

# Burlington School District Equity and Inclusion Data Report School Year 2020-2021



*Student artwork from Burlington School District's Stop the Hate campaign*



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## Superintendent's Statement

Dear Burlington Community,

Burlington School District first began publishing equity-related data in 2007 and an annual Equity Report in 2012. By publishing our Annual Equity and Inclusion Data Report, BSD seeks to be open and accountable for improving the way we serve students of the global majority, students learning English, those who qualify for free and reduced lunch, and those who receive student supports through 504 Plans and IEPs. This document reports on disparities in our school district as part of our policy governance model Policy Title 1.1: Reducing Disparities.

The District has made significant investments over the past 15 years and it is clear to me that we have made progress in addressing disparities and systemic racism in our schools. For example, we have seen some improvement in disparities between student groups over time, particularly around suspensions. This progress has been made due to community, Board, District, and school-level commitment that acknowledges systemic racism and its negative effect on our students and prioritizes strategies to create equity, like the use of restorative practices.

While it is appropriate to acknowledge our progress, it is also important to acknowledge the amount of work we still have to do to ensure our schools value every individual student. To do this we need to develop and utilize a student-centered, strength-based approach that employs anti-bias and anti-racist practices broadly across the District. We must view our students of the global majority, our students with special education needs, our LGBTQIA+ students, our students living in poverty, and our multilingual students as assets to our district, city, and state, and build programming to reflect this belief. I believe this needs to happen throughout the organization and it starts with me and my office. I also believe that the most impactful change occurs at the classroom level, with our efforts to create deep learning where students are challenged, engaged, and empowered in every task they complete. Our work to support math instruction, bolster literacy practices, create a District-understanding of authentic engagement, and prioritize culturally responsive teaching practices are critical efforts to address inequities.

Combating the deeply entrenched practices that further systemic racism is an adaptive change that requires us to be open and honest about where we are and where we need to go, and to highlight the bright spots while also being open about the places we need to improve. I believe this report strikes this balance well. Creating sustainable change will take a full community effort. I am proud of the progress we are making and excited about the work ahead.

In partnership,



Tom Flanagan,  
Superintendent

## Introduction

Burlington School District's Equity and Inclusion Data Report intends to give the Burlington School District (BSD) community a transparent view of our school district and publicly inform our community of needed improvements. This report has been expanded from previous years to highlight work being done on LGBTQ+ advocacy, the Office of Equity initiatives, and our anti-racism and dismantling of White supremacy culture. Student perspectives are shared throughout in the form of quotes and we have a specific section on student adult-partnerships as well as recommendations for how to deepen this work.

Every year BSD strives to improve in how we meet our students' social-emotional and academic needs. During the pandemic, the District has paid particular attention to our students, faculty, and staffs' social-emotional well-being. BSD fully understands if we are not paying attention to the well-being of our students, academic achievement is severely compromised. BSD also understands the importance of our mental health awareness of adults throughout the District. Covid-19 has put a tremendous strain on all of the District's employees and BSD leaders have been taking, and will continue to take, necessary steps to address wellness throughout the District.

The pandemic's impact on social-emotional well-being has also been a driving factor in BSD beginning to respond to student attendance and truancy differently, moving to a restorative approach that works to reengage students who are struggling in this area.

As BSD continues its efforts to increase racial diversity in our hiring throughout the District, we will surface challenges that we will hold ourselves responsible to addressing as we continue to move forward as a restorative, anti-racist district for all.

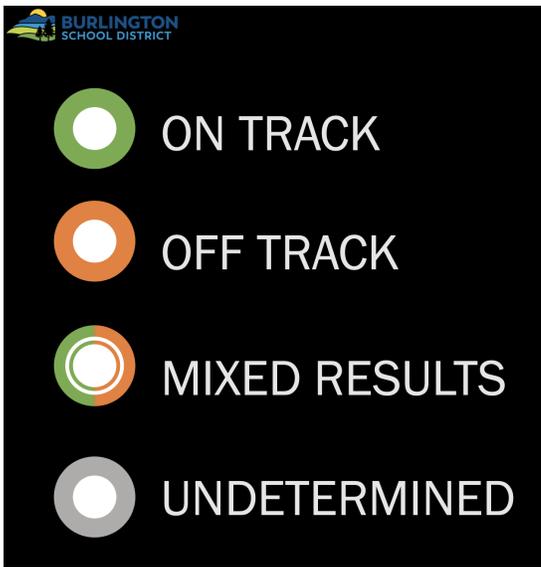
Burlington School District is grateful to the contributing authors of this report:

- Tom Flanagan (Superintendent)
- Sparks (Director of Equity)
- Stephanie Phillips (Executive Director of Teaching and Learning)
- Karyn Vogel (BSD Data Systems Coordinator)
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- Autumn Bangoura (Equity Instructional Leader)
- Mika Moore (Restorative Practices Coordinator)

## Explanation and Overview of Data

The data included in this report is from the school year 2020-2021 and, where applicable, the fall semester of 2021. Data is drawn from a variety of sources, including standardized assessments (such as the Literably reading assessments and interim SBAC assessments), internal BSD discipline monitoring systems, Equity Stories survey, Restorative Practices staff and student surveys, and many other sources. Although we had hoped to include Smarter Balanced Summative data from the school year 2020-2021, the Agency of Education had not released those results as of the writing of this report.

Quotes in this report are drawn from individuals who responded to the Equity Stories survey opportunity. Participants were asked to share their personal opinions and thoughts on different equity topics in the District. Quotes from the responses are embedded throughout the report to provide personal narratives and experiences of BSD's equity journey as a complement to the numerical data.



The data charts included in the Six District Goals section of this report include a green, orange, green/orange, or gray circle as part of the data chart. These symbols indicate if the goal is On Track, Off Track, Mixed Results, or Undetermined, respectively. Undetermined means that we do not yet have enough data from that particular assessment to fully measure the goal's outcome.

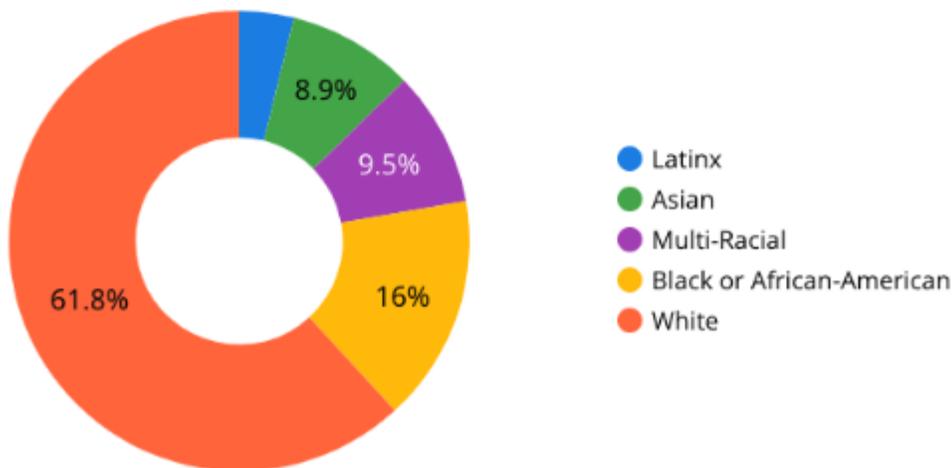
**What does people of the global majority mean?** Throughout this report, you will find the phrase “people of the global majority.” People of the global majority is a favorable alternative to the term “People of Color” (POC), which is outdated. “People of the Global Majority” replaces the inaccurate term “minority” since a majority of the world’s population are Black, Brown, Asian, Arab, Latinx and Indigenous. As such, Burlington School District has begun using this terminology as well as “students of the global majority.” To learn more, we suggest Daniel Lim’s article [“I’m Embracing the Term ‘People of the Global Majority’”](#).

## Demographics of Burlington School District

OCTOBER 2021 STUDENT SNAPSHOT					
SCHOOL	Total Students	Percent FRL	Percent with IEPs	Percent EL	Percent Global Majority
DISTRICT	3,260	50%	21%	15%	38%
Burlington High	906	46%	17%	13%	38%
Edmunds Middle	374	49%	19%	15%	37%
Hunt Middle	347	52%	25%	19%	35%
Flynn Elementary School	290	53%	26%	19%	48%
Champlain Elementary	269	38%	22%	8%	39%
Smith Elementary	259	41%	17%	11%	40%
Integrated Arts Academy	228	58%	16%	25%	63%
Edmunds Elementary	221	54%	18%	17%	52%
Sustainability Academy	175	63%	25%	26%	58%
Pre-K	133	65%	33%	-	54%
On Top	30	-	-	-	-
Horizons	28	-	-	-	-

Burlington Technical Center has an enrollment of 256 students. Some are Burlington High School students and others are from neighboring Vermont school districts.

## DISTRICT STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY



## Six District Goals

Burlington School District’s equity work in 2020-2021 was guided by the Six District Goals developed by the District’s Cabinet (a leadership team including all principals, department heads, and others) in the summer of 2019-2020. A new five-year strategic plan was adopted by the School Board in January and implementation is beginning now. More information about the strategic planning process can be found on our [website](#).

