

Montclair Public Schools

Achievement Gap Recommendations

June 2015

Executive Summary

Context

- ❖ Our vision for Montclair Public School District is a results-oriented frame that is based on raising the bar for all and closing disparities between student populations; This vision is rooted in the principles of **Excellence and Equity** which will ensure that there are high academic and high behavioral (unbiased) expectations for all
- ❖ The data shows that students in the Montclair Public School District have distinct and unacceptable paths of learning, reaching a crescendo of inequality at the most critical moment of opportunity in a young person's life: high school graduation
 - ❖ **Better said, Montclair has an opportunity gap**
- ❖ Socioeconomic status, while a contributor to some disparities, is not the sole cause; Montclair must be willing to have a conversation about race to truly address the issues at hand
- ❖ The foundation of our District, the magnet system, is built upon a premise of equal access; Our time has come to eliminate structural barriers to ensure that we realize equal opportunity for all
 - ❖ As a District that prides itself on excellence, we have an obligation as a community to ensure that all of our students are being challenged to their full potential and have the skills to compete in a 21st century economy; **Excellence should be a expectation for everyone**

Key Takeaways

- ❖ We must establish and monitor the policies and practices that promote **Excellence and Equity**
- ❖ **Shared accountability** coupled with leading practices, transparency, strong measurement and a deliberate focus on outcomes are necessary to closing the gap
- ❖ State test scores (e.g., NJ ASK) do not tell the entire story - other indicators show alarming differences in GPA's, course selection/enrollment in higher level courses, and suspensions, between student groups
- ❖ **Intentional academic planning** is necessary for all students to achieve their fullest potential, especially at key transition periods between Kindergarten and the 12th grade
- ❖ An **engaged and committed community partnership** will be necessary to achieve our objectives to eliminate the opportunity gap(s)

The cost of doing nothing: “Groups File Civil Rights Complaint in South Orange-Maplewood School District” OCT 2014

The South Orange-Maplewood School District is among the New Jersey school districts with the highest racial disparities in tracking and student discipline.

EXAMPLE: While white students make up slightly less than half of the student body, 70 percent of the higher-level classes are filled by white students, while 70 percent of the lower-level classes are filled by black students.

Taken from the website of the ACLU - <https://www.aclu.org/racial-justice/groups-file-civil-rights-complaint-challenging-tracking-and-discipline-practices>

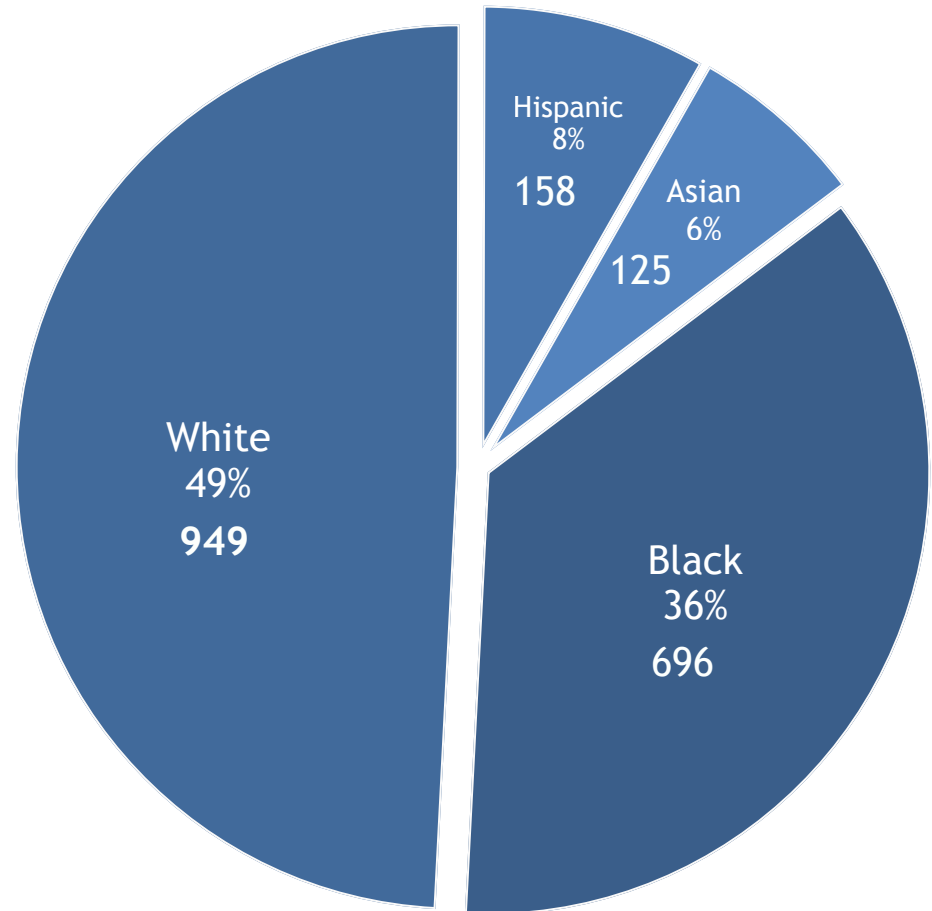
The South Orange-Maplewood lawsuit will be a “wake up” call for our community to take deliberate action to focus on our own disparities and create meaningful and sustainable change in our District. We are at a **policy-defining moment** in our history.

High School (9th - 12th grades)

High School Observations

- Disparities have existed within GPA outcomes and AP class composition for over a decade
- Due to the Quality Point Index, many parents have figured out how to manage course selection to achieve higher GPAs
- It seems there is an inordinate amount of subjectivity being applied to determine who gets to take higher level courses
- Perceptions that certain small learning communities (SLC) are more rigorous than others; SLC's should represent the diversity of the school and be equally resourced
- A strong commitment to sports and the arts is a core competency of MHS and creates a culture of pride

