

Mamaroneck Union Free School District
Equity Audit Report
2022

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I. Introductions

District Profile

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) reports that Mamaroneck Union Free School District (MUFSD) is one of seven hundred thirty one school districts in the state of New York, it's located in Westchester County, New York. The MUFSD serves families from the Villages of Larchmont and Mamaroneck, as well as the town of Mamaroneck. It is composed of four elementary schools (Central, Chatsworth, Mamaroneck Avenue, and Murray), one middle school (Hommocks), and one highschool (Mamaroneck). The district serves 5,382 students; has 685 full time staff, and 25 Administrators.

Every school district has a context that includes more than the daily academic and behavioral happenings within the learning community. In preparing to carry out MUFSD's equity audit there were several factors worthy of mention that coincided with the overall findings. Two major factors worthy of mention are [Hurricane Ida](#) and the [ongoing legal complaints](#) filed against the district, both of these factors have strong correlations to the ultimate findings.

MUFSD Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Mamaroneck Union Free School District “to promote intellectual engagement and an appreciation of learning as an inherently rewarding activity and to prepare students to function as responsible citizens in a multicultural world”. This equity audit will have this mission and more specific essential questions at the center of the findings.

Mamaroneck District Equity Team's (DET) Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Mamaroneck District Equity Team is to identify, acknowledge, and dismantle the systemic barriers that prevent equity and access for all students by creating and implementing a sustainable plan for equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.

Equity Auditor Profile

The equity auditor, Kiesha Lamb of Seek Equity Consulting LLC has over a decade of experience moving equity forward, she has partnered with students, families and district educators and leaders across the nation. She has experience in researching, designing, and facilitating equity based curriculum. Kiesha has held direct service positions providing an unconventional lens to educational equity in the classroom, and has held leadership positions to support those who hope to improve their direct service work. Currently, she serves as the Director of Educational Equity for Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC), an education service agency serving 15 member school districts. She enjoys infusing artistic expressions and methods into her work to support the learning of others. The auditor continues to carve out her lane within the field of equity to encompass (but not be limited to) the value and interventions of Family and Community engagement within education, prioritize the significance of human centered data and research analysis, and champion the re-humanization of minoritized people through rich tradition and innovative measures.



Equity Audit

This equity audit report is a compilation and analysis of data acquired from the MUFSD community related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). It has been drilled down to its most condensed and accessible version and is presented back to the community with recommendations on how to increase DEI within the community. An equity audit report is not intended to be an indictment of a school district, nor is it solely an internal admin reflection of the status of DEI. It is completed by an external consultant with an objective view of the community and an equity centered lens. The initial proposal included five sections which will be thoroughly decomposed in later sections:

1. Development of Implementation Plan
 - a. Forming collective audit process
2. Stakeholder Engagement
 - a. Empathic Interviews
3. Data and Document Review
 - a. Solicit additional data in collaboration with data gathered
4. Analysis, Synthesis, and Draft Report
 - a. Shape final report
5. Final Audit Report
 - a. Comprehensive Report

Here's an analogy that might help readers understand more about an equity audit. Imagine having to go through family photos from over the years. Firstly, there might be multiple perspectives on the best way to view the photos, some will want to pull out albums from under years of storage bins, others will want to open up an app to quickly view the highlight reels. Secondly, certain family members will want to focus on the photos that catch their best angles and leave the rest behind, others will want to see them all without cropping or editing. Of course, some people don't realize which group they're in until the photos actually come out. Finally, each photo will tell a story, and people will remember the story behind the photos differently. The equity auditor's job is to remove the filters and provide a collage of photos that capture the pride filled moments and the photos where blemishes can be seen. The goal is not to overlook the blemished photos or to point a finger at the blemished photos. Instead, we must collectively view the photos as representative of the state of the MUFSD family and be ready to actively engage with any story that gets lifted up by members of the family. Ultimately, the equity audit might be a revelation for some and a confirmation for others, but the work continues after the audit is complete, in fact, it's there where the real work begins and matters. Nevertheless, the photos are an archive of real life events. This equity audit will join the archive of MUFSD's story.

“Part of what makes it difficult for teachers to fully appreciate group differences in lived experience and their role in academic achievement is the well-intended cultural injunction not to see group differences. Since the civil rights era, the social norm has been to remedy the negative effects of historic group prejudice by not seeing group differences. The goal, then, has been to be colorblind. It is linked to our idea of fairness and the strongly held belief that, in America, if you work hard you can achieve anything. This belief is based on the notion that people are equal...”

II. Methodology

Process

The equity audit process is an extension of commitments to educational equity. The process undergone centers the humanity and liberation of those within the MUFSD learning community, specifically those who predictably are failing and unlikely to succeed within the education system. The three core elements of the equity audit process are as follows: Identifying an Equity Focus, Collecting and analyzing data through an equity lens, and Reflecting on next steps and recommendations.

Identifying an Equity Focus: Equity is truly an all encompassing and intersectional concept, as are the lives of each student and staff and community member (stakeholder) within the district. To narrow the audit focus further from the original proposal the equity auditor partnered with district leaders to develop an implementation plan which included forming a steering committee. On a volunteer basis, the steering committee served as a foundational navigation team throughout the equity audit process and included a specific navigator who would go on to partner with the equity auditor more closely to address logistical needs. In choosing the members, there was a focus on representation across positional power, access, and influence within the district. The equity auditor received recommendations from different stakeholders of members of the community who were potentially interested in joining the steering committee; then met with them to share more on the commitment and potential impact. This process resulted in having three parents, one community member, one board member, one teacher, one counselor, and six members of leadership across the majority of MUFSD schools on the steering committee. It should be noted that several members of the steering committee represented more than one of the aforementioned labels. The next step in narrowing the focus, after getting the steering committee up and running, was to narrow the language and 'look fors' for the equity auditor. This process began as a facilitated dialogue about the needs and skills of the community to a collective 38 questions, and finally to 4 comprehensive and essential questions that would direct the entire audit process.

