shows that low-performing students benefit the most from work that offers appropriate challenge, problem solving, and personal relevance.
FOCUS AREA 5

Other Areas of Concern

- Teachers were asked to submit artifacts that show mastery of a standard or standards. Teacher understanding of what mastery of the standards looks like is important, as is teacher familiarity with the standards and how they translate into student tasks and assignments. Auditors found evidence of confusion over what the standards mean. Auditors noted several artifacts with as many as 5 standards listed, meaning the teacher believed the artifact measured mastery of 5 standards (more if all student expectations are included). Closer examination of these artifacts indicated that at most, 1 or 2 standards were actually demonstrated by the task, and in some cases only 1 or 2 student expectations were demonstrated rather than the whole standard. Auditors also found several artifacts with incorrect standard numbers or with single standards listed in which only one student expectation corresponded to the task of the artifact. Other artifacts did not correspond well enough to the standard listed to be considered a measure of mastery for that standard, though the activity might be considered related to the content.

- Auditors noted many artifacts from internet sites such as Teachers pay Teachers. This is not necessarily bad – teachers need to be free to use the resources that best address the situations and students in their classrooms. However, with these types of materials, their quality and actual alignment to the standards can vary widely, and they are seldom vetted for appropriateness and quality. Many of these worksheets have grammatical or content mistakes, include confusing tasks, or contain culturally insensitive material. Having flexibility in resources is good as long as they are rigorously evaluated prior to use to ensure their quality, alignment, and appropriateness. For example, auditors received one artifact from Teachers Pay Teachers with a list of names and information that students were supposed to graph by gender. Some of the names on the list could have belonged to either a boy or a girl, so the task specifications were confusing and difficult to execute.

- In social studies grades 4 and 7, auditors noted overlap in some activities. Both of these grade levels study Texas History, with grade 7 meant to be a more in-depth look at historical events and the peoples involved. However, auditors noted activities in grade 7 that closely paralleled activities from grade 4, such as creating flags for one of the presidents of Texas or for a particular battle. Because these two sets of standards are so similar, special care will need to be taken to ensure the content and suggested activities are vertically articulated to eliminate overlap across grade levels. It’s worth noting that auditors did not see differences in the depth with which students engaged with the content in grade 7 compared to how they encountered in grade 4, other than in the complexity of the texts they were reading. There are indicators in the TEKS for grade 7 that imply more writing to demonstrate mastery of the content. The district will need to consider what “in-depth” should look like in grade 7 and write curricular objectives to achieve specific levels of mastery.
Key Takeaways for Focus Area 5, Finding 2

Overall, the auditors found strong cognitive demand in artifacts, especially in ELAR and Science in upper grades. Contexts were not engaging, however, with few opportunities for authentic or multidisciplinary connection and relevance. There are differences across campuses in the nature of expectations for student performance in both quantity and cognitive demand. Although high poverty schools have strong expectations for the amount or frequency of writing, the actual writing assignments were not as rigorous or extensive as those at mid-level or low poverty schools. Multicultural representation and evidence of cultural responsiveness in artifacts was overall low. Teacher expectations at high poverty schools were lower overall than at low poverty schools, and expectations for SPED students were also lower than expectations for regular education students. Mansfield has strong curriculum for most content areas and this is evident in the artifacts, but there were still many examples of outside resources that were not aligned nor of adequate quality to support the learning needed. Teacher understanding and clarity on what the standards actually mean and require are not consistent across all campuses.
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Recommendations

Based on data from documents, samples of student work, interviews and surveys and from an extensive and ongoing review of research on best practice, the auditors have developed a set of recommendations to address the gaps and weaknesses identified in the findings of the Equity Audit. These recommendations represent not only the knowledge to be found in the research literature, but also the professional judgment of seasoned educators who themselves have worked in multiple districts with ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse learners.

The recommendations are presented in the order of priority for initiating system-wide improvements. The recommendations also recognize and differentiate between the policy and monitoring responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, and the administrative and operational duties of the Superintendent of Schools. As such, the recommendations are divided into two sections: one directed at the policy-making authority and one directed at administration. Therefore, there are overarching goals for the Board of Trustees and for the Superintendent, followed by specific actions needed to meet those identified goals.

Recommendation 1: Adopt a Clear Vision and Specific Expectations for Equity

Why it matters: Having a clear vision establishes what the “ideal” looks like. Related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the vision establishes for all personnel, parents, and, most importantly, students, what a bias-free, inclusive, diverse educational experience looks like. The vision should derive from a set of beliefs, firmly rooted in research, that establishes what the Board of Trustees believe should characterize the school and classroom environment. From this vision, all expectations, goals, plans, defined roles and responsibilities, and related processes are derived.

Currently, the lack of vision concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion has resulted in inconsistent adherence to policy that exists related to equity and discrimination. Students, teachers, and administrators all report experiencing discrimination, bullying, and racism to varying degrees without it being consistently or satisfactorily addressed. There is a need for clear language, from the very top, about why all students matter and why every single child should be assured a positive, welcoming, and inclusive educational environment.

Who is responsible: Board of Trustees, with input from the Superintendent and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council. The council is charged with addressing aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion for policy, planning, and processes.

Tasks to accomplish:

1. Define the district’s beliefs and philosophy related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Address what a bias-free educational environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students and their families looks like. Specify in policy, from these values, what the core beliefs are and the vision that is desired.

The district does not have current policy that defines diversity, equity, and inclusion, nor does it have policy that communicates what the leaders’ expectations are related to equity and inclusion in Mansfield ISD schools. These policies would establish the philosophical framework within
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which decisions at all level of the system are to be made and would assure congruence of these decisions with the vision the district has for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Training for the Board of Trustees and the DEI Council around issues of cultural sensitivity and bias should be completed prior to engaging in discussions around the vision and expectations for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This training is described in greater detail in Recommendation 3.

2. Define expectations for critical areas that need improvement in order for the vision to become reality.

In order to assure that the vision and philosophy of 1.1 are implemented district-wide, the board must clearly articulate expectations for what an equitable, bias-free, and inclusive environment looks like in all areas of the organization, particularly areas where gaps and inequities have been noted in this report. These areas include:

A. Expectations for school and district climate and culture:

The auditors found that almost one-fourth of high school students who responded to the survey do not feel safe at school, and an even higher percentage do not feel like they are accepted for who they are. Almost one-third (31%) of high school students who responded do not feel like they belong at school, and over 40% report having experienced discrimination or bias at school. This includes racial slurs, harassment, and bullying for a variety of issues, including sexual orientation and transgender issues (see Focus Area 4). The following are recommended for board expectations related to school climate and culture:

School and classroom: specify expectations for unbiased, respectful, and inclusive interpersonal relationships between and among all students and school personnel throughout the school. This includes student-student, student-personnel, and personnel-personnel relationships. Note how these expectations are to align with and complement those of the Social/Emotional Learning program and restorative practices throughout the district. Note also expectations for pro-active parental outreach and involvement at each school site, including outreach for parents who do not speak English. With these expectations, explicitly communicate that every child and every child’s family should feel equally valued and important to his/her teachers and all other school personnel, and that each child (and family) feels that his/her background, culture, language, and perspectives are valued and appreciated by all personnel in the school.

These expectations should explicitly include respectful interactions when addressing behavior management or disciplinary issues. Have clear expectations for behavior management and disciplinary issues in congruence with the philosophy and vision. Require that all disciplinary issues related to “violating code of conduct” be investigated for implicit bias, due to variability of perceptions of disrespect.

B. Expectations for instructional delivery

Within the context of the expectations outlined above around culture and climate, specify expectations for instructional delivery that reflect this vision, but that also outline specific expectations for meeting all students’ needs in the classroom with differentiated (curricular as well as instructional), culturally responsive, and cognitively demanding approaches and activities that intentionally develop language and vocabulary and high levels of reading and writing. These components represent the most critical characteristics of effective instruction for student populations that are linguistically, economically, and ethnically diverse.
A philosophical shift that allows students greater voice and choice in classroom work not only increases the personal relevance of that work, but also renders it immediately meaningful to the student. This makes it more culturally responsive. District leaders should clearly define expectations that outline for teachers what the non-negotiable guidelines for all strategies, approaches, and student activities are. This will create a framework within which teachers have flexibility to choose suitable approaches, so they are not only aligning their teaching to the vision and philosophy of the district, but are also granted flexibility in their teaching style, as well. These expectations should be firmly rooted in the goals and requirements of social emotional learning and the Multi-tiered System of Supports/Response to Intervention. They must be fully integrated in every respect, both in guidelines to teachers as well as in the curriculum, itself. These components should become foundational to the Curriculum Management plan and be reflected in that plans’ goals around curriculum design, development, delivery, and assessment (see Recommendation 4).

The following are key components related to expectations for instructional delivery that must be clearly defined and expanded on for integration into both curriculum design and delivery. Design means that there must be support in the written curriculum for these components, and delivery means there must be specific training for teachers in how to incorporate these elements into their instruction within the context of a fully inclusive classroom environment. Again, all components must be addressed from an integrated framework—the needs of English Language Learners, Gifted students, students of economic disadvantage, and students who receive special education services must all be considered when the expectations are developed. There is considerable overlap in what effective instruction for all of these students should look like.

1. **Framework for strategies and approaches**

   The framework for the strategies and approaches specifies the approaches and strategies a teacher selects from to use with students. These approaches are what the teacher does, as in the case of direct instruction, shared practice, or modeling. This framework should include and address:

   - Culturally responsive, student centered, hands-on (real world, simulated real world, authentic) approaches.
   - Differentiation (curricular and instructional), specifically for students with special needs or who need additional scaffolding or supports (not tiers 2 or 3, but the differentiation and scaffolding needed for tier 1).
   - Guidelines for flexible student groupings for direct instruction: lessons, mini-lessons, and targeted supports for small groups, pairs, or whole group.
   - High cognitive demand that includes tiered questioning and open-ended questioning, to encourage students to think divergently, critically, and conceptually.
2. Expectations for student engagement

The expectations for student engagement address how district leaders wish to see students engaged or active in the classroom. These expectations are specific to students’ guided or independent practice—it is what the students are doing, not the teacher. Such expectations should minimally include requirements for:

- **Language proficiency**: a consistent, integrated focus on language and vocabulary development, with clear objectives for language structures and mechanics and an integrated focus on reading and writing across all content areas (and in assessment).

- **Cultural responsiveness**: students’ backgrounds and perspectives are always respected and valued, with additional consideration for their unique learning styles and experiences in all activities. Students are encouraged, wherever and whenever possible, to relate their learning to personal experience and interests. Within the expectations for culturally responsive teaching, integrate expectations for student voice and choice in their activities. This component allows students of all ages to have not only some choice in what kinds of activities they prefer to practice or show evidence of learning, but also to incorporate their personal experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives into those activities. Voice and choice also directs that resources and materials reflect the diverse backgrounds, histories, and experiences of the students or allows them to source additional materials if such resources are inadequate.

- **Authenticity**: all activities should be relevant to the real world, as much as possible, and emphasize bringing in real world realia, artifacts, or experiences, or simulated real-world experiences. The focus is on authenticity and relevance. It should be noted that what makes something relevant to one child may not make it relevant to the next—“real world” is very personal for young children.

- **Cognitive demand**: assure that a high percentage of student work, even at the earliest grade levels, is cognitively demanding and of equal rigor across campuses. A lack of cognitive demand is the most pernicious characteristic of educational programs serving disadvantaged students. High levels of rigor not only improve achievement scores, but increase engagement of students, decrease truancy, and increase learning. Having clarity for what cognitive demand looks like, in terms of the tasks, activities, and assessments students are expected to complete, is needed in both training and the written curriculum.

3. Assessment and progress monitoring

Expectations for assessment and progress monitoring must be developed to assure that how students are assessed is congruent with the vision and expectations of the board for best practice. Assessment should equally reflect authentic learning experiences and be culturally responsive and rigorous. Current assessment measures, such as the STAAR, are cognitively low, and district performance on nationally normed assessments is indicative of this weakness. Having common formative tools that align to the curriculum, that are performance based, and that require high levels of cognition and integrated reading and writing skills will assist in raising the instructional expectations for all students across the district and move district performance to a nationally high level.
C. Expectations related to access and economic isolation

Access to all programs and the identification of students for specific programs and services should be proportional with their ethnic representation across the district, as well as within campuses. Assuring proportionality ensures that no student is overlooked due to economic factors, and that no student is identified as having a learning disability that simply needs more effective scaffolding or supports.

In addition to expectations related to access and identification, clarify what the district’s expectations are with respect to economic isolation in schools. Currently, several campuses exceed or fall below the district’s average free and reduced lunch (FRL) percentage by fifteen or more percentage points. Establish guidelines for a target level of economic representation at every elementary and intermediate school over the next three to five years and redraw boundary lines to assure these guidelines are met.

Assure that all students have access and exposure to campus personnel (professional) that reflect the diversity of their student body. This does not have to be a perfectly proportional representation, immediately, but ensuring that students have at least a minimum level of access (as established by the board) to diverse personnel is key to improving student performance. In addition to improving diversity of teachers and administrators at campuses, establish expectations that those teachers who do not reflect ethnic diversity have been trained and exhibit high sensitivity to and effectiveness with diverse student populations.

With these expectations, assure the following:

1. **Alignment with vision:** access to programs, services, identification, disciplinary actions, administrators, and campus personnel should all be proportional with the diversity of the students and reflect the district’s vision and goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. **Economic isolation:** Identify what are reasonable expectations for assuring that no campus is economically isolated, such as a guideline that no campus should have an economically disadvantaged student population more than 5-10 percentage points from the district average rate. Proportionality of enrollment across campuses by Economic Disadvantage is one of the most significant factors inclosing gaps.

3. **Program/services access:** Clarify what is meant by equal access to supports and services related to identified needs. Include within these expectations that specific programs define and institutionalize identification guidelines and practices and monitor these for consistency, to assure equal access and proportionality (consistency in implementation of special programs—see also Recommendation 2).

4. **Equity in discipline:** establish goals for ensuring that disciplinary actions are fair and consistent across campuses and not reflective of any bias. Monitor numbers (a goal of the Equity Plan in Recommendation 2) for proportionality and require disproportionalities to be addressed with specific and measurable actions at campuses. These actions should reflect a pro-active, student-centered, parent-centered approach that improves communication and builds relationships.

5. **Parent and family engagement:** Establish guidelines and expectations around parent communications, outreach, and responsiveness. Assure that all parents who have a concern or complaint are assured a hearing and are dealt with respectfully at every campus. Require the Student Services department to identify procedures, including
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procedures supporting parents who do not speak English, in communicating, supporting, and responding to parents or guardians. Have a clear line of authority to follow if campuses do not respond satisfactorily and parents share concerns or complaints.

D. Expectations for resource allocation: financial, material, human

1. Financial resources: develop guidelines in policy that address how funding should be consistently and fairly weighted and allocated to campuses to address the needs on those campuses. Include considerations for: the type of poverty present; special programming; diversity of the campus and personnel; language proficiency and type of language learners (newcomers, less commonly spoken languages vs. Spanish bilingual); and any additional factors. Funding should never be equal; funding must be equitably distributed so needs are sufficiently met. Therefore, there must be clear and specific rationale as to why funding is not equally allocated and why these differences exist. These guidelines should be stipulated in policy made and transparent to all campus leaders.

2. Staffing guidelines: assure that staffing allocations also follow areas of need. Not all campuses require the same number of counselors, social workers, or behavior interventionists. Establish how funding and supports for staffing will be weighted and provide campus leaders with processes to make requests for specific needs, such as an additional behavior interventionist or parent liaison. Allow for and support innovation and creativity in meeting the unique nature of the needs on each campus. Student-teacher ratios should be lower at higher-need campuses. Consider implementing a system for giving incentives to those campuses.

3. Hiring practices and employee compensation: working with campus administrators and the DEI Council, identify goals for what the most critical characteristics of the Mansfield ISD teaching and support personnel must be, respective of the diversity of the student population. Consider all types of diversity and identify the expectations related to hiring for these characteristics in recruiting and hiring guidelines. In addition to ethnic diversity, prioritize sensitivity to and experience with economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse populations and students with all kinds of special needs. The most important goal is to hire teachers (even from out of state) that reflect the vision and expectations for instructional excellence, strong positive relationships, and inclusion at all campuses. Develop clear policies and guidelines for employee compensation and require an annual review of compensation for equity and transparency.

4. Develop policy that specifies the district vision, addresses audit criteria, and that directs the revision of all related policies for alignment to the expectations developed under R2.

   A. Define the vision, beliefs, and expectations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in policy.

   Include in policy definitions of all key terms related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Specify all areas to be monitored for equity (see #2, above) and note what expectations are for each area.
B. Develop policies and revise existing policies to meet all criteria presented in Exhibit 1.1 and that direct planning to achieve the expectations set forth in R1.1 and R1.2 of this recommendation.