2021-22 District Goals		
<b>Goal 1</b>	Our schools are <b>restorative and equitable communities</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Schools suspend African American students, students with disabilities, and students who qualify for FRL less frequently.</li> <li>● Staff report increased use of restorative practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2</b>	Students are <b>at grade level</b> in reading and math <b>by the end of third grade</b> .	% proficient improves for students who qualify for FRL.
<b>Goal 3</b>	Students are <b>at grade level</b> in math <b>by the end of 8th grade</b> .	% proficient improves for students who qualify for FRL.
<b>Goal 4</b>	Students graduate from high school having <b>successfully completed Algebra II</b> .	We will increase the % of students who complete Algebra II.
<b>Goal 5</b>	AP, Honors, and dual enrollment completion and successes <b>reflect the demographics of the high school</b> .	We will increase the % of students of the global majority who take AP, Honors, and dual enrollment courses.
<b>Goal 6</b>	Faculty and staff are a <b>mirror of our student population</b> . They are highly skilled and set high expectations for all students.	Increase the % of our teaching faculty who are teachers of the global majority.

### 1) District Goal 1: Our schools are restorative and equitable communities.

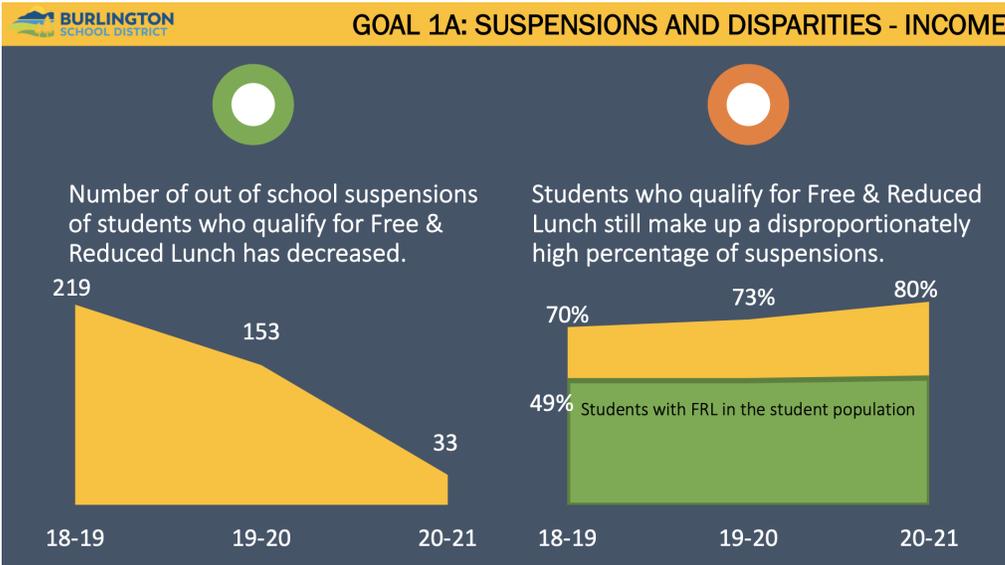
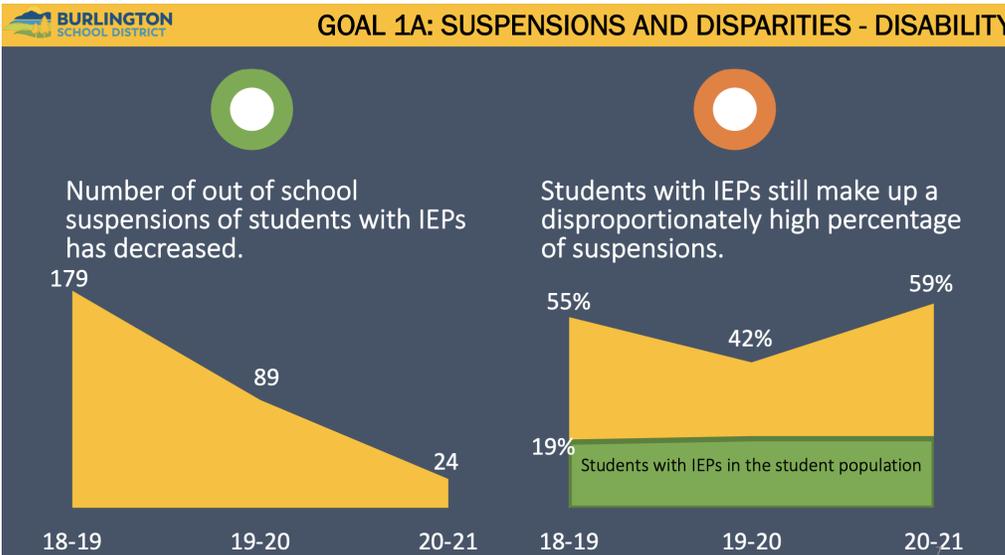
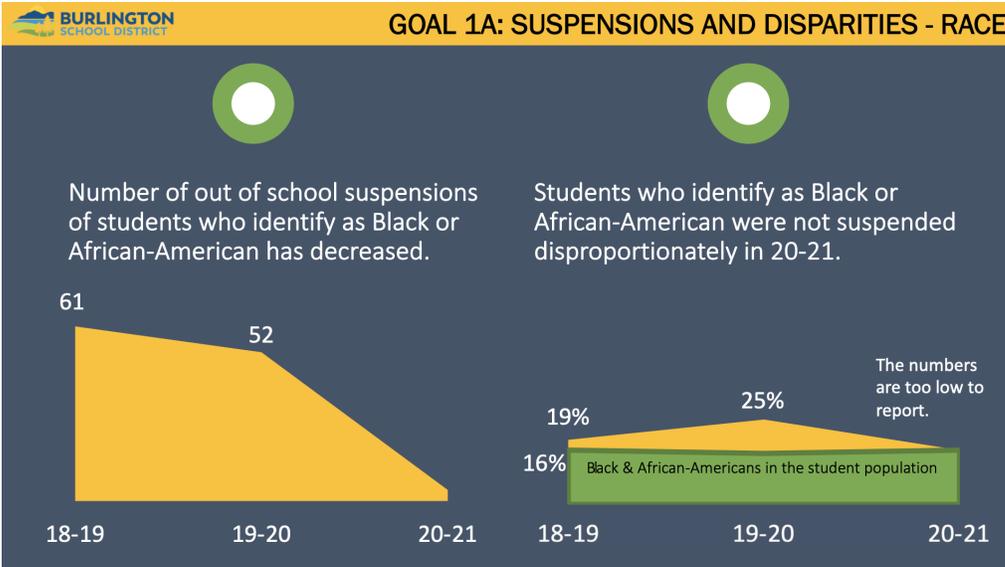
- *Schools suspend African American students, students with disabilities, and students who qualify for Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL) less frequently.*
- *Staff report increased use of restorative practices.*



**Goal Status for SY 2020-2021:** Mixed results.

**School Year 2020-2021 Suspension Data:** During the 2020-2021 school year, there were 41 total out of school (OSS) suspensions. This represents an 80% decrease from the previous year’s total of 211 OSS suspensions. However, the data must be interpreted through the lens of Covid given the continued impact the pandemic had on student attendance and behavioral incidents, which could account for some of the reduction in overall suspensions. Student attendance was in some cases adversely impacted by the pandemic as well as the hybrid learning structure, both of which could account for the lowered use of suspensions. As the Goal 1a charts

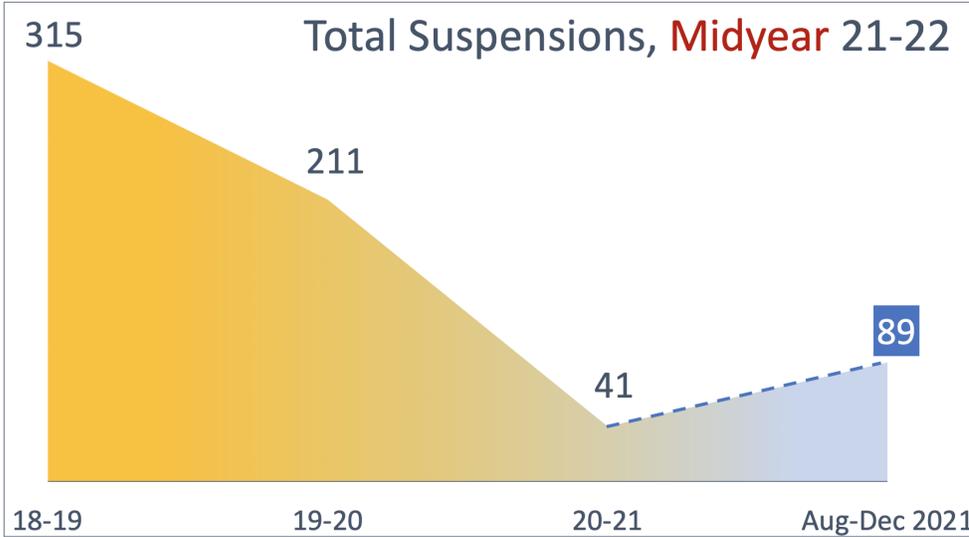
below indicate, disparities still persist in the use of punitive disciplinary practices specifically for students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and students who qualify for Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL) in SY 2020-21.