Essential Questions adapted 11/15/21

1. Do All students have opportunities and the support to achieve the same outcomes or their highest potential?
2. How do students and their families know and partner in the district's commitment to affirming and including all members of the community?
3. To achieve the district's commitments to prioritize learning and leading towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, what pathways are provided to staff and are created by staff?
4. Within MUFSD, what expectations, practices, and policies currently exist to disrupt inequities that occur on a daily basis?

**A continuación se encuentran las Preguntas Esenciales
del Comité Directivo adaptadas el 15 de noviembre**

Estas preguntas guiarán el marco del reporte final de la auditoría:

1. ¿Todos los estudiantes tienen oportunidades y el apoyo para lograr los mismos resultados o su mayor potencial?
2. ¿Cómo los estudiantes y sus familias conocen y se asocian con el compromiso del distrito de afirmar e incluir a todos los miembros de la comunidad?
3. Para lograr los compromisos del distrito de priorizar el aprendizaje y el liderazgo hacia la diversidad, la equidad y la inclusión, ¿qué camino se brindan al personal y son creados por el personal?
4. Dentro del Distrito de Mamaroneck, ¿qué expectativas, prácticas y políticas existen actualmente para interrumpir las inequidades que ocurren a diario?

Note: Originally, after synthesizing and condensing the first set of questions the committee landed on the first three questions, however, after rich and complex dialogue during the steering committee meeting, the fourth question was added to address the macro level opportunities for change that impact the community's daily experiences.

Collecting and Analyzing data through an Equity Lens: In addition to sifting through data provided by the district and online sources, using empathic interviews, open ended questions on Google forms, ethnographic research, and joining student and community efforts, meeting with the steering committee and district administrators were all constructive and collaborative efforts used to solicit the data gathered for this equity audit report. While some of these approaches may seem out of the ordinary, oftentimes it takes these human centered and iterative processes to recognize the community partners, learn the back stories from staff, or even to have any stakeholders trust enough to share their true stories in a meaningful and less defensive way. School districts often are missing important data and the humanity of stakeholders because reform and improvement efforts are often driven, designed, implemented, and evaluated in a rigid, linear, and top down approach by those who have the most positional power.

Site Visits and Opt-Out Option: In addition to the informal observations done across the district for the first few visits to the district, formal site visits were also completed. Before the visits occurred, the auditor had communications sent to families to Opt-out of interviews during the site visits. The communications included a full introduction to the auditor, and the equity audit process, along with assurance of confidentiality.

“At this stage of the Equity Audit process, I will be carrying out site visits at each school and inviting students and their families, staff and community members alike to share their knowledge and experiences with me. **The final report will not include individual names of people who were interviewed, rather, themes that highlight strengths and areas of growth.** Spanish interpretation will be provided, as needed. While I am visiting schools, I will be observing and connecting with the community as naturally and authentically as possible. With a focus on our students' experiences; students may be interviewed as a way of gathering data towards the findings related to the audit's

essential questions. While I have been contracted and granted permission to observe and gather data during my school site visits, you are permitted to opt your child(ren) out of any individual equity audit interviews.”

A link was then provided to families to opt-out by child. The following represents the data gathered by school. One hundred seventy-five students were opted out of the all equity audit related interviews.

School	Opted Out
Central	27 students
Chatsworth	31 students
Hommocks	34 students
MAS	8 students
MHS	48 students
Murray	27 students

Reflecting on next steps/Recommendations: Before reviewing the findings, it’s essential to understand that all of the intentional ethnographic approaches taken during the report thus far, are in and of itself, examples of what many within the community desire more of and with more depth and sincerity. In reflection, the final recommendations at the end of the report will be a manifestation of reflections on the themes solicited from stakeholder engagement, data and document review, and the ultimate analysis and synthesis of the findings. Recommendations are expert suggestions that might be familiar replications of previous asks and demands, or they may be new, unfamiliar, and need additional walkthrough sessions. Most of them will be a little bit of both. There might be a perfect combination that feels more immediate to act upon from the recommendations. Either way, an equity audit report is partnered with recommendations to support the commitments to educational equity.

Limitations: Below you will find a few noteworthy limitations to the equity audit and to the MUFSD community altogether. Further recommendations will be expanded on in the Recommendations section.

Lawsuit

To begin, often, the proverbial elephant in the room was the current lawsuit against the district. While the equity audit was not centered around the [Legal Complaint against MUFSD](#), it continued to surface in connection to the audit and the content were either directly connected to the experiences stakeholders shared or standing as an emotional barrier for many during empathic interviews. Readers are welcome to review and get up to speed with the details of the lawsuit [linked here](#). Another limitation was the narrow and incomplete narratives that certain

stakeholders understood as they linked the lawsuit to the audit. The unknowns regarding the lawsuit surfaced extreme anxiety for some stakeholders, leading them to reference it as either an example of why an equity audit was desperately needed to “get the district out of trouble”, and for others, it was a single narrow narrative about why changes like Superintendent Shaps resigning or needing to be terminated from his duties needed to happen. Very few stakeholders (with the exception of some in leadership and/or those close to the complaint) understood the details or impact of the lawsuit as it related to their experiences. No students referenced the lawsuit. This could be for several reasons, including but not limited to a lack of awareness or connection to the happenings related to the lawsuit, or it could have been experienced as simply a topic separate from their own. **Recommendation:** All staff and all students (especially secondary students as they are being prepared to enter the real world soon) might benefit from dialoguing about the state of their schools, critical thinking, transparency, and cross-school community engagement opportunities need to increase. Using real world current events adds a culturally relevant component to civic engagement, research, debate, writing, analyzing, and more.