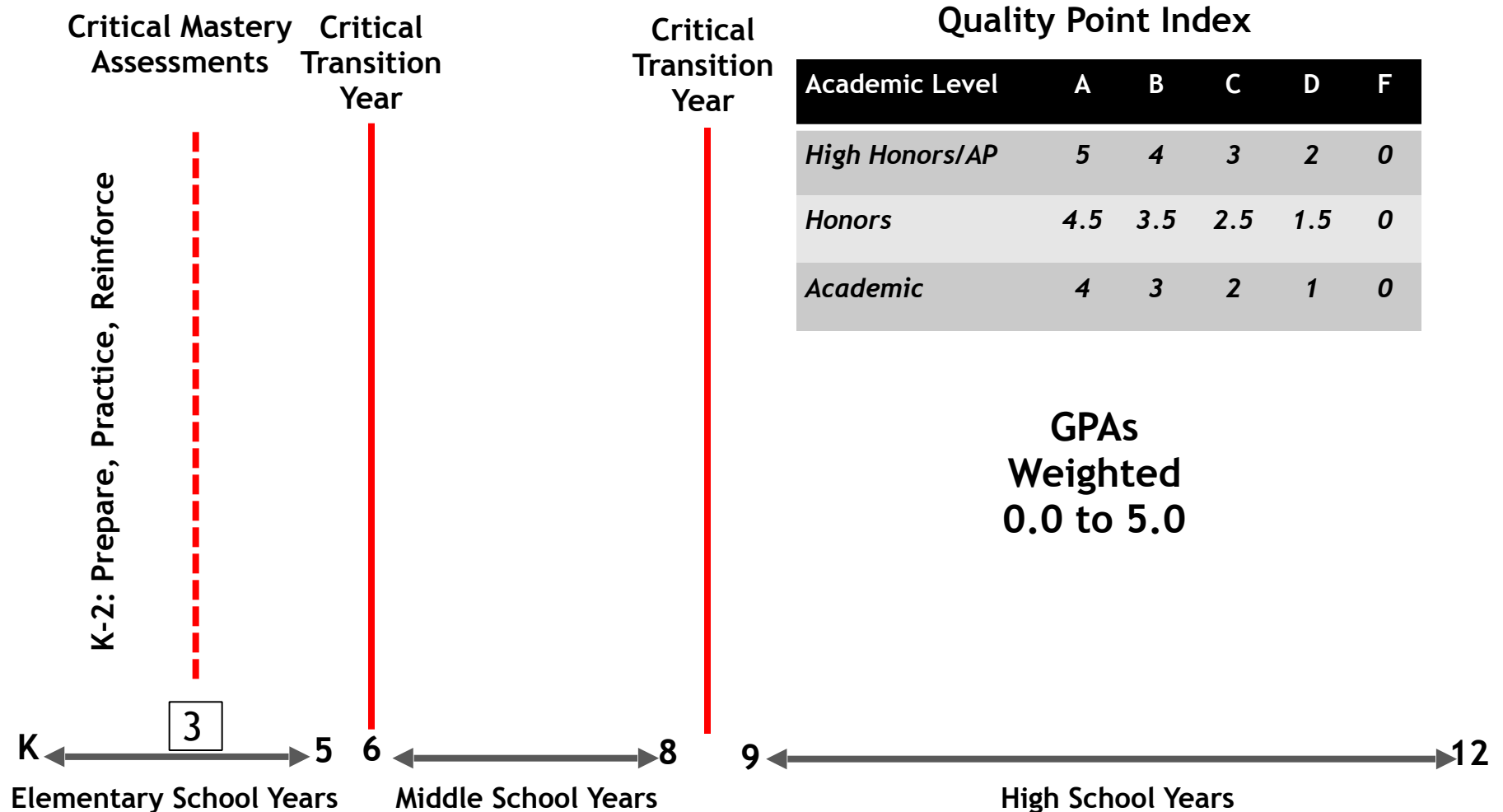
MHS Ethnic Breakdown



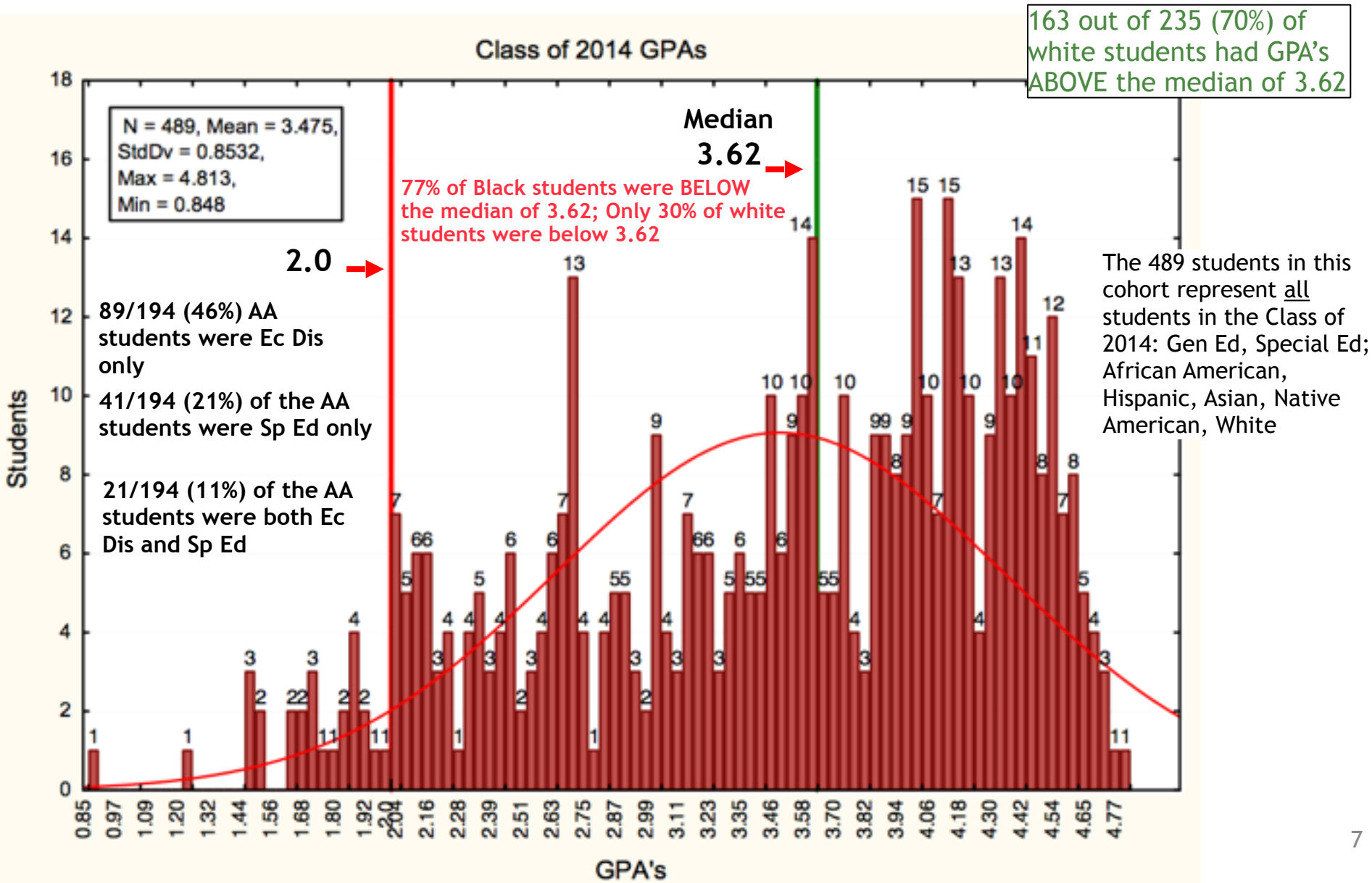
Grade	Total Black Students	Economically Disadv.	Special Education	Ec Dis+Sp Ed
12	196	87/196 (44%)	53/196 (27%)	20/196= 10%

Navigating the Quality Point Index

A 21st century education should afford each student the opportunity to perform at their highest level, and this starts early in the academic pipeline; Summer learning opportunities are critical to sustain skill mastery



GPA Curve: Entire Class of 2014 (489 students)



Gr 12 GPAs over the Past 10 years

Number of AA and Number of W students in selected GPA ranks

Gr 12	2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005		2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	AA	W	AA	W	AA	W	AA	W	AA	W	AA	W	AA	W	AA	W	AA	W	AA	W
Total	196	171	173	163	193	202	207	225	190	229	179	219	231	238	197	233	158	237	194	215
Top 5%	2	20	4	15	4	16	1	21	1	20	1	20	1	21	3	15	1	17	2	19
Top 10%	6	33	4	31	14	36	2	40	0	43	3	39	4	43	8	34	2	34	5	33
Top 25%	18	74	10	66	14	93	9	95	6	103	14	87	15	100	19	87	8	92	15	86
Top 50%	56	124	39	121	44	158	43	172	46	171	42	154	54	182	48	168	32	166	45	158
Bottom 25%	82	16	79	10	80	19	95	15	85	17	81	19	107	13	91	21	108	29	93	10
Bottom 50%	142	48	135	42	149	45	164	54	144	58	137	65	177	56	149	65	126	71	149	57

AA=African American/Black; W=White

Note: Totals may not be exact due to rounding

Racial Composition of 11th & 12th grade AP Courses

AP COURSES * 2014-2015	W	B	H	A	TOTAL
AP ART HISTORY	6	1	0	2	9
AP STUDIO ART	9	4	0	0	13
AP ENG 12	92	17	5	8	122
AP ENG LANG & COMP	20	0	0	5	25
AP FRENCH LANGUAGE	10	2	0	1	13
AP GERMAN	0	0	0	0	0
AP LAT V VERGIL	0	0	0	1	1
AP SPANISH V	26	7	15	0	48
AP SPANISH LIT	16	2	4	2	24
AP CALC AB	33	0	5	10	48
AP CALC BC	37	2	2	6	48
AP STATS	20	5	1	2	28
AP BIOLOGY	38	10	2	3	53
AP CHEMISTRY	17	2	1	5	25
AP PHYSICS B	29	7	1	6	43
AP PHYSICS C MECH	38	3	3	6	50
AP PHYSICS C ELEC/MAG	14	0	0	1	15
AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCI	36	2	5	4	47
TOTAL	441	64	44	62	612

* Does not include 10th grade AP US History

W=White B=Black H=Hispanic A=Asian

Quality Point Index (Point Value)

Academic Level	A	B	C	D	F
<i>High Honors/ AP</i>	5	4	3	2	0
<i>Honors</i>	4.5	3.5	2.5	1.5	0
<i>Academic</i>	4	3	2	1	0

Clearly, Black students are under-represented in AP Courses, but the preparation for these courses starts very early in the academic pipeline

- White students make up 72% of enrolled AP students, yet are 49% of the total population
- Black students are 11% of AP classes and 35% of the total population
- Asian students are 10% of AP classes and are 7% of the total population; 50% of Asian students take AP classes
- Hispanic students are 7% of AP classes and are 10% of the total population

Key Takeaways

To attain higher GPAs, students must strategically take and do well in High Honors and Advanced Placement courses in the 9th through 12th grades to maximize their cumulative GPA

Disparities within Grade Point Averages

TOP 50% (3.62 GPA or greater):

- 163 out of 235 White students (70%) had GPAs in the top 50% of the class
- Only 45 out of 196 Black students (23%) were in the top 50% of the class

BOTTOM 50% (Below 3.62 GPA):

- 72 out of 235 of White students (30%) had GPAs in the bottom 50% of the class
- 151 out of 196 of Black students (77%) had GPAs in the bottom 50% of the class