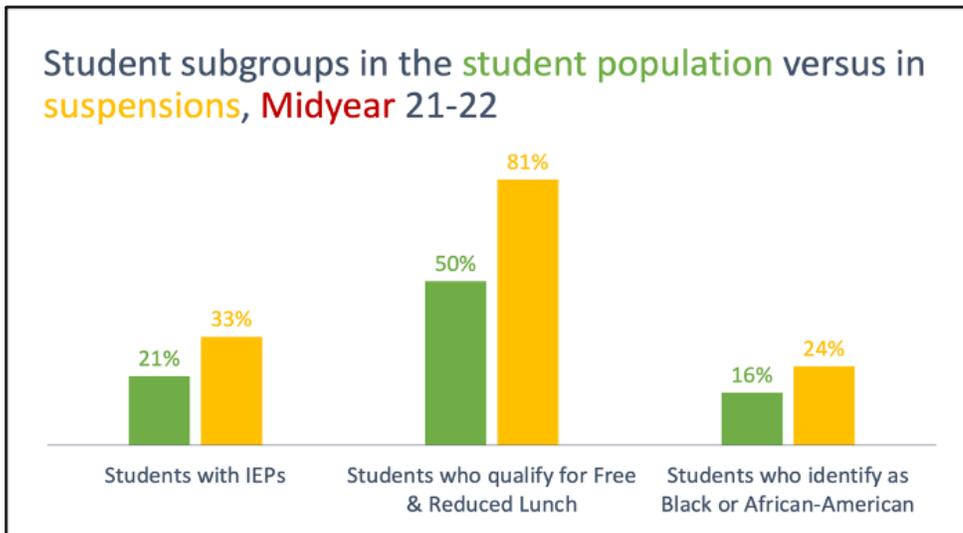
### Mid-Year Discipline Update for School Year 2021-2022

In the first half of the 2021-2022 school year (August-December 2021), there were 89 total OSS suspensions. Despite the Covid anomaly (and PCBs for the high school) of the 2019-2020 school year's total 41 OSS

suspensions, the District's pace of suspension for this school year still tracks significantly lower than our last full year of uninterrupted/Covid impacted schooling, which was the 2018-2019 school year in which we had 315 total suspensions. This indicates a downward trend over time in BSD's use of out-of-school suspensions, however the data shows disparities in which students receive OSS. Across all our target subgroup areas (students with IEPs, students who qualify for FRL, and students who identify as Black or African-American), suspensions were utilized more frequently than the percent of our overall student population that these groups represent.



IEPs, students who qualify for FRL, and students who identify as Black or African-American), suspensions were utilized more frequently than the percent of our overall student population that these groups represent.

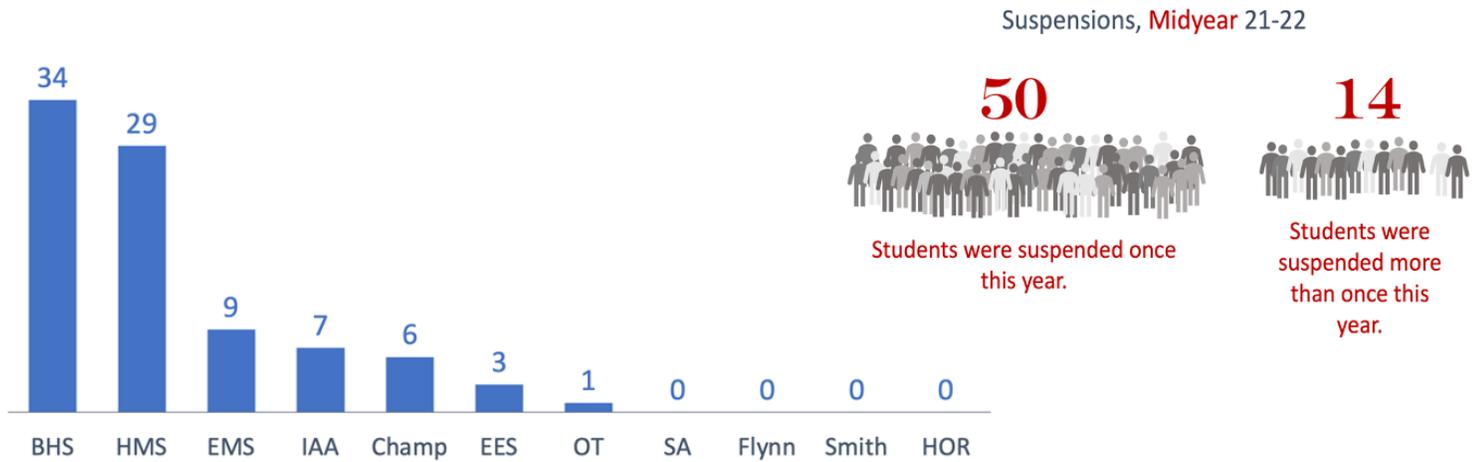


### Midyear Suspensions by School Site

For the fall semester of the 2021-2022 school year, Burlington High School (BHS) and Hunt Middle School had the most out-of-school suspensions. In the context of their school size population, the spread of out-of-school

suspensions across our largest sites to our smallest sites could be expected; however, Edmunds Middle School is the second largest school in BSD and only issued nine OSS.

## Suspensions by School, Midyear 21-22



**Office Discipline Referral Data Snapshot:** Students in BSD can receive an office discipline referral (ODR) for a variety of behavioral infractions that detract from the learning and/or safety of themselves or their peers. Receiving an ODR means that a student will receive disciplinary follow-up and that they may have been sent out of class for the infraction; ODRs do not directly tie to the use of OSS. Utilization of ODRs varies across school sites, which leaves room for disparate punitive responses across schools, particularly against students of the global majority, students with disabilities, and students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Data shows discrepancies for students with IEPs and who qualify for FRL as a 30+ percentage point discrepancy, whereas for students of the global majority there is an 8 percentage point discrepancy. We continue to push towards zero subgroup discrepancies, and these data do indicate that we are making progress toward our goal with students of the global majority. The group of students from the global majority includes all students who

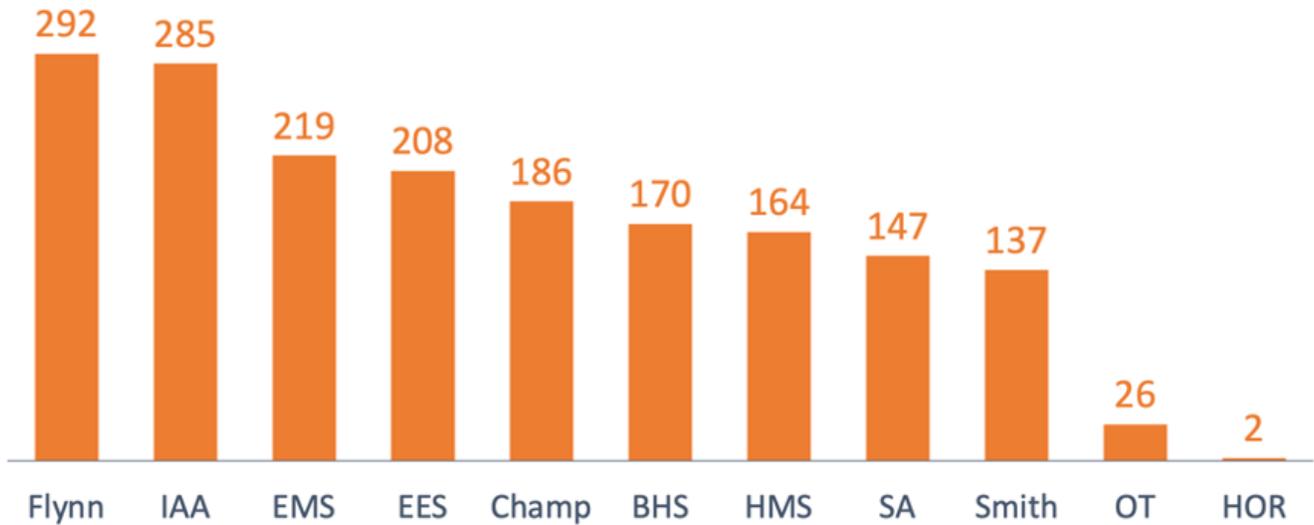
## Student subgroups in the student population versus in office referrals, Midyear 21-22



identify as non-White, which is different than earlier data charts which specifically highlights discipline data for students who identify as Black/African-American.

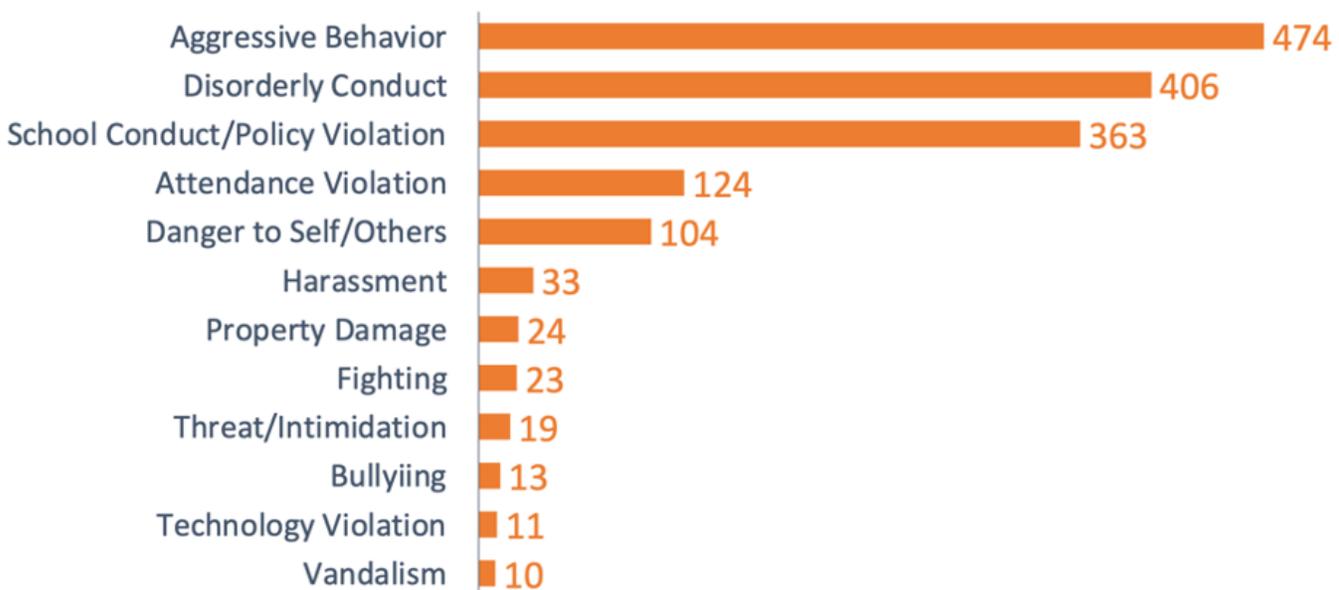
**School Site ODR Dispersion:** As mentioned above, sites utilize ODRs in slightly different ways . In addition, for some sites, midyear ODR data was impacted by staffing shortages and the ability for timely data entry.