Hurricane Ida

Hurricane Ida presented limitations to the audit and to the community. For obvious reasons, the community was limited in their ability to “weather the storm”, to access resources, to heal and recover. The natural storm caused irreparable damage to the community while also showcasing the community’s ability to rally together in support of the those most impacted by the devastation. Efforts included raising money through art performances in the park to physically housing families and cleaning up after damages. The point of inequity could easily be seen in which families were impacted the greatest, how staff and families rallied together, and which economic and community resources families had access to, just to name a few. In the spirit of equity, it must be noted that the limitations were not only foreseeable but predictable. [It is not by chance that many who needed to be located from the “flats” or the bottom of the city were experiencing economic oppression prior to the accumulation of water there from the Hurricane \(PBS-Natural Disasters and Inequality\).](#) The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues to operate a Disaster Recovery Center at the Mamaroneck Village Library to assist homeowners, business owners and renters affected by the Hurricane. Next, a spotlight must be shown on the community organizations, religious establishments, and local businesses that are still “under water” trying to meet the very real and current needs of MUFSD families. There are members of the community that experienced shame because of the impact that the natural disaster had on their family’s ability to secure housing, clothes, and other household essentials. Other members experienced support as pity and handouts from members of the community who had not invested in a relationship with them during the previous years within the district.

Recommendation: Under these circumstances,, while there is little that can be done after the fact, there are a few things worth mentioning to address the lack of authentic and long standing relationships with the most vulnerable in the community, and the lack of systems set up to be able to support anyone in need within the community. The consequences of lack of awareness, silence/avoidance, and lack of systems at the ready to redirect resources that are amply available to some and non-existent to others had torrential impacts. Consider the role of and collaboration of the District Equity Team (DET), the Multicultural Student Union (MSU), and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in all matters related to families. Groups like these might create authentic and ongoing relationships with community partners that both reinforce the interconnectedness and interdependence needed, while also being at the ready in times of need.

Remember, like most school districts, MUFSD has the potential to be the greatest community resource to which families have access. The district is full of families and staff and students who are and know experts in fields that have the possibility of positively impacting people. True and existing partnerships may have changed circumstances where families couldn't have afforded to evacuate, get a hotel room, food, and replace basic necessities. Remember, if someone feels valued as a human, it is often a natural instinct to respond to other asks i.e. volunteering, filling out surveys etc. While not the purpose, it is an excellent consequence of putting Humanity over everything.

Empathy vs Equity- When we start with empathy we assume that the real problem has been surfaced and that those who have been minoritized understand and appreciate the need for a solution that is design and human centered. This is not always the case

In reality, while the auditor engaged with empathy throughout the observations, she listened and observed with an equity focus, and it was that equity focus that directed the empathic audit report and recommendations.

In district Interpreting

The native Spanish speaking families require the district to scale up interpreting efforts. The district has one district wide translator who manages all sites, written and verbal needs. When there are competing events, onsite Spanish speaking staff serve as interpreters, and leverage their multilingual skills and relationships accordingly. One of the limitations that surfaced during the audit was finding an Interpreting service outside of MUFSD staff to serve as a confidential party, similar to the way the equity auditor could serve the English speaking community. This limitation was one that caused turmoil within the steering committee and greater community, and ultimately led to an extension of the audit report. The other side of In-district interpreting is that it can easily take the responsibility from Non-Spanish speaking staff to build authentic relationships with families. Leveraging one staff member's strengths does not take away another staff member's responsibility.

Recommendation: The district might consider inquiring with the Spanish speaking families in the district to learn if they have suggestions for local interpreting services that prioritizes their humanity, their culture, and the success of their community. Simultaneously, doing research on successful interpreting models might be partnered with feedback from students and families. Having a robust interpreting (not to be confused with translations alone) system can be the difference between compliant families and thoroughly engaged families, regardless of how busy families are.

Engaging Minoritized Families and Staff as a Monolith

There is no monolith of people groups within the district, however there were numerous occasions where minoritized groups of people were spoken of as a monolith. Amongst the Latinx and Black communities in particular, there are first, second, third and rooted generations of families in Mamaroneck. At times, these families were spoken about as new to the community. The impact of this is significant, it diminishes the or lessens their voice and contributions, as well as creates more division between members of the community. The diversity of education, ability, economic status, first language, cultural expressions, immigrant status, race, sexual orientation, and more are wide amongst these groups as well. Viewing minoritized groups as a

monolith is both a historical and current day limitation, yet impacts minoritized groups quite similarly across the ages. In current times, it might be identified as a microaggression. The equity auditor was often mistaken for a parent of students of color in the district by staff who should have had a personal relationship with said family, preventing the several incidents of mistaken identity.

Recommendation: While this seems obvious, MUFSD must prioritize real and authentic relationships with minoritized families. This might look like home visits, or volunteer options that are adaptable to family and staff schedules, and as many forms of technology and innovation as necessary i.e WhatsApp and the Remind app. Family Engagement vs family participation is key to collaborating with families as equal partners for the success of their child(ren). Community partners have likely gotten closer to mastering this and would make for good teachers for the district. Just as important, MUFSD staff and families likely need more personal relationships with people from the very communities and cultures and experiences as those within the district.