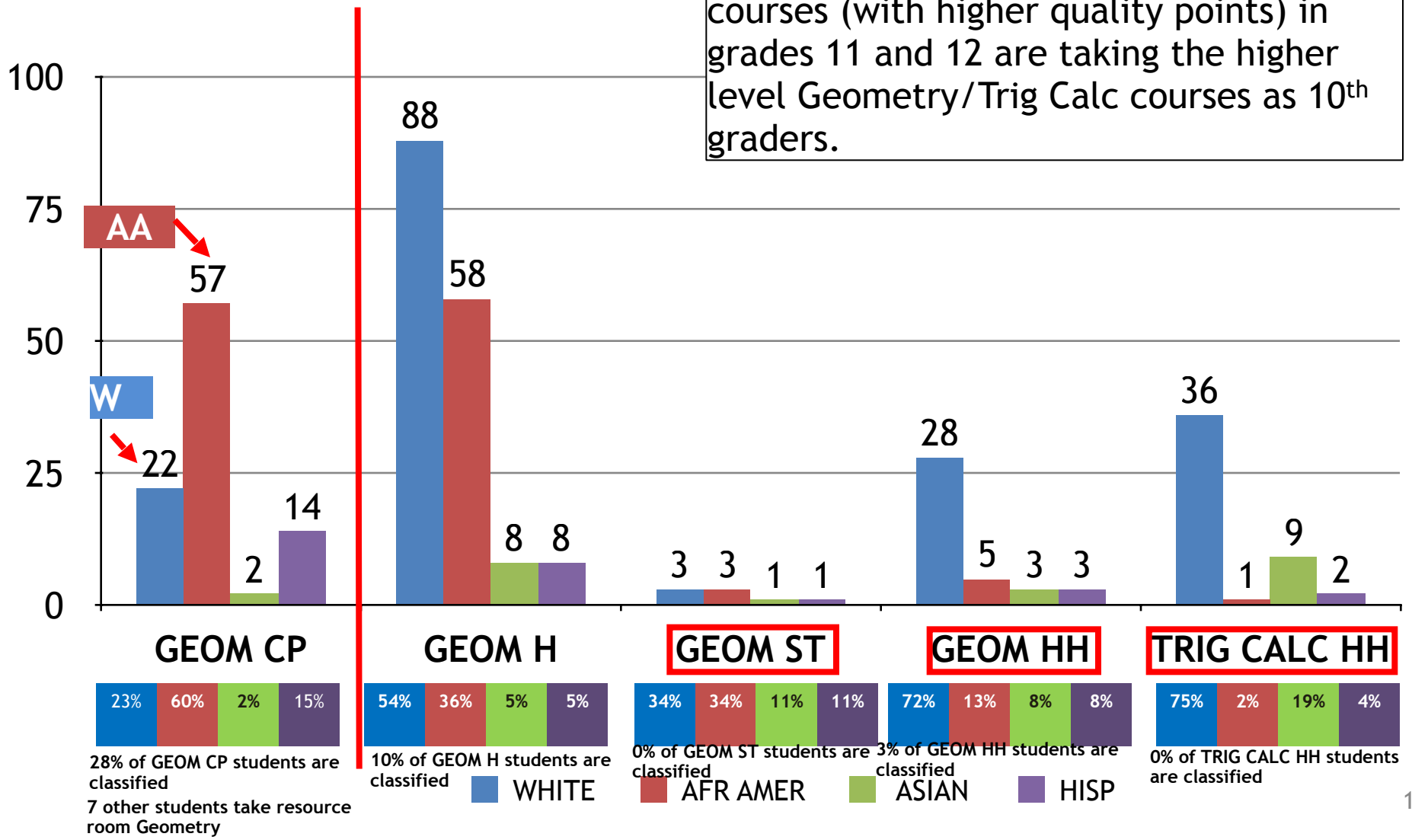
- This disparity has existed for over 10 years in Montclair

Disparities within Advanced Placement Classes and Small Learning Communities

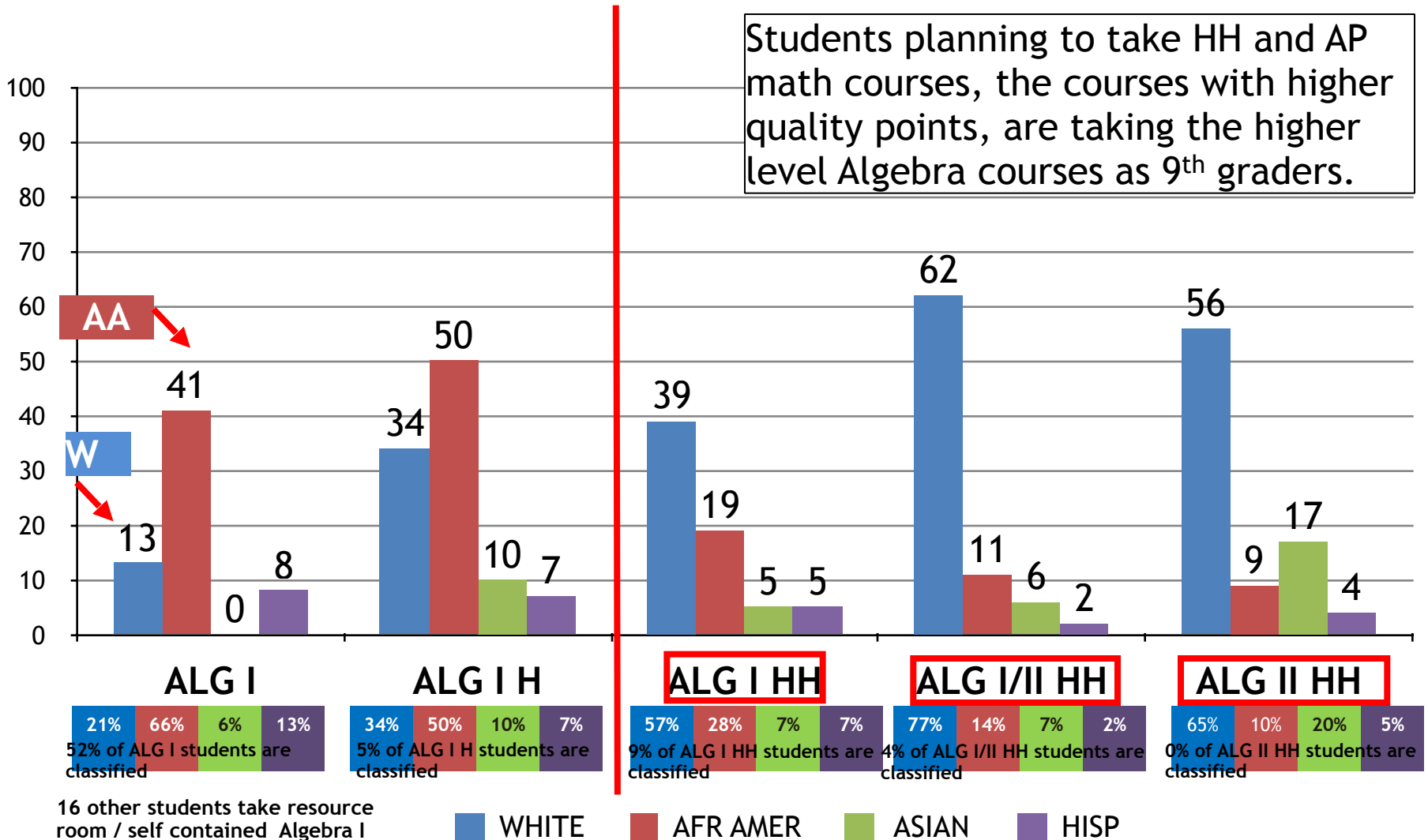
- White students make up 72% of all enrolled AP students in 2014-2015; AA students only make up 11% of all enrolled AP students in 2014-2015; Approx. 50% of Asian students take AP classes
- Disparities also exist within our small learning communities: CGI (Civics & Government Institute) is 78% white, while CSJ is 65% black
- While data on the number of students benefiting from paid tutors remains anecdotal, it is important to highlight the inordinate number of reports of tutoring happening for students enrolled in challenging courses, which potentially has unintended consequences for students to participate in these classes

Class Distribution for 2014-2015: 10th Grade Geometry Courses

Students taking the HH and AP math courses (with higher quality points) in grades 11 and 12 are taking the higher level Geometry/Trig Calc courses as 10th graders.