## Office Referrals by School, Midyear 21-22

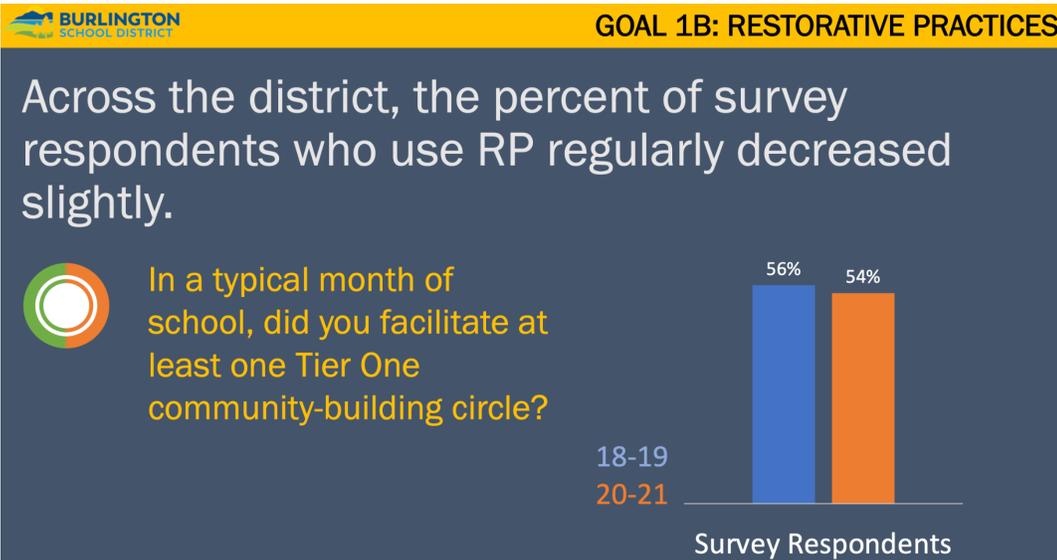


**Top Referred Behaviors:** These are the most referred behavioral categories during the Fall 2021 semester. This chart does not represent the totality of all ODRs written in the fall but instead represents the most utilized ODR categories.

## Office Referral Behavior Types, Midyear 21-22



## Staff Use of Restorative Practices Community Building Circles



Staff have been surveyed for the past three years on their use of restorative practices with their students. A Tier One community building circle is a connective opportunity for students and staff to engage in a talking circle about a specific topic or questions designed to build trust and relationships. At some schools- Champlain, Edmunds Elementary, and Hunt the percentage of survey respondents who said they used RP regularly increased since 2018-2019, whereas at other schools- Flynn, IAA, SA, BHS, CP Smith, and EMS- the percentage of survey respondents who regularly used RP decreased.

**Integrating RP and Social-Emotional Learning:** During the first half of the 2021-22 academic year, BSD's Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health Steering Committee worked to advance several new initiatives related to supporting the well-being and sense of belonging of all students, staff, and families, including:

- Publishing the "[BSD SEL Resource Hub](#)," an online professional learning library of activities and lesson plans for integrating SEL into instructional practices and core academic content.
- Introducing [Inner Explorer](#), a mindfulness-based social-emotional learning program, to all of BSD's 12 centralized campuses through a partnership with Project Hoepfner, a local nonprofit organization.
- Collaborating with the Office of Equity to create a menu of resources related to relationship mapping, an exercise that helps schools to systematically ensure that every student in their building has a strong, positive connection to at least one teacher or staff member. The District RP Coordinator and (SEL Specialist partnered to help facilitate relationship mapping in several of BSD's elementary schools.

The SEL/Mental Health Steering Committee is sponsoring several pilots during the second half of the year that are focused on student and adult well-being.

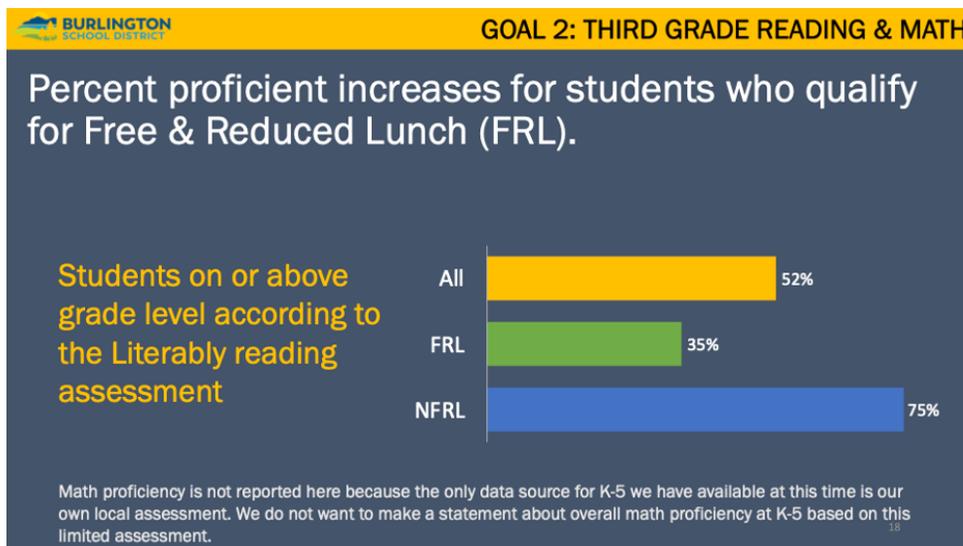
- 2) District Goal 2: Students are at grade level in reading and math by the end of third grade.
- *Percent proficiency improves for students who qualify for FRL.*

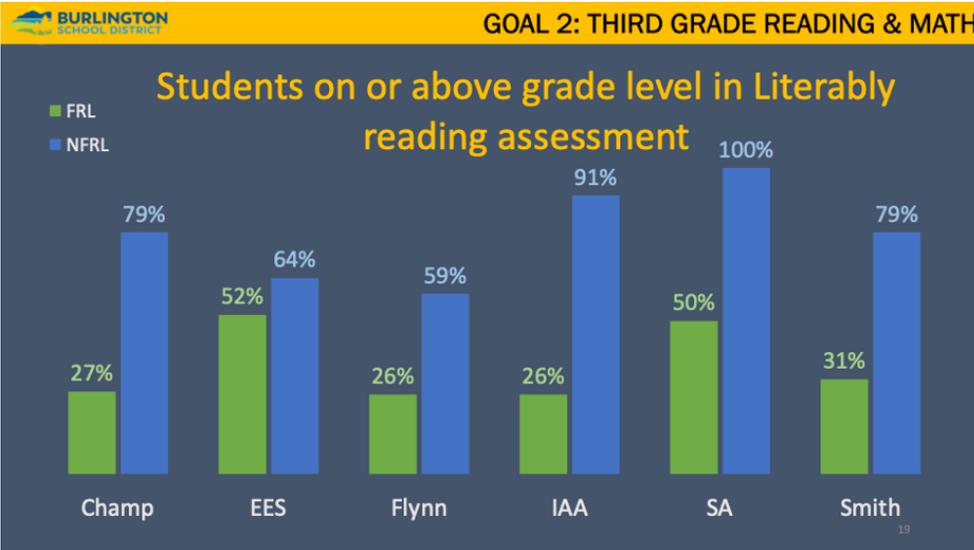


**Goal Status for SY 2020-2021:** Undetermined

For the 2020-2021 school year, 52% of 3rd grade students were at or above grade level in reading as measured by the Literably assessment, which measures fluency and comprehension. There is a stark disparity between students who qualify for FRL and those who do not, as only 35% of 3rd-grade students who qualify for FRL are at or above grade level in reading as assessed by the Literably reading assessment. This disparity exists across all six BSD elementary schools. Due to changing assessments used to measure this goal, we are not providing year to year comparisons.

Math proficiency is not reported here because the only data source for K-5 we have available at this time is our own local assessment. We do not want to draw conclusions about overall proficiency at K-5 based on this limited assessment.