Data Gathering and representation

Similar to most audits, the auditor is provided with baseline data to begin assessing and analyzing the state of affairs. Unfortunately, with equity audits, unlike technology audits, per say, the auditor is often presented with an overwhelming amount of data to sift through that portray the district in (what often appears to be) a more positive light. In a technology audit, districts are often hoping to showcase the problems to get more insight on how to improve the experience of all stakeholders. MUFSD provided statewide websites and data that lift up equity centered efforts, however, missed many opportunities to name and showcase areas of ongoing pain points. Instead, other stakeholders shared limited data on experiences to counter the data provided by the district. This will be noticed throughout the audit report as problematic since a district moving towards equity would not likely lack as much transparency in providing data that might better support the auditor to assess and analyze how to support movements towards equity.

Recommendation: Consider that the top tier leadership (central office) was missing a direct link to the second and third tiers of leadership (school based admin) as they collectively need to be aligned when moving towards equity. Gaps in knowledge of how leadership, programming, communications and otherwise are being experienced continue to be missed opportunities for learning and growth. Best efforts do not seem to translate to moving equity forward, especially with power dynamics that hinder honesty and growth.

Communications

The auditor learned that communications sent out to families in January with the opt-out option for site visit interviews would be amongst the first communications that had gone out to families about the equity audit since the start in July. Not having this equity audit on the district staff and families' radar is an example of a missed opportunity to engage transparently with stakeholders as equal partners in the education process. It also presented a much more substantial issue when select administrators were not prepared to receive push back from families and decided to send communications through established district wide systems instead of more intimate and familiar school wide measures. The impact of this decision likely decreased the number of stakeholders who accessed these communications, which in turn skewed data towards those families who regularly engage with district level communications.

Recommendation: It should be noted that while this communication was already received well by district leaders, transparently, the auditor is sharing for the stakeholders who might have been confused or missed an opportunity to engage, specifically, minoritized families and Spanish speaking families who were in need of an interpreter.

Dee Lanier uses this example: Getting an equity audit is more like meeting with an interior designer than a health inspector who evaluates if you're up to code.

The audit process allows a district to get a sense of the pulse within the community, what designs have been problematic and what designs flow really well and need to be doubled down on.

A health inspector might be viewed as someone who just gives you a grade and tells you if you're up to code or not. That might leave people without hope.

The designer's job is to help hear and amplify the voices of those experiencing the pain of the problem.

Accessibility

It's important for this equity audit report to be accessible to as many stakeholders as possible. Historically, formal documents like audit reports are attained by select administrators and summarized and disseminated accordingly. In an attempt to make this document more accessible at all entry points to the community, a list of concepts has been provided to better ground readers in this report and in the work to move the community towards a more equitable environment for all. In addition to the scaffolds and throughout the equity audit report, readers will be able to access the meaning of the sections for actionable next steps.

Equity audits might be viewed as a complex process that produces complex documents, but complex documents are not always easily comprehended and consumed, much less moved from theory to practice within learning communities. In an attempt to make this document and process more accessible to all, the equity auditor has chosen to use as much common language as possible. In addition, a list of relevant terms were created that might better ground readers in this report and in the work to move the community towards a more equitable environment for all. It's essential to highlight this as an example of a human centered approach that was used throughout the audit.

Terminology:

Core tensions- Core tensions occur when two realities exist that seem to be juxtaposed against one another that create friction or discomfort. An example of a core tension might be needing a formal equity audit to communicate what might have already been said more informally.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)- CRT is a research based approach to teaching and learning that connects educators to the languages, cultures, and life experiences of students in order to make learning rigorous and relevant. CRT serves ALL students better and specifically

engages students whose languages, cultures, and life experiences rarely make it into the classroom as an asset vs a deficit.

Deficit Ideology-Deficit ideology is a set of beliefs (at times subconscious), connecting negative outcomes to the inherent nature of a person or group that has been historically disadvantaged.

Educational Equity- Raising the achievement of all students, while narrowing the gaps between the highest and lowest performing students, and eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories. (Singleton)

Empathic Interviews- A non-traditional interviewing strategy that uses open ended questions, conversational speech, and empathy to solicit more authentic responses and fuller stories without leading or rushing the process.

Ethnographic research- A qualitative and human centered method for collecting data i.e home visits, conversations over dinner, car rides, extended observations in hallways and libraries etc.

Fragility- A higher demand for comfort met with a lowered tolerance for multiple perspectives, especially those that counter one's own beliefs or values. In this context, fragility is found within those who represent the dominant groups in society and within the school district.

Human Centered Design- An approach that relies on surfacing the stories, experiences, and perspectives of stakeholders as the source of the crisis and the solution. All data gathering measures and recommendations have a human centered design focal point.

Individualism- The value based stance that each person is responsible for their own progress and achievement of success. This often leads to unhealthy competition and lack of collectivism within learning environments, promoting the perpetuation of long standing learning and opportunity gaps between historically advantaged and disadvantaged groups.

Leader/Learner- The individual terms, leader and learner are commonly used within education, however, in this context, the leader and learner dynamic proposes an opportunity for people to exist in both spaces despite the hierarchy and power dynamics; in fact it acknowledges that everyone has a responsibility to be a leader and a learner, just as well positioned leaders have the responsibility to carve out space for everyone to be a leader and a learner.

Minoritized- [Minoritized](#) is a concept describing a certain group of people based on their relationship to the dominant group at a certain time and place. Some groups are minorities only in certain settings, not in relation to the groups they originate from or belong to. AVC has adopted the use of the language "minoritized" instead of "minority" to acknowledge the various identities and the power dynamics that exist.

NYSED- The abbreviation for New York State Education Department. A website that makes educational data available for all to be informed about the state of student achievement

throughout the state. Amongst all other NY state districts, MUFSD data can be found here. <https://data.nysed.gov/>

OLAS- The abbreviation for the [Online Application System](#) for K-23 Education where employers can seek applicants to fill their open positions. MUFSD regularly uses OLAS to seek candidates for all six schools within the district.

