

# Burlington School District Equity and Inclusion Data Report 2019-2020



April 2021

Table of Contents .....	1
Superintendent’s Statement .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Explanation of Data .....	5
Overview of Report .....	6
Goal 1 .....	7
Goal 2 .....	12
Goal 3 .....	15
Goal 4 .....	16
Goal 5 .....	18
Goal 6 .....	20
Equity Stories Survey - Students and Staff .....	21
Reflections and Recommendations .....	22
Acknowledgements .....	24



## Superintendent's Statement

This school year has reinforced the importance of listening to our students, families, and staff as we worked to re-design a traditional school model that was upended by COVID-19. In an extraordinarily challenging year, we experienced outsized inequities in our school system, our city, our state, and our nation. This experience challenged us to our core and also gave us a charge to critically examine the structures that create inequities and to rethink school so that we disrupt and erase these inequities. I am excited for the opportunity to begin this work with the Burlington community and for our work together moving forward to ensure excellent outcomes for every student in our care.

In August of 2020, our district leadership team, the “Cabinet”, started a year-long professional learning workshop series that focused our attention on the impact structural racism has on every part of our education system. This experience gave us a common frame of reference to develop district goals for 2020-21 that take initial steps to eliminate disparities in the outcomes of our students who are historically marginalized. In analyzing school data across the country, it is clear to me that adults have designed systems that privilege some students and discriminate against other students, namely BIPOC students, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, English learners, students with disabilities, and students who identify as LGBTQ. And I believe it is our moral imperative to disrupt these systems of structural racism, ableism, and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In doing this, I believe we make our schools and communities better for every student.

We have started to take action this year. We set measurable, equity-focused goals and have regularly analyzed our progress toward these goals. We created an Office of Equity to guide our work and an Office of Engagement to ensure we were listening to and engaging with our community. The Office of Equity has started affinity groups, led community-wide equity conversations, developed and shared curricular materials, and much more. The Office of Engagement has developed student, family, and teacher advisory groups and is preparing for a strategic plan that will be co-constructed with the community. Our Cabinet has focused on the priorities of equity, engagement and deep learning, and our principals and schools have focused their efforts on creating “warm demander” spaces for students to be supported and challenged. Schools continue to emphasize Restorative Practices and we are starting to develop culturally responsive learning environments. Our data and student feedback clearly show we have an enormous amount of work in front of us. It's easy to talk about equity, but we need to be about equity; I am pleased to say the work is underway.

This report is designed to show our progress toward our equity-focused district goals, and to hold us accountable to our community and to our school board policy of reducing disparities. The data you will see in this report show our progress toward these goals over 2-3 years, including data up to the current year. Our Annual Report on Global Ends, in November of 2021, will review our progress toward our goals over the full 2020-21 school year.

I look forward to our continued work together as we create an equity-focused strategic plan to guide our work over the next five years.

Tom Flanagan  
Superintendent

## Introduction

Burlington School District's (BSD) Equity and Inclusion Data Report is the annual report that measures equitable outcomes for students. Published since 2013, the report gathers and analyzes data on student academic achievement, discipline, and participation in order to identify and eliminate disparities in these areas. It is the District's goal that race/ethnicity, household income, language background, ability, and gender are not predictors of achievement, discipline, or participation.

The 2019-20 school year was a year unlike any other in recent memory: in addition to a change in leadership, we also experienced a worldwide pandemic. In October, Superintendent Yaw Obeng announced that he would be stepping down at the end of the school year. Then, in March 2020, schools closed to in-person learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and students and staff pivoted to remote and online learning until the end of the school year. In July 2020, Tom Flanagan succeeded Yaw Obeng as Superintendent.

The 2019-20 school year will also be remembered for the nation-wide violence of systemic racism and white supremacy. Our nation experienced the trauma of injustice in the killing of Black people by police in the deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. The events of the past year renew our District's focus on equity and racial justice. We must be actively anti-racist in order to ensure that all our students can be academically, socially, physically, and emotionally successful. Accordingly, this report contains more student voice, especially from students from the global majority, so that we better understand their experiences in our schools.

Though BSD has been producing this report since 2013, many of the disparities in achievement, discipline, and participation have not changed much. While we call this report the Equity and Inclusion Data Report, the data shows that there are still not equitable outcomes for all students in our schools. Moving forward, we want to ensure the data in this report is used to focus on eliminating disparities in all areas. This is really a *Disparities Report*, with the purpose of indicating where we must do better as a school community in educating and supporting all our students.

The 2019-20 Equity and Inclusion Data Report builds on previous reports by examining data on academic achievement, discipline, and participation, while also focusing on new directions. In August 2020, in anticipation of a full process to develop a new strategic plan, Superintendent Flanagan worked with the District's Cabinet to develop six strategic goals that were shared with, and approved by, the Board of School Commissioners. These goals focused the District's work on three priority areas identified by Superintendent Flanagan in his [100 Day Entry Plan](#): Equity, Engagement, and Deep Learning. This report is organized around these six goals with the intent of clearly articulating how we are meeting these goals now and as we move forward. Consequently, some data points from the 2020-21 school year are included in this report.

Finally, in order to address disparities detailed in this report, listed below are some of the steps taken by the District during the 2020-21 school year. More information about the impact of these steps will be provided in next year's Equity and Inclusion Data Report.

- Established the [Office of Equity](#) with key staff, including the Director of Equity, Equity Instructional Leader, and the Restorative Practices/PBIS Coordinator.
- Created the [Equity Webinar Series](#) with the goal of engaging the community on equity-related topics including supporting LGBTQ+ Youth, supporting the AAPI community, introducing Restorative Practices, combating ableism, and understanding racialized trauma.
- Provided professional development for administrators in August 2020 on racialized trauma.
- Committed to taking actions towards becoming an anti-racist district in supporting the City of Burlington's Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Emergency.
- Created the School Safety Task Force to determine the future roles of School Resource Officers in our school. The [Task Force shared their report](#) with the School Board in April 2021.
- Created bi-annual District and Community Restorative Practices report.
- Committed resources to district RP teams in all schools, including Ontop and Horizons, Expanded Learning Opportunities, and Essential Early Education.
- Raised the Black Lives Matter flag at all BSD properties and [produced a mini-documentary](#) focused on the intent and impact of doing so, complete with student voice.
- Implemented a race and equity leadership workshop series for our District Cabinet with Shane Safir and Jamilla Dugan that focused on a common understanding of structural racism and unconscious bias and actions we can take as leaders who listen, put students first, and design from the margins.

*“My experience with race at BSD is that teachers and administration take incredibly performative measures while not addressing any real problems. If saying that Black Lives Matter is the best we can do to combat racism, then we need to rethink our motivation for ‘racial justice’. The savior mentality that I see among white staff, white students, and white teachers while talking about race is extremely discouraging to me”*

- BSD Staff

## Explanation of Data

The purpose of this report is to gather and analyze data that show whether and to what extent there are differences in academic achievement, discipline, and participation based on a student's race/ethnicity, household income, language background, ability, or gender.