Class Distribution for 2014-2015: 9th Grade Math Courses



Key Takeaways:

- **White students are consistently taking higher level courses in the 9th and 10th grades, preparing them to take High Honors and AP courses in the 11th and 12th grades**
- **Preparedness of students before they enter the 9th grade is essential to ensure they are positioned to take higher level courses at MHS**
- **Academic courses (lower level classes) at the high school are majority African American**

4-year MHS Suspension Data

Montclair High School					
Race/Gender	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total
Asian Male	0	0	1	0	1
Asian Female	0	0	1	0	1
African American Male	85	68	42	24	219
African American Female	21	34	9	9	73
Hispanic Male	2	6	8	1	17
Hispanic Female	1	2	2	1	6
White Male	8	6	7	5	26
White Female	6	2	1	0	9
Total	123	118	71	40	352
General Ed	60	70	41	28	199
Special Ed	63	48	30	12	153

Key Takeaway: Consistently African American students represent approx. 80+% of school suspensions, while representing only 38% of the total school population; Special education students show disproportionality relative to general education students

Key Recommendations to Address Disparities: High School

Recommendations

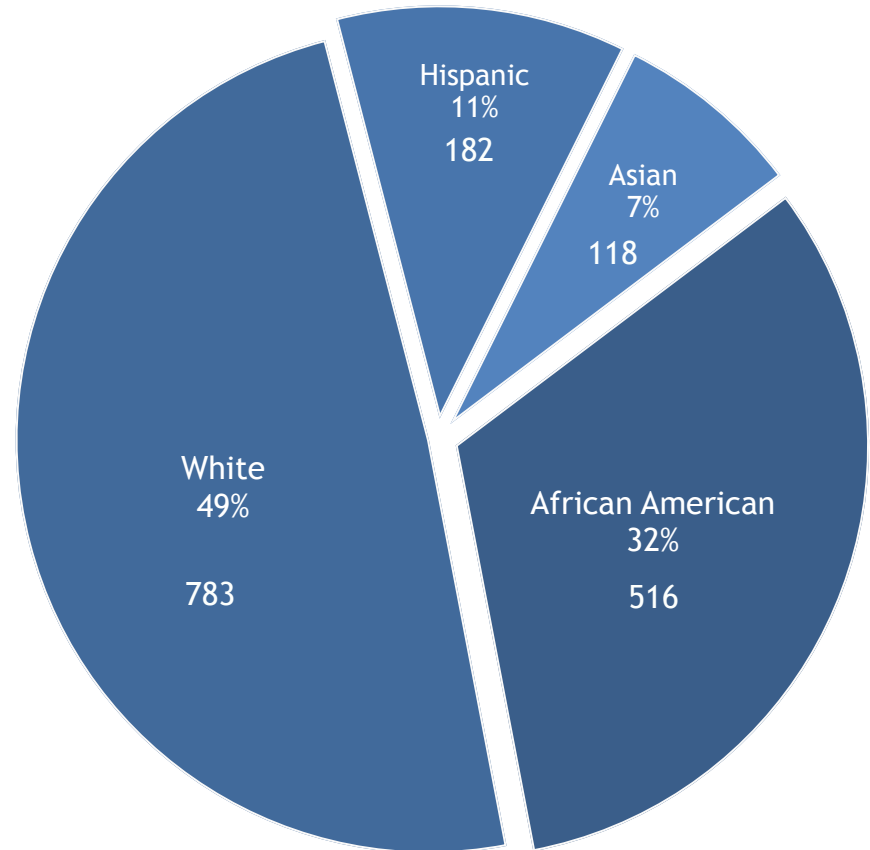
1. Set specific, quantitative goals for incrementally increasing AP enrollment in populations with historically low enrollment in these courses.
2. Use the College Board PSAT report recommendations as a determinant and trigger for course selection and student enrollment in High Honors or AP classes.
3. Require any "A" or "B" student from a population that is underrepresented in higher level courses to have a timely meeting with a staff member and caregiver about upgrading to a higher level course in that subject area.
4. Disallow students from unilaterally making decisions about course selection without parental input.
5. Structure standard course sequences in Small Learning Communities with disproportionately high numbers of African American students, to increase High Honors and AP course enrollment.
6. Simplify the design of the Montclair High School curriculum flowchart, and align classes across disciplines more uniformly by grade. It is imperative for MHS to simplify labeling and differentiate among general-education, honors and Advanced Placement courses. (e.g. Geometry College Prep)

Middle School (6-8 grades)

Middle School Observations

- “House” system is a strong component of our middle school experience, however, a student is limited to a group of teachers for three years
- Middle school represents the defining period in the academic pipeline where the student establishes their academic priorities and ultimately defines how he/she is positioned for higher level courses, especially in Math and ELA
- Critical involvement of community partners who provide enrichment, summer learning loss and academic tutoring is essential to support this segment pipeline

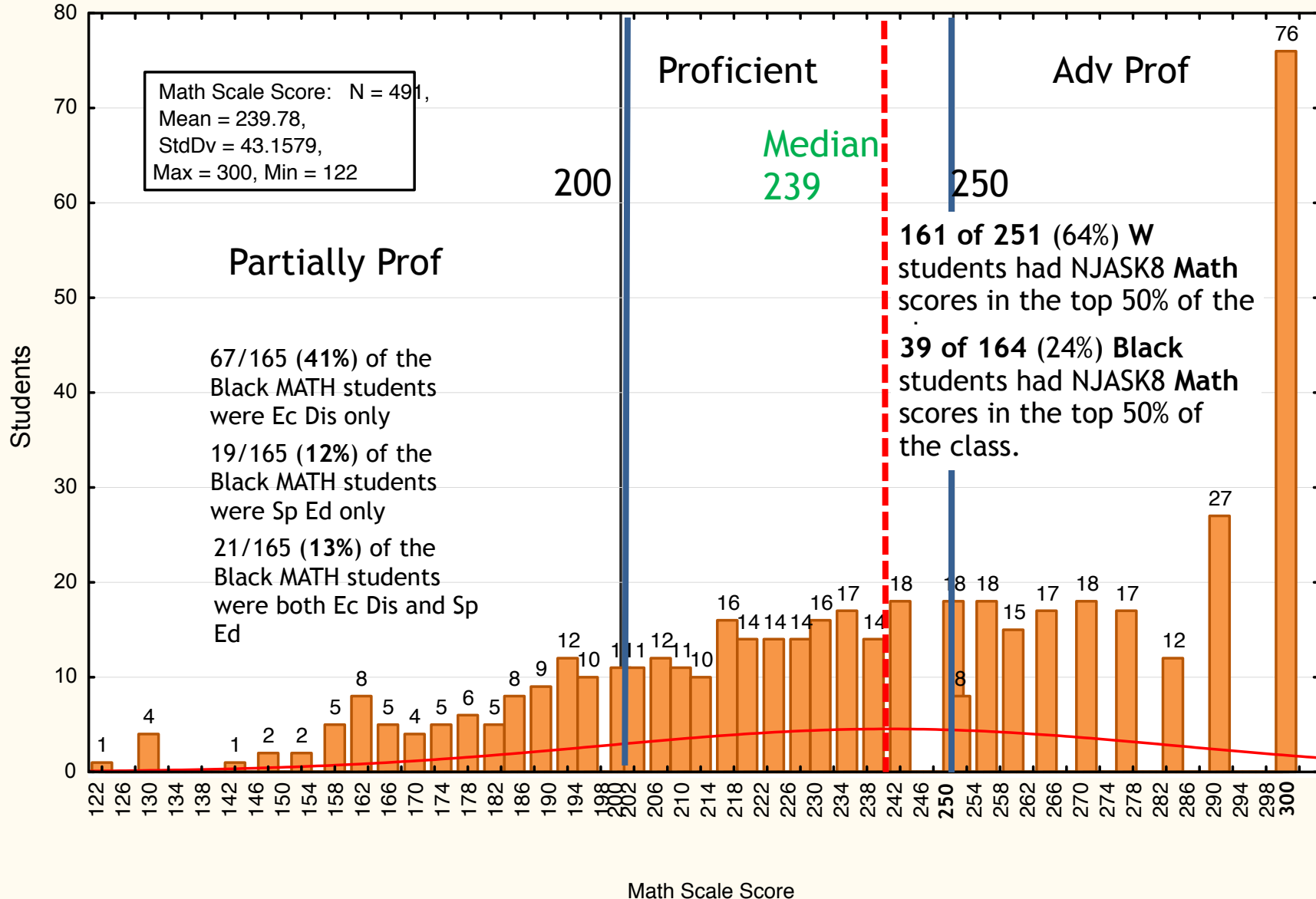
Grades 6-8 Ethnic Breakdown



2014-2015	Total Black Students	Percentage Ec Dis	Percentage Sp Ed	Percentage Ec Dis+Sp Ed
<i>Gr 8</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>94/176 = 53%</i>	<i>55/176 = 31%</i>	<i>33/176 = 19%</i>