Stakeholders- In general, the term stakeholders within education include all those impacted and those who are connected to or providing input to the education community. In this report, the auditors have narrowed down the focus to include SPS families, students, staff (licensed and unlicensed) and community partners. In general, the stakeholders referenced participated in the interviews and focus groups and informed the qualitative data matched by the quantitative data provided.

Tokenism- The written, or more likely, unwritten practice of seeing, utilizing, narrowing one’s existence and purpose to one part of their identity as a technical solution to an adaptive problem. This is often seen in hiring minoritized persons without allowing them to hold adequate power and influence as needed to shift cultural norms.

III.

Findings (Assets and Areas of improvement)

Most of the quantitative baseline data can be found between NYSED and the district website. Currently, the district serves approximately 5,382 students, a slight decrease from the previous year’s population. The student body is almost split evenly between males and females; the racial makeup of the community is predominately White with the Latinx community right behind, trailed by the Asian and Black community. Last school year’s data showcased the following breakdown of the student body:

District wide student body
5,382 students

Male	Female
52 %	49 %

American Indian	Black or African American,	Asian	Multiracial	Hispanic or Latino	White
0%	2%	4%	4%	22%	67%

Other group demographics are represented as 5% English Language Learners (ELL), 13% students with disabilities, with 19% of the population being economically disadvantaged. It should also be noted that when reviewing the economic and characteristics of the student body on the NYSED website, it reports that students' needs are significantly lower than the state average within the MUFSD, and the district's ability to raise funds is significantly more than the state average.

English Language Learners (ELL)
5%

Students with disabilities
13%

Economically Disadvantaged
19%

The overall student to teacher ratio is 13:1, teachers with fewer than 4 years of experience (9%) teachers with 4-20 years of experience (56%) and teachers with 21+ years of experience (36%). As of January 31st 2022, of the 685 full time staff there are 25 administrators (20 White, 5 BIPOC), 427 teachers (382 White, 45 BIPOC), 126 support staff (technicians, teacher's aides etc- 99 White, 27 BIPOC), and 107 professional staff (guidance counselors, librarians etc.- 78 White, 29 BIPOC).

Student to Teacher Ratio	Full time staff	Administrators
13:1	685	25

Board Guidelines for elementary class size: (Central, Chatsworth, Murray)

Kindergarten 22 students	First grade- 22 students	Second grade 25 students	Third grade 25 students	Fourth grade 26 students	Fifth grade 26 students
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Board Guidelines for elementary class size: (MAS)

Non Dos Caminos

Kindergarten 19 students	First grade- 21 students	Second grade 25 students	Third grade 25 students	Fourth grade 26 students	Fifth grade 26 students
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Dos Caminos= 24 all grades

Administrators I.e Principals, Assistant Principals	Teachers I.e K-12 classroom teachers	Support Staff I.e Technicians, Para professionals	Professional Staff I.e Guidance, Librarians
20 White, 5 BIPOC	382 White, 45 BIPOC	99 White, 27 BIPOC	78 White, 29 BIPOC

MAMARONECK UFSD HIRING DATA BY RACE/ETHNICITY – 2018 – 2022

Race/Ethnicity	Community*	MUFSD Hiring 2018 - 2022	Difference
White	72%	71.93%	-0.07%
Black	2%	5.26%	+3.26%
Hispanic	17%	16.67%	-0.33%
Asian	5%	5.26%	+0.26%

Chronic Absenteeism Grades 1-8

2020-2021 Grades 1-8	
Race/Ethnicity	# of Students
American Indian or Alaska Native	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	3
Black or African American	23
Hispanic or Latino	131
Multiracial	9
White	124
Total	291

2018-2019 Grades 1-8	
Race/Ethnicity	# of Students
Asian or Pacific Islander	5
Black or African American	12
Hispanic or Latino	105
Multiracial	15
White	140
Total	277

2017-2018 Grades 1-8	
Race/Ethnicity	# of Students
Asian or Pacific Islander	2
Black or African American	15
Hispanic or Latino	57
Multiracial	9
White	117
Total	200

Chronic Absenteeism Grades 9-12

2020-2021 Grades 9-12	
Race/Ethnicity	# of Students
Asian or Pacific Islander	6
Black or African American	5
Hispanic or Latino	78
Multiracial	5
White	65
Total	159

2018-2019 Grades 9-12	
Race/Ethnicity	# of Students
Black or African American	10
Hispanic or Latino	91
Multiracial	9
White	112
Total	234

2017-2018 Grades 9-12	
Race/Ethnicity	# of Students
Asian or Pacific Islander	7
Black or African American	4
Hispanic or Latino	53
Multiracial	6
White	72
Total	142

In many ways, MUFSD is “ahead of the curve” or at least at par with some of the best schools (comparably) with the range of program offerings, community partnerships, and access to resources. For instance, **MHS Connections** is a program where students are offered additional academic and social-emotional support at the highschool level. Students enrolled in the program

receive support ranging from basic oversight to daily monitoring of assignments and check ins. Critical thinking skills and self advocacy are taught and the team of leaders are flexible with their approach to students. **Dos Caminos**, the dual language program at MAS has ample research to show that the model is the most beneficial instructional model to help reduce the achievement gap between native English speakers and ELL students and lead to holistic biliteracy development. The district follows the English language learners (ELLs) Screening, Identification, Placement, Review and Exit Criteria by NYSED.