Data used in this report is defined as follows-

**Ability** is measured by Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans.

**Academic achievement** is typically measured by performance on annual standardized assessments in reading and math. The state of Vermont administers the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Summative Assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics to students in grades 3-8 and 9th grade. Due to COVID-19, these assessments were not administered in the 2019-20 school year. Instead, we are using Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments and other local progress monitoring data to assess academic achievement and growth.

**Discipline** is measured by suspensions, both in school suspensions (ISS) and out of school suspensions (OSS). Students may be suspended for serious infractions like physical aggression or possession of drugs or weapons.

**Household Income** is collected when parents or guardians complete the Annual Student Update each year. Family income, combined with the number of members in the household, is used to determine whether students are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) and other benefits. The acronym FRL is frequently used to refer to students from families whose income falls within the Federal income eligibility guidelines. It does not necessarily mean the student is actually receiving free lunch, but should be viewed as an income designation. This is an important demographic data point because students whose families have access to fewer financial resources face marginalization and discrimination in school.

**Participation** is measured by course completion, specifically Algebra II and Honors classes.

**Race/ethnicity** data for students are self-reported when students complete the registration process for the Burlington School District. Race/ethnicity data for teachers and staff are self-reported and optional.

For this report, disparities related to language background and gender are not reported.

*"Sometimes I think I get mistreated because of the color of my skin."*

- BSD Student

## Overview of Report

Since the first Equity and Inclusion Report Card in 2013, BSD has published an annual report to show how well we are serving all students. Each report has looked slightly different than the one before, though all have had the same goal: identify areas of our system where we need to do better, such that one's identity or demographic factors are not predictors of achievement, discipline, or participation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this report will look different from previous reports in a few ways. For instance, after schools closed to in person learning in March 2020, annual standardized testing typically held in the spring was cancelled. As a result, the District has no end of year academic achievement data (outside of graduation rates which are not part of this report) for the 2019-20 school year. Additionally, with no students in schools, there were no suspensions for the last few months of the year, not because of changes in practices or behavior, but rather due to the school closure. In those areas where no data were available, adjustments in reporting data were made so that we can still show growth or change over time and these adjustments are noted where necessary. While there are many ways to examine the data, and we had many slides and charts to choose from in order show progress toward our goals, we strived to make this report as concise and clear as possible. Equity stories from secondary students and staff were gathered in a survey in March 2021 and describe experiences of members of our school community. At the end of the report, reflections and recommendations provide ideas for how we can finally eliminate the disparities presented in this report.

The goal of the Office of Equity is to focus BSD's full efforts to address inequities and eradicate racism and white supremacy. This report helps us address inequities by identifying disparities in our data. It shows again what we have seen and already know: we suspend students of the global majority and students with disabilities at a much higher rate than other students. We also know that students of the global majority are not achieving in math and reading at the same rate as their white peers. Finally, we know our faculty and staff do not reflect our student body. This report focuses on the impact of these disparities and how the District and the Office of Equity will lead to address them to ensure equitable outcomes for our students.

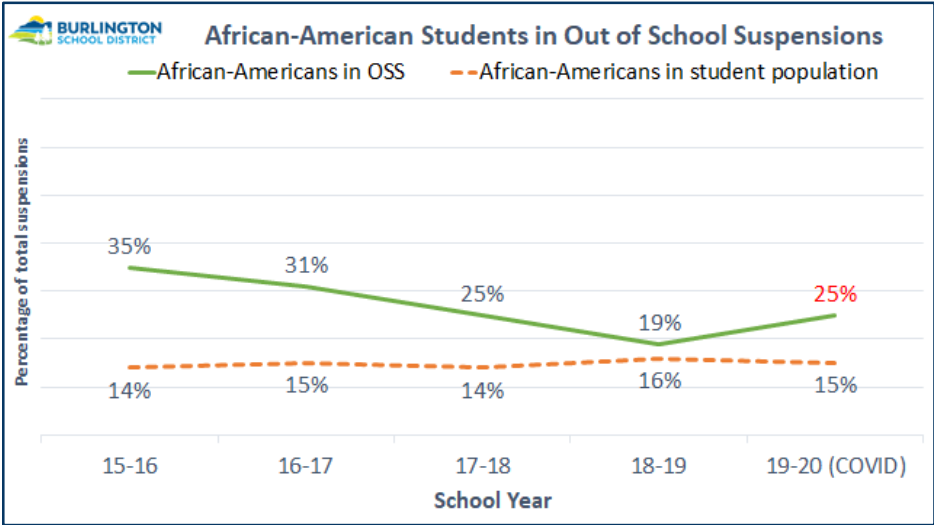
*"I feel like we're getting there. We are much better than some schools, but we are not great. We still have racism, sexism, and hate in our school."*

- BSD Student

**Goal 1: Our schools are restorative and equitable communities.**

BSD aspires to be a restorative district where educational equity is a guiding value and goal. We measure this goal through reduced suspensions and the implementation of Restorative Practices.

**Suspensions:** We prioritize reducing suspensions among groups who have been historically marginalized through punitive disciplinary practices. *It is our goal that schools suspend African American students, students with disabilities, and students who qualify for FRL less frequently.* We are currently meeting this goal, although the 2020-21 school year was an anomaly so it will be important to analyze the trend next school year and to review the disparities in percentages by groups.

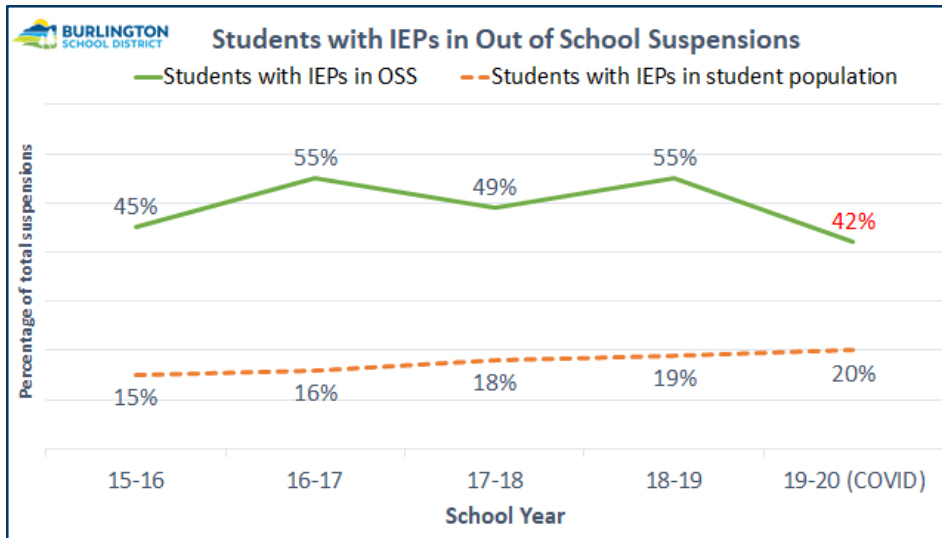


The chart above shows that African American students comprised 25% of all students who were suspended out of school in 2019-2020, even though African American students make up only 15% of the student population. This 10 percentage point difference shows that African American students are suspended at a higher rate and that this rate increased in 2019-20, despite a shorter than usual school year.