### School Year 2021-2022 Literacy Needs Assessment

In the spring of 2021 and leading into the 2021-2022 school year, Partnerships for Literacy and Learning (PLL) partnered with BSD to help the District better understand the strengths and opportunities of K-5 elementary literacy instruction across the District. As part of this work, BSD conducted a Literacy Audit, which led to new approaches to literacy instruction and curriculum being piloted at the Sustainability Academy in the fall of 2021, with five more schools to follow in early 2022.

### Priority Audit District Level Recommendations

- Use a District-representative literacy leadership model to develop a shared vision of literacy success across all schools to begin building a culture of collective efficacy. Use this group to vet new materials and to adjudicate any questions or concerns as they arise regarding the implementation of new materials and instructional practices.
- Establish and develop a culture of reading and writing across the BSD. Include reading and writing for authentic purposes to increase student choice and voice within instruction. Provide opportunities for students to lead their literacy journey for themselves and others.
- Provide ongoing professional learning with expectations for literacy instruction that include equity of instruction for all learners, the use of high leverage literacy practices, and the deep knowledge of the literacy components.

### Key 2021 Actions

- June 2021 - K-5 Administrators review Audit Highlights
- August 2021 - Schools review Audit Highlights (Inservice)

- August 2021 - June 2022 SA Pilots EL (Expeditionary Learning)
- October 2021 - American Reading Co. & Wit/Wisdom selected for pilot
- November 2021 - K-5 Literacy Workgroup is Established
- December 2021 - Literacy Workgroup meets with PLL
  - Establish Literacy Vision

**Key 2022 Actions**

- January 2022 - Develop criteria for materials pilot review (PLL)
- January 2022 - Flynn, Smith, Champlain, IAA, and EES begin pilot
- January - April 2022
  - Workgroup meets with PLL
  - Director of Teaching and Learning visits pilot classrooms to conduct observations
- April 2022 - Review pilot data
- May 2022 - Recommendation to Superintendent
- July and August 2022 - Professional Learning & Implementation

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

- *Percent proficiency improves for students who qualify for FRL.*

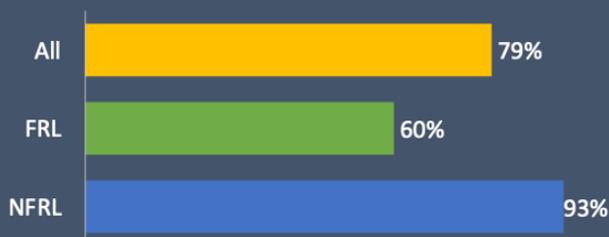


**Goal Status for SY 2020-2021:** Undetermined

Similar to the disparities examined in Goal 2, 8th-grade math scores reflect a disparity between the math achievement of students who qualify for FRL and those who do not. Scores on the interim SBAC math assessment were similar between the two middle schools; viewed across both schools, there is a 33 percentage point difference for students who are at or above grade level in math between those who qualify for FRL and those who do not. Due to changing assessments used to measure this goal, we are not providing year to year comparisons.

Percent proficient increases for students who qualify for Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL).

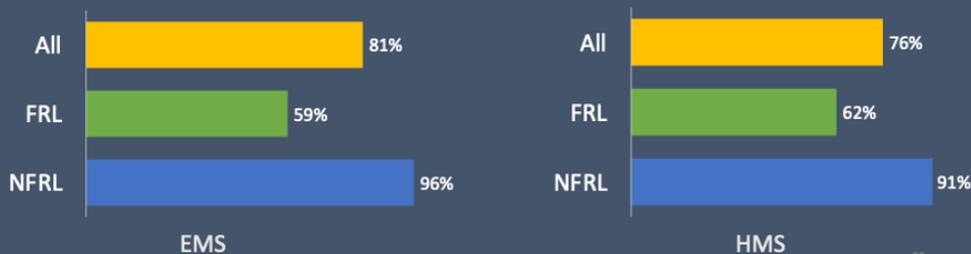
Eighth graders at/near and above grade level according to the SBAC Interim math assessment



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Percent proficient increases for students who qualify for Free & Reduced Lunch.

Eighth graders at/near and above grade level according to the SBAC Interim math assessment



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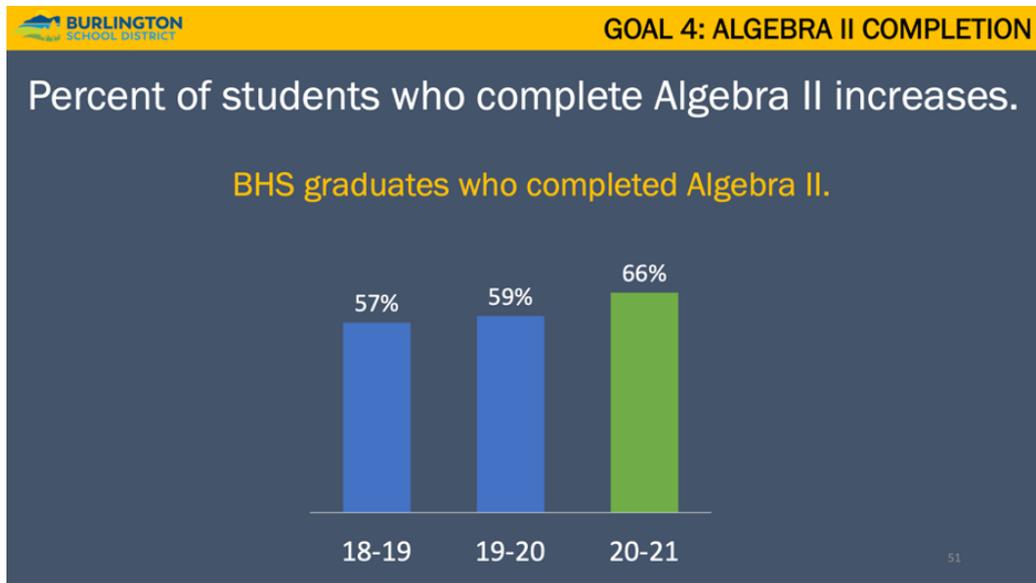
4) District Goal 4: Students graduate from high school having successfully completed Algebra II.

- We will increase the percentage of students who complete Algebra II.



Goal Status for SY 2020-2021: On Track

The completion of Algebra II has long been viewed as an important predictor of college enrollment and graduation. Many colleges require it for admission and/or may require a math assessment upon entry. Though this is a controversial practice and some higher education institutions are changing this requirement, we recognize that this remains the standard for many institutions and, as such, this goal remains an indicator for how we are serving students.

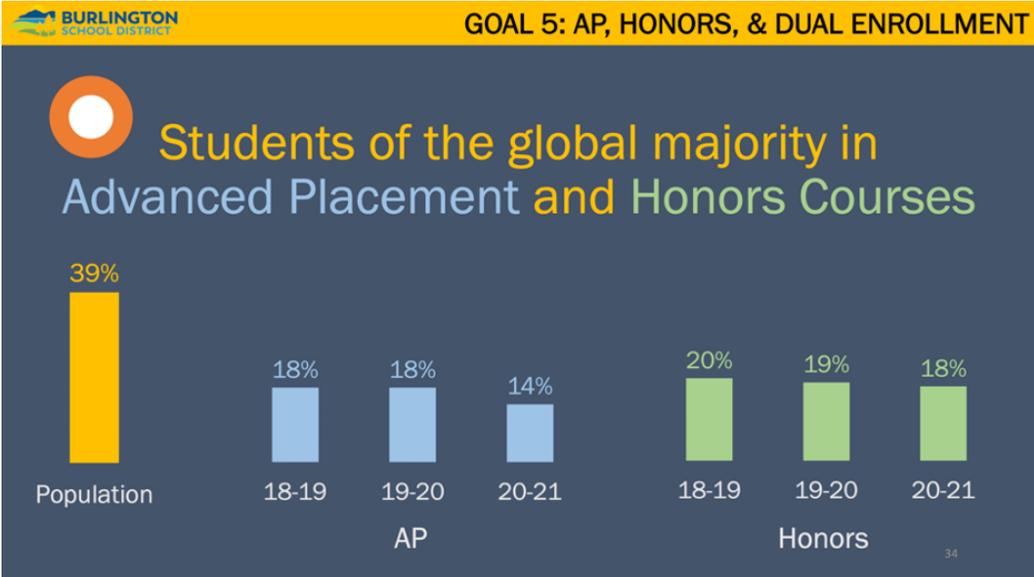


5) District Goal 5: AP, Honors, and dual enrollment completion and successes reflect the demographics of the high school.

- We will increase the percentage of students of the global majority who take AP, Honors, and dual enrollment courses.



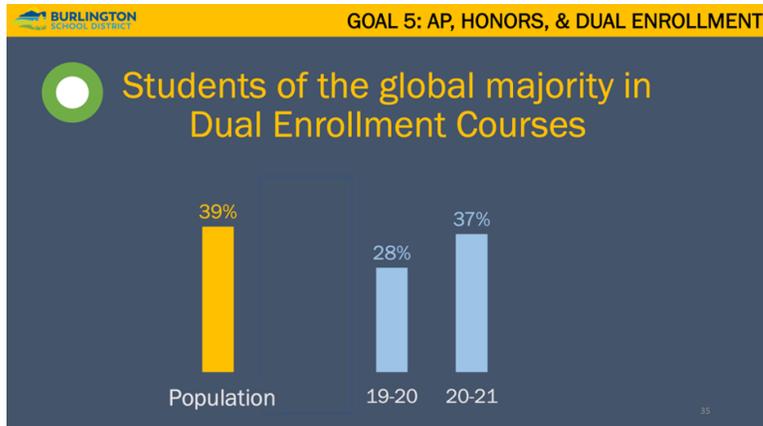
Goal Status for SY 2020-2021: Mixed Results



The percentage of students of the global majority who are enrolled in at least one AP or honors course dropped from the school year 2019-2020 to the school year 2020-2021, with AP enrollment decreasing by 4 percentage points and honors enrollment going down by 1 percentage point. Layered on this decrease is that while students of the global majority make up

roughly 39% of the high school student population, they account for less than 20% of the enrollment in AP or honors classes at the high school.