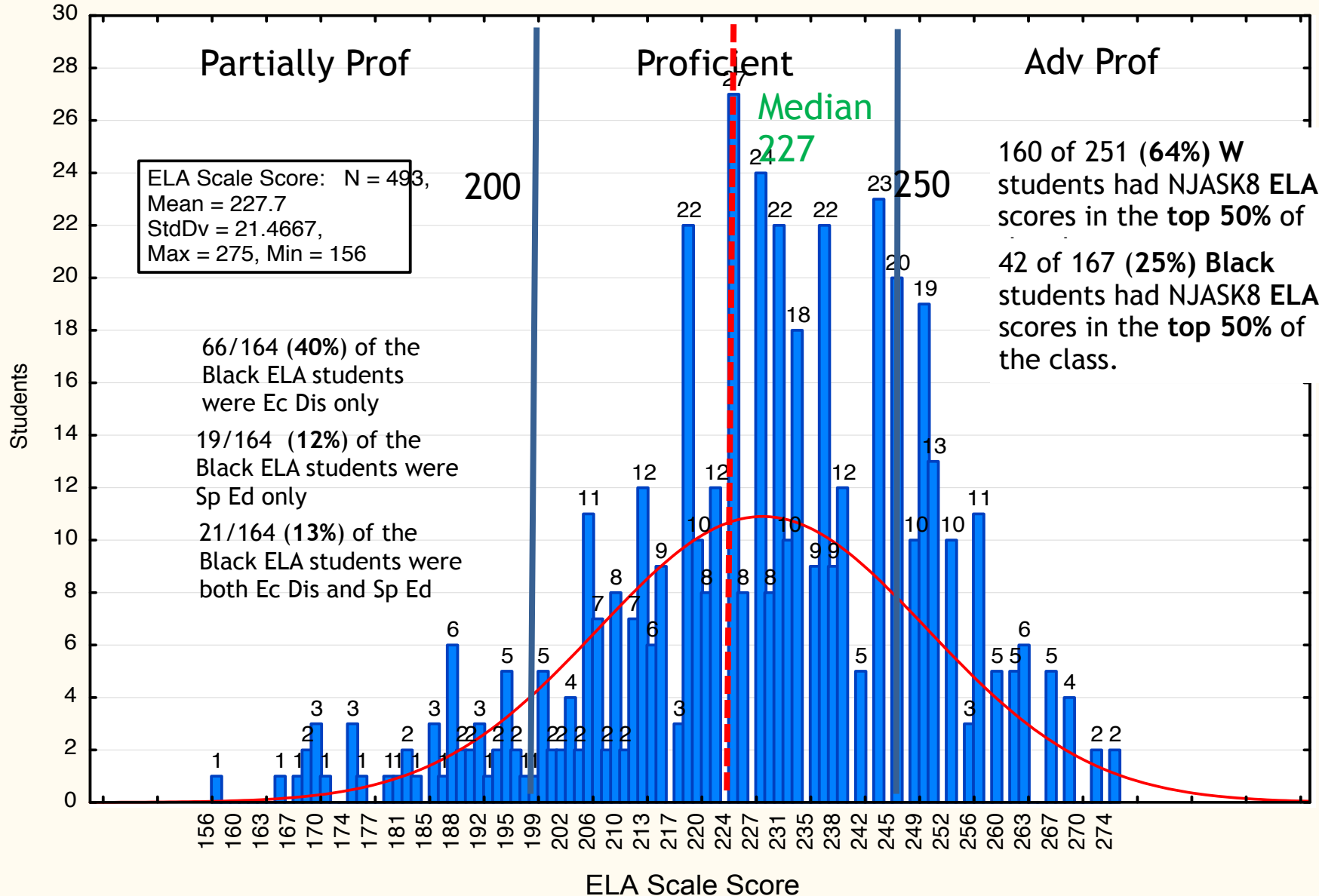
2014 NJASK 8 MATH

2014 NJASK 8 MATH Scale Scores



2014 NJASK 8 ELA

NJASK 8 2014 ELA Scale Scores



NJASK 8 by the Numbers

25% of Black students (42/167) in Gr8 in 2014 had NJASK8 ELA scores in the top 50% of the class.

64% of White students (160/251) in Gr8 in 2014 had NJASK8 ELA scores in the top 50% of the class.

NJASK 8 2014	ELA		MATH	
	B	W	B	W
RACE / ETH				
TOTAL:	167	251	164	251
Top 5%	2	16	1	15
Top 10%	5	35	4	32
Top 25%	19	81	11	94
Top 50%	42	160	39	161
Bottom 25%	84	28	79	35
Bottom 50%	125	91	125	90

24% of Black students (39/164) in Gr8 in 2014 had NJASK8 Math scores in the top 50% of the class.

64% of White students (161/251) in Gr8 in 2014 had NJASK8 Math scores in the top 50% of the class.

Note how similar the numbers on the chart below resemble the numbers on the GPA charts earlier.

Gap Analysis: NJASK MATH W/AA Non-Econ Dis v. Econ Dis by Gen Ed and Sp Ed

Percent Proficient+Adv Proficient

Blue lines show consistent disproportionate MATH outcomes between Spec Ed, Non Economically Disadvantaged Students

Gr8



Gap Analysis: NJASK ELA W/AA Non-Econ Dis v. Econ Dis by Gen Ed and Sp Ed

Percent Proficient+Adv Proficient

Blue lines show consistent disproportionate ELA outcomes between Spec Ed, Non Economically Disadvantaged Students

Gr8



Key Takeaways:

- 64% of White students in 8th Grade in 2014 had scores in the TOP 50% of the class on both NJASK8 ELA and MATH.
- If approx 75% (3 out of 4) Black 8th grade students are below the median (bottom 50%) in MATH and ELA, then these students will likely not be in a position to take higher level courses in the 10th-12th grades.
- When accounting for socioeconomic factors, Black and white non-economically disadvantaged Special Education students have disparate outcomes on 8th grade NJ ASK MATH and ELA - consistently at least 30 percentage points difference.

4-year Middle School Suspension Data

Middle Schools					
Race/Gender	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total MS
Asian Male	3	0	1	0	4
Asian Female	0	0	0	0	0
African American Male	37	71	59	23	190
African American Female	10	13	29	14	66
Hispanic Male	4	4	3	1	12
Hispanic Female	0	2	1	0	3
White Male	15	25	26	3	69
White Female	2	4	3	1	10
Total	71	119	122	42	354
General Ed	46	90	69	22	227
Special Ed	25	29	53	20	127

Key Takeaway: Consistently African American students represent approx. 70+% of school suspensions, while representing only 32% of the total middle school population; Special Ed students show disproportionality relative to general ed students

Key Recommendations to Address Disparities: Middle School

Recommendations

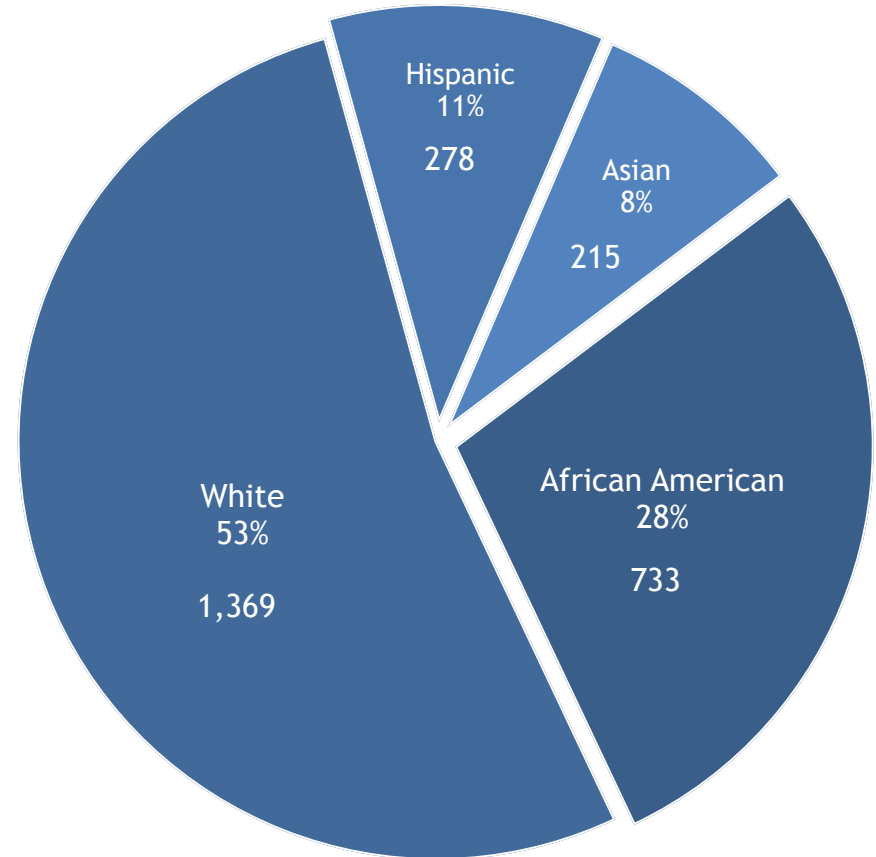
1. Provide a year of Algebra instruction to all students by the end of 8th grade.
2. Provide in-school and out-of-school extended learning time of 60-90 minutes with a focus on students who are not grade-level proficient in Language Arts or Mathematics. Partner deliberately with local service providers of after-school programs to ensure academic content alignment with school-based curricula.