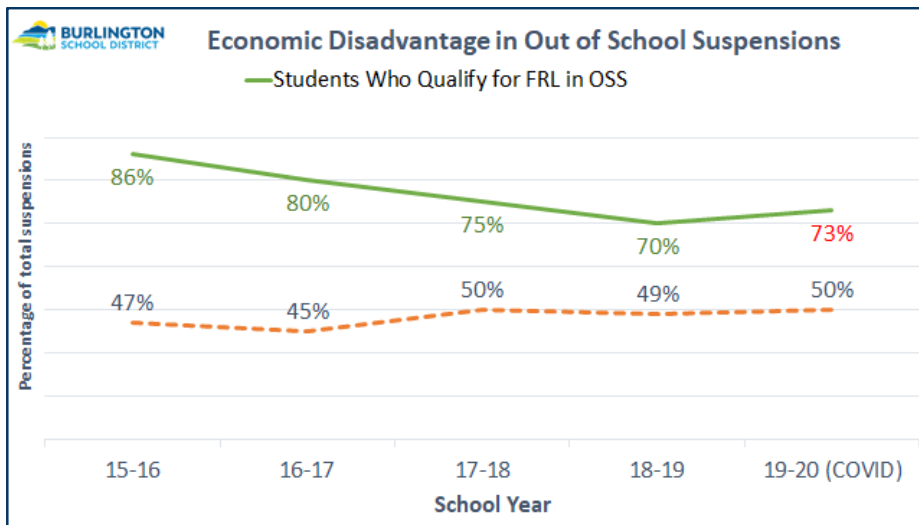
*“I find that in many of my classes there are little to no people of color sitting beside me. This is disappointing to me because I know that BHS is the most diverse school in our state, and I see many BIPOC students walking through the halls but I seldom get the chance to know them and hear their perspective in the classroom.”*

- BSD Student

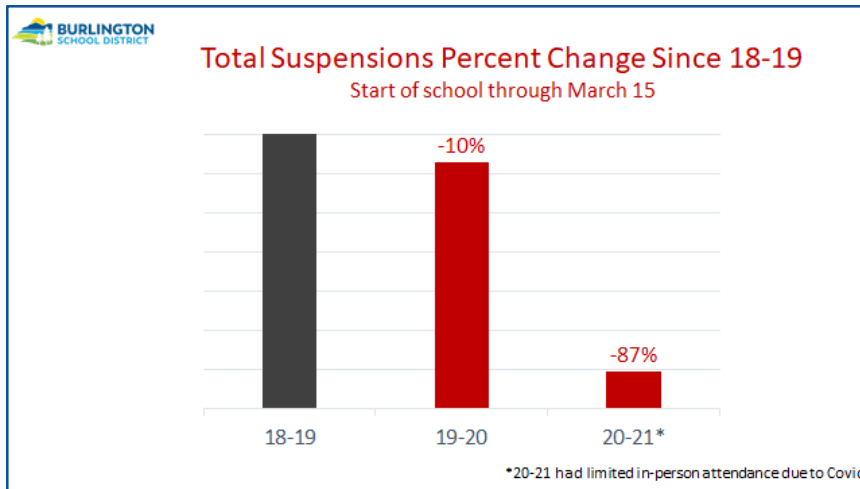




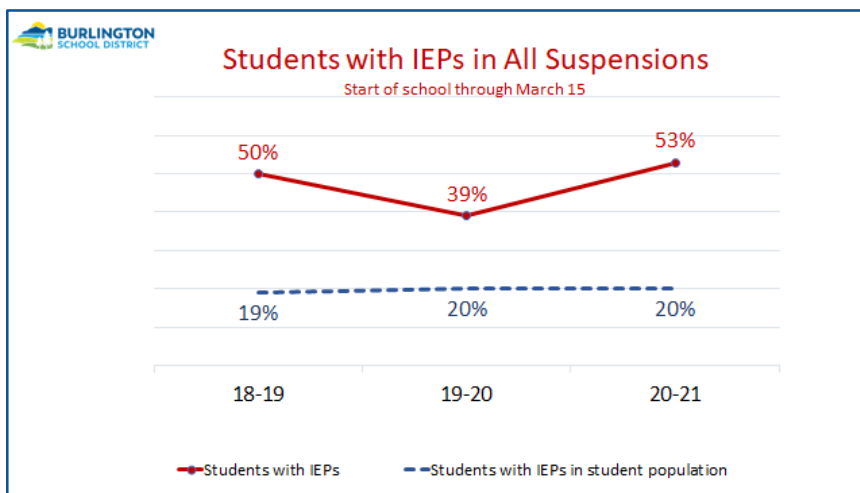
The chart above shows that students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) comprised 42% of all students who were suspended out of school in 2019-20, even though students with IEPs make up only 20% of the total student population. This 22 percentage point difference shows that students with IEPs are suspended at a higher rate. Although this is a decrease from previous years, it underscores the important work we have to do as a district to ensure proper support for our students with disabilities.



The chart above shows that students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) comprised 73% of all students who were suspended out of school in 2019-20. Students qualifying for FRL make up only 50% of the total student population, so this 23 percentage point difference shows that students who qualify for FRL are suspended out of school at a higher rate and this rate increased slightly in 2019-20.



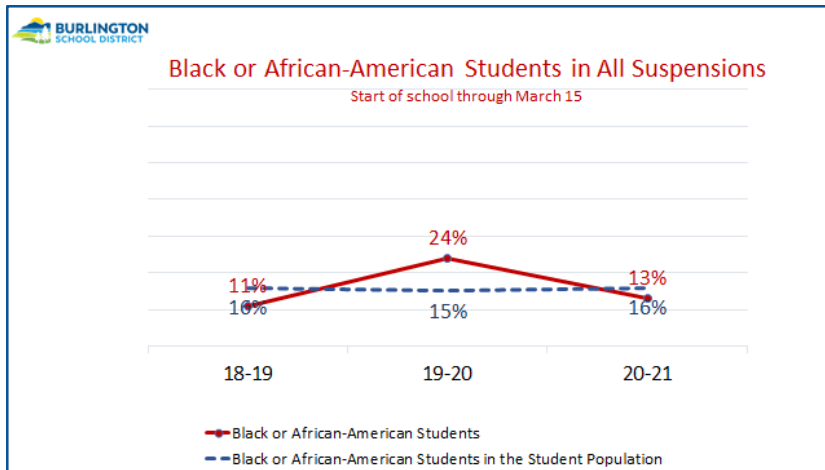
The graph above suggests that COVID-19 has impacted suspension rates during the 2020-21 school year. While overall suspension rates have declined considerably, down 87% from suspension rates in 2018-29, rates for some subgroups have increased.