On the other hand, enrollment increased for students of the global majority in dual enrollment courses from 28% in 2019-2020 to 37% in 2020-2021. This is closer to a reflection of the student population for students of the global majority (39%).



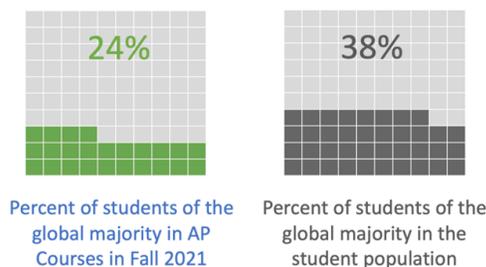
*“Without having a challenge makes for a pretty boring day at school. And some people need the knowledge of those high classes for college or for whatever they want to do when they’re older.” - BSD Student*

*“Having all the BIPOC and white students be more evenly distributed in classes would be more equitable, because in most of my classes there are less than five including me.” - BSD Student*

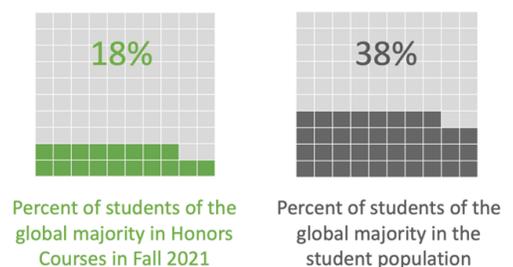
**SY 2021-2022 Mid-Year Data Update**

Encouragingly, AP enrollment during the 2021 fall semester went up 10 percentage points for students of the global majority to 24% compared to last year’s overall AP course completion of 14%. As of the fall semester, honors enrollment was 18% for students of the global majority, the same as the previous school year. BHS leaders have been putting an emphasis on equitable representation in advanced level courses, with staff and faculty taking a more proactive approach to scheduling, including having targeted one on one conversations with students and families around options for advanced studies.

**Advanced Placement Courses, Midyear 21-22**



**Honors Courses, Midyear 21-22**

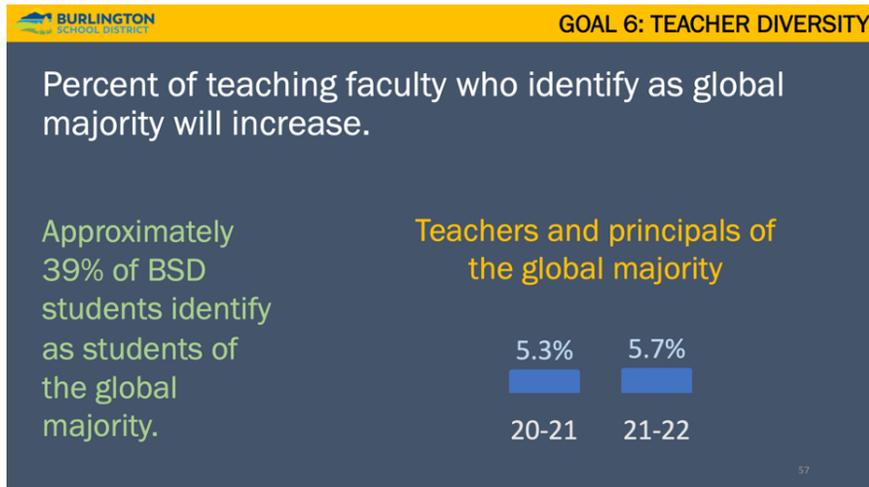


**6) District Goal 6: Faculty and staff are a mirror of our student population. They are highly skilled and set high expectations for all students.**

- **Increase the percent of our teaching faculty who are teachers of the global majority.**



## Goal Status for SY 2020-2021: Off Track



While 39% of our student population identifies as students of the global majority, the number of BSD teachers and principals who identify as such is below 6%. For school year 2020-2021, 5.3% of teachers and principals identified as individuals of the global majority, and at the beginning of school year 2021-2022, 5.7% of teachers and principals identified as individuals of the global majority. This represents a 33%

discrepancy in the percent of students versus teachers/principals who identify as individuals of the global majority.

There is significant growth that needs to be made on this goal. If we hope to achieve measurable growth in this area, recruitment, retention, and support of staff of the global majority must be a priority focus for the District. As of January 2022, we now have at least one teacher, principal, and/or staff member of the global majority at every school site. While this is a small improvement, we are learning that we need to better support these staff members to feel safe and to feel a sense of belonging at their sites and in our district.

## BSD Anti-Racism Initiatives

Burlington School District is committed to dismantling White supremacy culture and directly addressing racism within our District. We released the following statement on anti-racism in October 2020:

*We are living in a historic moment of racial reckoning as we watch our country come to terms with its history and present while living within the dual pandemics of racism and Covid-19 and the disproportionate impact on BIPOC communities. As our nation grapples with anti-Black violence and the recent killings of Black people, we recognize that racism has persisted in our nation for centuries and we acknowledge the part that schools play in perpetuating institutional racism. We recognize there is much work to be done in our commitment to dismantling the systems of oppression within our practices, policies, and procedures.*

*We at BSD strongly denounce racism in all its forms. We dedicate ourselves to examining our practices in order to eradicate systemic racism in our school community. We stand in solidarity with Black students, faculty, and staff in condemning racial injustice. We believe in Black Lives Matter and stand behind local nonviolent youth activism committed to Anti-racism.*

In BSD, we have begun to intentionally frame all of our work through an anti-racist lens to promote the integration of District initiatives with a consistent push towards dismantling White supremacy and racism. Our goal and expectation is that this thought process will be intentionally incorporated into the work across all schools and District offices. This started in 2020-2021 with training for Cabinet members, and will continue with ongoing training across the District over the next five years. In December 2021, BSD issued a request for proposals from professionally-qualified contractors to support and train BSD leadership in developing anti-racist, equity leadership capacities while maintaining an atmosphere that builds trust and allows for vulnerability. A stated goal of this work is for District leaders to develop their anti-racist and equity-focused leadership competencies, as they all oversee and train staff.

### Office of Equity Anti-Racism Initiatives

- **Black Parents Advocacy Group:** Created in the fall of 2021, the Black Parents Advocacy Group meets regularly as an affinity group collaborative. In a safe space with shared identities, the parents have become a central force of activism to respond to incidents of racism in the District. They have had a chance to share their voices with BSD administrators and leaders, Superintendent Flanagan, and the School Board, and are working actively to brainstorm solutions and work towards accountability.
- **Racial Equity Training with the City:** Over 30 BSD staff have signed up for professional development training sponsored by the City of Burlington's Racial Equity Inclusion and Belonging department. BSD educators have engaged in critical dialogue alongside City employees to discuss race and racism over a 10 part series that will run through April 2022.

- **Summer Racial Justice Academy:** More than 50 middle and high school students participated as youth leaders, consultants, and community organizers in a new, five-week [Summer Racial Justice Academy](#) that was piloted in July 2021. Alongside many community partners, BSD students explored weekly themes of identity, community, rage, oppression, joy, love, activism, and abolitionism which culminated in capstone project presentations. During this capstone presentation, the youth presented a set of [recommendations](#) to improve the School District. Students continued their advocacy and work by exploring these recommendations with all District staff on BSD's first day of in-service training in the fall of 2021; the SRJA students led staff from the entire district, including teachers, administrators, and central office support staff, in a dialogue designed to improve our systems and dismantle white supremacy culture.

Additionally, The SRJA recommendations have helped to guide teacher goal setting, administrative actions, and strategic planning. While there is still much work to be done, here are some of the action steps that have taken place in response to these recommendations:

**1. Revamp discipline processes within our schools to produce equitable outcomes**

*Through the new roles of Restorative Practice Specialists in our schools, the Student Support Center disciplinary model has been reviewed and is moving towards a more restorative approach.*

**1c. Attending white affinity spaces to learn about their privilege and how bias shows up in the classroom and school**

*The Office of Equity is including "Let's Talk about Whiteness" in our [Virtual Equity Community Workshops](#). Additionally, BSD's RP Coordinator has led a training for white-identifying parents in RP so that this work is continuing in the community. The Office of Equity is also working with a consultant to provide specific professional learning for white administrators and leaders.*

**1i. "Create restorative student panel at the high school to allow students to participate and have influence over disciplinary action"**

*At EMS a Peer Mediation Panel has been established under the leadership of the Assistant Principal and Youth and Family Restorative Liaison at EMS. 18 students of the global majority who have had experiences with the disciplinary process are being trained as leaders and community mediators and meet weekly to problem solve. Currently, this is a pilot for one middle school, with a goal of expanding the program to our other middle school and the high school once it has been vetted and established.*

**2. Overhaul the student handbook** - *After attending the SRJA Capstone presentations, leadership at BHS produced the [BHS Playbook](#), an abridged version of the Student Handbook, and is working on developing a student panel to give further feedback to improve accessibility and policies.*