The district has partnerships with community organizations for the Summer months like **STEM Alliance** that has a vision to serve as a network connecting families, educators, and organizations to STEM as a means of solving problems and fostering innovation. The organization does this by bridging systemic gaps to provide equal access to STEM resources. MHS has partnered with **Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO)**, an organization that prides itself on facing oppression throughout history through history, literature, and critical thinking in a curriculum model for teachers. The district provided a range of policies that draw on equitable practices, as in gender neutral bathrooms, attendance and transportation policies that all center student success. **One River Arts and Design School** in Larchmont provides scholarships and rich experiences to MUFSD students, and **MUFSD provided contactless library circulation** during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the work of the **District Equity Team (DET)** undergirded by April Francis Taylor (Equity Consultant) and a diverse group of community stakeholders, the creation of a strategic equity plan was created. The creation of the **Mamaroneck Equity in Education Leaders (MEELs)** is built on a model that has shown the most success when doing equity work within multiple sites. This model has the capacity to create outward facing equity work based on inward facing learning, data gathering, and skill building. Not only is the framework deserving of applause, but the DET model as a whole has great potential.

On the other hand, through empathic interviews and data gathering at each school site and within the community, it became clear that the DET's leadership structure and implementation was being challenged. DET leaders and MEELs experienced great push back, used limited modalities to engage a select few individuals, and often felt they were unable to sustain the work, but was fearful of it being thrown by the wayside as if equity was not a district priority. While the MEELs were collectively passionate, they were often unprepared and underdeveloped to be leading equity work in their buildings. At times, they were overwhelmed (or experienced as such) at the barriers they faced in buildings once they were up against previously scheduled meetings, administrators who didn't support the equity work, or their imbalance of passion and skill to lead in silos. With the need for Equity leadership and BIPOC staff to have more oversight and high level navigational power, recent resignations and historically snail paced hiring of these candidates do not offer trust that this will be the direction of the district.

Data also showed that several of the community partnerships are concerned that lack of approved funding and support will end the partnerships that do not directly present as (on track) college readiness or meet the needs of enough of the dominant groups within the district. As well deserving as Dos Caminos is of praise and support, the district wide data sound bites suggest that most of the non-Dos Caminos families are weary of the amount of "Additional

resources” provided to “those” students. These narratives come from families and staff across buildings alike.

In Identity Safe Classrooms, Steele and Cohn-Vargas dive deep into how nonsensical and counterproductive pretending to be colorblind really is, they reference great historical documents while also keeping the information fresh and relevant. To the parents who reached out for interviews or just to share how unfair it is, and tired they are hearing about the needs or “extra” resources “those kids” at MAS are receiving, consider what definition of fairness you’re speaking of, and the role of prejudice, classism, and other divisive social norms you might be operating from.

The Middle School also has a strong narrative, mostly full of euphemisms that portray it as the hub for all negative behaviors, specifically as it relates to combining the elementary schools that were homogeneous to become one diverse community. Becoming a diverse community is not the goal of educational equity. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion requires leaders and learners at all levels. Students must learn how to value one another as an opportunity but also as an expectation. Staff across the district must learn this first. If we begin with Hommocks first then we will have missed an opportunity to see Hommocks as one part of a greater system that suffers when cast out instead of pulled in. This is true for every elementary school and high school accordingly.

Discipline incidents, Academic tracking, and Sports have a common narrative focused on an individualistic avenue for success instead of a communal approach to skill building, learning to live out and love DEI principles, and student centered and declared passions. While these are vastly different areas, the same underlying truths exist. When we focus on who the human (at any grade level) is that we seek to partner and design and create a rigorous and safe learning environment with, while also staying abreast to research based and community approved models of success, then we are less likely to fall trap to dehumanizing and adult centered success.

In addition to the data provided by the district, the equity auditor accumulated additional data. There were over 423 District Stakeholders who intentionally added their voice and narratives to the audit report. Over the period of data collection months, the equity auditor visited 25 learning environments ranging from gyms and art rooms to stairwells and resource rooms.

Ethnographic Research, Empathic Interviews, Site Visits, District wide Survey and more..

<p>423 District Stakeholders</p>	<p>individual, groups, families, phone, zoom, in person, parks, local establishments, homes, classrooms, school hallways, libraries, gymnasiums, school stairwells, offices, over breakfast, lunch, dinner, coffee...</p>
<p>25 Classrooms/ School environments visited</p>	<p>Physical education, Art, Music, Library, Technology, History, Science, Math, Language Courses, English, Reading Resource Room, Hallways, Stairwells, Dos Caminos...</p>

Some conclusions that can be drawn from site visits, observations, sub text, and direct feedback from stakeholders are that:

The MUFSD central office leadership has not and does not consistently follow through on meeting the needs of the community that has the least organizational power. In turn, it appears that individual acts or events that might be named as good faith acts towards the district's stated commitments to equity are limited to the fraction of the community that desperately needs their support and leadership.

Board Accountability

From empathic interviews about the history of the forming of the Board, and the Board meetings, right up to planning for the equity audit presentations, it was made clear that the majority of the community does not feel supported, heard, or respected by the Board. It is stated that the Board is responsible for several key areas: establishing policy; defining district priorities and goals; monitoring and evaluating progress; approving contracts, bonds and the annual budget; and selecting and evaluating the Superintendent of Schools. Stakeholders have named the following as reasons for not feeling supported by the Board: Rooted in white supremacy (both in Board meeting practices and disregard of the diverse experiences of the minoritized groups), Lacking multiple perspectives or silencing the multiple perspectives within membership, and power hoarding without a clear pulse on the community.

Recommendation: If the Board is to preside over the district priorities and engage with the macro levels of change across the district, then the stated goal of educational equity needs to be a shared study, value, and implementation accordingly. Members recruited need to be educated on and aligned to the district's commitments to equity without hesitation. Without this assurance, stakeholders will continue to fear engaging during meetings, and continue to feel ostracized by the Board's unit of overwhelming power.