All expectations described above should be adapted into policy, to assure consistency in decision making across all campuses. Currently, policies that address discrimination, bullying, and bias do not include terms or concepts such as diversity, equity, or inclusion. Currently, policies do not communicate expectations regarding inclusivity, nor do they address the issues of culture and climate in buildings. Revise existing policies to include such language and develop new policies that address the vision and expectations of the board related to equity and inclusion—and that address all areas outlined in R1.2.

C. Require the development of an Equity Plan and the revision of related department plans to carry out the expectations of the board and to define goals, processes, timelines, roles and responsibilities, and budget considerations.

The Equity Plan components and purpose are addressed with specificity in Recommendation 2. Require the development of a plan over the next 6-12 months, in response to the needed policy. Allow all departments and campus leaders sufficient time to process through the results of the Equity Audit and to be informed of the new guidelines from the board related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Require all related departments (Human Resources, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability, Advanced Academics, Special Education, Student Support Services) to revise current plans and to submit these to the DEI Council for review for their alignment to the goals and expectations of the Equity Plan and board. The Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is not responsible for facilitating and directing all the needed changes; this department should function in a monitoring capacity, collecting the needed metrics and reports to assure that the goals of the Equity Plan are being met and responsibilities carried out. Frequent communication between this department and the Superintendent’s Cabinet will be critical in assuring needed change and to ensure accountability for the plan’s implementation.

In conclusion, clear and comprehensive direction from the board is critical to establishing the vision and philosophical framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This should be firmly rooted in the data from the Equity Audit as well as in research on best practices for diverse student populations. Attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and perspectives matter in the goal of educating children; relationships and the caring that is fundamental to the act of teaching should be explicitly valued and directed from the very top. Assuring that all students feel included, feel valued, and feel important to the mission of Mansfield ISD is not an unworthy goal and is a logical next-step for a district with a history of academic excellence and continuous improvement.
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Recommendation 2: Equity Planning

Why it matters: Once the board has defined clear expectations for diversity, equity, and inclusion across the district that establish the framework within which the vision and mission are to be realized, a plan is needed to connect these expectations with clear and measurable goals and the processes and procedures needed to accomplish them. The plan will focus and coordinate the many efforts needed across multiple departments to erase opportunity gaps and improve student access and achievement.

Currently, the district has no plan or cohesive vision coordinating the various initiatives and programs that impact instruction. There are several programs and initiatives in place that, due to insufficient clarity in the non-negotiable aspects of those programs and initiatives, have inconsistent and inequitable implementation across campuses. Planning is needed to assure that not only the goals related to areas of inequity are met, but also to assure that current programs and initiatives that have plans in place can revise those plans, tighten implementation procedures, and eradicate existing gaps and disproportionalities in student access to programs and services.

Who is responsible: Superintendent or superintendent’s designee, with input and guidance from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council.

Tasks to accomplish:

1. Develop an Equity Plan that specifies all goals related to board expectations and that outlines processes, timelines, evaluation procedures, and roles and responsibilities related to the plan’s implementation.

An equity plan is needed to clearly define the actions required to fulfill each expectation identified by the board, superintendent, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council. A plan coordinates efforts across all departments of the district; something of critical importance in a district the size and complexity of Mansfield ISD and given the comprehensive nature of the equity issues identified. Equity touches every department and level, and will therefore require monitoring by all members of the Superintendent’s Cabinet and by the Board of Trustees. The plan will identify measures for monitoring and establish guidelines for how accountability will be achieved. The plan should include the following key components:

A. DEI goals

Goals for DEI should address all areas of gaps and inequities identified in the Equity Audit. These include all those outlined in R1.1 and R1.2, but be developed with measurable language. For example, with program access, specify that identification of children of color and poverty for Gifted and Talented programming should be proportional with the district’s diversity within three years, as well as enrollment.

These goals should address the following:

1. Program Identification (SPED and GT)
2. Retention and disciplinary practices
3. Recruitment and hiring practices
4. Economic isolation of campuses
5. Culture and Climate, parent outreach and engagement
6. Instructional effectiveness with diverse populations
7. Written curriculum that better supports differentiation and diversity

B. Specific, measurable actions in support of the goals

The actions should clearly connect to the related departments and responsibilities across the district. The actions are to be in support of the goals listed above, and might include the following:

1. **Program Identification (SPED and GT):** goal is to increase the identification of students of color and poverty for Gifted and Talented services and to decrease the percentage of males and males of color for Special Education. Require each department to develop clear and consistent guidelines (see R2.2) for these processes, especially in casting a wider and more frequent net in elementary, for identifying gifted students. Universal enrichment practices for all kindergarten and first grade students should be implemented that allow students to demonstrate unusual abilities in all areas of giftedness. Monitor, by campus, the percentages of students referred and identified. Require intervention when disproportionalities persist.

2. **Retention and disciplinary practices.** Related actions might include:

   **Discipline:** Implementation goals for SEL and restorative practices; training teachers in same, and monitoring disciplinary referrals for fidelity to expectations. When numbers are disproportional, have consistent interventions from the Student Services department to identify where problems persist and what training or supports are necessary.

   **Retention:** Improve the system for formatively assessing and identifying learning gaps among students, particularly on campuses where performance is not consistent across student groups or with other campuses. Use multiple assessment instruments, including the MAP, to identify areas of weakness. Provide training to teachers and additional supports (as identified in the Curriculum Management Plan and MtSS/RtI Handbook) to assure student success before retention or test failure is probable.

3. **Recruitment, hiring, and human resources practices:** Actions should include developing new processes for recruitment and new guidelines for hiring. These hiring and recruitment practices should focus on increasing the diversity of the teacher cadre, but also improve instructional excellence. Deliberately seek to hire teachers with a sensitivity for and experience with diverse student populations. Monitor numbers accordingly; if diversity continues to be a problem, begin recruiting out of state and within the district, as well (future educators program). Develop programs and incentives to encourage the most experienced and effective teachers to serve at the neediest campuses.

4. **Economic isolation of campuses:** establish expectations for ideal economic balance within schools; consider current boundaries and how to minimally adjust these boundaries or evolve more schools of choice to assure an economic balance (ideally within 5-10 percentage points of the district average) at all district campuses. Create or implement programs to allow campuses to compete for students across campuses, to allow more programs of choice, and to assure that the most disadvantaged students have access to the highest quality educational programming—as will be evident in their achievement.
5. **Culture and Climate**: within culture and climate, establish comprehensive training for board members, central office and campus administrators, to be followed by teachers and campus support personnel. The training should focus first on cultural sensitivity and understanding cultural lens and diversity. Specific targets for demonstrating the implementation of this training in classrooms should be developed at every campus, and then monitored for implementation (in classrooms, during walk-throughs as well as in samples of student work). Reports should be provided by every campus to the DEI department regarding success of implementation.

Surveys should be administered annually to teachers, support personnel, and campus administrators regarding perceptions of the success of all training initiatives in making an impact on culture and climate and on students’ perceptions of safety and belonging. Where problems persist (as evident through complaints or from survey data), intervene with specific actions and require campus follow-up (crucial conversations, for example, with campus personnel where needed, write up with the appraisal process, etc.).

Establish goals for parent outreach and engagement and provide resources to implement. Consider changes to staffing for those schools with unique needs (add/provide a parent liaison, translation services, behavior interventionist, social worker/therapists, etc.).

Provide translation services and resources to all campuses with EL students.

6. **Instructional effectiveness with diverse populations:**

Train all principals and teachers in culturally responsive teaching and sensitivity, and also in how to differentiate, scaffold, and provide effective Tier I instruction for diverse learners. See Recommendations 3 and 4 for additional guidance in this.

7. **Written curriculum that better supports differentiation and diversity**: see specific actions under Recommendation 4.

All seven goals and related actions should have the following accompanying detail:

a) **Personnel (departments) responsible for each action**

Specify who is to do what, within which department, and with what scope of authority. Note who is responsible for holding each role accountable for action completion.

b) **Evidence and reports**

This includes all data or evidence to be submitted to show that actions were completed, with any corresponding results (in terms of student achievement, survey responses, etc.). This may include specific data that should be collected, disaggregated, and reported along a specified schedule, or reports that are required to be submitted to the Superintendent, DEI council, and Board annually.

c) **Timeline, due dates**

Some actions may be a project to be completed (revision of a plan), while others are ongoing and require frequent monitoring to assure completion (monitoring disciplinary data, administering surveys).
2. Identify other district plans and related processes that need revision in order to align with and support the Equity Plan

There are multiple programs that serve either all students or specific groups of students in Mansfield ISD. Many of these programs have plans to direct their implementation. However, there is a lack of clarity around the latitude and autonomy for decision making related to program implementation that campus administrators possess. This must be clarified (in policy) and specific guidelines regarding the tightly-held vision, mission, and expectations for each specified. Update and revise all plans to assure alignment with the equity plan and newly revised vision, mission, and expectations from the board, focusing on removing the gaps and barriers that currently exist district-wide related to the programs’ respective implementation. These services and programs include, but are not limited to:

- **Curriculum Management Plan** (see also Recommendation 4 for additional input regarding the Curriculum Management Plan)

- **The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (TTESS)**: identify where culturally responsive teaching is expected and the incorporation of student perspectives and backgrounds.

- **ELL Academic Planning Guide**: include specific guidelines for program vision, goals, and implementation in response to the needs and populations served. Have clear guidelines for push-in or co-teach models and identify where campuses have flexibility in implementing these services and where they do not.

- **Gifted and Talented Program Guide**: for gifted programming, establish clear goals for increasing the identification of students of color and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Update all identification procedures to allow for giftedness to be determined using local norms and with non-verbal assessments. Establish specific goals for every campus for the targeted GT identification percentages by race/ethnicity and Economic Disadvantage. Establish clear guidelines for clustering GT students in classrooms and for meeting needs at every campus, in accordance with state guidelines. As with ELL programming, identify those areas of providing services where campuses have some flexibility and where they do not, to assure consistency in the implementation of services and equity for all students.

- **Special Education Program**: for special education, identify the system’s priorities and non-negotiable expectations for identifying students and for providing services. Communicate these to all campuses and include these expectations in the plan, connected to the Multi-tiered Support System and Response to Intervention (MtSS/RtI) Handbook and the Curriculum Management Plan. Consider having a comprehensive evaluation of the special education program, to audit the appropriateness and accuracy of IEPs, effectiveness and appropriateness of service delivery, and to ascertain the current weaknesses in the program’s implementation that are resulting in such low student performance. Having greater clarity around program implementation and the tightly held expectations for the program is essential; then monitoring for fidelity in practice is the next step in assuring improvements.

- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**: identify goals, expectations, and processes related to SEL and behavior management/disciplinary procedures. These must identify what are non-negotiable expectations for every campus and where campuses have flexibility in implementing the program and in carrying out positive behavior management practices.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Safe Schools**: identify within the Safe Schools requirements where overlap exists with all the above programs, initiatives, and procedures and how this works in congruence with the vision, goals, and expectations of the Equity Plan and related programs/initiatives. Replace redundant components with DEI-developed trainings and information. Safe Schools is included here to assure integration with all aspects of curriculum delivery and to more effectively meet the intent of that legislation within the context of equity and inclusion.

All of these programs and services support Mansfield ISD students, and several are areas with identified inequities and unequal opportunities for students. To every extent possible, the goals, vision, and expectations for each program for each population served by specific programs must be identified and assured of alignment with the vision, beliefs, and expectations related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion identified by the board. The programs, in addition to expectations concerning behavior management, maintaining safe schools, and evaluating teacher effectiveness, should be aligned in their priorities and guidelines.

There is considerable overlap in the implementation of these programs in district classrooms, and as much as is feasible, there needs to be a unified, clearly defined vision for instructional delivery that addresses differentiation and tiered models of support that is inclusive of all students and culturally responsive. Goals and guidelines specific to the needs (and legislated requirements) of each group may then be specified in the respective program plans, in support of this centralized, unified, and common vision. However, it is incumbent on all the separate departments that expectations are communicated in such a fashion as to condense requirements and eliminate overlaps and redundancies as much as possible, in an effort to make teachers’ responsibilities in implementing the vision for student engagement in their delivery of the curriculum more manageable.

A critical message to send to all campuses and campus personnel is that every student in Mansfield ISD, no matter their identified need or demographic characteristics, is to be treated as equally important and worthy of respect and consideration. Including and treating all students as our students is the primary goal, so that all feel a sense of belonging.

In conclusion, planning related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is essential to assuring that identified gaps and inequities are addressed across all campuses and departments in the next three to five years. With this goal is the additional focus on attaining educational excellence for all students, which will only improve Mansfield ISD’s academic standing in the state and nation.

**Recommendation 3: Professional Development and Coaching**

*Why it matters:* Once the Equity Plan is in place, the training that needs to happen to facilitate the implementation of the plan and the vision the board has established is critical. The expectations around school climate and culture, culturally responsive instruction, and the importance of relationships to the teaching and learning process require clarification and modeling by all leaders and coaching from principals and coordinators. Without this preliminary step of equipping its personnel, the district will not realize the goals and vision established by the board.

There has been no recent training on diversity and equity in the district beyond the minimum required from safe schools. As this is a very new, limited training, there is a widespread need for more comprehensive and coordinated training in cultural sensitivity, implicit bias, and culturally responsive instruction. There is also training needed in how to effectively address bias and discrimination, especially bullying and racist speech and behavior, in classrooms and schools.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Who is responsible: Curriculum and Instruction Department, with input and assistance from the DEI Department and Cabinet.

Tasks to accomplish:

1. Establish goals and guidelines for professional development initiatives.

   Identify the training and supports needed to make the vision and goals of the equity plan a reality. From top to bottom, unpack the meaning and importance of culture, diversity, and perspective. Work to assist all Mansfield personnel in becoming aware of their own cultural lens and perspectives and how our personal lens influences how we perceive the world around us and process information. Through training, equip personnel to begin the work of modeling the culture and values of the Board of Trustees in support of the board’s new vision and mission of excellence for all Mansfield students.

Integrate within all trainings:

- Instructional “lens” of Culturally Responsive Teaching and the SEL framework
- MTSS/Tiered instruction and differentiation
- Classroom and behavior management, discipline practices, etc.
- Replace Safe Schools content and components with DEI-developed content, components, and training.
- How Culturally Responsive Teaching connects with and reinforces special program implementation: ELL, SPED, GT, etc.

Establish the phases for training. These phases would include:

Phase I: train the Board of Trustees and DEI Council in understanding cultural sensitivity and bias and the impact on student learning. Emphasize the role and importance this understanding has with students and their learning, specifically in creating accepting and safe environments in district classrooms.

Phase II: train all central office administrators and campus administrators in cultural sensitivity and cultural responsiveness. Include in this training the development of an awareness of one’s own cultural lens and how culture and our cultural lens impacts how we perceive circumstances, actions, and information around us. Develop goals for monitoring the implementation of culturally responsive practices in the classroom for the campus administrators as part of this phase, and train them first in these practices prior to rolling it out with teachers.

Phase III: train all teachers in cultural sensitivity and cultural responsiveness, as with district and campus administrators. With the teachers, connect all training components with aspects of SEL and behavior management principles and guidelines; use Professional Learning Communities on each campus as mini DEI committees to help facilitate more conversation and transparency about diversity and culturally responsive practices. Survey teachers annually about their perceptions regarding the training; give feedback to teachers and campus personnel when complaints are made or concerns shared by parents, and hold campus administrators responsible for supporting and monitoring the implementation of the training in classrooms.

Phase IV: train all administrators in proper practices when discrimination, bullying, or racism is witnessed. This training should support implementation of policy but also enforce a critical finding
from research: racist speech and ideologies should not be “shut down.” Such an approach only serves to exacerbate them and drive them underground. Where racism exists, these attitudes and thoughts must be identified and clarified, and then processed against the district’s beliefs (and legally protected rights) regarding equality for and inclusion of all. Have specific processes for resolving such conflicts, communicating issues to parents, and for following up in every single case, so that such behaviors are not just blocked; rather, the fundamental mindset that is resulting in disrespect and unkindness to others is changed.

**Phase V:** train all teachers in the same processes and practices described in Phase IV, and monitor for implementation. Collect survey data from students and parents to determine if areas of concern remain and monitor complaints or concerns shared with the DEI department.

**Phase VI:** create a curriculum with specific objectives and model lessons for students related to cultural sensitivity, connected to the Social Emotional Learning program. These objectives and lessons should be fully integrated within the district curriculum and monitored for implementation. Use surveys and survey data to collect data for evidence of increased sensitivity to others.

Define the timeline for each phase and how frequently related processes will be evaluated or monitored. Note the budget needed to carry out the training. Where possible, connect the goals and content of these trainings to related trainings for differentiated, effective instruction for diverse student populations (see **Recommendation 4**).