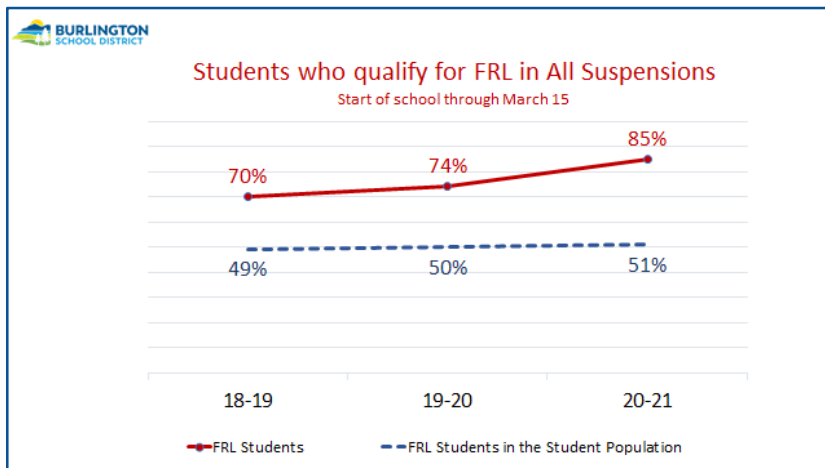
The chart above shows that the percent of students with IEP's receiving both in and out of school suspensions decreased in 2019-20, but then rose again in 2020-21. The overall number of students with disabilities who were suspended decreased and the rise in percentage is magnified by the low number of overall suspensions in the District in the 2020-21 school year.

*“Sometimes it is, sometimes it isn’t.  
Some subtle things happen where I don’t feel included.”*

- BSD Student



The chart above shows rates of in and out of school suspensions for students who are Black or African American over three years. While the percentage rate rose in 2019-20, data through March 2021 shows a decrease.



The chart above shows rates of in and out of school suspensions for students who qualify for FRL. This rate has increased over three years from 70% to 85%.

This year, we regularly analyzed school-level data as a District Cabinet and with individual schools. In response to the data, we continue to emphasize the importance of keeping students in school, and we continue to prioritize the implementation of Restorative Practices. Additionally, smaller class sizes, fewer students in the building at the same time, staggered arrival and dismissal times, and close supervision in hallways, cafeterias, and playgrounds appear to have resulted in far fewer suspensions overall than in any other year.

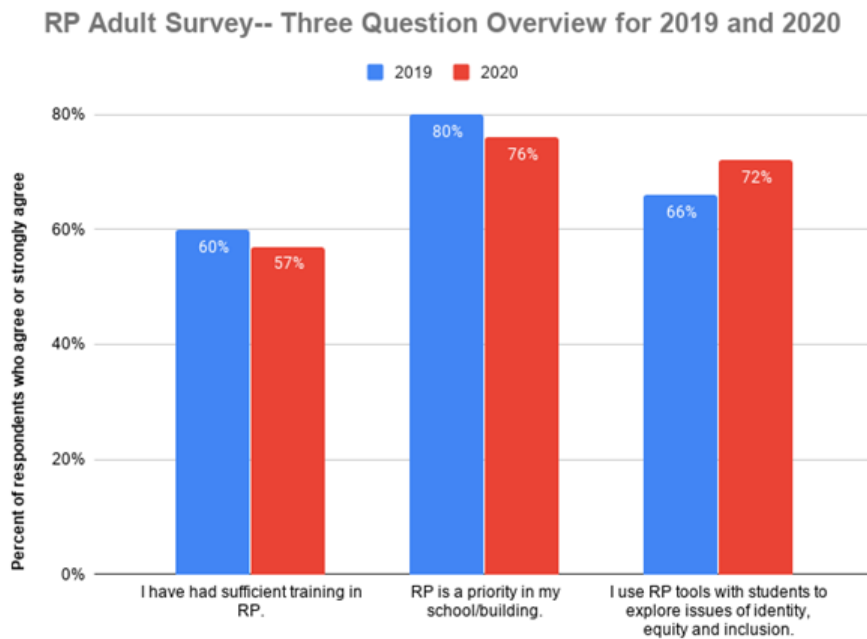
**Restorative Practices:** To determine whether our schools are restorative and equitable, we measured the level of use of Restorative Practices as reported by staff. *It is our goal that staff report increased use of Restorative Practices.* We are currently meeting this goal.

In May 2020, the District surveyed adults to learn about their implementation of

Restorative Practices. A total of 443 staff members completed the survey. Of those completing the survey, 52% were teachers, 20% were paraprofessionals, with the remaining participants comprised of administrators, counselors, and afterschool staff.

In response to the school closure, the survey asked specifically about the use of Restorative Practices during remote learning. The results of the survey show that 36% of respondents were using community building circles as part of their remote instruction.

When comparing use of Restorative Practices from 2019 to 2020, the survey found that there was an increase in using Restorative Practices to address issues of identity, equity, and inclusion. As the chart below shows, there may also be a need to continue professional development in RP.



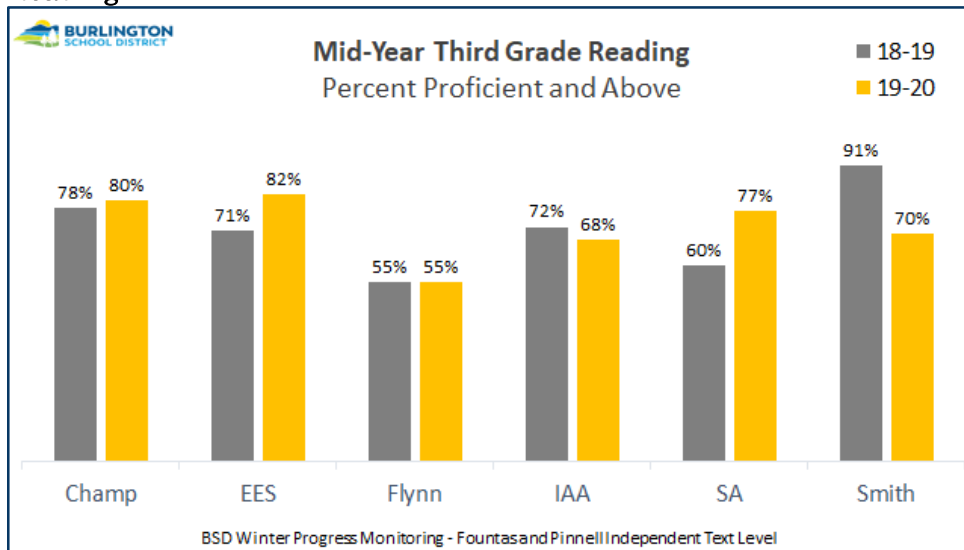
*We absolutely need more representation of diversity in our teachers and staff. It is so unfortunate that students of color at our school do not see their diversity represented by the teachers that they spend hours of time with. This year as we learn more about social justice issues in class, I find it ironic that this information is being presented by white teachers in a format designed for white students.*

