

District 303



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Title: Review of Equity Audit

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Background: The Board of education requested that an equity audit be completed during the 21-22SY as a means to understand the disproportionate student outcomes. The audit serves as a tool to gain insights into where inequities exist within our systems and to provide recommendations for the next steps.

At the August 2021 Learning & Teaching Committee Meeting, the Board was provided three proposals from equity-focused organizations to conduct the audit. In October of 2021, in response to the Board's request to consider a vendor that did not specifically focus on equity, an additional proposal was provided from the Consortium For Educational Change (CEC). At the November 2021 Learning and Teaching Committee meeting, a comprehensive review of the services provided by all four potential organizations was presented to the board. At the December 2021 Regular School Board meeting, the Board voted unanimously to approve the contract with CEC to conduct the D303 equity audit.

Discussion: CEC began its work in January 2022 and concluded in April 2022. During this time, CEC administered surveys and conducted focus groups across the District 303 community. At the request of the Board, a random sampling design, stratified by race/ethnicity, was utilized to determine focus group participants. The content for the focus group discussions was derived from themes that emerged from the equity survey. CEC was the sole entity responsible for developing the focus group content and leading the focus groups. Adjacent to CEC's work, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago analyzed District academic and school climate data to look for any phenomena that might suggest inequities within our system.

Both reports have been completed and provide insights into how we can improve learning outcomes for all students. Overall, both reports found that inequities were not widespread throughout the system; rather, there were pockets of student groups that warrant attention.

Key findings in the reports:

- The findings indicate that achievement gaps are found along the lines of demographic characteristics, specifically, students who are Hispanic and Black/African American, and socioeconomic status in the district that mirror national trends.
- IAR and SAT results indicate an achievement gap by gender. Females significantly outperform males in ELA and males outperform females in math.
- School climate data indicated a significant gap by gender regarding student-teacher relationships and having a sense of belonging within the school. Males' scores were significantly higher in student-teacher relationships and in having a sense of belonging within the school.
- There was a strong sense of urgency across all stakeholder groups to ensure a culture of dignity and respect for all District 303 staff and students.
- Generally, families reported feeling included, welcomed, and valued at most schools. However, there were reports of microaggressions and disrespectful behavior reported across racial/ethnic groups that need to be addressed.
- The data collected would suggest a significant desire across all interest groups for a more equitable system.

Key recommendations:

- Ensure professional learning develops District 303 staff's skills to more effectively reach and teach students from backgrounds that are different from theirs.
- Establish a strong sense of community across the district that allows the community to listen and learn from each other.
- Work to develop strategies and make intentional efforts to recruit, hire and retain more diverse administrators, teachers, and support staff.
- Acknowledge the role that complex systems and structures within public education play in creating achievement gaps across races/ethnicity.

Recommendation: District 303 Administration recommends a Superintendent's committee be formed to develop an action plan based on the audit findings. This work will become part of the upcoming District strategic plan. The committee's scope will be outlined and provided to the Board at the September regular board meeting.