**Recommendation 4: Curriculum Design, Development, and Delivery**

**Why it matters:** Once the Equity Plan is in place, the training that needs to happen to facilitate the implementation of the plan and the vision the Board has established is critical. The expectations around school climate and culture, culturally responsive instruction, and the importance of relationships to the teaching and learning process require clarification and modeling by leaders and coaching from principals and coordinators. Without this preliminary step of equipping its personnel, the district will not realize the goals and vision established by the board.

**Who is responsible:** Curriculum and Instruction Department, with input and assistance from the DEI Department and related program departments (Special Education, Advanced Academics, English Learners, etc.)

**Tasks to accomplish:**

1. **Revise the Curriculum Management Plan in response to the new vision and expectations around instructional delivery and student engagement.**
   a) Include new criteria for curriculum format and components to ensure that all supports teachers require in delivering instruction are available.
   b) Specify how curriculum design supports its delivery and expectations for that delivery. Note that lesson planning is the sole responsibility of teachers and that it should be responsive to students’ needs.
   c) Expand the section on instruction to more specifically address meeting the needs of linguistically, economically, and ethnically diverse populations and to better reflect the vision for effective instruction adopted by the board.
RECOMMENDATIONS

d) Specifically require training in meeting the needs of diverse student populations for all incoming teachers. This training should address how to differentiate effectively for all learners, particularly in scaffolding learning so students can access grade-level content, supporting English learners effectively in all classrooms, and how to incorporate students’ personal learning styles, interests, and backgrounds into classroom learning activities. Build off of the expectations for MtSS/RtI. Connect this training, focused on the expectations for instructional delivery from R1.2.

2. Revise curriculum structure to more effectively support flexibility in pacing, while noting where pacing must be tight to ensure students are making adequate progress. In the unit plans, include more targeted, integrated suggestions for differentiating Tier I instruction while using culturally responsive and engaging approaches and activities. Include specific suggestions for student activities and formative assessment tools that assure rigor and student voice and choice.

   a) Specify expectations for unit plans in all content areas for bundling, sequencing, pacing, and prioritizing the content (the standards). Note which components should be included at what levels (pacing increments); definitions and clarity for content, depending on priority, belong at the unit and sub-unit levels, while suggestions for instructional delivery (strategies/approaches, student activities, and resources/materials) belong at the unit pacing increment that directs lesson planning.

   b) Give guidance for pacing increments at different grade spans; specify expectations around daily suggestions. Keep daily expectations or suggestions minimal; “bundle” these suggestions for a week at a time (for example) to support flexibility in lesson planning and to allow teachers latitude in responding to student needs. Note expectations in the guide for how the suggestions are to be used for planning instruction. Models can be provided for sample lesson plans or approaches, or for a typical weekly or daily progression, but these are provided as examples. Lesson planning should be the responsibility of teachers (as noted in the Curriculum Management Plan), but the curriculum should offer plenty of suggestions for strategies, approaches, activities and resources and materials to plan from.

   c) Specify in the suggestions for instructional delivery (strategies, activities and materials/resources) the scaffolds/supports, interventions, or extensions that are useful for students. These suggestions should be integrated into this section throughout and not “stand alone” or be a separate link to an external resource. Make these suggestions part of everyday, high quality instruction—rigor and engaging contexts with clear supports are good for all students, not just students of special populations. Make these suggestions very targeted: less is better. Include just a few of the very best suggestions for instructional delivery.

   d) Include exemplars for student work. There is variation across campuses in what teachers consider “mastery” of the skills. Use exemplars and provide clear rubrics with the success criteria delineated throughout the curriculum to support teachers’ understanding of what high-level mastery of the concepts, skills, and knowledge looks like. This will aid in assuring greater consistency of student performance and also improve achievement.

   e) Regularly collect samples of student work from campuses. Rotate through the content areas and grade spans. Have curriculum coordinators review the work with principals, highlighting where work is strong and where there are gaps. Use the information from these reviews to identify potential weaknesses and gaps in the curriculum and revise accordingly.
RECOMMENDATIONS

f) Make access to the curriculum more user-friendly and assure that all links included in the guides are functional and high quality. Avoid generic, “menu-type” lists of resources or student activities. Only include the very best and wherever able, note what the suggested approach, activity, or resource is right in the unit plan (rather than a link). Links can be used for additional suggestions if teachers want more ideas than the few that are in the unit plans. Ensure that if a resource is referenced in the curriculum, all have access to it.

3. **Assure that all curriculum resources and materials are not only equally available to all students, but that they allow for representation of diverse, multicultural perspectives and support student choice whenever possible.**

   a) Identify the revised expectations for curriculum components in the Curriculum Management Plan and develop a rubric with which to review and evaluate the quality and alignment of all resources in the curriculum. Include in this rubric expectations specific to culturally responsive approaches, allowing student voice and choice, cognitively challenging activities, and relevance and authenticity. Develop criteria with which to evaluate the degree to which resources integrate and embed these priorities for student work.

Attention to these recommended steps will assure not only greater rigor and engagement in district classrooms, but will assist in creating learning environments that are inclusive and relevant for all students.
Appendices

Appendix A: Auditors’ Biographical Data

Holly J. Kaptain, PhD

Holly J. Kaptain is the Executive Director of Curriculum Management Solutions, Inc. (CMSi), owner of the Curriculum Management Audit, developed by Fenwick English. A former teacher, teaching assistant, curriculum writer, and grant project coordinator, Dr. Kaptain now consults in the areas of curriculum evaluation, design, and alignment, and on instructional strategies, particularly for linguistically diverse populations. She is a CMSi-licensed trainer in deep curriculum alignment and has participated in or led 35 curriculum audits in 17 different states since 1996. Dr. Kaptain received her BA from St. Olaf College, her MS in Curriculum and Instruction from Iowa State University, and her PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Iowa State University. She completed curriculum management audit training in St. Paul, Minnesota, in July 1996. She completed advanced audit training in 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2015, and 2018.

Dr. Kaptain has provided curriculum design and cultural sensitivity presentations at regional and national conferences and is a recipient of the Jordan Larson award for outstanding graduate work at Iowa State University in Educational Administration. She is a member the Association for Curriculum Supervision and Development.

Heather Boeschen, BA

Heather Boeschen is Director of Operations for CMSi. She has been an educator for over 25 years and currently serves as an independent professional consultant in curriculum and instruction. She received a bachelor’s degree in English, German, and Education from Macalester College in 1988, and she has completed advanced graduate work at Augsburg College, Drake University, and Iowa State University. She served as a teacher of advanced college preparatory writing for over a decade and completed her curriculum management audit training in St. Paul, MN, in 1996. She has served on more than 28 audits, most recently in Texas, Arizona, and Illinois.
Appendix A: Auditors’ Biographical Data (continued)

**Patricia E. Braxton, MA**

Patricia Braxton is an educator with 42 years of experience. She retired as Director of Curriculum and Instruction of the Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District in Woodstown, New Jersey, in 2015. Prior to that she completed 16½ years with the Camden City Schools in Camden, New Jersey, serving in various teaching and administrative roles including Project Manager for the Cooper’s Poynt Professional Development School, elementary reading center teacher, secondary reading department chairperson, and coach/trainer with the Office of Staff Development. She was a secondary reading instructor in Philadelphia Public Schools in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and began her career as a fifth-grade teacher in Newport News Public Schools in Virginia. She has taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Ms. Braxton completed her undergraduate studies at Hampton Institute in Virginia and earned master’s degree in Psychology of Reading (Temple University in Philadelphia, PA) and in School Administration (Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey). Ms. Braxton is certified as an elementary teacher, reading specialist K-12, supervisor, and school administrator. She completed Curriculum Management Audit training in 2006 and has served on audit teams in Maryland, Michigan, Arizona, Missouri, Alabama, Washington DC, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas, Georgia, and Connecticut.

**Anthony Luévanos**

Anthony Luévanos has over 17 years experience in education. His past experiences with school turnaround and organizational evaluation make him an exceptional asset to local advisory boards, leadership teams, and research organizations. During his career, he taught and lead in rural, suburban, and urban environments from elementary, middle, high schools, and alternative school settings to collegiate-level experiences. He continues to deliver lessons and training across the United States and internationally at conferences to education and community leaders while continuing to learn from most cutting-edge professionals.

He received his doctorate in curriculum and teaching from Baylor University’s Graduate School of Education in addition to earning his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the same institution. After several years as a private and public-school teacher at the elementary and secondary levels in non-core and core-content areas, he went on to serve as a campus principal and district administrator. Another aspect of his work involves Texas A&M University where he serves as a researcher under a Kellogg Foundation research grant. Part of his expertise involves the development and delivery of resources, training for schools, in addition to working with teachers and administrators on school improvement approaches and organizational development. Moreover, the research portion of his work involves studying demographic shifts, diversity, inclusion, and equity. Studying central office administrative behavior and thinking as it influences organizational response, behavior, and outcomes in overall performance is his current research focus. Additionally, some practical implementation elements include literacy work that captures the development and operation of district-wide systems for comprehensive academic programming. His approach focuses on the qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis, and evaluation of curricular programming for K-12 school contexts. He completed his auditor training in Waco, Texas.
Appendix B: Audit Methodology

The Model for the Curriculum Audit™

The model for the Curriculum Audit™ is shown in the schematic below. The model has been published widely in the national professional literature, including the best-selling book, *The Curriculum Management Audit: Improving School Quality* (1995, Frase, English, Poston).

A Schematic View of Curricular Quality Control

General quality control assumes that at least three elements must be present in any organizational and work-related situation for it to be functional and capable of being improved over time. These are: (1) a work standard, goal/objective, or operational mission; (2) work directed toward attaining the mission, standard, goal/objective; and (3) feedback (work measurement), which is related to or aligned with the standard, goal/objective, or mission.

When activities are repeated, there is a “learning curve,” i.e., more of the work objectives are achieved within the existing cost parameters. As a result, the organization, or a subunit of an organization, becomes more “productive” at its essential short- or long-range work tasks.

Within the context of an educational system and its governance and operational structure, curricular quality control requires: (1) a written curriculum in some clear and translatable form for application by teachers in classrooms or related instructional settings; (2) a taught curriculum, which is shaped by and interactive with the written one; and (3) a tested curriculum, which includes the tasks, concepts, and skills of pupil learning and which is linked to both the taught and written curricula. This model is applicable in any kind of educational work structure typically found in mass public educational systems, and is suitable for any kind of assessment strategy, from norm-referenced standardized tests to more authentic approaches.

The Curriculum Audit™ assumes that an educational system, as one kind of human work organization, must be responsive to the context in which it functions and in which it receives support for its continuing existence. In the case of public educational systems, the support comes in the form of tax monies from three levels: local, state, and federal.

In return for such support, mass public educational systems are supposed to exhibit characteristics of rationality, i.e., being responsive to the public will as it is expressed in legally constituted bodies such as Congress, state legislatures, and locally elected/appointed school boards.

In the case of emerging national public school reforms, more and more this responsiveness is assuming a distinctive school-based management focus, which includes parents, teachers, and, in some cases, students. The ability of schools to be responsive to public expectations, as legally expressed in law and policy, is crucial to their future survival as publicly-supported educational organizations. The Curriculum Audit™ is one method for ascertaining the extent to which a school system, or subunit thereof, has been responsive to expressed expectations and requirements in this context.
Standards for the Auditors

While a Curriculum Audit™ is not a financial audit, it is governed by some of the same principles. These are:

- **Expertise**
  TCMAC-CMSi-certified auditors must have actual experience in conducting the affairs of a school system at all levels audited. They must understand the tacit and contextual clues of sound curriculum management.

  The Mansfield Independent School District Equity Audit Team selected by the Curriculum Management Audit Center included auditors who have been school superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, coordinators, principals and assistant principals, as well as elementary and secondary classroom teachers in public educational systems in several locations, including Texas, Iowa, New Jersey, Arizona, and Minnesota.

- **Independence**
  None of the Equity Audit Team members had any vested interest in the findings or recommendations of the Mansfield Independent School District Equity Audit. None of the auditors has or had any working relationship with the individuals who occupied top or middle management positions in the Mansfield Independent School District, nor with any of the past or current members of the Mansfield Independent School District Board of Trustees.

- **Objectivity**
  Events and situations that comprise the database for the Curriculum Audit™ are derived from documents, interviews, site visits, and online surveys. Findings must be verifiable and grounded in the database, though confidential interview data may not indicate the identity of such sources. Findings must be factually triangulated with two or more sources of data, except when a document is unusually authoritative such as a court judgment, a labor contract signed and approved by all parties to the agreement, approved meeting minutes, which connote the accuracy of the content, or any other document whose verification is self-evident.

  Triangulation of documents takes place when the document is requested by the auditors and is subsequently furnished. Confirmation by a system representative that the document is, in fact, what was requested is a form of triangulation. A final form of triangulation occurs when the audit is sent to the superintendent in draft form. If the superintendent or his/her designee(s) does not provide evidence that the audit text is inaccurate, or documentation that indicates there are omissions or otherwise factual or content errors, the audit is assumed to be triangulated. The superintendent’s review is not only an additional source of triangulation, but is considered a summative triangulation of the entire report.

- **Consistency**
  All TCMAC-CMSi-certified curriculum auditors have used the same standards and methodology since the initial audit conducted by Dr. Fenwick English in 1979. Audits are not normative in the sense that one school system is compared to another. School systems, as the units of analysis, are compared to a set of standards and positive/negative discrepancies cited.
Materiality

TCMAC-CMSi-certified auditors have broad implied and discretionary power to focus on and select those findings that they consider most important to describing how the curriculum management system is functioning in a school district, and how that system must improve, expand, delete, or reconfigure various functions to attain an optimum level of performance.

Confidentiality

Auditors must reveal all relevant information to the users of the audit, except in cases where such disclosure would compromise the identity of employees or patrons of the system. Confidentiality is respected in all audit interviews.

In reporting data derived from site interviews, auditors may use some descriptive terms that lack a precise quantifiable definition. For example:

- “Some school principals said that…”
- “Many teachers expressed concern that…”
- “There was widespread comment about…”

The basis for these terms is the number of persons in a group or class of persons who were interviewed, as opposed to the total potential number of persons in a category. This is a particularly salient point when not all persons within a category are interviewed. “Many teachers said that…” represents only those interviewed by the auditors, or who may have responded to a survey, and not “many” of the total group whose views were not sampled, and, therefore, could not be disclosed during an audit.

In general, these quantifications may be applied to the principle of full disclosure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Term</th>
<th>General Quantification Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some...or a few...</td>
<td>Less than a majority of the group interviewed and less than 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many...</td>
<td>Less than a majority, more than 30% of a group or class of people interviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A majority...</td>
<td>More than 50%, less than 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most...or widespread</td>
<td>75-89% of a group or class of persons interviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly all...</td>
<td>90-99% of those interviewed in a specific class or group of persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All or everyone...</td>
<td>100% of all persons interviewed within a similar group, job, or class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted for purposes of full disclosure that some groups within a school district are almost always interviewed in toto. The reason is that the audit is focused on management and those people who have policy and managerial responsibilities for the overall performance of the system as a system. In all audits, an attempt is made to interview every member of the board of trustees and all top administrative officers, all principals, and the executive board of the teachers’ association or union. While teachers and parents are interviewed, they are considered in a status different from those who have system-wide responsibilities for a district’s operations. Students are rarely interviewed unless the system has made a specific request in this regard.

Interviewed Representatives of the Mansfield Independent School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superintendents</th>
<th>School Board President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 Principals</td>
<td>15 Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Students (virtual)</td>
<td>17 Parents (voluntary, self-referred)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately 82 individuals were interviewed during the off- and on-site phases of the audit.
## Appendix C: List of Documents Reviewed by the Mansfield Independent School District Audit Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision and Accountability Documents</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>All Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board policies</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Vision 2020 Statement, Mission, Guiding statements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Descriptions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District organizational charts: all departments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Charter</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Recruiting Information</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISD District Scorecard</td>
<td>Updated 2020</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NewHire Forms</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISD Staffing Formulas</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and Faculty Handbooks</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum and Direction</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>All Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-2 literacy Look-fors</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Interventions</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-2 Literacy Social Studies Framework</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>District Curriculum Guides: All core content areas</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Management Plan</td>
<td>Jun-19</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity and Consistency</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>All Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MISD Parent Survey</td>
<td>2019</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISD Parent Survey</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISD PDS Climate Survey</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISD Campus Staff District Climate Survey</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>MISD PDC Climate Survey</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>MISD Climate Survey District Staff</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SafeSchools Compliance Training Plan</td>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifted and Talented Program Guide</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ELL Academic planning guide</td>
<td>May-15</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MISD MTSS/RtI Handbook</td>
<td>rev. 2020</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-Teach guidelines</td>
<td>Nov-20</td>
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<td>In-class Support</td>
<td>Nov-20</td>
<td>X</td>
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Appendix D: Cultural Proficiency

### Cultural Destructiveness
Seeking to eliminate the cultures of others in all aspects of the school and in relationship to the community served.