- BSD Staff

**Goal 2: Students are at grade level in reading and math by the end of third grade.**

It is important that by the end of grade three students can read and do math at grade level. After grade three, the academic load increases, with students expected to use their reading skills to make meaning of content and engage in more challenging problem-solving. Students who are not on grade level in reading and math by the end of grade three are far more likely to struggle to meet the academic demand in later years. *It is our goal that the percentage of students proficient in reading and math who also qualify for FRL increases.* We are not yet meeting this goal.

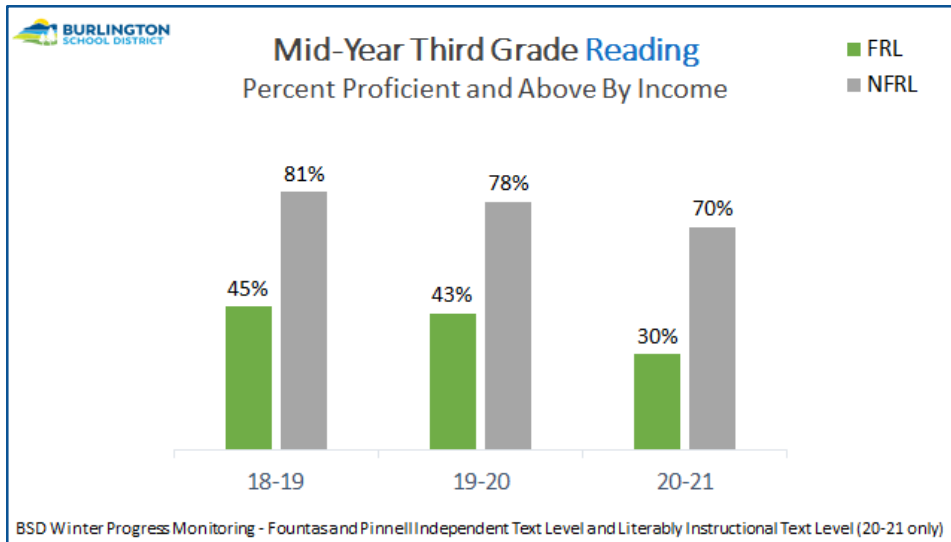
**Reading:**



The chart above shows the percentage of all students by school in third grade who were reading at level at mid-year for 2018-19 and 2019-20. This chart shows how the percentage of third-grade students reading at level at mid-year increased, decreased, or stayed the same over time at each school. Because of these disparities, BSD undertook a literacy audit with an outside organization to evaluate our literacy practices and provide us with recommendations for improvement in the Spring of 2021. Through this process, teachers and district leaders were interviewed about their practices and expectations for teaching reading and we reviewed our curricular materials and professional development.

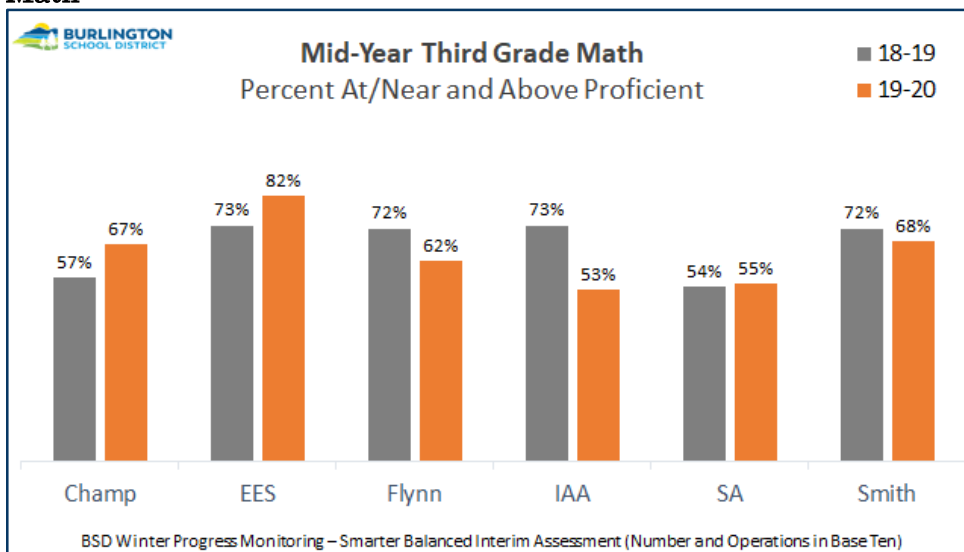
*“We don’t learn enough about the inequalities that have occurred in this country to all minorities.”*

- BSD student



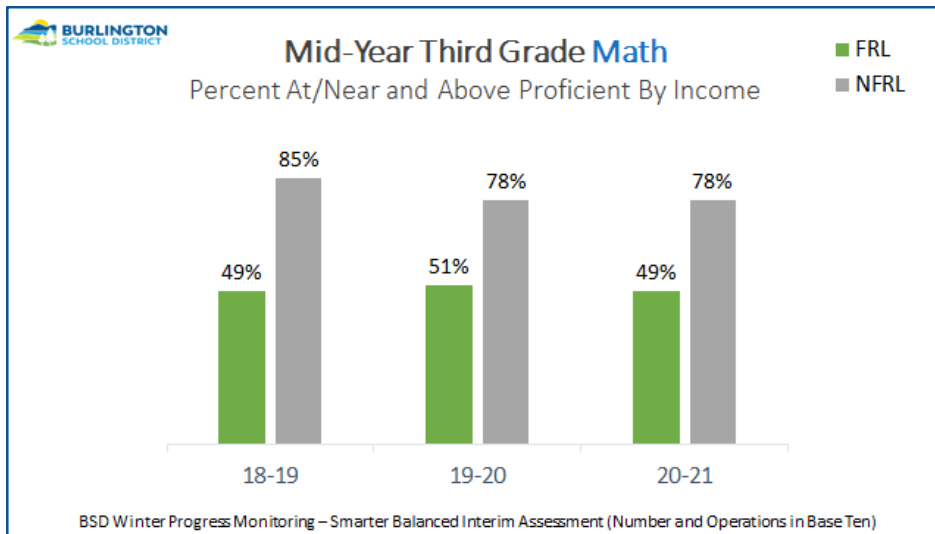
The chart above shows the percentage of all third grade students who were on grade-level on the mid-year interim assessment in reading as measured by FRL status. In 2018-19, 45% of third-grade students who qualified for FRL were proficient in reading at mid-year as compared to 81% of third-grade students who did not qualify for FRL. In 2019-20, the disparity between these two groups of students remained about the same, with 43% of third-grade students who qualify for FRL proficient in reading at mid-year as compared to 78% of third-grade students who did not qualify for FRL. By 2020-21, the disparity between the two groups increased with even fewer students who qualified for FRL being proficient in reading at mid-year, highlighting the impact of disruptions to in-person learning on our students. It is important to note that our reading assessment changed from SY 2019-20 to 2020-21, and this likely factors into any changes in score. Additionally, these mid-year data highlight the lost learning that may have occurred with the reduced number of days of in-person instruction per week

**Math:**



The chart above shows how the percentage of third grade students at, near, or above level

in math at mid-year increased, decreased, or stayed the same between 2018-19 and 2019-20.