Professional Development- "Professional learning is most effective when it is collaborative and embedded". Data provided by the district showcased a wealth of PD offerings since the 16/17 SY in support of Cultural competency and equity centered foci. Several stakeholders referenced online PD provided at the beginning of the school year. However, after reviewing data from empathic interviews, most PDs were done in silos by school in replace of (instead of in addition to) district wide systemic PD, and not followed through on after some time of being introduced. Equity is still being experienced as a buzzword for stakeholders who have not shown investments into the work, which presents itself as problematic, especially coming from teaching staff.

Recommendation: Coaching, evaluations, and accountability must be enacted for a more collective buy-in across schools. Families are under-educated about the historical context and future impact of inequities within education and unless they are experiencing it personally, they seem to be having trouble empathizing with an equity lens accordingly. While most classrooms did not outwardly showcase their knowledge of CRT practices, it was referenced as a known concept. One highschool classroom taught by a teacher of color was a model of excellence in connecting age-old concepts to relevant topics for the students. It was a challenge to leave the classroom with so much fun learning happening. There was also an elementary school music

school sites spoke of their desire to deepen their understanding and implementation of equitable practices.

3. To achieve the district's commitments to prioritize learning and leading towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, what pathways are provided to staff and are created by staff?

Not everyone knows or believes the district is prioritizing commitments to learning and leading towards DEI. The few people (including building Administrators) who do know and are interested, are already thinking about the work on their own time or through events like book studies and conferences etc. It is not the expectation across the district. Staff who may have exhibited passion for Equity but have either assimilated to the MUFSD culture or subscribe to respectability politics are brought on board to support current efforts. Those who are burned out or disenfranchised leave, are pushed out, or worse, stay and become complicit with the inequities. Other staff participate but are not a part of the design of equity throughout the district therefore experience equity as an event or new initiative.. Although culturally relevant materials were provided, previously taught from, and explored in past PD opportunities. Very few classrooms actively use and are held accountable for CRT models.

4. Within MUFSD, what expectations, practices, and policies currently exist to disrupt inequities that occur on a daily basis?

Most people don't believe inequities occur within the district, then there's the people who might believe it's possible, but for sure not happening on a daily basis. Those who experience the inequity on a daily basis usually believe that the daily experiences are systemic and can't be disrupted by the current practices. See Dignity for All (DASA). Those who believe that inequities are made up often experience policies and practices with equity based language as absurd and unnecessary.

5. Additional themes include:

The MUFSD and surrounding community stakeholders have a disjointed, small, but MIGHTY community dedicated specifically to moving educational equity forward.

While not everyone used the same terminology and many voiced feeling alone and voiceless in their truth or defeated in their efforts, the brilliance and potential for change are very present and vibrant in the district. This vibrancy can be found both within the community partners and families, as well as with the internal students and staff. The empathic interview process uncovered common stories and strengths related to innovation, vision, collectivism, and historical richness that can directly be linked to moving educational equity forward. There appears to be disjointed efforts and wavering trust and commitment to the process of change. This is not unusual in a district this size where the culture and climate seems to be ripe for division instead of unity.

MUFSD has a long history of carrying out isolated acts that mimic equity in education.

Isolated efforts to appease members of the community are felt as mechanical, disconnected, and inauthentic. In best case scenarios efforts might lead to small reprieve and temporary positive feedback and data, however, the worst case scenarios lead to deepened mistrust, lack of faith

and engagement with the change process, and a status quo that continues to mirror systemic inequities. This can be seen by the process of initializing and deserting programs designed for (not with) minoritized students.

The majority of MUFSD families and staff representing dominant narratives are at times unaware of the extent to which inequities thrive in the district, and/or are comfortable communicating that the district should not be prioritizing educational equity.

The data consistently showcased an extreme dichotomy between students, families, and staff experiencing inequities on a daily basis (systemic) and those who actively voiced confusion or disregard for the “claimed” inequities that seemed to be bombarding them in recent years. It must be noted that those who disregard or benefit from the systemic inequities hold a significant influence within the district’s power dynamic.

While it can be difficult to learn about the district’s design flaws and its impact on the community, it is in fact why district’s should get an audit of how equity is living or suffering. Throughout the equity audit, the students were always the North star. They were and are the reasons for struggling with new learning and seeking feedback on current and past practices. Students spoke the loudest in the ways they were engaged silently, jokingly, with curiosity, and sometimes in an unsettled manner. Students deserve better and MUFSD can and will do better! Let the journey towards equity continue, albeit needing some redirection, it must still be the destination.

IV.

Recommendations and Resources

Actionable and Holistic Recommendations: In summary, with the range of assets and areas of improvement, MUFSD has the potential to leverage current resources to move forward towards commitments to equity. With the same token, the district, like many others in comparable positions, has power, tradition, and the backing of families and staff and leaders across the district to maintain the status quo. The recommendations are human centered and bite sized to encourage movement, but this will be no small feat.

On a Micro level

In order to move DEI forward within MUFSD, there must be an **investment in listening and learning** more about what has worked to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion. Micro level does not mean easy level, it’s more so related to the strategic plan and plausibility timeline.

Family Engagement

Recommendation: Think Tank with Thought Partners and Human Centered practices to restore faith in what is possible and to provide a space that everyone involved helps to shape and become safe and brave enough to turn theory into practices. Allies to Partner with & Community Partners that would benefit from transparent engagement.

Technology concerns

Recommendation: Since there were wifi issues in 3 of the 6 classes visited at one site, it might be helpful to look into a more sustainable wifi system. It's very likely that resources are already within the district, but it needs to be acted upon in order to increase student success. Also, having additional technology integration staff will greatly improve the skill building needed at all grade levels and in both major languages.