- See the difference, stamp it out.
- "In this class, we speak English only."
- "If we could get rid of our special needs students, our scores would improve."

### Cultural Incompetency
Trivializing and stereotyping other cultures; seeking to make the cultures of others appear to be wrong or inferior to the dominant culture.

- See the difference and make it wrong.
- "You know that those parents never show up to school functions."
- "Asian students come to this country and succeed. Why wouldn’t the other students do so as well?"

### Cultural Blindness
Not noticing or acknowledging the cultures of others within the school community; treating everyone in the educational system without recognizing the needs that require differentiated interaction.

- See the difference and act like you don’t.
- "I don’t see color. I just see kids."
- "Racism and discrimination don’t exist anymore. I really hate it when parents use the race card."

### Cultural Pre-Competence
Increasing awareness of what you and the school don’t know about working in diverse settings; at this level of development, you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction, or you can falter, stop, and possibly regress.

- See the difference and at times respond appropriately.
- "During Christmas time I have a menorah in my classroom."
- "We value all cultures. We have a night where parents bring food representing their country."

### Cultural Competence
Aligning your personal values and behaviors, and the school’s policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive of cultures that are new or different from yours and the school’s; enables healthy and productive interactions.

- See the difference and value it.
- "A student made a derogatory remark and I used it as a teachable moment to remind students of the right thing to do."
- "The co-teach model with the push-in Special Education teacher is allowing us to have honest conversations about differentiation in the classroom."

### Cultural Proficiency
Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy; interacting with your colleagues, students, families, and the community as an advocate for life-long learning to effectively serve the educational needs of all cultural groups.

- Seek the difference and esteem it as an advocate for equity.
- "Our school’s Social Justice and Equity Vertical Team is doing a great job of embedding culturally relevant lessons into our curriculum."
- "My job as an educator is not only to teach content. I also openly embrace my role as an advocate for each child and their family."
Poverty and Equity

Poverty and race are so intersectional that it is nearly impossible to talk about one without the other. Poverty affects more children of color than it does White and Asian children. While the official percentage of children living in poverty for 2018 was 18%, poverty percentages broken out by race are considerably different. For White and Asian children, poverty rates are below the national average, at 11%. For Hispanic, Native American, and Black children, poverty rates are above the national average (26%, 31%, and 32% respectively). Black and Native American children experience poverty at nearly triple the rates of White children.¹ Nationwide, in schools with the highest poverty, 50% or more of students are Black or Hispanic. In schools with the lowest poverty, Black and Hispanic students typically make up only 11% of students. If a school is high-poverty, it is extremely likely to have a majority of students who are People of Color.

Poverty is a situation, not an identity, or a mindset, or a culture. Nobody celebrates or memorializes poverty: they survive it. To frame poverty as a culture is to imply that those in poverty have a perverse liking for it or they would work harder to overcome it, in effect demonizing them for being poor. It also misdirects efforts toward changing the “mindset” of poverty rather than changing conditions that disproportionately affect the most economically disadvantaged people such as a lack of access to quality healthcare, housing, nutrition, education, political power, clean water and air, and other basic needs. In particular, self-proclaimed “expert” Ruby Payne has done a fair amount of damage with this narrative. It’s worth noting that her “research” was actually personal observation and anecdote and her “framework” espouses blatant negative stereotypes about ethnic groups while shoring up the privileges of the wealthy.² This view of poverty makes an unsubstantiated assumption that poverty is a constant experienced by those who prefer not to work; however, research on poverty demonstrates that:

- Most people in poverty have jobs, but these jobs do not pay enough to lift them out of poverty. Poverty statistics also include children, people with disabilities, retired people, and people in school, which skews unemployment figures. Only about 5-6% of people in poverty are truly unemployed.³
- Poverty is fluid. People move in and out of poverty depending on a variety of circumstances. The incidence of poverty differs by race. Nationally, 1 in 3 White children will be poor for at least 1 year of their childhood but 3 in 4 Black children will be poor for at least 1 year of their childhood.⁴
- Persistent poverty is poverty that lasts for 50% or more of a person’s childhood. In the U.S., 1 in 10 children will experience persistent poverty. ⁴ This type of poverty is often difficult to escape even with government assistance. Some assistance programs are designed so that when a person gets a good job, the level of assistance drops so sharply that they are no better off with the good job than without and sometimes are actually worse off than before. In this way, the system keeps people from escaping it and then blames them for being in the system in the first place.

The economic situation a child is born into is a powerful predictor of his or her opportunities in school and in life unless districts take steps to ensure equity and proper support for these vulnerable students and families.

Appendix F: Fluidity of Intelligence

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Intellectual Fluidity: The Infinite Capacity of the Brain

Sometimes, ideas in psychology filter into the general consciousness—usually via the media—and lodge there for long periods of time. Unfortunately, such ideas can remain in the public consciousness long after their validity has expired. Such is the case with the theory of the ‘hardwired’ human brain. This idea that the human brain was ‘hardwired’ originated in tandem with the advent of computers because there’s a marked tendency for humans to look for metaphors in the prevailing technology of the day to help us understand psychological principles. The computer, with its pre-programmed routines and processes, became a lens to frame our understanding of the human brain. The danger in this particular theory is the idea that if something is ‘hardwired’ it can’t be changed, which is true of computers but not, as it turns out, of the human mind.

Some supposedly ‘hardwired’ conditions have lasting ramifications for students. Believing that a condition is fixed and unchangeable changes how practitioners approach it: the level of innovation they may apply, their willingness to persist in what may seem like a pointless exercise, the rapidity with which they categorize a student’s work as “good enough,” the likelihood that they will recommend a child for gifted or special education. But even conditions with demonstrable brain differences such as ADD are being shown to respond to new methods of retraining the brain to improve focus and impulse control. What was once thought to be a fixed condition is now known to be far more malleable.1

The Matthew Effect has gotten a lot of attention in education recently. The principle is that those who are intellectually rich will continue to get richer and those who are not will never catch up. But the Matthew Effect occurs not because the cognitively “poor” have less capable brains, but because they are not given the opportunity to develop key cognitive skills for independent learning—in effect, they don’t learn how to learn apart from the input and guidance of the teacher. Without the opportunity to develop independent learning skills, dependent learners will never improve their performance. The problem is not in their brains, but in the opportunities they have to develop critical cognitive skills.2

The Matthew Effect is sometimes used to explain why some kids start out as good readers and just continue to improve while others remain far behind; cognitive “poverty” makes closing the gaps impossible and that “poverty” appears fixed. However, research from Temple University demonstrated that when exposed to a high quality program to build vocabulary, preschool children in poverty were able to close gaps between their abilities and those of affluent children. The problem wasn’t the children's intellect, it was the quality of the instruction they were given. A high quality program coupled with intensive teacher training in delivering it resulted in a rapid narrowing of gaps. Note, the children did nothing here; only the program and the delivery were targeted for reform.3
So the brain is not ‘hardwired’ in any meaningful sense—intellect is not fixed. A better metaphor, especially for children, might be the brain as a camera: when the camera shutter opens, it reacts to light and transforms the film to record the image. The brain reacts and transforms itself when recording or experiencing certain stimuli. In this metaphor, the brain can only react and transform insofar as it is exposed to stimuli. In other words, if the stimuli are lacking, the brain will not expand its neural pathways. The problem is in the stimuli, not in the brain.

Madeline Hunter, one of the truly great educational practitioners, famously said “If a child didn’t learn, a teacher didn’t teach.” The excuse that a child’s brain is ‘hardwired’ a particular way and that learning is enhanced or prohibited by those fixed features is not supported by the research. In fact, the opposite is true: the brain is infinitely moldable and changeable, capable of transforming in response to a vast array of information and situations. This means that all children—all—have the innate capacity to learn and to learn at high levels. The task for teachers is to assume intellectual capacity in all students and if they aren’t learning, find better ways to aim their lenses.


Appendix G: The Myth of Color Blindness

The Myth of Color Blindness

Research Snapshot

Color blindness is the idea that enlightened people do not “see” race; that they hold no racial biases. Color blindness may also be used to argue against discussing race and racism with children because they are believed to be naturally innocent of racial biases and even of noticing racial differences. Extensive studies, however, have demonstrated that color blindness does not exist, however much people would like it to.

One of the problems with the assumption of color blindness is that it ignores implicit biases, which operate below the level of conscious thought to inform decisions and beliefs. Extensive research has been underway at Harvard since 1998 to document how implicit biases influence our actions, but other studies of teachers and students in the primary grades have demonstrated the effects of implicit biases. One long-range study of early childhood education documented case after case of teacher actions that stigmatized Black boys, though the teachers categorized themselves as colorblind when it came to race. Another study from 2008 documented a consistent pattern of teachers favoring White 2nd graders for classroom privileges and academic recognition, including punishing children of color based solely on White children’s reports of “misbehaviors.”

The idea that children are naturally unbiased toward other races is a popular thought, but it also been disproved in a number of studies over multiple decades. Research has demonstrated that children are aware of racial differences beginning at 6 months of age. By age 3 or 4, most children have a rudimentary concept of race (multiple studies have confirmed this, dating back to 1947), or that differences exist among people in physically-observable characteristics. Even without people of color in their environment or social circle, children begin to form ideas about other races drawn from tv, books, adult attitudes and actions, and observations of their environment. They are remarkably perceptive about power structures and the idea of the “other” in social settings. Anyone who’s been on the receiving end of a declaration that they are not allowed to play with a group anymore, knows this is true. But dozens of studies and observers have documented very young children enacting biases against children of color and preferences for whiteness. Even children of color will enact preferences for whiteness and, disturbingly, assumptions of their own inferiority.

The deeper problem with color blindness is that by making race and racism taboo subjects, children learn not to publicly express anything about race, thus making it impossible to know what they think or believe about other races or even their own race. A study as far back as 1952 demonstrated that White 3rd grade students had learned to be polite about race relations, although their internal beliefs about people of color were quite different. Implicit biases on the part of adults and children are often enacted in ways that adults don’t realize or acknowledge. Since the taboo extends to grown-ups as well, adults may find themselves deeply uncomfortable with the topic of race and ill-equipped to recognize and address biased or racist beliefs and related behaviors in students, the roots of

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1. https://curriculumsolutions.net/blog/2019/04/30/the-implications-of-implicit-bias/
discrimination. Without addressing it, these biases can grow and limit students’ ability to live and work in a global society.

Subscribing to color blindness is to surrender the opportunity to overtly and intentionally teach about culture, bias, and discrimination. It surrenders the opportunity to equip teachers to effectively discuss and process with students and their colleagues the social construct of race and counter existing stereotypes and negative messages.
Appendix H: Glossary of Equity Terms

Achievement Gap: An achievement gap is a difference in achievement levels between racial/ethnic subgroups occurring over a significant period of time. For example, if a school has an overall rate of 70% proficient in reading in grade 3, a look at subgroups might show that White students in grade 3 are 95% proficient, Black students are 54% proficient, Hispanic students are 49% proficient, and so on. The difference between 54% or 49% and 95% is the achievement gap. Gaps are not always based on race: there is extensive research showing that gaps persist between high- and low-income students as well, and occasionally gaps are gender-dependent. Achievement gaps can be tracked and analyzed to indicate Years to Parity – how long it will take, at the current pace, for the gaps to close.

Anti-Racist Pedagogy: Pedagogy is simply teaching and/or the method of teaching. Anti-Racist Pedagogy means both explicitly teaching students to be anti-racist and a method of instruction that is itself anti-racist.

Bias and Implicit Bias: A conscious or unconscious prejudice against or belief about an individual or group based on their identity. It’s important to note that biases may be negative or positive, causing a person to behave negatively or positively toward someone without an empirical reason for doing so. Implicit bias can cause people to enact their biases in ways they don’t consciously acknowledge. Once a bias is enacted, it becomes Racism.

Color Blindness: An erroneous belief that enlightened people do not “notice” race and/or that children are naturally innocent of racial biases. Extensive research has demonstrated that children are aware of racial differences beginning at 6 months of age and that they begin forming ideas of “otherness” and enacting those preferences for whiteness as young as age 3. The deeper problem with “color blindness” is that by making race and racism taboo subjects, it teaches children not to publicly express ideas about race, thus making it impossible to know what children think or believe about other races or even their own race. Subscribing to an ideal of “color blindness” is to give up the opportunity to explicitly teach about race and racism and to equip teachers to counter stereotypes and negative messages.

Confirmation Bias: When a person interprets a situation according to their own pre-existing beliefs or selectively notices, recalls, or emphasizes examples that confirm pre-existing beliefs. Confirmation bias can lead to racist behaviors which are ‘justified’ by these selective examples; taken to an extreme, it can lead people to reject evidence-based decision-making.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: A method of instruction designed to raise diverse learners up to the same level of academic rigor and independence as their peers. To that end, CRT is not a one-and-done proposition; neither is it a one-size-fits-all set of strategies. Effective CRT takes a fair degree of skill, creativity, effort, and perseverance to correctly diagnose gaps and design strategies to ameliorate them for each individual child, to support learners as they practice new skills to independence, to ensure that diverse learners are being intellectually challenged and authentically engaged, to build a culture of inclusion and achievement in the face of hostility, defeatist thinking, or avoidance due to past failures, and to keep at it every day until every child is successful. (See also Social Emotional Learning and Anti-Racist Pedagogy)

Discrimination: Actions and thoughts based on conscious or unconscious biases, that favor one group over others. Often, discrimination works to promote one group over others. There is some overlap here with both Bias and Implicit Bias, Confirmation Bias, and Racism.
**Ethnicity**: one’s cultural expression, apart from race. A person may be black, but ethnically Dominican or Puerto Rican or Cuban. Children adopted internationally may be of any race but will tend to express the culture of their adoptive parents.

**Equity**: a state in which all students receive the same social and educational benefits and opportunities. Requires policies and practices that recognize differences in needs and actively redistribute resources and access to opportunities to ensure this outcome for everyone.

**Exclusionary Discipline**: Any form of discipline which removes the student from the classroom. This type of discipline includes suspension and expulsion, which are used both as punishment for behaviors and also (theoretically) as deterrents. There is extensive research indicating that exclusionary discipline measures have negative long-term effects on students, including increasing the likelihood of dropping out and increasing the likelihood of incarceration. In the short term, exclusionary discipline creates a cycle in which a child acts out, gets sent from the classroom, misses instruction, returns, can’t track with content, acts out, and gets sent out again. Often, those who are sent out of the classroom environment are the ones who most need to be there. Additionally, exclusionary measures are sometimes applied for vague offenses such as “disrespect,” or “disruption of class.” These are often defined by the teacher rather than empirically defined offenses, and as such can be unfairly and disproportionately applied solely on the basis of race and/or gender.

**Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE)**: This is when a person blames extenuating circumstances or situations for their own failure but blames another person’s failures on his character.

**Gaslighting**: This is the practice of casting doubt on the feelings and experiences of marginalized groups or individuals. It is essentially a way to maintain power in a relationship by causing a group or individual to question their own interpretation of their experiences or by undermining their credibility before authority figures by reframing interpretations of events in a way that justifies the abuser/oppressor. Research suggests that gaslighting has been used successfully to maintain and justify oppressive institutions/systems and their practices for many years.

**Grit**: Grit is the idea that if a student applies herself and works hard enough, she will be successful. Grit has been cited as a factor in a host of long-term positive outcomes for students and it seems likely that perseverance does produce desirable characteristics. BUT: grit becomes a problem when the lack of student success is attributed to a lack of grit rather than to situations or systemic problems outside of the student’s control. No amount of grittiness can atone for a lack of competent, certified teachers in the classroom, or severely reduced school funding, or no access to college preparatory coursework. Nor will grit overcome an inherently poor curriculum or discriminatory discipline practices. Defaulting to grit as an explanation for failure without noting extenuating circumstances is a **Fundamental Attribution Error**.

**Hispanic**: a term for people who speak Spanish or have Spanish-speaking lineage. Technically this is a term that describes culture, not race or racial characteristics. A white person with blue eyes and light brown hair who grew up speaking Spanish may be said to be Hispanic. Because it is a cultural descriptor, “Hispanic” people may also identify with an additional racial descriptor as well, such as Black. People who are Hispanic are not necessarily Latino/a/x, and vice versa. Most people prefer to be known by their country of origin (Dominican, Ecuadorian, etc).

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5 [https://www.thoughtco.com/hispanic-vs-latino-4149966](https://www.thoughtco.com/hispanic-vs-latino-4149966)
**Internalized Racism:** This is when oppressive systems and institutions result in people of color believing in negative messages about themselves or their racial group. The reverse of this is when white people internalize privilege to the point that they feel a sense of superiority and entitlement, or hold negative beliefs about people of color.

**Intersectionality:** a term coined in 1989 by Kimberly Crenshaw to describe the way in which forms and methods of oppression can converge on individuals and groups like streets in a busy intersection, forcing people to navigate multiple types and sources of oppression at once. For example, a woman of color might experience both racism and sexism at the same time. People of color seldom experience a single form of oppression; they often find themselves fighting for equity on multiple fronts.