Elementary School (1-5 grades)

Elementary School Observations

Grades 1-5 Ethnic Breakdown

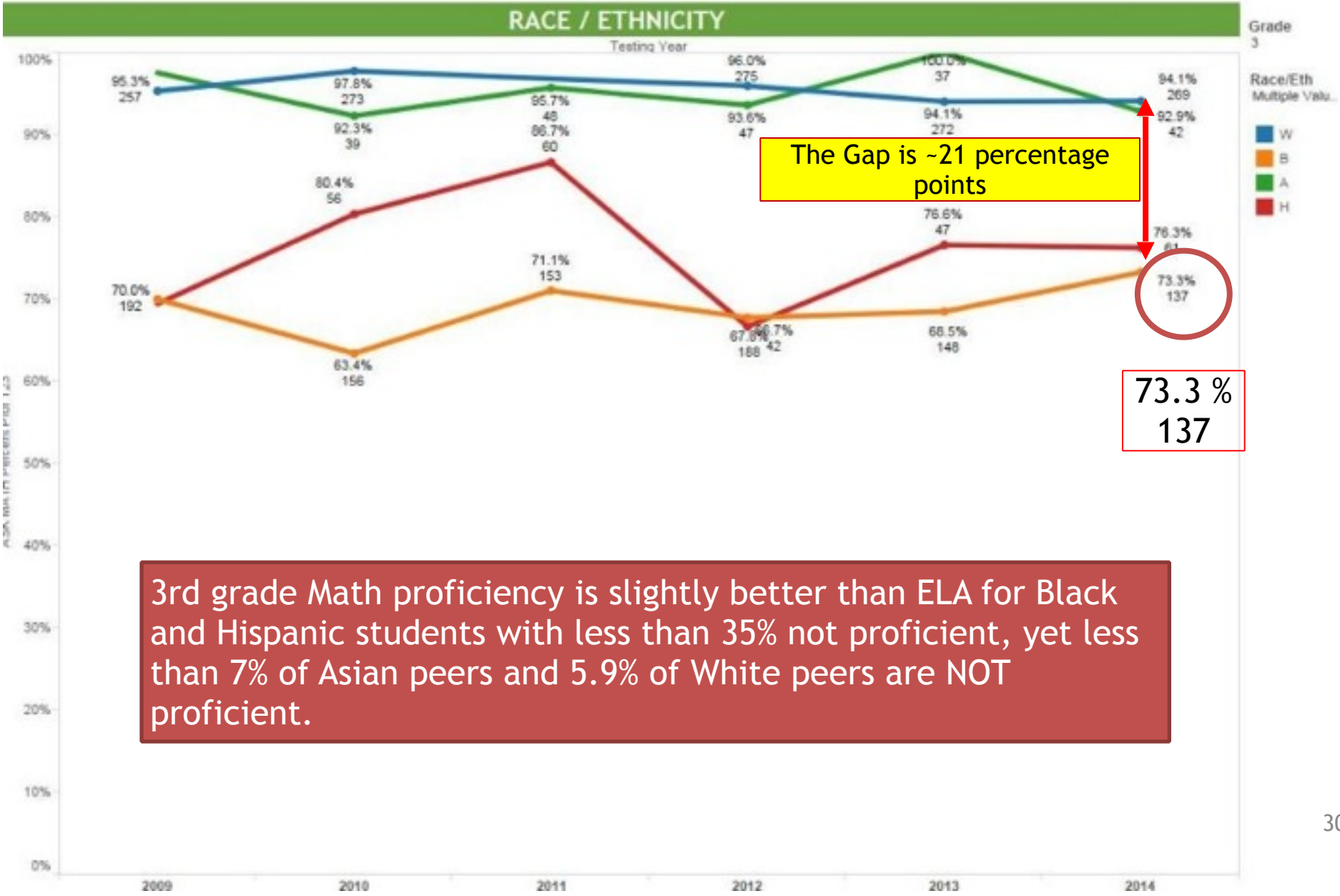
- Only **60% of Black** and **67% of Hispanic students are proficient by the end of 3rd grade**; **90% of white students are proficient at 3rd grade.**
 - These are pivotal statistics because of the **implications for access to a rigorous curriculum beyond 3rd grade.** This underscores the need for an **explicit, urgent approach to early literacy**, particularly for students in this population."
- Teachers need the support of all parents/caregivers
- Parents shared that teachers in some elementary schools are recommending tutoring to supplement classroom learning
- A clear understanding of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process is key for teachers and parents in the K-5 experience



2014-2015	Total Black Students	Percentage Ec Dis	Percentage Sp Ed	Percentage Ec Dis+Sp Ed
Gr 5	147	70/147 = 48%	50/147 = 34%	33/147 = 22%
Gr 3	149	72/149 = 48%	30/149 = 20%	18/149 = 12%

Montclair NJ ASK MATH Race / Eth Percent Proficient

Gr3



Gap Analysis: NJASK MATH W/AA Non-Econ Dis v. Econ Dis

by Gen Ed and Sp Ed

Percent Proficient+Adv Proficient

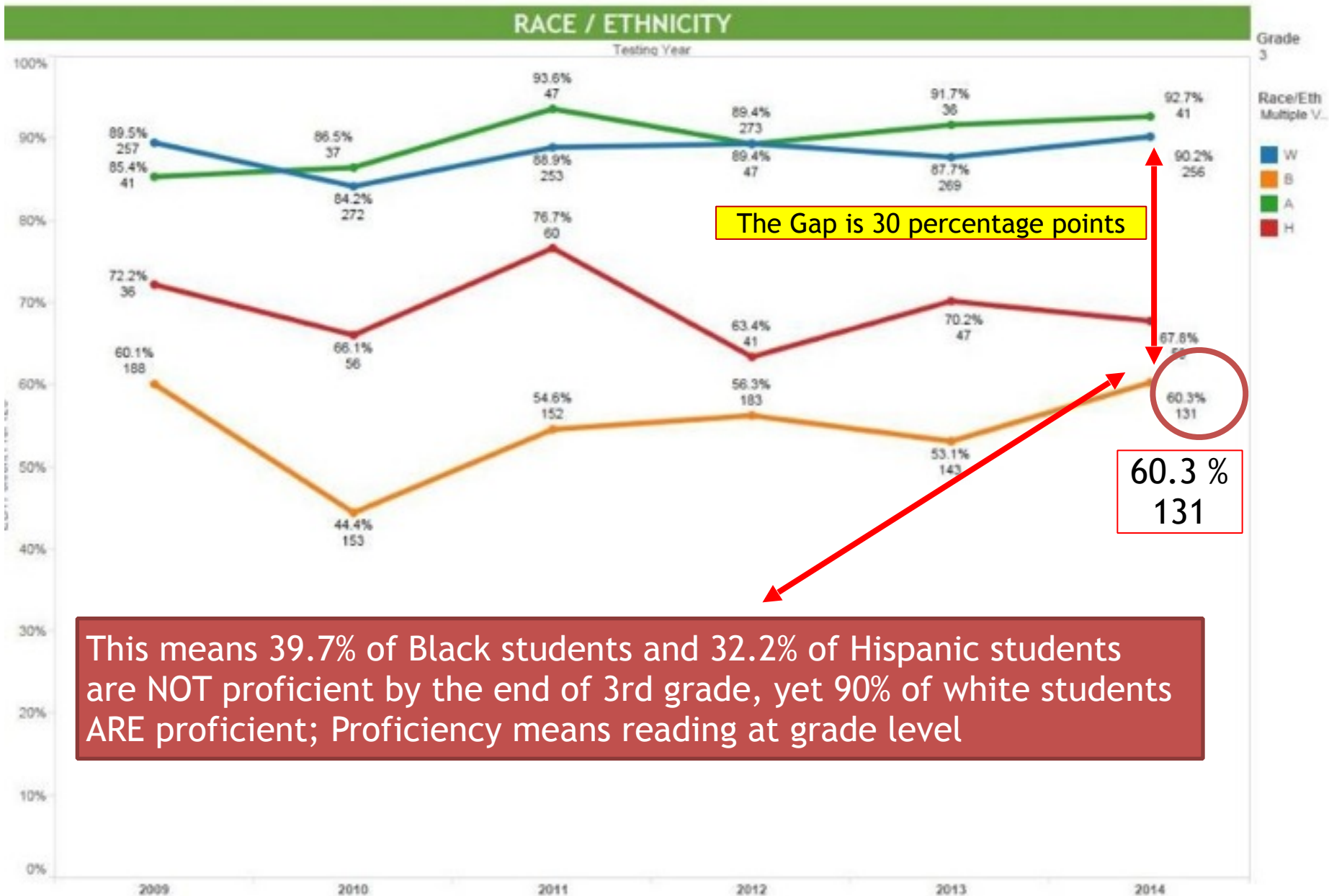
Blue lines show consistent disproportionate MATH outcomes between Spec Ed, Non Economically Disadvantaged Students

Gr3



Montclair NJ ASK ELA Race / Eth Percent Proficient

Gr3



Gap Analysis: NJASK ELA W/AA Non-Econ Dis v. Econ Dis by Gen Ed and Sp Ed

Blue lines show consistent disproportionate ELA outcomes between Spec Ed, Non Economically Disadvantaged Students

Gr3

Percent Proficient+Adv Proficient



Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters.....