**3. Hold Burlington School District accountable for high-quality teaching and learning** - *Priority Area 2 of BSD's strategic plan is "Deeper Learning for Every Student" which*

*includes rigorous and inclusive curricular materials and practices that meet the individual needs of students. Examples include adopting high-quality, culturally responsive literacy materials K-5, professional development on Deeper Learning in partnership with the Harvard Graduate School of Education for Cabinet and BHS staff, and partnering with Stern Center to support literacy development at On Top.*

**8. Believe the experiences and perspectives of students/youth:** *The Office of Equity has lifted up youth as partners by providing compensated opportunities to serve on District planning teams as youth panelists in our virtual equity workshop series and on the RP Youth and Family Engagement Team. The Superintendent's Advisory Group has participated and given critical input in developing the Strategic Plan. Students were essential co-creators in our strategic plan.*

*“Something I got out of the experience was connecting with people, conversations we had, coming out of this program with a better understanding of race, how I can make a positive impact and how I can set an example.”*

– SRJA Student



**Stop the Hate Campaign:** Across the country, our city, and our district, there has been a considerable uptick in the incidences of hate speech. The Office of Equity launched a “Stop the Hate Campaign” in December 2021 as a way to support our students and staff who have endured this. The primary goal of the campaign is prevention through a consistent District-wide message that hate has no home in BSD and to teach about the harmful impacts of hate. In the pilot program at Hunt, students were involved at every step of the way; the Hunt Social Justice Club

created a teaching video, surveyed the school, and planned and led dialogue in classrooms. 82% of survey respondents (188 students and staff at Hunt) said they strongly agree that “it is really important to work on preventing hate speech at our school.” The work is currently expanding to EMS, SA, and Flynn with student leadership being prioritized and centered in the process.

## LGBTQIA+ Advocacy in BSD

In BSD, we are proud that our schools have witnessed an increase in LGBTQIA+ activism and advocacy over the past years. One recent example includes the Fall 2021 Homecoming football game which featured Vermont's first-ever halftime show [Drag Ball](#). Students from BHS' Gender Sexuality Alliance, alongside their advisor Andrew LeValley and BHS/BSD staff created space for all to celebrate our LGBTQ+ community during the event. Yet far too many students and staff still encounter discrimination and feel unsafe based on their individual sexual identity, gender identity, and gender expression.

In 2019, BSD entered into a [Settlement Agreement](#) with the US Department of Justice after determining that BSD needed to do more to protect the safety of our LGBTQ+ students. We must do better and work harder to institute affirming policies that support LGBTQ+ youth and staff and to address bullying, health risk behaviors, and challenges with family and friends. Data included in this report from the [Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#) shows that LGBTQ+ students are among the most vulnerable and face challenges that can cause adverse mental effects such as depression, self-harm, and suicidal ideation.

*"We have safe spaces, safe classrooms and are very inclusive in our language around sexuality and inclusiveness." - BSD Staff*

*"My experience with homophobia at BSD is hearing the f slur all around, teachers not using pronouns of students and staff, and teachers not understanding the difference between homophobia and being queer, and the boundaries within that." - BSD Student*

Schools are responsible for helping LGBTQ+ youth by creating affirming spaces, guiding youth towards resources, creating school-wide protections and increasing representation in the curriculum so that youth are assured that their identities and feelings are valued. In October of 2021, Superintendent Flanagan commissioned the formation of an [LGBTQ+ Task Force](#) that includes students and staff to better understand our needs as a district and develop a set of recommendations that will inform actions in our upcoming strategic plan.



*"I identify as gay, and I use He/They pronouns, I've been called slurs multiple times in this district, I've had people make fun of me for using he/they, I've seen my friend, who is trans, be misgendered by people (including teachers) on purpose. In middle school, the bullying I was experiencing was almost all because I'm gay." -BSD Student*

*"I have had some interesting conversations with students who are learning about the different LBGTQA+ vocabulary and what that means in their culture*

*and seeing how contrasting our district beliefs are from their parents' beliefs and the confusing thoughts that creates.” - BSD Student*

**Afterschool Affinity Spaces:** Please see the Expanded Learning Opportunities Section of this report to learn about specific LGBTQ+ affinity spaces offered for students in afterschool programming.

**Youth Risk Behavior Survey:** Every other year, the Health Department and the Agency of Education sponsor the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Included in this report are some excerpts of school-related data from the [VT YRBS 2019 Report](#). 15% of Vermont high school students and 11% of Vermont middle school students reported as LGBTQ+. It is important to note that the YRBS data highlighted in this report is drawn from the entire state of Vermont, not solely BSD. Data for 2021 will be available in the summer or fall of 2022.

- **Violence and Bullying:** In comparison to their heterosexual/cisgender peers, LGBTQ+ high school students in Vermont were:
  - twice as likely to experience electronic bullying during the past year (p.23/p.159)
  - twice as likely to be bullied during the past month (p. 24, p161)
  - more than two times as likely to have been threatened with a weapon on school property.
  - significantly more likely to skip school due to safety concerns at or on their way to or from school
    - LGBTQ+ middle school students were nearly three times as likely to report skipping school during the past 30 days because they felt unsafe
- **Mental Health:** In comparison to their heterosexual/cisgender peers, LGBTQ+ high school students in Vermont were:
  - nearly two and a half times as likely to feel so sad or hopeless during the past year that they stopped doing some activities
    - LGBTQ+ middle school students were three times as likely to feel so sad or hopeless during the past year that they stopped doing some activities
  - nearly four times as likely to have hurt themselves on purpose during the past year
    - LGBTQ+ middle school students were more than three times as likely to have ever thought seriously about killing themselves
  - four times as likely to have made a suicide plan during the past year
  - five times as likely to have attempted suicide during the past year

**LGBTQ+ Task Force:** A working group of two students, four BSD staff, one parent, one alumni, and two members of the greater community formed a new [BSD LGBTQ+ Task Force](#) in January 2022. The Task Force is co-chaired by the Equity Instructional Leader and a BHS student and meets biweekly. They have identified priorities and next steps in regards to the vision of transforming BSD into a national model for holistic wellness for LGBTQ+ people, youth and adults alike. The Task Force will present a plan that addresses the following objectives as part of the District priorities of equitable and safe inclusive schools:

- To define what an LGBTQ+ affirming and liberated environment looks and feels like and create a roadmap to get there
- To assess and document successes and challenges in BSD schools that relate to the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ students and staff
- To ensure the safety and affirmation of Burlington’s LGBTQ+ students and staff
- To research and recommend non-discrimination policies and best practices
- To create a list of recommendations that will inform the BSD Strategic Plan and present recommendations and task force final report to the Superintendent

*“I have seen how discrimination plays out when there are no policies in place to protect people with marginalized identities...I'm interested in changing that in BSD.” - Task Force Member*

*“I want to be part of laying the groundwork for LGBTQ+ young people to thrive. I believe positive experiences here will encourage them to remain in our community and contribute their talents to its continued social and political progress.” - Task Force Member*

**LGBTQ+ Advocacy Coordinator:** As part of the Department of Justice settlement agreement, the Office of Equity has on-boarded a part-time position to reduce incidents of gender- and sexuality-based bullying and harassment in the District. Through the introduction of a pilot program at the Sustainability Academy, the LGBTQ+ Advocacy Coordinator is developing GSA affinity spaces, facilitating a Social Justice Club, leading staff and parental education, determining next steps and recommendations for improvements, and serving on the District’s LGBTQ+ Task Force.

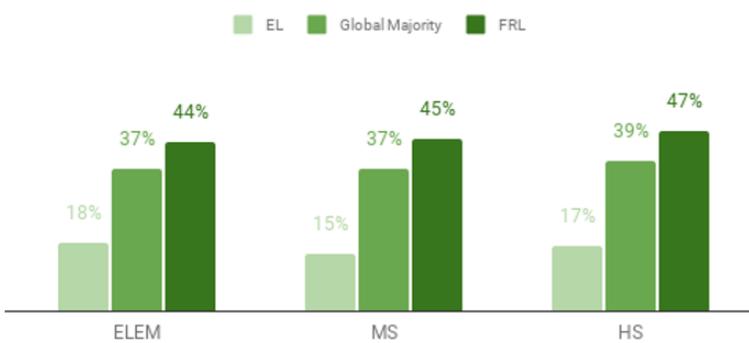
## Expanded Learning Opportunities

**BSD's Expanded Learning Opportunities** encompass the array of academic and enrichment programming offered in the after-school hours during the school year and across summer break. The mission of Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) is to foster the social and academic success of Burlington youth through high-quality programming in an environment that creates lasting connections with peers, adults, and the community. With this mission in mind, the program works to provide spaces where students have meaningful ways to increase their leadership, use their voice, and engage in their community. BSD is committed to providing program access to all students and staff prioritize work to increase capacity and efforts to recruit, hire, and retain staff of the global majority; continually evaluate policies through an equity lens; engage in equity-focused professional development; utilize restorative practices and social-emotional learning tools; and work closely with other departments ensure that students have access to programs that meet their needs in a safe and supportive environment.

**Afterschool programs** are offered at each school, K-12, providing academic support and enrichment programs, as well as free supper and snacks. BSD is committed to ensuring that program fees will not be a barrier for students to attend. Elementary programs offer a hardship waiver (a sliding scale) for income-sensitive families, and we employ a Family Outreach Coordinator to assist families in applying for state subsidy funds, and secondary programs are free for students to access. In addition, having afterschool programs at each schools ensures that transportation to and from the program is not be a barrier.