**Latino/Latina/Latinx:** A geographical term which describes people who are from or descended from Latin America. Again, this is not a racial descriptor. Anyone from Central or South America or the Caribbean can be described as Latino/a/x, no matter what their race is. Some people have begun using Latino/a/x as a racial descriptor associated with brown skin and Latin American heritage to set themselves apart from those who are Mexican-American. Because Spanish is a gendered language, adjectives take on the gender of the nouns they are describing, so Latino refers to a Latin American man, Latina to a woman, and Latinx is a term meant to be gender inclusive. Latinx is primarily used by college educated people, English-speaking white people, and young Hispanic women.⁶ Most Spanish speaking people do not use Latinx and most people prefer to be known by their country or origin (Dominican, Ecuadorian, etc).

**Microaggression:** Indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group. Although they’re seemingly small and sometimes innocent offenses, they can take a psychological toll on the mental health of their recipients. This toll can lead to anger and depression and can even lower work productivity and problem-solving abilities. They can also make the school environment seem hostile and erode a student’s sense of acceptance.

**Opportunity Gap:** Refers to ways in which marginalized students are excluded from educational opportunities. This can play out in several ways: lack of access to college-preparatory coursework or advanced classes, shortages of counselors to help students apply to higher education, shortages of qualified or competent teachers, lack of grade level course materials, curriculum restricted to “the basics”, curriculum which is not relevant or engaging, lack of access to technology, lack of specific personnel on site such as nurses, and so on. Opportunity Gap also recognizes gaps in access in areas outside of school control such as health care and nutrition.

**Oppression:** The systemic and institutional abuse of power by one group at the expense of others and the use of force to maintain this dynamic. An oppressive system is built around the ideology of superiority of some groups and inferiority of others. See also Gaslighting and Intersectionality.

**People/Students of Color:** Umbrella term for people considered by their society to be non-white. In general, it is used when there are many races and ethnicities present. If the ethnicity or race of the groups is known, it is more respectful to use more explicit language (such as Black, Asian, etc.)

Race: refers to the concept of dividing people into populations or groups primarily on the basis of skin color. Historically, race was assumed to be biological. Scientifically, “races” are not a biological reality; there is no race gene. This idea of race has been used to justify the oppression and subjugation of people for hundreds of years. In reality, race is a social construct that begins to break down the more we try to codify its definition and characteristics which have been remarkably fluid over the past 3 centuries, changing to suit the values of the times.

Racial/Economic Isolation: A situation in which a school or schools, or even an entire district, has a preponderance of students of color or economically disadvantaged students, or both. Although desegregation was ordered nationwide by the Supreme Court in 1954 (Brown v. Board of Education), desegregation peaked in the U.S. in the 1970s and 80s, after which schools began moving back toward a de facto segregation with the rise of neighborhood schools. So while schools are no longer officially segregated, they may find themselves siloed in a way that closely parallels the segregation of the 1950s. Districts may have one or two schools (or more) in which the majority of students are economically disadvantaged and/or in which most of the students are children of color. Often, these racially/economically isolated schools have lower rates of educational attainment and achievement than other schools in the district that have lower rates of poverty and (often) a lower proportion of students of color. Racial isolation matters: one study found that for every year a black child attended an integrated school, his chances of graduating increased by 2%. That same study found that for black children, a 5 year period in an integrated school translated to an 11% decline in poverty for each year and a 15% increase in wages over time.

Racism: The idea that some races/groups are superior to other races/groups and the actions taken to enact those ideas. Historically, this has been the domination of people of color by white/European people. Action is an important component of racism. Racial bias is a belief. Racism is what happens when that belief is translated into action. You can have beliefs that are biased. You can have feelings that are biased. When you act on those feelings or beliefs, it becomes racism. A key component of racism is power. Without power, there can be no racism. (See Reverse Racism.)

Reverse Racism: This is the idea that programs designed to equalize opportunities, resources, and power structures for people of color constitute a “reverse racism” against White people. It is absolutely fundamental to the understanding of racism that there can be no racism without the power structure to back it up. In other words, a group must have the power to enact racism for it to be racism. Without the power, it’s just prejudice/bias. When white people want to argue against policies designed to equalize opportunities, resources, and power structures for people of color, they sometimes accuse agencies and institutions of reverse racism, but since people of color are receiving the assistance in the first place, it means they don’t have the power to enact any biases they might hold; the accusation doesn’t hold water. It’s important to note that no hard data support the existence of “reverse racism” in any arena: education, business, housing, finance, etc.—but plenty of hard data support that white businesses and other institutions discriminate against employees (or students or participants) based on skin color and/or enact preferences for whiteness.

8 https://scholar.harvard.edu/jlhochschild/publications/racial-reorganization-and-united-states-census-1850-1930-mulattoes-half-br
9 “Was Brown v. Board a Failure?” https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/12/was-brown-v-board-a-failure/265939/
Social-emotional Learning: A curriculum or set of lessons in through which social skills and personal emotional development and understanding are explicitly taught. The goal is to help kids understand themselves as learners and to help them function optimally within the social environment of school. SEL acknowledges that social skills do not appear organically but must be taught and its precepts dovetail effectively with Anti-Racist Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Systemic Racism: When the idea that some races/groups are superior to other races/groups is translated into structures and processes which are carried out by groups with power, such as governments, businesses, or schools. These groups and institutions then work individually and in concert (see Intersectionality) to oppress those defined as inferior.

White Privilege: What White privilege is might be better expressed in what it does: it conveys the “power of normal” on White activities, appearance, food choices, needs (what color are your band aids? What color is “nude”? How hard/expensive is it to purchase a doll with your child’s skin tone or facial features?). It conveys the “power of the benefit of the doubt,” which gives access to more compassion, more ability to survive mistakes, more recognition as individuals rather than as representatives or stereotypes of a group (Are your hair care products out on a shelf or locked up? Has a clerk ever followed you around to make sure you don’t shoplift? Have you ever talked your way out of a ticket?). And it conveys the “power of accumulated power” which can be described as the perpetual feedback loop of racism—the powers exist because systemic racism enables them and systemic racism endures because those powers perpetuate it. The critical questions here are “Who built the system?” and “Who keeps it going?” White Privilege does not mean White people have never struggled or had to work hard for what they’ve got. It doesn’t mean that White people aren’t food insecure or never have trouble paying their bills or always have access to good healthcare. It just means that they have benefited from their Whiteness in ways they may not even realize because race is not a factor for them in their day to day interactions and activities.

Years to Parity: An analysis which looks at achievement gaps between subgroups and calculates how long it will take, given the current rates of change, before those gaps are closed. Sometimes, the answer is “never.”
### Appendix I: Online Surveys

#### Student Survey Questions

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<tr>
<td>Transgender female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. What is your sexual orientation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual/straight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. How often do you worry about not having enough to eat at home?</td>
<td>E How often do you worry about not having enough to eat at home?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. My family has always had a safe place to live</td>
<td>F My family has always had a safe place to live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. The device I use for school work is:</td>
<td>G. The device I use for school work is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bought for me by my parent(s)/guardian</td>
<td>Bought for me by my parent(s)/guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loaned/given to me by the school</td>
<td>Loaned/given to me by the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given to me from another source</td>
<td>Given to me from another source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have a device</td>
<td>I don’t have a device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other________</td>
<td>Other________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. I have internet:</td>
<td>H. I have internet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From a source my parent(s)/guardian gets for me</td>
<td>From a source my parent(s)/guardian gets for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From a wifi hotspot the school gave to me</td>
<td>From a wifi hotspot the school gave to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have internet access at home.</td>
<td>I don’t have internet access at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. My teachers care about me as a person and about my learning.</td>
<td>I. My teachers care about me as a person and about my learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA, A, D, SD</td>
<td>SA, A, D, SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. I feel safe at school.</td>
<td>J. I feel safe at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. I see teachers/administrators who look like me (have the same race/ethnicity that I do).</td>
<td>L. I see teachers/administrators who look like me (have the same race/ethnicity that I do).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. I feel like I belong at my school.</td>
<td>M. I feel like I belong at my school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. I feel accepted at school for who I am (R IN INTERMEDIATE)</td>
<td>R. I feel that people at school accept me for who I am (N from HIGH SCHOOL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. My school works to address discrimination and bias and deals with any incidents of bias quickly and effectively.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. I have experienced discrimination or bias from other students at school.</td>
<td>N. I have experienced discrimination or bias from other students at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. I have experienced discrimination or bias from teachers or other school staff.</td>
<td>O. I have experienced discrimination or bias from teachers or other school staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. My teachers are comfortable discussing race, diversity, and culture and they do so often.</td>
<td>P. My teachers are comfortable discussing race, diversity, and culture and they do so often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. My teachers teach us to be understanding of others and their differences, and to be kind to one another.</td>
<td>Q. My teachers teach us to be understanding of others and their differences, and to be kind to one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. How accepting are students in your school of diversity or the differences of others?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. I have been persecuted at school by other students.</td>
<td>S. Please share any comments or experiences related to discrimination or equity:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Please share any comments or experiences related to discrimination or equity:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. There are clear expectations for behavior at my school.</td>
<td>T. There are clear expectations for behavior at my school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. There is a process for resolving conflict or problems with others at my school.</td>
<td>U. There is a process for resolving conflict or problems with others at my school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y. Discipline at my school is fair.</td>
<td>V. Discipline at my school is fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z. There are clear expectations regarding bullying at my school.</td>
<td>W. There are clear expectations regarding bullying at my school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA. I know if I report any bullying at school, it will be dealt with quickly and effectively.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Our school’s police officer treats students fairly.</td>
<td>X. Teachers at my school have the same expectations for students’ behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y. Our school’s police officer treats students fairly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>I have been suspended from school on one or more occasions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>I have been held back in one or more grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>I have been bullied by other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>I have people (teachers, school staff) at this school that I trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>I receive services in the following areas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Gifted/talented education or advanced academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>English language learning/English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Other disability/504 planning and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Dual language/Immersion programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.</td>
<td>I have access to any program(s) I want to be involved in (extracurricular, academic, fine arts, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>My teachers are willing to help me when I don’t understand something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.</td>
<td>My teachers encourage me to excel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.</td>
<td>I have been encouraged to take advanced courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td>I have been encouraged to go to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>I have been encouraged to apply to a vocational program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.</td>
<td>How often are you bored at school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.</td>
<td>Teachers at my school make me feel like I can be successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.</td>
<td>I feel well prepared for classroom tests/assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.</td>
<td>I know what I have to do to earn a specific grade on assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.</td>
<td>Is there anything else about your experiences at school that you would like to share with us?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent Survey Questions

B. What is your race/ethnicity?
   - White
   - Black or African American
   - Asian
   - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   - Two or More Races
   - Hispanic or Latinx or of Spanish Origin, any race
   - Native American or American Indian
   - Race/ethnicity unknown
   - Other:

C. My students are in the following grade levels (Check all that apply):
   - PreK/K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5-6 (intermediate), 7-8 (Middle School) 9-12 (High School)

D. What school does your child attend?

E. I/we have secure employment that is sufficient to meet my family’s needs.

F. Our household income is:
   - Under $20,000
   - $20,000-$30,000
   - $30,000-$40,000
   - $40,000-$50,000
   - $50,000-$60,000
   - $60,000-$70,000
   - $70,000-$80,000
   - $80,000-$90,000
   - $90,000-$100,000
   - $100,000-$150,000
   - $150,000-$200,000
   - More than $200,000

G. How often do you worry about not having enough to eat at home?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Always

H. I/We rely on the school to provide meals to my children.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

I. I/We have work-provided healthcare benefits (self or from spouse or partner)

J. My child(ren) use(s) devices for schoolwork. These are devices that:
   - I/we have provided for them
   - The school provided for them
   - Are on loan/given to us from another source
   - Other:
APPENDICES

K. We access the internet:

   Mark only one oval.
   From a service provider that I/we pay for at home
   From a wifi hotspot that the school provides
   From an employer-provided service
   Other:

L. My community has the same access to resources as other communities in the district.

M. My school has adequate support for teachers, families, and students during and after a pandemic.

N. My child has access to the same resources as children in other schools in the district.

O. My child’s teacher(s) care(s) about my child as a person and about my child’s academic success.

P. My child is treated fairly and with kindness at school.

Q. Front office staff treat me with respect when I call or visit the school.

R. I know whom to contact if my child experiences racism or discrimination.

S. When I visit the school, I see teachers and administrators who reflect my child’s ethnicity/race.

T. My child’s school leaders and teachers care about any concerns I might have.

U. My child’s school works to address discrimination and bias.

V. I know if I report any incident of racism or discrimination, it will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

W. My child has experienced discrimination or racism.

X. We need more discussion about racism and racial identity at my child’s school.

Y. Please share any experiences you have had related to discrimination or bias:

Z. There are clear expectations for behavior at my child’s school.

AA. There is a conflict resolution process at my child’s school.

AB. My child has been bullied at school.

AC. Bullying is dealt with effectively at my child’s school.

AD. Discipline policies and procedures in my child’s school are fair.

AE. Teachers at my child’s school have consistent expectations for student behavior.

AF. The school’s Police officer treats students fairly.

AG. My child feels accepted for who he/she is.

AH. My child has been suspended from school on one or more occasions.

   Yes/No

AI. My child has been retained in one or more grades.

   Yes/No

AJ. Please share any additional comments or experiences you have had related to discrimination or behavior issues at school.

AK. I know any complaints or concerns I share with the school are dealt with quickly and effectively.

AL. I know who at school can help me if our family is having a personal issue.

AM. My child feels engaged and connected at school.

AN. My child’s experience at school is very positive.

AO. I get information about services in my own language and the school provides a translator at school meetings.
APPENDICES

AP  My child has access to the program(s) he/she wants to be involved in.

AQ  My child receives services in the following areas:
    Gifted/talented education or advanced academics
    English language learning/English as a Second Language
    Special Education
    Other disability/504 planning and services
    Dual language/Immersion programming

AR  I know what services are available (during the school day/outside of the school day) if my child needs academic assistance.

AS  My child has received encouragement and support to excel from teachers.

AT  My child has been encouraged to take advanced courses.

AU  My child has been encouraged to go to college.

AV  My child has been encouraged to apply to a vocational program.

AW  My child is bored at school: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, always

AX  My child’s teacher(s) build(s) up his/her self-esteem.

AY  Teachers at my child’s school believe all children can be successful.

AZ  My child is well prepared for all assessments.

BA  My child knows what he/she has to do to earn a specific grade on assignments.

BB  Is there anything else you’d like to share with the auditors?
APPENDICES

Personnel Survey Questions

1. What is your position in the district?

Teacher

2. What school(s) do you work at?
3. How many years have you worked in the district?
4. What is your level or area of assignment?
5. The district has a clear definition for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
6. The district is effective at supporting and monitoring equity in its policies and practices.
7. The district works to address issues related to discrimination and bias.
8. We have a strong commitment to equity and inclusion in my school.
9. There is a variety of cultures and ethnic identities in my classroom.
10. The level of tolerance for diversity in this district is high.
11. The identification of students for special programs (Gifted/talented, Special Education, etc.) is equitable and effective.
12. Teachers at this school have very high expectations for all students’ academic performance.
13. All students at my school are treated fairly and with kindness by all personnel.
14. The personnel at my school are racially and ethnically diverse.
15. Our school actively works to address issues related to discrimination and bias.
16. Personnel in my building are aware of diversity or race issues and are comfortable addressing them.
17. I have observed biased or racist speech or behavior among students at my school.
18. I have observed biased or racist speech or behavior among teachers at my school.
19. I have personally experienced discrimination or racist behavior in the workplace.
20. I feel comfortable reporting incidents of discrimination or racism to our building leaders.
21. I have received training in MISD on how to deal with incidents of racism or discrimination that I observe in the classroom or school.
22. I feel the professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion is adequate in the district.
23. We need more discussion about racism, discrimination, and racial identity at my school.
24. I feel comfortable having conversations about race, racial identity, discrimination, and bias with my colleagues at my school.
25. I feel comfortable having conversations about race, racial identity, discrimination, and bias with students at my school.
26. My school leader(s) are effective at engaging us in discussions about diversity, bias, and inclusion issues.
27. What is your race/ethnicity?
28. What is your gender/orientation?
29. What is your sexual orientation?
30. What are the strengths of the district with respect to diversity and equity?
31. What are the areas related to diversity and equity where the district could improve?
32. Student behavior at my school is not a problem.
33. Personnel at my school have consistent and fair expectations for student behavior.
34. Discipline policies at my school are implemented fairly and consistently with all students.
35. The school’s police officer treats all students fairly.
36. I believe that my supervisor/employer values my input and that I receive adequate support in my position.
37. I believe our district leaders are effective at recruiting highly skilled personnel that reflect the diversity of our students.
38. Students at my building have access to the same resources as students at other schools in the district.
39. Our district adequately supports the needs of our most disadvantaged students.
40. Our parents are very supportive of and involved in their children’s education.
41. I feel comfortable contacting parents of other races/ethnicities about issues with their children.
42. Culture and ethnic identity plays an important part in a child’s successful learning.
43. My classroom instruction is equally effective with all of my students.
44. Differentiation is necessary for my students’ needs to be met.
45. I have the resources and tools needed to effectively differentiate my instruction and meet the needs of all my students.
46. I have received adequate training on how to differentiate instruction for my students.
47. I have received adequate training in how to effectively engage students from diverse backgrounds.
48. I consider my students’ culture(s) and backgrounds when planning instruction.
49. The district curriculum is effective at suggesting ways to address students’ diverse perspectives and backgrounds during instruction.
50. We have resources that reflect the backgrounds and cultures of the students in our classrooms.
51. Is there anything else you would like to share with the auditors?