This chart shows the percentage of all third grade students who were near, at, or above grade level on the mid-year math assessment as measured by FRL status. In 2018-19, 49% of third grade students who qualify for FRL were proficient in math at mid-year as compared to 85% of students who did not qualify for FRL. In 2019-20, the disparity between the two groups persisted with 51% of third grade students who qualify for FRL proficient in math at mid-year as compared to 78% of students who did not qualify for FRL. By 2020-21, the numbers had not changed much, with 49% of students qualifying for FRL at or near proficiency while 78% of students who did not qualify for FRL at or near proficient in math.

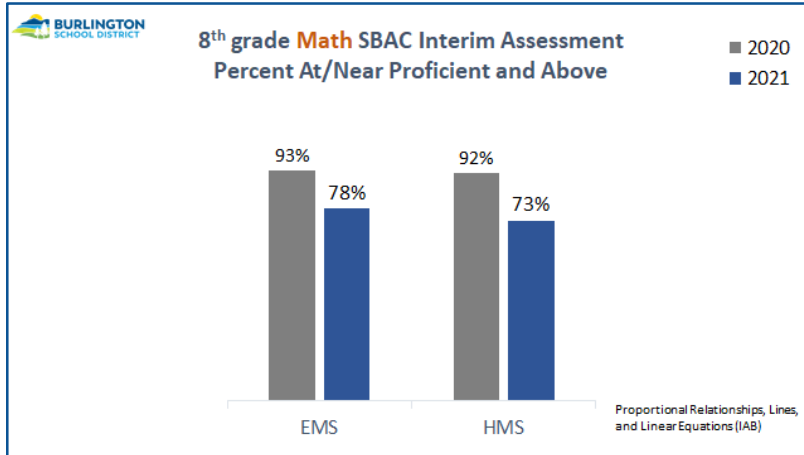
At the beginning of 2020-21 school year, BSD began a year-long professional development focus for elementary teachers on Number Talks, a strategy designed to develop students' mental models in reasoning and model math language.

*“Drivers ed, AP, Dual Enrollment, access to BTC, communication systems to families that are EL, the inequity and bias of ‘vocational education’ vs. HS education, and the bias of students who do not want to or can’t afford to attend colleges.”*

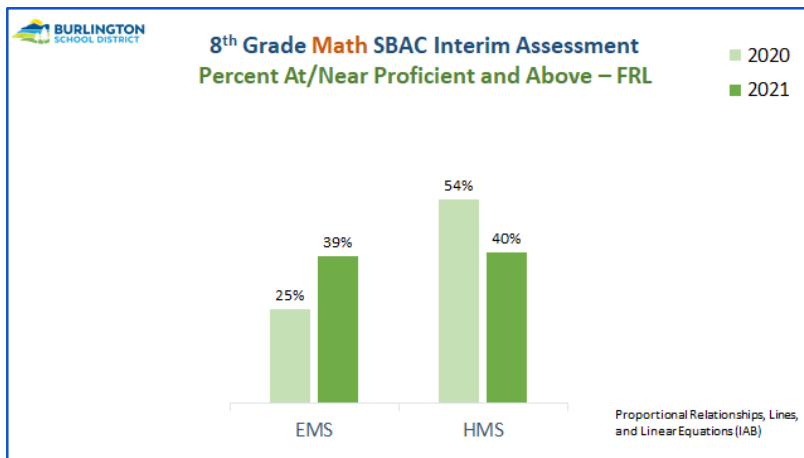
- BSD Student

**Goal 3: Students are at grade level in math by the end of 8th grade.**

It is important that students are at grade level in math before they move on to the high school so they are well prepared to participate in the opportunities that our high school and technical center offer. Therefore, *it is our goal that the percentage of eighth graders proficient in math and who qualify for FRL will increase.* We are not meeting this goal at mid-year.



The chart above shows the percentage of students who were near, at, or above level in math on the mid-year interim assessment at the two middle schools. Students at the two middle schools performed comparably. This chart shows that students did not perform as well in math midway through the 2020-21 school year as they did at mid-year in 2019-20.



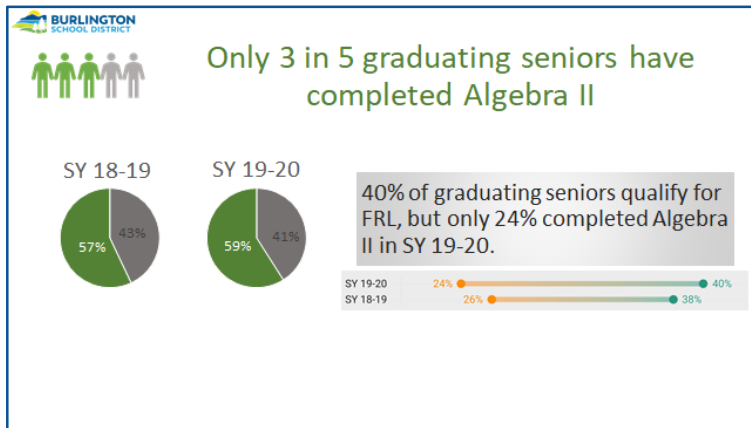
This chart shows the performance of eighth grade students who qualify for FRL on the mid-year math assessment at the two middle schools. In 2019-20, 25% of students at EMS who qualified for FRL were near, at, or above proficient in math as compared to 54% of eighth grade students at HMS who qualified for FRL. In 2020-21, the percentage of eighth grade students at EMS who qualified for FRL near, at, or above proficient in math rose to 39%, while at HMS that number dropped to 40%.