Millions of American children get to fourth grade without learning to read proficiently, and that puts them on the high school dropout track. The ability to read is critical to a child's success in school, life-long earning potential and their ability to contribute to the nation's economy and its security. Children can succeed at reading proficiency if policymakers focus on school readiness, school attendance, summer learning, family support and high-quality teaching.

A KIDS COUNT Special Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation
By the Annie E. Casey Foundation



In Montclair, 4 out of 10 (40%) of Black students are NOT proficient in Language Arts (Reading) by the end of 3rd grade; 90% of white students are proficient.

Elementary School Suspension Data

Elementary Schools					
RACE/GENDER	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total Elem
Asian Male	1	0	1	3	4
Asian Female	0	0	0	0	0
African American Male	26	42	19	9	79
African American Female	5	8	3	6	17
Hispanic Male	10	5	1	1	11
Hispanic Female	0	1	0	1	1
White Male	4	7	9	1	14
White Female	1	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	47	63	33	21	164
General Ed	35	35	21	16	107
Special Ed	12	28	12	5	57

Key Takeaway: Consistently African American students represent approx. 70+% of school suspensions, while representing only 28% of the total elementary population

Key Takeaways:

- Black students perform better on the 3rd grade NJ ASK Math test than ELA, however, the disparities between Black students and their white peers is 21 percentage points in Math and 30 percentage points in ELA.
- **As stated earlier, the third grade is a critical transition year and approximately 40% of Black students are moving to the 4th grade without reading proficiency.**
- **When accounting for socioeconomic factors, Black and white non-economically disadvantaged Special Education students also have disparate outcomes on 3rd grade NJ ASK MATH and ELA - in some years, as wide as a 40 percentage point difference on the ELA; The disparity in MATH is not as wide.**

Key Recommendations to Address Disparities: Elementary

Recommendations

1. Administer diagnostic tests within the first 20 days of school to identify students' gaps and tailor remediation accordingly.
 - 1a. Administer school readiness and informal reading assessments (in small groups) for all kindergarten students within the first 15 days of the school year.
 - 1b. Administer a formal diagnostic assessment within the first 10 days of school to students in grades 1-3 who ended the previous school year below grade level in reading. This will enable the schools and teachers to identify students' reading growth or loss over the summer, and accelerate the process of matching students with the appropriate level of support to ensure their success.
 - 1c. Administer informal assessments for all students in grades 1 - 3 within the first 20 days of the school year.
2. Provide summer programming that provides targeted instruction for students in grades 1 - 5 who end the school year below grade level.
 - 1a. Identify students who are not proficient in ELA and/or MATH during the critical transition years, especially during the summer after the 3rd grade, and provide a District-sponsored summer enrichment program in collaboration with local community providers
3. Identify gap-closing strategies, programs and approaches to use in Montclair Public Schools (e.g. approaches that emphasize that even in the youngest grades, reading comprehension is as important as phonics, or word calling), to ensure that students are reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade
4. Pilot a program that will focus on enhancing student life skills, including but not limited to, time management, study skills, organizational skills, executive functioning skills and communication skills.
5. Develop a clear academic roadmap for caregivers outlining the academic progressions from the 4th to the 12th grade that correlate best to career and college readiness.

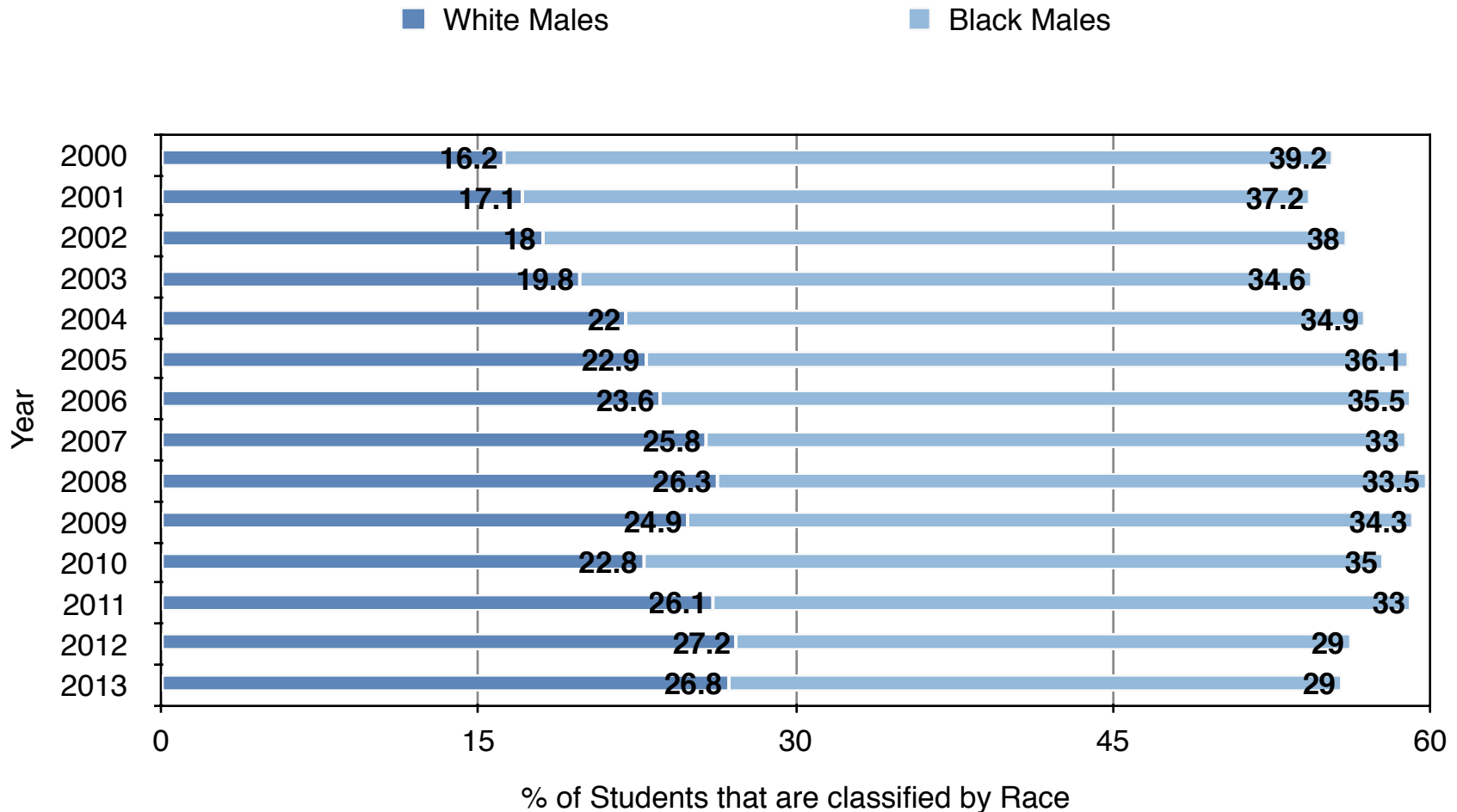
Recommendations

6. Provide a crystal-clear multi-lingual document, showing the specific literacy and math knowledge that students should master by the end of 3rd grade.
7. Provide at-home practice guides for parents to support their children in achieving mastery in these areas.
8. Review District's RTI (Response to Intervention) policy to advance the clock on when a student can begin to get help through the RTI process.
9. Partner with community organizations including the Montclair Public Library, to foster participation in summer initiatives, e.g The Summer Book Challenge, that will mitigate the summer slide.
10. Administer the algebra readiness exam to all fifth-grade students, and allow fifth-grade teachers or caregivers to recommend students for Algebra in sixth grade.

Broad Observations

MPS Classified Students: Black vs White Male

Over the past 13 years, we have seen a steady increase in the percentage of white males who are classified as a % of the total white males population; Black male classified students have conversely declined from 39% of the total black male population to 29%, yet they still are disproportionate to white males



Recommendations

NOTE: Due to time limitations to review all recommendations, these represent the most pertinent gap closing strategies; Please see the Full Report for the remaining recommendations

Hire an Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement and Equity, whose charge will be to serve as a powerful advocate and to ensure that the playing field is level; Primary responsibilities include leading, measuring, supervising and ensuring the implementation of all efforts related to closing the opportunity gap.