**Campus Administrator**

52. What is your job title?
53. How many years have you worked in the district?
54. What is the grade level/gradespan you serve?
55. The district has a clear definition for diversity, equity and inclusion.
56. The district is effective at supporting and monitoring equity in its policies and practices.
57. The district works to address issues related to discrimination and bias.
58. The level of tolerance for diversity in this district is high.
59. The identification of students for special programs (Gifted/talented, Special Education, etc.) is equitable and effective.
60. Teachers at this school have very high expectations for all students’ academic performance.
61. All students at my school are treated fairly and with kindness by all personnel.
62. Personnel in my building are aware of diversity or race issues and are comfortable addressing them.
63. I have observed biased or racist speech or behavior among students at my school.
64. I have observed biased or racist speech or behavior among teachers at my school.
65. I have personally experienced discrimination or racist behavior in the workplace.
66. I have observed others experience discrimination or racist behavior in the workplace.
67. I have received reports of discrimination or racism.
68. I have received training in MISD on how to handle reports of discrimination or bias.
69. There is adequate training in MISD on cultural sensitivity, bias, and diversity.
70. I feel comfortable having conversations about race, racial identity, discrimination, and bias with my colleagues at work.
71. We frequently have discussions about diversity, bias, and inclusion issues on my campus.
72. What is your race/ethnicity?
73. What is your gender/orientation?
74. What is your sexual orientation?
75. What are the strengths of the district with respect to diversity and equity?
76. What are the areas related to diversity and equity where the district could improve?
77. Personnel at my school have consistent and fair expectations for student behavior.
78. Discipline policies at my school are implemented fairly and consistently with all students.
79. The school’s police officer treats all students fairly.
80. The district has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its hiring and recruitment practices.
81. District leaders are effective at recruiting personnel with a high level of sensitivity for and experience with diversity.
82. I receive the support or resources I need to retain teachers of color.
83. Students at my building have access to the same resources as students at other schools in the district.
84. Our district adequately supports the needs of our most disadvantaged students by allocating additional resources for those students.
85. I have the resources and support I need to communicate with parents whose first language is not English.
86. Culture and ethnic identity plays an important part in a child’s successful learning.
87. Our teachers’ classroom instruction is equally effective with all of their students.
88. Differentiation is necessary for our students’ needs to be met.
89. Teachers are effective at differentiating their instruction to meet the needs of all their students.
90. Teachers have received adequate training in how to effectively engage students from diverse backgrounds.
91. Teachers in my building consider their students’ culture(s) and backgrounds when planning instruction.
92. The district curriculum is effective at suggesting ways to address students’ diverse perspectives and backgrounds during instruction.
93. We have resources that reflect the backgrounds and cultures of the students in our classrooms.
94. Is there anything else you would like to share with the auditors?
**APPENDICES**

**District Administrator**

95. What is your job title or level of responsibility?
96. How many years have you worked in the district?
97. The district has a clear definition for diversity, equity and inclusion.
98. The district is effective at supporting and monitoring equity in its policies and practices.
99. The district works to address issues related to discrimination and bias.
100. The level of tolerance for diversity in this district is high.
101. The identification of students for special programs (Gifted/talented, Special Education, etc.) is equitable and effective.
102. I have personally experienced discrimination or racist behavior in the workplace.
103. I have observed others experience discrimination or racist behavior in the workplace.
104. I have received reports of discrimination or racism.
105. I have received training in MISD on how to handle reports of discrimination or bias.
106. There is adequate training in MISD on cultural sensitivity, bias, and diversity.
107. I feel comfortable having conversations about race, racial identity, discrimination, and bias with my colleagues at work.
108. What is your race/ethnicity?
109. What is your gender/orientation?
110. What is your sexual orientation?
111. What are the strengths of the district with respect to diversity and equity?
112. What are the areas related to diversity and equity where the district could improve?
113. Discipline actions across the district are implemented fairly and consistently with all students.
114. The district has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its hiring and recruitment practices.
115. The district is effective at recruiting personnel with a high level of sensitivity for and experience with diversity.
116. The district is effective at retaining and supporting teachers of color.
117. Schools in our district all have equal and adequate access to resources and services.
118. Our district adequately supports the needs of our most disadvantaged students by allocating additional resources for those students.
119. Is there anything else you would like to share with the auditors?

**Campus Support Personnel**

120. How many years have you worked in the district?
121. The district has a clear definition for diversity, equity and inclusion.
122. The district is effective at supporting and monitoring equity in its policies and practices.
123. The district works to address issues related to discrimination and bias.
124. I have personally experienced discrimination or racist behavior in the workplace.
125. I feel comfortable reporting incidents of discrimination or racism that I see to my supervisor.
126. I feel the professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion is adequate in the district.
127. I feel comfortable having conversations about race, racial identity, discrimination, or bias with my colleagues.
128. The level of tolerance for diversity in this district is high.
129. Our district adequately supports the needs of our most disadvantaged students.
130. Student behavior in the district is not a problem.
131. I believe that my supervisor/employer values my input and that I receive adequate support in my position.
132. I believe our district leaders are effective at recruiting highly skilled personnel that reflect the diversity of our students.
133. The identification of students for special programs (Gifted/talented, Special Education, etc.) is equitable and effective.
134. What is your race/ethnicity?
135. What is your gender/orientation?
136. What is your sexual orientation?
137. What are the strengths of the district with respect to diversity and equity?
138. What are the areas related to diversity and equity where the district could improve?
139. All students at my school are treated fairly and with kindness by all personnel.
140. The personnel at my school are racially and ethnically diverse.
141. Our school actively works to address issues related to discrimination and bias.
142. Personnel in my building are aware of diversity or race issues and are comfortable addressing them.
143. I have observed biased or racist speech or behavior among students at my school.
144. I have observed biased or racist speech or behavior among teachers at my school.
145. We need more discussion about racism, discrimination and racial identity at my school.
146. My school leader(s) are effective at engaging us in discussions about diversity, bias, and inclusion issues.
147. We have a strong commitment to equity and inclusion in my school.
148. Teachers at this school have very high expectations for all students’ academic performance.
149. Personnel at my school have consistent and fair expectations for student behavior.
150. Discipline policies at my school are implemented fairly and consistently with all students.
151. The school’s police officer treats all students fairly.
152. Students at my building have access to the same resources as students at other schools in the district.
153. Culture and ethnic identity plays an important part in a child’s successful learning.
154. Is there anything else you would like to share with the auditors?

Support Personnel

155. How many years have you worked in the district?
156. The district has a clear definition for diversity, equity and inclusion.
157. The district is effective at supporting and monitoring equity in its policies and practices.
158. The district works to address issues related to discrimination and bias.
159. I have personally experienced discrimination or racist behavior in the workplace.
160. I feel comfortable reporting incidents of discrimination or racism that I see to my supervisor.
161. I feel the professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion is adequate in the district.
162. I feel comfortable having conversations about race, racial identity, discrimination, or bias with my colleagues.
163. The level of tolerance for diversity in this district is high.
164. Our district adequately supports the needs of our most disadvantaged students.
165. Student behavior in the district is not a problem.
166. I believe that my supervisor/employer values my input and that I receive adequate support in my position.
167. I believe our district leaders are effective at recruiting highly skilled personnel that reflect the diversity of our students.
168. The identification of students for special programs (Gifted/talented, Special Education, etc.) is equitable and effective.
169. What is your race/ethnicity?
170. What is your gender/orientation?
171. What is your sexual orientation?
172. What are the strengths of the district with respect to diversity and equity?
173. What are the areas related to diversity and equity where the district could improve?
174. Anything else like to share?
APPENDICES

Appendix J: Curriculum Charts

ELAR Charts

Curriculum Notes: ELAR (SS in K-2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Grades K-2</th>
<th>Grades 3-4</th>
<th>Grades 5-6</th>
<th>Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>TEKS (ELAR and Social Studies) linked in the curriculum; Specific phonics skills identified; Specific Social Studies TEKS integrated in each ELAR sub-module with linked resources. “Students will” statements included in lesson script and we will statements listed in shared reading and writing sections of ELAR daily lesson plans.</td>
<td>“We will” statements found at the sub-module level.</td>
<td>Has “we will” statements listed in all sub-unit weekly plans at grade 5. Grade 6 curriculum identifies students will statements under unit goals.</td>
<td>TEKS Mastery Document provided and linked to TEKs clarifiers. “Students will” statements are provided for all instructional units.</td>
<td>Has we will statements at the sub-unit level for English I, II, III, and IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential questions</td>
<td>Has one weekly essential question noted in each ELAR sub-module.</td>
<td>4 Big ideas and 3-6 essential questions provided per unit.</td>
<td>An essential question is provided in each weekly sub-unit at grade 5. Grade 6 has three essential questions for each unit.</td>
<td>Has one essential question for each unit at grades 7 and 8.</td>
<td>4 Big Ideas and one essential question are identified for all ELAR units across the grade span. Guiding questions provided for every unit in English I, II, II, and IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Questions to be answered after ELAR instruction regarding student ability are listed. Links to module assessments and selection quizzes embedded in ELAR daily lesson script. CBAs are included at Grade 2.</td>
<td>Links provided to CBAs, progress checks, DRAs, and TEKS Mastery Additions with intervention activities.</td>
<td>Linked assessments include progress check-ups, cold reads, end of unit assessments, district CBAs, and weekly monitoring towards TEKS mastery.</td>
<td>District CBAs linked at the unit level.</td>
<td>District CBAs linked at the unit level. Quizzes provided and linked in Google folder documents for units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Key vocabulary listed at sub module level.</td>
<td>Key Vocabulary listed for all units in the grade span.</td>
<td>Academic vocabulary and related genre language including terms in units, texts, and ELAR resources are provided.</td>
<td>Has key vocabulary at unit level.</td>
<td>Key vocabulary listed in every unit in English I, II, III, and IV. Link also provided to literacy terms / devices K-12, and figurative language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Support for Instruction and Differentiation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Embedded links to primary and supplemental resources found in sub-module daily lesson plan; some links require additional teacher login at a vendor site, some show an error, and others indicate the item doesn't exist. Resources to which all campuses have access to implement balanced literacy model are identified and include district adopted as well as district developed resources; Links are provided to supplemental resources; some requiring additional teacher login at a vendor site</td>
<td>Has links to instructional resources embedded in each sub-module Resources to which all campuses have access to implement balanced literacy model are identified and include district adopted as well as district developed resources;</td>
<td>Teacher pages and student pages identified but not matched directly to the standard or skill listed Accompanying activity resources linked for each mentor text Resources to which all campuses have access to implement balanced literacy model are identified and include district adopted as well as district developed resources;</td>
<td>Teacher and student pages identified in text resources linked to unit topic, but not specifically matched to specific standards Primary resources include unit overview and suggested literature titles from which teachers can choose based on the unit skills and concepts to be covered and the genre focus Materials and teachers might not have access to and other literature resources are linked in the curriculum unit to district Google drive folders</td>
<td>Links provided for unit level resources in Google drive folders. Resources include wrap-around text and supplementary texts, novels and other resources to implement balanced literacy model. Links provided for unit level resources in Google drive folders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested strategy, approach</td>
<td>Has identified scaffolds or supports for typical gaps at sub-module level and in daily lesson plan. Curriculum link provided to guided reading strategies at the module level.</td>
<td>Have scaffolds and supports for typical gaps; including If Then Reading Intervention Menu of Approaches.</td>
<td>Link provided to balanced literacy guide strategies. Has videos teachers on how to teach students reading comprehension strategies.</td>
<td>TEKS Mastery Intervention Ideas provide teachers strategies to support individual learners.</td>
<td>Balanced literacy guide linked as a unit resource to support ELAR instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging and Enriching Activities</td>
<td>Engaging activities are provided in the curriculum and implemented during shared reading, shared writing and other balanced literacy activities. Two concrete examples of activities/tasks are provided in the scaffolding up section of the sub-unit plan and are examples of engaging activities.</td>
<td>A performance task is linked to unit plan and is an engaging and enriching activity.</td>
<td>In unit resources linked to the curriculum, teachers are provided specific engagement activities to introduce and reinforce unit skills concepts and explore theme and genre focus.</td>
<td>Concrete activity examples are not shown in curriculum units plan. Sample engaging activities are provided in Google drive folder.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Materials / Resources for Differentiation</strong></td>
<td>Link provided to guided reading leveled texts. Some mentor texts for shared reading are linked and others are only listed. Suggested Read-a-loud texts for student choice are identified. Some are linked to vendor sites. Linked intervention ideas and activities for literacy centers / stations to reinforce and support learning. Links to CBA support resources provided at grade 2.</td>
<td>Linked guided reading leveled texts. Concrete and linked examples provided for literacy centers and learning stations. Text complexity charts provided. Linked Cold Reads (on-level, developing, and advanced).</td>
<td>Link provided to on-level, advanced, and/or developing level cold reads. Links provided to intervention mini-lessons.</td>
<td>Has links to mini lessons on specific skills. On-level and Pre-AP resources identified and linked at the unit level.</td>
<td>On-level, Pre-AP, and F/O resources linked at the unit level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Student Activities / Assignments</strong></td>
<td>Concrete examples of response options for students during shared reading provided at the sub-module level. Has suggested learning center ideas to reinforce skills and concepts. Links provided to CBA assessment support activities. Concrete examples of response options for students during shared reading provided at the sub-module level Has suggested learning center ideas to reinforce skills and concepts Links provided to CBA assessment support activities</td>
<td>Linked TEKS Mastery PowerPoint with intervention activities and lessons.</td>
<td>TEKS mastery assessment with intervention activities to support balanced literacy model linked to unit plan. Scaffolding activities (Down and Up) listed at unit level. Has linked literacy station activities.</td>
<td>Has link to TEKS Mastery Intervention activities.</td>
<td>Links to online activities to support intervention provided at the unit level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Support Resources</strong></td>
<td>Has links to teaching resources and professional development support. Link provided to guided reading coaching cards. Background, articulation and model lesson videos are linked resources.</td>
<td>Has linked SWAG unit previews.</td>
<td>Linked teacher materials provided to prepare students before, during and after reading. Linked unit overviews and weekly SWAG online sessions assist with instructional planning.</td>
<td>Linked district video support provided for teachers in implementing instructional planning guide.</td>
<td>Linked district video support provided for teachers in instructional planning and other topics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## ELAR Structure and Pacing Support

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<tr>
<th>Pacing Increment</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Largest Increment</strong></td>
<td>K = 8 modules Grades 1 and 2 = 11 modules</td>
<td>Six- 6-week units (Units 1 - 5) Unit 0 (Introduction)</td>
<td>Five 6-week units (Units 1 - 5) Unit 0 (Introduction) Unit 0 = 8 days</td>
<td>7 instructional units (Units 0 - 6) Unit 0 - introductory unit (3-5 days) Units 1-6 (19-28 instructional days)</td>
<td>6 units (Unit 0 - 6) Unit 0 - introductory unit - 3-5 days Units are chunked by instructional blocks (9-16 blocks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-increment</strong></td>
<td>K= 2-4 one-week sub-modules Grades 1 and 2 = 3 one-week sub-modules with one exception---module 11 at grade 1</td>
<td>Unit 0 = 8 days Units 1-5 5-week (5 days) sub-units</td>
<td>Units 1-5: 5 one-week (5-day) sub-units</td>
<td>3 sub-units identified for Units 1-6</td>
<td>3 sub-units per unit (approximately 2 weeks per sub-unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smallest Increment</strong></td>
<td>Scripted daily lesson plan for each sub-module with embedded links to instructional resources and activities</td>
<td>Daily lesson plans provided at sub-unit level with number of instructional days Sample model lesson provided for grade span Template provided for teacher developed lesson planning</td>
<td>Daily lesson plans linked to each grade 5 unit plan Grade 6 introductory unit (Unit 0) provides daily plan based on balanced literacy components Instructional planning guide and video support provided to help with lesson planning</td>
<td>Has linked unit instructional planning guide and sample lesson plan provided; A template also provided as a guide for instructional planning</td>
<td>Instructional planning guide and sample lesson plan provided; A template also provided as a guide for instructional planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other strengths noted in the ELAR guides include the specificity of skill expectations at primary, as well as the integration of social studies content. Student learning goals are clarified with specific examples. Additional resources and examples are provided to anchor and reinforce student learning and assist the teacher in meeting the needs of all learners. The suggested books for read-aloud are largely focused on gender and cultural diversity with the characters in various community roles. The suggested texts are authentic literature and will assist students to develop strong vocabulary and language skills.