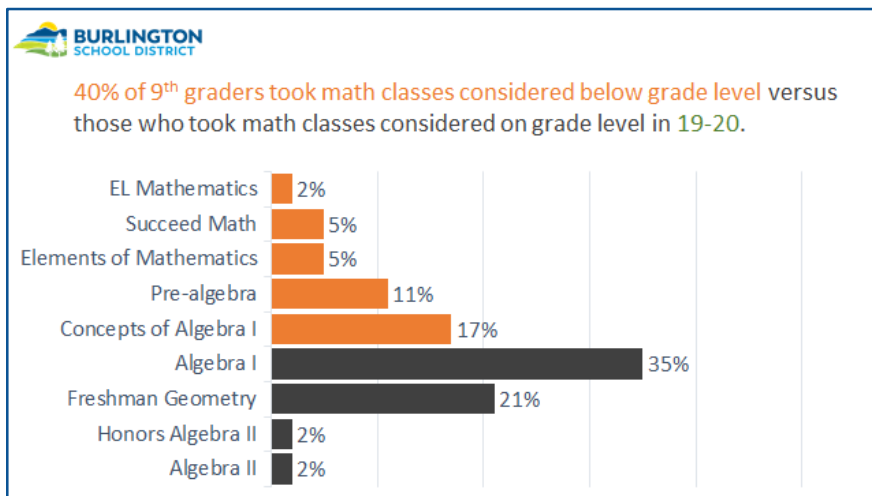
#### Goal 4: Students graduate from high school having successfully completed Algebra II.

Students' performance in eighth grade math matters. Assessment results inform placement in ninth grade math classes which subsequently set up students' academic trajectory in high school.

Completion of Algebra II demonstrates a high level of math understanding, a level that is historically a prerequisite for college. We want to have high expectations for all students so they have all of the options they deserve and have the ability to make informed decisions about their path after high school. Therefore, *it is our goal that the percentage of students who complete Algebra II will increase.* We are currently meeting this goal, but inequities in access are clearly a problem that need to be addressed.



The chart above shows that the percentage of graduating seniors who completed Algebra II increased slightly from 57% to 59% or roughly 3 out of 5 students.



The chart above shows that 40% of ninth grade students enrolled in math classes that were below grade level. When students begin their high school careers below grade level in math, they are less likely to enroll in Algebra II by the time they graduate.

The Burlington School District is committed to equitable access to the math curriculum. Beginning in the spring of 2021, all math course rosters for 2021-22 will be analyzed for equity of access for BIPOC students. Schedule adjustments will reflect BSD’s commitment to providing all students with access to rigorous academics including math curricula beyond Algebra II. In the fall of 2022, math department course offerings will reflect the rigor and content needed for all students to be college and career-ready after graduation. Remedial courses below a pre-algebra level will not be offered as part of the core curricula.

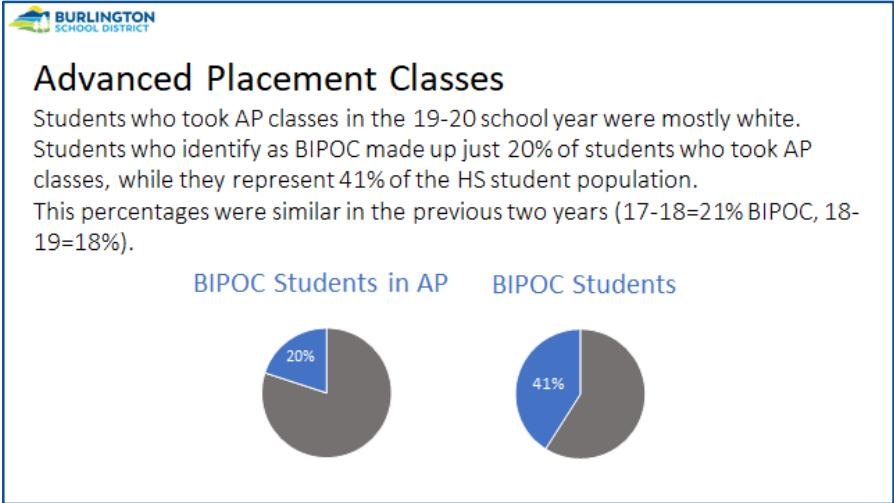
*“Racism is a huge issue in the BSD and the best piece of evidence that you will receive is the fact that some people will deny it. All you have to do is look at the Honors and AP classes at BHS and you will know that it is a huge issue throughout ALL of our schools.”*

- BSD Student

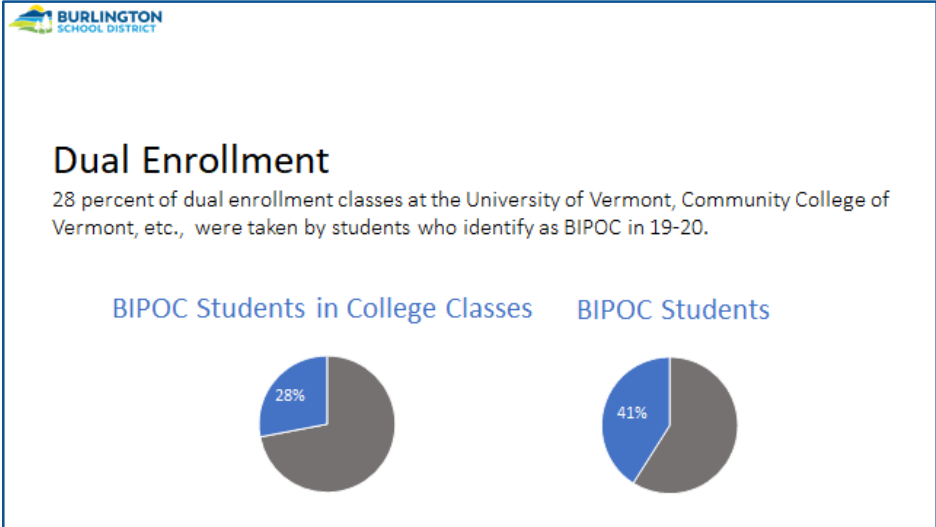


**Goal 5: AP, Honors, and dual enrollment completion and successes reflect the demographics of the high school.**

Advanced Placement courses, honors courses, and college-level courses that students can take through the dual enrollment program demonstrate that students are prepared for college level work. These are challenging courses that engage students and prepare them for the rigor of work after high school. *It is our goal that the percentage of students of color who take AP, honors, or dual enrollment courses will increase.* We are not meeting this goal.



The chart above shows that while students of color make up 41% of the student population at Burlington High School, they represent only 20% of students in AP classes. In addition, these classes are small: more than half of AP classes have fewer than 12 students and fewer than 3 students of color. Honors classes look similar to AP classes with students of color making up only 19% of students.



The chart above shows that slightly more students of color enrolled in courses at local

institutions of higher education. While students of color make up 41% of the student population, they comprised only 28% of the students participating in college courses through the dual enrollment program.

BSD is committed to equity in dual enrollment. Beginning in Spring 2021, we will increase dual enrollment participation by improving the methods and frequency of communication to underrepresented students and their families regarding dual-credit options, including the types of courses offered. District and school administrators will develop a communication plan to convene both student and parent information sessions.