Lawsuit

Recommendation: All staff and all students (especially secondary students as they are being prepared to enter the real world soon) might benefit from dialoguing about the state of their schools, critical thinking, transparency, and cross-school community engagement opportunities need to increase. Using real world current events adds a culturally relevant component to civic engagement, research, debate, writing, analyzing, and more.

In district Interpreting

Recommendation: The district might consider inquiring with the Spanish speaking families in the district to learn if they have suggestions for local interpreting services that prioritizes their humanity, their culture, and the success of their community. Simultaneously, doing research on successful interpreting models might be partnered with feedback from students and families. Having a robust interpreting (not to be confused with translations alone) system can be the difference between compliant families and thoroughly engaged families, regardless of how busy families are.

Engaging Minoritized Families and Staff as a Monolith

Recommendation: While this seems obvious, MUFSD must prioritize real and authentic relationships with minoritized families. This might look like home visits, or volunteer options that are adaptable to family and staff schedules, and as many forms of technology and innovation as necessary i.e WhatsApp and the Remind app. Family Engagement vs family participation is key to collaborating with families as equal partners for the success of their child(ren). Community partners have likely gotten closer to mastering this and would make for good teachers for the district. Just as important, MUFSD staff and families likely need more personal relationships with people from the very communities and cultures and experiences as those within the district.

Communications

Recommendation: It should be noted that while this communication was already received well by district leaders, transparently, the auditor is sharing for the stakeholders who might have been confused or missed an opportunity to engage, specifically, minoritized families and Spanish speaking families who were in need of an interpreter.

On a Macro level

Macro level recommendations will likely require longer and more strategic planning, but all recommendations are manageable.

Sankofa Work- Data from stakeholders unveiled quite progressive and realistic approaches to successfully engaging the community that have either gone undervalued, overlooked, unspoken,

or discontinued. Remember that the community has the knowledge, experiences, and capacity to create the environment they will thrive in. Tapping into said brilliance at times requires sacrifice, consistency, and follow through. Sankofa is a West African word loosely meaning “**To go back and get, in order to move forward**”. Research and data gathering is a great way to “go back and get, in order to move forward. One place to begin going back would be the origins of schools and how they were intentionally designed to leave certain groups out. Families and staff are not all in agreement that inequities are alive and well within the district. This could become a light study for all. *En Comunidad: Lessons for centering the voices and experiences of bilingual Latinx students is a great starting place for the MUFSD community.*

Family and Community Engagement and Partnerships- Programs and Initiatives are not the end all be all, how they are chosen and implemented and sustained has lots to do with family and community engagement and partnerships. As noted in the limitations, substantial efforts need to be made to humanize said stakeholders, not just putting them to work. Stakeholders across multiple organizations along with in-district folks have **interconnected goals** for students and families to thrive, however, currently appear to be individual barriers to one another collectively achieving.

Instructional Practices - Independent Learners and Leaders are possible within the district staff and students. Following CRT practices more closely and increasing the rigor and access to supports for all will make this possible. There are teachers who have mastered the “tight” lesson planning needed to execute “lightly” as students should be directing the focus. The top down classroom environment has proven to not serve students as learners and leaders, but to excel in compliance.

Leadership Structure and Staff Demographics

Recommendations: Considering that this might already be in the works, increasing the support and planniful stages to include more stakeholders is key. There is a need to add an expert Equity leader who has full oversight to support the leaders eager and passionate about moving equity forward. Too many foci on this leader’s plate will be felt by the community as deprioritizing equity.

Hurricane Ida

Recommendation: Under these circumstances,, while there is little that can be done after the fact, there are a few things worth mentioning to address the lack of authentic and long standing relationships with the most vulnerable in the community, and the lack of systems set up to be able to support anyone in need within the community. The consequences of lack of awareness, silence/avoidance, and lack of systems at the ready to redirect resources that are amply available to some and non-existent to others had torrential impacts. Consider the role of and collaboration of the District Equity Team (DET), the Multicultural Student Union (MSU), and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in all matters related to families. Groups like these might create authentic and ongoing relationships with community partners that both reinforce the interconnectedness and interdependence needed, while also being at the ready in times of need. Remember, like most school districts, MUFSD has the potential to be the greatest community resource to which families have access. The district is full of families and staff and students who are and know experts in fields that have the possibility of positively impacting people. True and existing partnerships may changed circumstances where families couldn’t have afforded to

evacuate, get a hotel room, food, and replace basic necessities. Remember, if someone feels valued as a human, it is often a natural instinct to respond to other asks i.e volunteering, filling out surveys etc. While not the purpose, it is an excellent consequence of putting Humanity over everything.

Data Gathering and Representation

Recommendation: Consider that the top tier leadership (central office) was missing a direct link to the second and third tiers of leadership (school based admin) as they collectively need to be aligned when moving towards equity. Gaps in knowledge of how leadership, programming, communications and otherwise are being experienced continue to be missed opportunities for learning and growth. Best efforts do not seem to translate to moving equity forward, especially with power dynamics that hinder honesty and growth.

Board Accountability and Representation

Recommendation: If the Board is to preside over the district priorities and engage with the macro levels of change across the district, then the stated goal of educational equity needs to be a shared study, value, and implementation accordingly. Members recruited need to be educated on and aligned to the district's commitments to equity without hesitation. Without this assurance, stakeholders will continue to fear engaging during meetings, and continue to feel ostracized by the Board's unit of overwhelming power. Similar sentiments on representation as satiated above.

Professional Development

Recommendation: Coaching, evaluations, and accountability must be enacted for a more collective buy-in across schools. Families are under-educated about the historical context and future impact of inequities within education and unless they are experiencing it personally are having trouble empathizing accordingly. Educators of all kinds must practice what's learned in PDs and take new risks at engaging their content differently and more effectively.

V. Appendix

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