Grade 4 ELA guides have refined TEKS, listing Big Ideas and essential questions, and provide a link to the grade 4 TEKS ELAR Mastery Document, which includes a link to additional explanations and examples of mastery at grade 4. The text selections include some culturally diverse people and characters. Most of the units in grade 4 focus on either science nonfiction texts or social studies nonfiction texts; however, there is no connection or link to science or social studies learning standards. A link to resources teachers can use to differentiate and scaffold activities is found on the grade level page for English language arts. Among the resources are graphic organizers and literacy center activities that differentiate the process and product for increased student understanding and learning.

Grade 7 units include ELA TEKS in the form of guiding questions, Big Ideas, and ongoing targeted foundational, comprehension, and response skills. The unit instructional planning document and resources provide on level and pre-AP activities to extend learning. Suggested reading materials reflect mostly gender diversity with some cultural representation. The close reading protocols provide instructional strategies for English language learners and approaches reflecting English language proficiency standards to meet the needs of struggling readers. Multiple writing prompts are linked in the plan to allow students more than one way to demonstrate understanding and mastery. Comprehension checks and district prepared CBAs are provided to assess student understanding and mastery. Auditors clicked on 50-60 links in order to open and review the guidance documents provided for one unit of study for English language arts in grade 7.

English II unit guides list the TEKS and provide a link to a unit TEKS mastery document. The year at a glance lists the TEKS by number with Big Idea statements providing more specificity to learning objectives. The instructional planning guide includes the primary selections for balanced literacy, and only one passage is linked and placed in the Google resource folder. Auditors found activities for several of the identified readings in the instructional plan; however, the selections were not found in the resource documents. Evidence of differentiation and diversity could not be determined. District prepared CBAs to assess content and skill mastery are included.

Some links to ELAR resources are not working which denies teachers access to materials to support instruction.
## Math Charts

### Mathematics Curriculum Components

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>All units have “I can” and or “I will” statements. “Students will” statements identified at the sub-unit level.</td>
<td>Five to 11 “I can” statements found at unit level across the grade span.</td>
<td>“I can” statements are identified for units across the grade span.</td>
<td>Has “I can” statements for all units across grade span. “Student will” statements listed in each sub-units.</td>
<td>“I can” statements identified for all instructional units in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. “Students will” statements found at the sub-unit level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential question</strong></td>
<td>Each unit has a list of specific tasks and accompanying questions to guide planning.</td>
<td>Units across the grade span have a combination of guiding questions and identified student tasks to help determine a starting point for planning.</td>
<td>Has 4-9 guiding questions that identify what students will know and be able to solve after unit instruction.</td>
<td>No essential questions provided in curriculum across the grade span.</td>
<td>No essential questions found in math curriculum for the subjects reviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>No formal assessment at kindergarten level. Work samples collected to show progress. Links to rapid and unit assessments provided for grades one and two.</td>
<td>Linked assessment items include unit assessments, quick checks, and STAAR released questions.</td>
<td>Links provided to district CBAs and STAAR released items. Has concrete examples of unit assessments and quick checks.</td>
<td>Unit assessments are identified, but not linked. Some pre-assessments are linked and others note...coming soon. Has linked exit tickets at the unit level. STAAR released items provided.</td>
<td>Pre-assessments included in curriculum units. Released EOC questions linked at the unit level. District CBAs linked at the unit level. Has linked concrete sample assessment items. A link to SAT connection provided in Algebra II units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Key vocabulary (new and previously introduced words) identified by standard. Link to TEA Interactive Math Glossary included.</td>
<td>Key Vocabulary (new and previously introduced words) identified at the unit level. Link provided to TEA Interactive Math Glossary.</td>
<td>Key vocabulary including new and previously introduced words provided at the unit level. Link to TEA Interactive Math Glossary provided at unit level.</td>
<td>Key vocabulary identified at the unit level for previously introduced and new words. Has inquiry vocabulary development activities, assignments, and quizzes.</td>
<td>Vocabulary for new and previously introduced words identified by standard at the unit level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Math Support for Instructional Delivery and Differentiation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component: Suggested strategy, approach</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General suggestions about approaching math instruction provided in unit overview. Link to list of ELPS strategies provided at kindergarten level, but it is not working.</td>
<td>Unit introduction provides strategies to clear up student misconceptions, prepare for the upcoming unit, and support learning. Links to ELPS interactive language objectives provided for all units across the grade span; Links work for 11 of 12 grade 4 units but do work for any grade 3 units.</td>
<td>General instructional strategies suggested in unit overview Has link to ELPS strategies and ELPS interactive language objectives.</td>
<td>Enrichment and scaffolds with linked resources identified for 8 of 10 units at grade 7 and 6 of 10 at grade 8.</td>
<td>Link to the complete list of ELPS strategies provided, but are not matched with specific TEKS. Suggested teaching considerations to deepen student understanding provided at the unit level. Six of 10 Algebra I units have linked enrichment and scaffold activities. Algebra II has linked enrichment activities for 5 of 8 units and scaffold support for one of 8 units. No geometry curriculum unit identifies scaffold and enrichment activities under the differentiation unit sub-heading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Resources | Primary resources available at all campuses are identified and include Unit slide show and 5-6 math texts. Most of the texts list the activity/skill and page number, some identify the activity matched with the TEK, and some provide a link to the activity in the unit plan. Links to math websites and online interactive/virtual manipulatives are also provided. | Resources available at all campuses include Unit Slide show and 10 math texts. Activities listed for text resources by activity and page number; some are linked, and some are not. Links also provided to websites with online games and interactive/virtual manipulatives. | Illustrative Math activities provided directly linked to specific standards Linked PDF and online resources provided. Resources available at all campuses are identified and include Unit Slide show and 6 math texts. | Mathematics resource bank and virtual tools listed with page number and activity number; some are linked, and others only named. Resources include primary district adopted text with activity pages listed by learning objective and the teacher’s edition of an additional text resource. Student practice resources include three additional math texts with activity and page numbers listed along with identified math websites. | Resources include primary text and 3 supplementary math texts identified in curriculum units with specific sections, page numbers, and lessons listed by unit learning objective. Additional math texts are identified under student practice resources some with linked activities, some activities are listed, and some units include a note saying “coming soon.” |

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<tr>
<th>Component: Engaging and Enriching Activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 tasks provided in grade 1 unit 1 to assist teachers in planning additional / alternative lessons were all engaging activities</td>
<td>Only activities addressing unit TEKS are listed, and no concrete examples provided. Engagement of activities could not be determined.</td>
<td>One of the math texts has two activities linked to district grade level Google drive folders, one of which is engaging and enriching.</td>
<td>Concrete examples of tasks and activities were not found in Grade 8 Unit 1 curriculum. Only one of the three activities linked under whole group, collaborative activities, was engaging.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Suggested materials / resources | Links provided to resources and ideas for enrichment and intervention. Links to 3-10 websites with online games, and links to 4-6 interactive/ virtual manipulatives provided in units across the grade span. | Has learning station ideas and digital resources to reinforce prior learning and prepare for upcoming unit. | Links to resources to scaffold instruction provided at unit level for specific standards. | Resources provide specific ideas for additional and alternative lessons for specific standards. | Link provided at unit level to resource guide with scaffold of current and earlier TEKS and linked lesson activities. Linked video tutorials and worked out solutions to problems provided to support intervention. |

| Suggested student activities / assignments | Links provided to specific intervention activities and learning station ideas. | Links provided to enrichment, higher level problems. Has linked intervention activities by learning objective. | Unit resources identify specific choice boards and student practice activities to scaffold learning; some are linked and others are just listed. | Enrichment and scaffolding activities to implement during instruction identified; some are linked and some list resource activity number and page number. | Projects and menu activities identified for advanced learners. Enrichment and scaffolding ideas provided to implement during instruction. |

| Teacher support resources | Unit overview provides links to one-minute videos on teaching specific unit concepts. | Linked teacher background videos and SWAG unit preview. Has list of common misconceptions. | Linked teacher resources, PD and demonstration videos at the unit level. Common student misconceptions listed in unit plan. | Link to teacher background and professional development video provided at unit level. | Mathematics resource bank of tools used for demonstration. |
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Math Support for Pacing

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Largest Increment</td>
<td>10 - 11 units across K-2 grade span</td>
<td>Grade 3 9 units (6 -21 days)</td>
<td>Grade 5 10 units (10 -26 days)</td>
<td>11 units 6 - 22 days</td>
<td>Algebra I - 10 units (3-13 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 - 26 instructional days</td>
<td>Grade 4 12 units (8-21 days)</td>
<td>Grade 6 13 units (2-26 days)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Geometry - 13 units (5-8 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Algebra II - 8 units (5-16 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-increment</td>
<td>1 - 4 sub-units with instructional days listed</td>
<td>1 - 4 sub-units</td>
<td>2-8 sub units</td>
<td>1- 4 sub-units</td>
<td>1-5 sub-units for content area subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest increment</td>
<td>Has 4- 8 concrete examples of resources and ideas for lessons connected to unit standards.</td>
<td>Ideas and suggested tasks provided for lessons connected to the standard. 2-26 ideas given at grade 3</td>
<td>Suggested lesson ideas provided for specific standards.</td>
<td>Lesson plan template provided for teachers to assist with instructional planning.</td>
<td>Lesson plan template provided for instructional planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unit slide show with linked daily lesson plans (Day-1 to Day-10) provides examples to use for instructional planning.</td>
<td>2 -12 ideas given at grade 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daily lesson plans provided in textbook resources and noted in the curriculum, based on TEKS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although math units provide tasks and guiding questions to support planning, they do not include essential questions.

The link to ELPS strategies included in mathematics curriculum to support differentiation does not work in any units at grade 3 which could deny teachers timely access to resources to plan instruction to meet student needs.

None of the math curriculum units have essential questions and some have not yet identified pre-assessments.

Math curriculum units do not have essential questions to focus instruction. No geometry units have identified intervention and enrichment activities for differentiation and Algebra II has no scaffold support suggestions to meet student needs.
### Social Studies

#### Social Studies Curriculum Components

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<th>Grades 7-8</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>Has “we will” statements for 2 of 6 (33%) of units at grade 3. 4 of 6 (67%) units at grade 3 list the same verbiage as the standards, there was no change. We will statements found in all six units at grade four.</td>
<td>Same verbiage as the standards, there was no change. Unit specificity documents list targeted skills, specific information about people, and concepts to be learned. No we will / I will statements found in grade 5 and 6 curriculum.</td>
<td>“We will” statements are included in 2 of 7 (29%) of units accessible at grade 8 and 8 of 13 (62%) of units at grade 7. 5 units at grade 8 and 5 units at grade 7 list, a total 10 of 20 (50%) units have the same verbiage as the social studies standards; no change. Unit specificity document provides list of specific persons, places, concepts, and skills to be learned.</td>
<td>“We will” statements are identified in only one World History curriculum unit and one US History unit. US History curriculum has students understand statements at the unit level. Unit specificity documents for US History include some specified content intended to clarify objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential question</strong></td>
<td>No essential questions found for in curriculum units across the grade span</td>
<td>Grade 6 units include guiding questions None of grade 5 units include essential questions.</td>
<td>No essential questions provided in grade 7 and 8 curriculum units.</td>
<td>US History curriculum has guiding questions for units in 3 of 6 (50%) grading periods. None of 6 World History curriculum units have essential questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Linked assessments include topic and vocabulary quizzes. Suggested assessment includes unit culminating project. Assessment direction found in only 3 of 12 (25%) of units across the grade span.</td>
<td>General suggestions provided regarding assessment tasks. Assessment across the grade span includes a combination of questions to be answered and tasks to be completed. Assessments were found in grade level resources in Google folder, but are not linked or listed in the curriculum unit.</td>
<td>Only 2 of the 20 (10%) accessible units across the grade span listed or referenced assessment. Assessment questions are provided to assess learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>A total of 5 of 12 (42%) of units across the grade span have identified key vocabulary 4 of 6 of units at grade 3 and only one of 6 units at grade 4 have identified key vocabulary</td>
<td>Key vocabulary listed for all units across the grade span Sample vocabulary activities also included</td>
<td>10 of 20 (50%) of accessible units at grades 7 and 8 identified key vocabulary</td>
<td>Key vocabulary identified for all curriculum units for US History World History only has key vocabulary identified for the first instructional unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Resources/activities clustered and linked at the unit level by category, topic, and TEK at grade 3. Grade 4 lists primary text and the specific unit, chapter and page for corresponding standard.</td>
<td>Resources provided by standard with reference to specific chapter, section and page number. Some linked resources require a subscription, educator login or sign up by creating an account. Some linked pages do not exist, some require access be requested, some deny access, and others were reported owned by a person and is now in their trash.</td>
<td>Links provided for 3 of 8 resource modules identified at grade 7 and none worked.</td>
<td>Some of the unit resources in units are named and others are linked to websites and the district Google drive folders. Of the 26 resource links in US History Second Grading Period, 14 (54%) are invalid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Social Studies Curriculum Support for Differentiation

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested strategy, approach</strong></td>
<td>Unit overview gives general suggestions regarding use of globes, maps, map elements and integration of math concepts. Suggested use of note booking activities for hands-on learning at grade 4.</td>
<td>English language development (ELD) strategies, social studies teaching strategies, and writing strategies for social studies classrooms listed as differentiation support.</td>
<td>Unit specificity document provides background information to give teachers support regarding how to approach the concepts, however it does not identify strategies or approaches on how to provide enrichment or scaffolding to meet individual student needs and support their learning.</td>
<td>The same specific ELPS strategies are identified in all unit plans. Unit overview provide general suggestions on how to approach teaching the content and addressing prior learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Primary text is identified and links provided to supplementary texts, publications, journals, district Google drive folders and online resources. Resources/activities clustered and linked at the unit level by category, topic, and TEK at grade 3. Grade 4 lists primary text and the specific unit, chapter and page for corresponding standard.</td>
<td>Resources include primary text identified and supplementary modules linked to Google drive folder. Links provided for 3 of 8 supplementary resource modules identified at grade 7 and none worked.</td>
<td>Resources include primary text identified and supplementary modules linked to Google drive folder. Links provided for 3 of 8 supplementary resource modules identified at grade 7 and none worked.</td>
<td>Primary text identified and chapters listed to match cluster of TEKS in the first grading period. Links to resources in Google Drive folders provided. Of the 26 resource links in US History Second Grading Period, 14 (54%) are invalid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Engaging and Enriching Activities

- Activities/tasks are linked and only one concrete example was found and it was not engaging.
- Concrete examples of activities/tasks are not provided in curriculum unit and links to modules do not work.
- Concrete examples of activities/tasks are not provided in curriculum unit and links to modules do not work.
- Brief descriptions of several unit tasks/projects are provided in US History first grading period curriculum, one of which was engaging and enriching.

### Suggested materials/resources

- Linked resources include choice boards for grade 4 units. Some links do not work, and some require additional educator signup and/or login.
- Lists *Strategies for Teaching Social Studies to ELLs* as a resource for remediation.
- *Writing frames for the social studies classroom* identified as a unit resource.
- Pre-assessment listed as an enrichment resource.
- *Strategies for teaching social studies to ELLs* listed as a remediation resource.
- Website resources for enrichment and scaffold support listed and linked at the unit level.

### Suggested student activities/assignments

- Links provided to choice Board menu of activities - GT Differentiation chart.
- Student activities linked at the unit level reference utilizing GT extension.
- No suggested activities or assignments found in grade span curriculum to support differentiation.
- Activities and assignments utilizing ELPS strategies listed in instructional units in US History.

### Teacher support resources

- SWAG meetings and PD sessions linked under professional development at the unit level.

### Social Studies Curriculum Support for Pacing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 3-4</th>
<th>Grades 5-6</th>
<th>Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Largest Increment</strong></td>
<td>Six - 6-week units</td>
<td>Six 6-week grading periods</td>
<td>Six 6-week grading periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-increment</strong></td>
<td>2-6 one-week sub-units</td>
<td>1-4 sub-units 5-8 weeks</td>
<td>1-5 sub-units identified for each grading period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smallest Increment</strong></td>
<td>Sample lesson plans included for grading periods by standards on Google grade level resources folder</td>
<td>No sample lesson or template/guide was found for instructional planning</td>
<td>No instructional planning support documentation was found in social studies curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Curriculum guide units at grades 4 and 7 provide the TEKS as student learning objectives with an accompanying vertical alignment of Social Studies TEKS 9-12. The TEKs are repetitive in nature and do not add specificity to student learning objectives. Resources are linked in the unit and accessible on the district’s Google drive. Auditors found few cultural connections with Texas history represented in instructional activities.