To expand access to dual enrollment, BSD commits to:

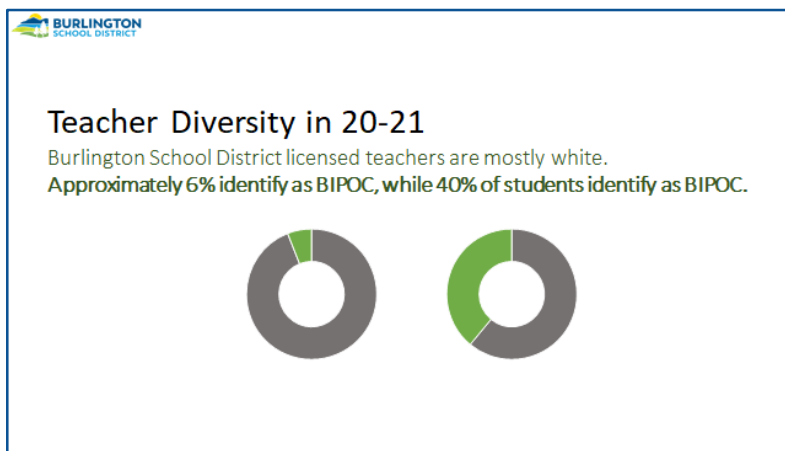
- Build early awareness and aspirations (beginning in middle school)
- Improve outreach to BIPOC students (Advisory with support from Dual Enrollment Coordinator)
- Recruit actively and strategically (Guidance Counselors)



**Goal 6: Faculty and staff are a mirror of our student population. They are highly skilled and set high expectations for all students.**

Teachers are the key staff members responsible for ensuring students learn and grow. *It is our goal that the faculty and staff reflect the racial/ethnic diversity of the student body.* We are not meeting this goal.

Prior to 2020-21, BSD did not collect race/ethnicity data for staff. In 2019-20, it was estimated that only 4% of teachers identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). Early in 2020-21, BSD worked to take a data-driven approach to hiring more diverse teachers. To create change using a data-driven approach, a foundation based on current teacher demographics was set as a priority. The outcome of the review of current teacher demographics found a slightly higher percentage than previously reported.



The chart above shows that approximately 6% of staff identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). This is a slight improvement over the estimated 4% reported during the previous year.

This data benchmark will be used to develop a plan of action to lay the foundation for lasting change around hiring. In addition, the following are additional strategies to increase awareness and improve teacher diverse hiring and retention in the coming years:

- Establish diverse hiring task force to develop strategies
- Attend Teachers of Color and Diverse Administrators Career Fairs
- Target advertising
- Hire a dedicated recruiting position
- Broaden areas of race and gender identity in application process to be more inclusive
- Create affinity spaces for staff

## Equity Stories from Students and Staff

In March 2021, the Office of Equity shared a survey with secondary students and staff requesting stories, specifically, *“BSD is collecting quotes and narratives from students and teachers to add some qualitative data to our annual Equity and Inclusion Data Report. Please take a moment to share your thoughts.”*

The following questions were asked:

- Do you believe BSD is an equitable school system? Why or why not?
- What are some inequities that currently exist at BSD?
- What is your experience with race or racism at BSD?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

There were 56 responses to the survey. Many of the responses have been used as quotes as they relate to topics in this report and attributed to students or staff. Not all responses have been shared in this report, but they all have informed our planning and reflections.

*“I was having trouble coming up with some inequities and then I thought about how I believe it is important for students to see and encounter educators who look like them. It’d be cool to celebrate a population of educators as diverse as our students. I think this varies from school to school in the district, but I’m just speaking from my own experience.”*

- BSD Student

## **Reflections and Recommendations**

This report shows the disparities that exist in a number of key areas in the Burlington School District. This is the purpose of the Equity and Inclusion Report: to show our community where we need to do better for students, especially our historically marginalized students.

Now that we know where we need to improve, how do we do it? What changes do we need to make in our school community to ensure students have equitable outcomes, as well as equitable access? More importantly, how do we do it? What follows are some reflections and recommendations that may result in the changes we want to see.

### **Include Students in Conversations about and Planning for Equity**

Our schools are for our students: for their learning and growth. Students know their classes do not reflect the student body. Students should be included in any conversations about how to address the disparities presented in this report. For example, there could be a student YPAR project specifically designed to research alternatives to suspensions. Students should be included in conversations regarding AP and Honors courses, specifically to ensure students of color are in these classes.

### **Support Students Pursuing Mastery and Excellence**

We need to examine how students get to - or do not get to - enroll and succeed in AP, honors, and dual enrollment courses. What is the process and is the process the problem? If students want to be in a challenging class, they should be able to enroll in it. Instead of preventing a student from excelling, we need to provide more paths or more supports to access challenging coursework.

### **Develop Systems to Provide Feedback**

We need to know at multiple points throughout a student's time in our schools how we are doing. We needn't wait until the end of the year when this report is presented to learn that students have been excluded, suspended, or otherwise underserved.

- We need feedback loops in the form of surveys for students and parents so they can share their experiences. Surveys with questions like, "Do you feel respected? Do you feel your teacher cares about you? How can your teacher help you better?"
- We need supervision and evaluation systems that support teachers and administrators in providing appropriate instruction for our diverse student population. How do we know when students are struggling or succeeding? What is our process for addressing challenges or celebrating success?
- Provide professional learning for staff in addressing Tier 1 behaviors in the classroom.

### **Create More Opportunities to Connect and Engage**

We need to provide more opportunities for students to learn, especially if they need to make more academic progress than their peers. Programs for students in the summer should not be remedial, but rather expansive and enriching: employment, internships, and other relevant and engaging activities should be available for all students and especially for students who may not have access to such opportunities elsewhere.

### **Ensure the Curriculum is Accessible and Relevant to all Students**

Math, more than reading, seems to be a subject area where many marginalized students underperform. Math instruction develops the skills that are at the core of many of the jobs and professions of the future, specifically the ability to solve problems and think critically and analytically. We need to understand how we can provide more access and support to high levels of math instruction and build on innovative programs that have successfully improved student engagement and success, like the Burlington City and Lake Semester program.

### **Provide Professional Development**

Develop a summer institute for teachers to design race and ethnic studies courses and curriculum.

Respectfully submitted,

Sparks

Director of Equity and Safe/Inclusive Schools  
Burlington School District





## Resources and Acknowledgements

### [BSD Office of Equity](#)

Sparks, Director of Equity  
Autumn Bangoura, Equity Instructional Leader  
Joshua Meyer, Restorative Practices/PBIS Coordinator

### Special thanks to

- Karyn Vogel, District Data Manager, for developing the data and creating the many charts in this report
- Autumn Bangoura, Equity Instructional Leader, for conducting student and staff surveys
- Bernice Garnett, UVM professor, for data on Restorative Practices