1. The Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement and Equity will ensure the District's progress towards:
 - a) **increasing achievement, expectations and access to opportunities and resources for underrepresented minorities and economically at-risk students;**
 - b) **identifying and eliminating educational disparities (i.e. academic disciplinary, etc.) between majority and underrepresented students by developing institutional initiatives and policies and working with faculty, staff, families and students;**
 - c) **recruiting, retaining and developing a more diverse and culturally competent faculty and staff;**
 - d) **ensuring an educational environment that promotes high academic achievement, embraces and values various learning styles, individual growth, social development and fosters a mutually respectful collaboration between students, faculty, staff and families;**
 - e) **preparing all students, staff and faculty to thrive interpersonally and professionally in a community and larger world that is diverse, global and interconnected by enhancing each school's climate for inclusion and appreciation of diversity;**
 - f) **advocating for students who disproportionately experience disparities and are currently and historically underrepresented among the highest achieving students; and**
 - g) **observing school climates and supervising the school-by-school implementation of the Achievement Gap Advisory Panel recommendations and other initiatives through regular meetings with school principals and their Achievement Teams, in school evaluations and quality data collection, reporting and analysis.**

The Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement and Equity will be supported by and collaborate with the District, the Achievement Gap Advisory Panel and various community partners to address the educational disparities within the MPS

Recommendations (con't)

2. **Present school performance reports, led by the principals, at a Board of Education meeting within 30 days of the reports' release.** In addition to presenting an overview of student demographics, academic growth and performance, suspensions, and absenteeism metrics, the principal will present two or three goals for student growth in the key areas. To increase the Township's understanding of student growth and overall performance at the district and school level, a predetermined time for clarifying questions from the Board of Education and the parent community should follow each presentation.
3. **Create a procedure to ensure the emotional disturbance identification under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Section 300.8 is properly applied and children are not inappropriately assessed or classified.**
4. **Identify a best-in-class math assessment** to evaluate elementary and middle school students at the beginning of each school year. It is imperative that MPS value Math assessments on par with Language Arts.
5. **Design and embed lessons** at each grade level of the K-12 curriculum to teach students **to consider the needs of all individuals** regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, class, equity, entitlement or privilege.
6. **Form an Achievement Team at each school**, consisting of a principal, Student Assistant Counselors (SACs), head of guidance, general education and special education teachers at each school. Achievement Teams will **coordinate directly with the Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement and Equity**, and work closely with the Chief Academic Officer and SATp to ensure that each school is living up to its full potential.
7. **Develop and implement a Family Advocacy Mentoring program** to provide guidance for caregivers on academic planning and transition support; summer slide strategies and resources; and at-home study techniques. The SATp at each school could lead this program, which will be targeted to caregivers for students who are partially proficient in major subjects.

Recommendations (con't)

8. While the AGAP's charge has been to focus on students and schools from kindergarten to 12th grade, evidence shows that a high-quality pre-kindergarten educational experience is a valuable step in a child's development, and **we strongly support access to affordable pre-K for all Montclair students**. The Township, working with MPS and community leaders, particularly Pre-K providers, must make this a high priority.

Further, MPS will:

- Establish **collaborations between MPS and early education and child-care providers**, including meetings and visits, to establish standards of high quality and facilitate transitions from preschool to kindergarten;
- Create a **developmentally appropriate portfolio or report for each child leaving pre-K and entering kindergarten**, to provide insight for kindergarten teachers about specific children's skills and behaviors;
- Develop and provide a **sequenced summer transition plan for caregivers with children entering kindergarten**, targeted to those without Pre-K experience;
- Develop and provide a **toolkit of resources**, focused on skill and behavioral expectations, to caregivers with children who are less than 5 years old;
- Identify and invite pre-K teachers to participate in a **mutually beneficial exchange of professional development tools and knowledge** sharing with MPSD K - 2 teachers.

9. **Create an Inter-Community Council** bringing together community organizations that deliver services to MPS students, **focusing primarily on tutoring and summer learning loss**.

- The Council will **work closely with the Chief Academic Officer**, who will set standards and goals for measuring the outcomes of each partner group.
- It will help **align partner groups on approaches, rigor, strategies, and outcomes** to best serve MPS students. And it will issue annual report cards assessing each organization's delivery of service.
- The Inter-Community Council could, for example, **identify existing programs that provide summer learning opportunities effectively**, and help expand their scale

Recommendations (con't)

10. **Provide on-going professional development to administrators and teachers**, with an explicit focus on establishing and supporting a school culture and climate of cultural respect and high expectations for all students. This must be a multi-year commitment with ongoing, established objectives, milestones and defined outcomes.

Specifically, MPS will identify and provide:

- a) **Racial, unconscious-bias, equity and cultural-competency assessment**, and embed these elements into the professional development requirements for all staff. MPS will ensure that staff development recognizes the **historical and contemporary impacts of racism on student outcomes and success**.
- b) **Culturally-responsive instruction training**, and develop a program, with specific outcomes, for teachers.
- c) **Differentiated-instruction training**, to provide information and support to teachers.
- d) **Professional development for administrators** on providing timely and constructive feedback and support to teachers.
- e) A mechanism for teachers, counselors and other academic staff to **formally suggest professional development topics, and to shape training opportunities**.

11. **Develop a universal suspension policy for non-violent offenses**. It is imperative to ensure that all schools implement and follow disciplinary policies consistently, and that they adhere to established intervention processes before suspending students.

- When a child is removed from a class for any disciplinary reason for more than a hour, the **parents are to be notified immediately and the discipline has to be documented**.
- Ensure that disciplinary policies and responses to conflict include a **trauma-informed approach**

Recommendations (con't)

12. Develop a **Skyward Montclair campaign** to encourage wider usage of the tool across the district, beginning in the Fall of 2015. This campaign will be a priority for each school SATp. It will:

- Provide a series of **training workshops** to teach caregivers how to access the site, either online or via the Skyward app;
- Provide **computer access through the Montclair Public Library**;
- Implement **greater use of text messaging** as an alternate means to communicate with caregivers;
- **Establish protocols requiring teachers to record grades in Skyward within a specified period of time**, especially for exams, essays, and other activities that significantly affect a student's overall grade;

13. Management of **class size should remain a key focus of the Superintendent and the Board of Education** to ensure that our classes are sized to achieve and promote the best learning environment for MPS students; Conduct District-wide analysis of optimal student/staff ratio to ensure greater student outcomes

14. Ensure that the **District hiring practices** emphasize the need to **attract a more racially diverse and culturally-competent workforce**; As part of the hiring process, a diverse slate requirement should be implemented, especially for every student-facing role (teachers, counselors, aides, et al); Ensure that any Search Firms hired to conduct searches for a position in the District understands the mandate to attract ethnically diverse staff to MPS and these firms will be measured on their efforts in this regard

15. **Develop and implement an after-school bus service** that will provide transportation for students who are staying for extended learning time, enrichment programs or sports activities; At a minimum, this program should be piloted in the middle school grades and then rolled out District-wide, as financially feasible

Next Steps

1. **Schedule a public data session to dive deeper into the metrics (Fall 2015)**
2. **Work with the Superintendent, BOE, MPSD COO, and Town Council (Education Subcommittee) to develop a multi-year funding strategy to support AGAP initiatives**
 - **There are many resources available to support these kinds of initiatives, including grants as well as public/private funding**
3. **Schedule a time to present during a future Board of Education meeting**
4. **Convene key community partners to engage in a series of sessions to implement the Inter-community Council - outline roles, responsibilities, deliverables and outcomes by September 2015**
5. **Conduct open solicitation for new AGAP members who are interested in joining the next phase of the work (Announce new Advisory Panel in Fall 2015)**
6. **Organize a meeting with the SATP leadership to review the recommendations and identify those that specifically involve their engagement and support**

Achievement Gap Advisory Panel

Dr. Kaili Baucum
Roberta Bernhard
Sylvia Bryant
Barry Devone
Paula Donaldson
George Glass
Kimberly Griffiths
James Harris
Adele Katz
Peter Keating
Steve Knox
Grace Ko
Marcia Marley

Lisa Sedita
Jonathan Simon
Jane Susswein
David Troutt
Franklin Turner
Roosevelt Weaver
Sue Weintraub
Lois Whipple
Paula White
Jenna Williams
Amillah Williamson

Special Mention: Former AGAP Members

Wil Adkins
Kabir Baber
Dr. Renee Baskerville
Ron Brown
Twana Davisson
James Earle, Ex Oficio
Helen Fallon
Dan Gill
Laura Hertzog
Jamil Jannah
Julianne Jones

Anne Mernin
Veronica Nicholson
Dr. Clement Price, In Memoriam
Michelle Russell, Ex Oficio
Tom Reynolds
Chris Swenson
Regina Tuma
Gayl Shepard
Shameekqa Warren
Peter Zorich

“The Secret of Change is to
FOCUS all of your energy, Not
on Fighting the Old, but on
BUILDING the NEW.”

—Socrates