World History grade 10 units provide the TEKS with a link to vertical alignment of TEKS 9-12. Learning objectives are also listed, but closer examination shows they include the exact wording of the TEKS with the addition of “we will” at the beginning of each statement. No refinement of TEKS was done.
to clearly define required learning. Key vocabulary, terms, and concepts are identified in units. The primary text and secondary online websites used for instruction are included, but with no specific match to the TEKS. Auditors could not gain access to social studies online texts. Differentiation was not found in content, process, or product. Although there were several journaling tasks, most social studies planned activities required limited writing.

Social Studies curriculum does not have clear and specific objectives in the majority of grade 3 units beyond the language of the standards, no essential questions are included in any units across the grade span, and assessment direction is not provided for over 75% of instructional units to guide instruction toward the mastery of the standard. Key vocabulary has not been identified for more than half of the units across the grade span. Social studies curriculum provides general suggestions for instructional strategies/approaches and resource links provided do not all allow access to identified materials to use for intervention and enrichment.

Social studies curriculum across the 5-6 grade span lacks objective specificity to evaluate mastery of the standard, and no essential questions are included in grade 5 units. Although there are sample assessments in grade 6 Google folder resources, those items are not identified in the curriculum unit plan. Social studies curriculum units list general assessment suggestions and/or questions to be answered, but do not show concrete assessment examples needed to provide adequate direction to determine mastery. Additionally, resource links in social studies units are inconsistent in providing access to identified materials to support instruction.

Half of 7-8 social studies curriculum units do not have the specificity needed to evaluate mastery of the standard. Essential questions are not included in any units across the grade span, and little to no assessment direction is provided to teachers to allow them to plan instruction in response to student need. Key vocabulary has not been identified in half of the units across the grade span and resource links provided do not allow access.

Social studies courses do not have clear and specific objectives and essential questions for most units across the two subjects reviewed. Units in World History do not have key vocabulary, and just over half of the links to resources in US History units did not work for the auditors.
## Science Curriculum Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Grades K-2</th>
<th>Grades 3-4</th>
<th>Grades 5-6</th>
<th>Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>Has one student will statement for each instructional unit reviewed</td>
<td>2 - 7 we will and students will statements found in all instructional units at grades 3 and 4.</td>
<td>Units have one student will statement and 3 - 7 we will statements per unit across the grade span</td>
<td>Has we will and I will statements for 8 of 12 units across the grade span</td>
<td>Has 3-5 we will /I will statements in biology and chemistry curriculum for 3 of 12 (25%) of instructional units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential question</strong></td>
<td>Kindergarten and grade 1 units have guiding questions for ongoing TEKS</td>
<td>Have guiding questions for ongoing TEKS at unit level</td>
<td>Lists 1 - 4 guiding questions per standard in units across the grade span</td>
<td>Has 1-5 essential questions per unit</td>
<td>5-20 guiding questions included in biology and chemistry curriculum in 10 of the 12 instructional units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Links to unit assessments in primary instructional resource and district CBAs in Google drive</td>
<td>Links to pre-assessment, progress monitoring, and evaluation items built into unit resources</td>
<td>Checkpoint quizzes linked in resources</td>
<td>Links to district CBAs provided.</td>
<td>District CBAs identified and linked at the unit level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Key vocabulary previously introduced and new words identified for each standard</td>
<td>Key vocabulary (new and previously introduced words) identified for all units in grades 3 and 4</td>
<td>Key vocabulary including new and previously introduced words provided at the unit level</td>
<td>Has links to sample word walls</td>
<td>Key vocabulary for new and previously introduced words listed for every unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Links to resource activities provided for unit standards</td>
<td>Resources available at each campus identified; some are listed and some are linked</td>
<td>Links to resources provided by standard</td>
<td>Has link to site where teachers can access problem-based learning activities</td>
<td>Resources linked to unit topics and matched with specific standards provided at the unit level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Science Curriculum Support for Differentiation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component:</th>
<th>Grades K-2</th>
<th>Grades 3-4</th>
<th>Grades 5-6</th>
<th>Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested strategy, approach</strong></td>
<td>Identifies specific ELPS strategies at the module level</td>
<td>Has scaffolds for intervention and guided practice</td>
<td>Has identified scaffolds and extensions based on pre and diagnostic assessment</td>
<td>Specific ELPS strategies are linked to units</td>
<td>Scaffolding activities applying specific ELPS strategies identified and linked in Chemistry units for specific TEKS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Link provided to leveled readers and ELAR connections to science for guided reading</td>
<td>Lists specified ELPS strategies and support for acceleration and enrichment</td>
<td>Link to ELPS strategies provided</td>
<td>General suggestions given in unit overview on use of manipulatives to implement ELPS strategies</td>
<td>Chemistry unit overview suggestions include grouping, chunking information, and time to process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has link to site for teachers to access accommodations based on students’ needs; teacher input of student behaviors is required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Primary resource identified at grades K-1 include district created activities and lessons in Google folders</td>
<td>Primary resource for grades 3 and 4 science is linked in unit plan</td>
<td>Resources include district adopted STEMscopes and district developed Google drive folder resources. Most activities are linked to the two resources</td>
<td>Primary text and supplementary resources linked in curriculum units</td>
<td>Primary text listed in all units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary resource for grade 2 science is STEMscopes. Links are provided to specific activities in STEMscopes</td>
<td>Additional resources available at each campus include Bitmoji classrooms, and 3rd/4th grade teacher made activities; some are listed and some are linked.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Most activities are linked to the two resources</td>
<td>Supplemental resources linked in biology curriculum, but 5 of 29 (17%) linked items in the 5th marking period are not working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Links also provided to supplementary resources identified by TEK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary text listed in all units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Engaging and Enriching Activities** | Two of the three concrete activity examples provided to teachers in unit 1 of grade 1 to assist in planning additional/alternative lessons are engaging and enriching | Auditors were unable to access resource activities. Determination could not be made regarding the level of engagement and enrichment. | 1-3 concrete examples of engaging and enriching real-world, hands-on activities found in curriculum units at grade 6 to assist teachers in planning additional/alternative lessons | Concrete examples of tasks and activities were not found in grade span curriculum | 9 tasks are identified in chemistry unit 1 curriculum; 2 are concrete examples and 7 are linked. Both concrete examples are engaging activities and only 1 of the 7.

Mansfield Independent School District
### APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component:</th>
<th>Grades K-2</th>
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<th>Grades 5-6</th>
<th>Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested materials / resources</strong></td>
<td>Links provided to resources that provide alternative lessons for individual TEKS. Has two linked websites where teachers can access materials to support differentiation based on identified student needs.</td>
<td>Resources provide alternative lessons connected to the standard.</td>
<td>Content connection in science for ELLs is a suggested resource.</td>
<td>Choice board menu of activities identified for enrichment. ELPS activities linked in unit plan. Linked resources with enrichment activities provided at the unit level.</td>
<td>Specific resource materials identified for learning support at the unit level; some are linked and some only named.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested student activities / assignments</strong></td>
<td>Identifies suggested activities and tasks to scaffold and provide supports for intervention and enrichment in primary resource.</td>
<td>Have links to enrichment activities for acceleration/ elaboration and scaffold supports for intervention and guided practice by standard.</td>
<td>Menu of Activities for acceleration linked to unit plan.</td>
<td>Linked extension activities and assignments provided in unit resources. Acceleration section of identified resources provide enrichment activities.</td>
<td>Has linked activities to support enrichment and intervention in two of six biology instructional units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher support resources</strong></td>
<td>Link provided to video modeling labs. Linked Six Weeks At a Glance (SWAG) PD presentations including strategies for connecting content and language for ELLs in science.</td>
<td>Linked teacher background videos and SWAG unit preview. Has list of common misconceptions.</td>
<td>Has teacher background videos to teach concepts linked to unit plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Science Curriculum Support for Pacing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Grades K-2</th>
<th>Grades 3-4</th>
<th>Grades 5-6</th>
<th>Grades 7-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Largest Increment</td>
<td>Six (6-week) Instructional periods</td>
<td>Six 6-week instructional periods</td>
<td>6 instructional periods 4-8 weeks</td>
<td>Six - 6-week units</td>
<td>Six - 6-week instructional units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-increment</td>
<td>2-4 sub-units with instructional days listed</td>
<td>2 - 7 weekly sub-units (Some sub-units are combined)</td>
<td>Bulleted list of 3-6 learning tasks with instructional days listed</td>
<td>1-5 sub-units</td>
<td>2-4 sub-units bundled by grading period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest Increment</td>
<td>Sample lesson plan provided for teachers to use in instructional planning Concrete examples of resources and ideas for alternative lessons connected to standards provided at the unit level</td>
<td>Sample lesson plan provided SWAG one pager provided for instructional planning Sample lessons provided in content area primary resource</td>
<td>SWAG one pager provided for specific standards Linked tasks and resource ideas provided for planning lessons connected to the standards SWAG support provided to plan instruction</td>
<td>Exemplar lessons provided for specific standards Linked tasks and resource ideas provided for planning lessons connected to the standards SWAG support provided to plan instruction</td>
<td>Exemplar lessons included in chemistry sub-units for specific TEKS Linked tasks and resource ideas provided for planning lessons connected to the standards SWAG support provided to plan instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several science units are inaccessible at grade 1 and curriculum guidance is absent for TEKS content scheduled to be covered in those units.

Science units lack objective specificity and some resource links in biology do not allow access to curriculum materials to support instruction.

Biology units also provided few activities to support enrichment and intervention and some links to resources and activities for differentiation and instructional planning were invalid.
Appendix K: Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy

Appendix K.1: Description of Cognitive Types in Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Domain</th>
<th>Definition of Type</th>
<th>Additional Clarification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remembering</td>
<td>Includes those behaviors and test situations which emphasize remembering, either by recognition or recall of ideas, material, or phenomena</td>
<td>Ranges from the specific and relatively concrete to the more complex and abstract, including interrelations and patterns in which information can be organized and structured. Remembering is the dominant psychological process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>When confronted with written or oral communications, the student is expected to know what is being communicated and how to make some use of the materials or ideas contained in it.</td>
<td>Three types: translation, interpretation, extrapolation. Emphasis is on grasping the meaning and intent of the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>Student must be able to apply comprehension without prompting in a situation new to the student. Requires transfer of knowledge and comprehension to a real situation.</td>
<td>Emphasis is on remembering and bringing to bear upon a new situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing</td>
<td>Student must break down into component parts, make explicit the relationships between elements, and recognize organizational principles of the structure which holds the elements together as a whole.</td>
<td>Emphasizes breaking wholes into pieces and the ability to detect structure, relationships, organization. Must have a specific purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Making judgments about values for some purpose; ideas, works, solutions, methods, materials, etc.</td>
<td>Involves the use of criteria as standards for appraising the degree to which something is effective, accurate, satisfying. May be quantitative or qualitative. Not merely opinions; must have salient criteria as its basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating</td>
<td>Putting together elements and parts to form a whole; to create pattern or structure not clearly there before.</td>
<td>Emphasis is on the creative ability of students within a given framework. Must draw on elements from many sources. Should yield a product.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K.2: Context Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Real World/ Simulated Real World</th>
<th>Test-like</th>
<th>Classroom Activity</th>
<th>Meaningful Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>This type of context replicates activities found in the real world. It is often a hands-on activity.</td>
<td>This context replicates activities and tasks from released test items or from other exit exams in use by the district, such as AP exams. It allows students to practice skills prior to the test. It is important to note that quizzes and tests from a classroom setting do not necessarily fall into this category.</td>
<td>This context is comprised of activities which are unlikely to be found outside a classroom.</td>
<td>This context requires students to use higher-order thinking skills to complete the writing. The writing is usually of an extended nature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Examples       | Writing a business or persuasive letter; building a ramp to measure acceleration and velocity; researching a historical period and designing costumes for a play set in that period; planning a travel itinerary; creating a budget using salary and expense information from local papers or websites; learning songs in a target language; examining, describing, and evaluating soil types. | Marking a bubble sheet; selecting from multiple choice items; constructing a short answer; writing an extended response. True/false questions. DBQs in AP classes. STAAR test prep materials. | Vocabulary worksheets; answering questions at the end of a chapter; solving a sheet of math problems; marking geographical features on a map; labeling parts of a cell; locating examples of figurative language in a poem; fill-in-the-blank worksheets. Some types of writing fall into this category if they are formulaic (write a topic sentence and 3 detail sentences). | Researching, formulating and defending a position; analyzing and critiquing a piece of literature; hypothesizing, testing and evaluating a theory or premise; writing a personal narrative utilizing techniques learned in class. |
Appendix L: Years to Parity

All years to parity calculations were made with the following guidelines:

- 2015-16 data are included in the charts in FA 2, but are not used to calculate trends.
- 2015-16 data represent the percentage of students who scored at satisfactory on the STAAR. 2017-19 data represents students who scored at approaches grade level.
- LEP student data represent those who are Current LEP students; Non-LEP does not include students who were exited from the program.
- All data were downloaded from http://txreports.emetric.net

### Years to Parity calculations for Student Ethnic Groups, STAAR and EOCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STAAR Reading</th>
<th>STAAR Math</th>
<th>EOC English I</th>
<th>EOC Algebra I</th>
<th>EOC US History</th>
<th>EOC Biology I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gap</strong> in 2016</td>
<td>27 points</td>
<td>41 points</td>
<td>38 points</td>
<td>22 points</td>
<td>5 points</td>
<td>24 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gap in 2019</strong></td>
<td>21 points</td>
<td>29 points</td>
<td>28 points</td>
<td>13 points</td>
<td>9 points</td>
<td>21 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difference</strong></td>
<td>-6 points</td>
<td>-12 points</td>
<td>-10 points</td>
<td>-9 points</td>
<td>+4 points</td>
<td>-3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in gap, per year</strong> (three-year span)—how much gap will narrow each year</td>
<td>-2 points per year</td>
<td>-4 points per year</td>
<td>-3.33 points per year</td>
<td>-3 points per year</td>
<td>It won’t; gap increases 1.33 points per year</td>
<td>-1 point per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of time required to eradicate the 2019 gap (if all change remains constant)</strong></td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>7.5 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>4.5 years</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>21 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*for this analysis, the “gap” is determined to be the percentage points between the highest performing group and the lowest performing group in 2016, and these same two groups in 2019.

### Years to Parity Calculations for Student Ethnic Groups (Using satisfactory/approaches grade level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohort I: Reading</th>
<th>Cohort I: Math</th>
<th>Cohort II: Reading</th>
<th>Cohort II: Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gap in 2015 (2016 in math)</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gap in 2017</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gap in 2019</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difference</strong></td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in gap, per year (three-year span)—how much gap will narrow each year</strong></td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
<td>-3 per year</td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
<td>-9 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of time required to eradicate the 2019 gap (if all change remains constant)</strong></td>
<td>never</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>never</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Parity was calculated using the percentages from 2017, and the rate of change based on the two-year span from 2017-2019.
### Years to Parity Calculations for Economically Disadvantaged Students (revised)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohort I: Reading</th>
<th>Cohort I: Math</th>
<th>Cohort II: Reading</th>
<th>Cohort II: Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2015</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2017*</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2019</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in gap, per year (three-year span)—how much gap will narrow each year</td>
<td>-2 per year</td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
<td>-1.5 per year</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time required to eradicate the 2019 gap (if all change remains constant)</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Parity was calculated using the percentages from 2017, and the rate of change based on the two-year span from 2017-2019.

### English Learners’ Cohort Data Calculations Revised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohort I: Reading</th>
<th>Cohort I: Math</th>
<th>Cohort II: Reading</th>
<th>Cohort II: Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2015</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2017*</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2019</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+14</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in gap, per year (three-year span)—how much gap will narrow each year</td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
<td>-3.5 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time required to eradicate the 2019 gap (if all change remains constant)</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDICES

Years to Parity Calculations for Special Education Students Revised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohort I: Reading</th>
<th>Cohort I: Math</th>
<th>Cohort II: Reading</th>
<th>Cohort II: Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2015</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2017*</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap in 2019</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+16</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in gap, per year (three-year span)—how much gap will narrow each year</td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
<td>-.5</td>
<td>No narrowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time required to eradicate the 2019 gap (if all change remains constant)</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Parity was calculated using the percentages from 2017, and the rate of change based on the two-year span from 2017-2019.

CHARTS FOR COHORT II

Charts for Exhibit 2.16:

Cohort II Reading

![Chart showing student performance in reading from 2015 to 2019 for different racial/ethnic groups.](chart.png)
Cohort II Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>