**Summer learning programs** are offered at the elementary and middle school level. Students enrolled in Title I programs, those who receive English Learnerand/or Special Education Services, and those who qualify to receive free or reduced-priced lunch are prioritized for acceptance. Summer programs are designed to help students maintain their learning and prevent learning loss through high-quality literacy and math instruction, field trips, and other experiential activities. Breakfast, lunch, and transportation are provided.

### Afterschool and Summer School, 20-21



**914** Students Participated in Afterschool and Summer School Programs



Due to COVID-related safety measures, our afterschool and summer learning programs operated at 50% capacity during the 2020-2021 school year.

**Affinity Spaces:** Affinity spaces are specifically designed for a group of people who share a common identity factor, such as race or sexual orientation, to come together in a safe space to reflect, celebrate, and discuss shared issues based on their common identity factor. In BSD, we are proud to offer affinity spaces for our students as part of our ELO programming. During the 2020-2021 school year, afterschool programs at the middle and high school levels offered affinity spaces for students, including:

- **Burlington High School**
  - **GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance):** 12 students participated regularly in the 2020-2021 school year. The GSA is an inclusive group that aims to create a safe space for all students to discuss, disclose, and explore topics relating to gender and sexuality.
  - **MBK (My Brother's Keeper) and MSK (My Sister's Keeper):** 10 students participated regularly in MBK and 15 participated regularly in MSK during the 2020-2021 school year. MBK is an initiative launched by President Obama in 2014 to address and recognize the persistent opportunity gaps in employment and education faced by young Black men. Working in partnership with the City of Burlington's Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO), BHS afterschool offers these affinity groups for Black female and male students. MBK/MSK focuses on improving academic performance, career development, and cultural understanding. MBK/MSK supports outstanding participants with a stipend and provides a pathway to summer internships.
- **Edmunds Middle School**
  - **YouBeYou:** Five students participated regularly in the 2020-2021 school year. YouBeYou helps make EMS safe and welcoming for all, where students learn and raise awareness about the LGBTQIA+ community at EMS and around the world.
  - **Students of Color Alliance (SOCA):** Three students participated regularly in the 2020-2021 school year. This program is a partnership with the Office of Equity to offer an Affinity Space for students of the global majority to build community, have fun, and celebrate shared identities.
  - **Race Up (now called "Social Justice Union"):** Six students participated regularly in 2020-2021. Race Up is a student-led group that provides a safe place for students to meet and support each other, and talk about issues related to racism and racial justice.
- **Hunt Middle School**
  - **Pride Panther:** Seven students participated regularly in the 2020-2021 school year. The goal of Pride Panther is to raise awareness and foster a safe environment for LGBTQ+ students and adults in the school community. The group is youth-driven with a staff advisor. The group plans events, discusses terminology and identities, and brainstorms effective ways to share information with others at the school.

- **Social Justice Club (SJC):** 15 students participated regularly in the 2020-2021 school year. The HMS Social Justice Club meets to discuss equity and justice issues in our community and in the world. This club brainstorms effective ways to share information throughout our schools, and plans activities that will raise awareness of equity and justice issues and initiatives.
- **Students of Color Alliance (SOCA):** Three students participated regularly in the 2020-2021 school year. As with the Edmunds program, this is a partnership with the Office of Equity to offer an Affinity Space for students of the global majority to build community, have fun and celebrate shared identities.

### **SY 2021-2022 Mid-Year Data Update**

In 2021-2022, summer and afterschool programs have returned to pre-pandemic capacity and have developed new data-informed targeted outreach towards students who are most in need of re-engagement, academic and social support.

## Special Education

*“Ableism is everywhere. I can do anything if you let me and support me!!!” - BSD Student*

**Special Education Vision:** BSD envisions a special education program that breaks down ableist and racist systems of inequity, creating instead a district that prepares all students, regardless of need, to be their most complete selves. We expect brilliance from all of our students and support them to get where they want to go. Our special education program is differentiated, safe, accessible, inclusive, active, supportive, consistent, appropriately challenging, and engaging.

**Supporting Students with IEPs:** In consultation with the Agency of Education and Ability Challenge (ABC), Student Support Services continues to work to improve outcomes for children with disabilities. Supporting students with learning and behavioral challenges in a traditional learning environment can be complex and is an ongoing process that often requires flexibility. We value best inclusive practices and adapt to address the changing needs of our students.

**Vermont Alternative Assessment:** Educational benefit for students with disabilities may not be easily assessed on national or statewide standardized testing. However, inclusion and equity of access require that most students with disabilities be assessed in this manner. For those students who cannot be appropriately assessed in the SBAC testing mode, the State of Vermont provides an alternative assessment method, the Vermont Alternative Assessment (VTAA). This assessment is for students with complex disabilities who cannot demonstrate growth in the broad areas the SBAC requires or who are not able to interact with the testing materials effectively. BSD Approximately 1-3% of BSD students with IEPs utilize the alternative assessment annually.

In the 2020-2021 school year, these students demonstrated growth with the VTAA in patterns consistent with growth for typically developing peers evaluated with the SBAC. On the Math assessment, 34% of students who took this assessment scored proficient or above. On the English Language Arts assessment, 39% of students who took this assessment scored proficient or above.

**Special Education Parent Connection:** In school year 2020-2021, we established Parent Connection Meetings, virtual meetings designed to co-construct parent mentorships and better systems to support students and families. This year, we have worked closely with staff and principals to establish the ground work to develop a clear continuum of services with well defined roles. The primary goals are to improve learning outcomes, reduce time students are out of the classroom and to identify systems that can step in before students are identified with disabilities. The Special Education Parent Connection (SEPC) is a parent group that meets regularly to discuss concerns and questions about special education. This group has expressed concern about student learning and has participated in the development of an annual or biannual parent survey to improve best practices for the development of Individualized Educational Programs (IEP). The group plans to continue

discussions related to the challenges in including students with disabilities in dual enrollment and AP classes. To address these concerns, Student Support Services is in the process of developing a Young Adult Program to review these issues and to enhance employment opportunities for students with disabilities in high school. This work begins in middle school, where we assist students in identifying interests. Additional supports in the process include the development of a clear continuum of services to meet the needs of students with disabilities at all grade levels.

**Restraint and Seclusion:** In the fall semester of the school year 2021-2022, more than 130 staff were trained in De-escalation Part 1, and more than 60 staff completed De-escalation Part 2. Our goal is to provide professional development for select staff in de-escalation annually. The specific training required for staff to perform physical restraint is being limited to 3-5 staff per building. The use of restraints and seclusions must be considered only as a last resort and to promote the safety of students and staff. Students who may require the use of restraint or seclusion as a result of their disability will have written plans outlining their needs. We will include data specific to the use of restraint and seclusion for students with IEPs next year.

*"I think the educators work to meet the needs of students on special education plans by individualizing their teaching to these students" - BSD Student*

*"IEPs and 504's are not always followed, not planned on students' needs and school is not accessible for students who need it." - BSD Student*

*"People who have a disability or something are sometimes discriminated against and people don't like hanging out with them as much." - BSD Student*

*"Many kids need evaluations and do not receive them. Many come into kindergarten with no preschool experience so they have not been identified yet as having learning disabilities. They start out at a disadvantage, then there is a huge "wait and see" when we could be providing intervention and services sooner to get these kids the help they deserve." - BSD Staff*

## Multilingual Learners

Multilingual Learners (MLs) are an asset to the entire BSD community. The mission of the Department of Multilingual Learners is to provide fully equitable and inclusive instruction, support, and advocacy to ensure that Multilingual Learners gain all of the linguistic, social, and academic skills they need as members of the Burlington school community. BSD believes that language justice demands equity across all language communities, and we actively work to help all members of our community recognize MLs as an asset.

Our vision is that all students learn in a school community that values its multicultural and multilingual student body. As a subset of Multilingual Learners, English Learners (ELs) access a rigorous academic curriculum and receive support to learn English and achieve at school. We view our students as emergent bilinguals; that is, we encourage students to maintain and even strengthen their primary language(s) while learning English.

Our mission and vision speak directly to equity. We do not accept or promote lower expectations for English Learners, or exclusion from any academic or social opportunities available to other students. There is still more work to be done in this area. Parents and students have expressed that many barriers still exist to accessing higher level classes, including beliefs which hold students back. The Department of Multilingual Learners is committed to overcoming all obstacles leading to EL and ML success, including harmful attitudes.

*“We need to start giving kids hope. They think they are going to get something and even when they work hard, they do not get it.” - BSD Student*

Our team is made up of a group of talented individuals who are fully committed to helping students and their families learn and thrive through English and their other languages. This includes a highly qualified staff of EL teachers, a dedicated team of Multilingual Liaisons and Native Language Instructional Specialists, and staffing to support Parent University, a parent program aimed at engaging and empowering ML families as partners in their children’s education. In 2020-2021, the ML Department added the Language Acquisition Program as a free opportunity for any BSD community member to learn one of the home languages of ML students.

As one way of ensuring that English Learners have the tools they need to be successful in school, we assess proficiency and growth in reading, writing, listening, and speaking on a regular basis, and use what we learn to provide feedback to students and make adjustments to instruction. In addition to teacher-made and formative assessments, per federal and state mandates, we assess each English Learner annually via the WIDA ACCESS.

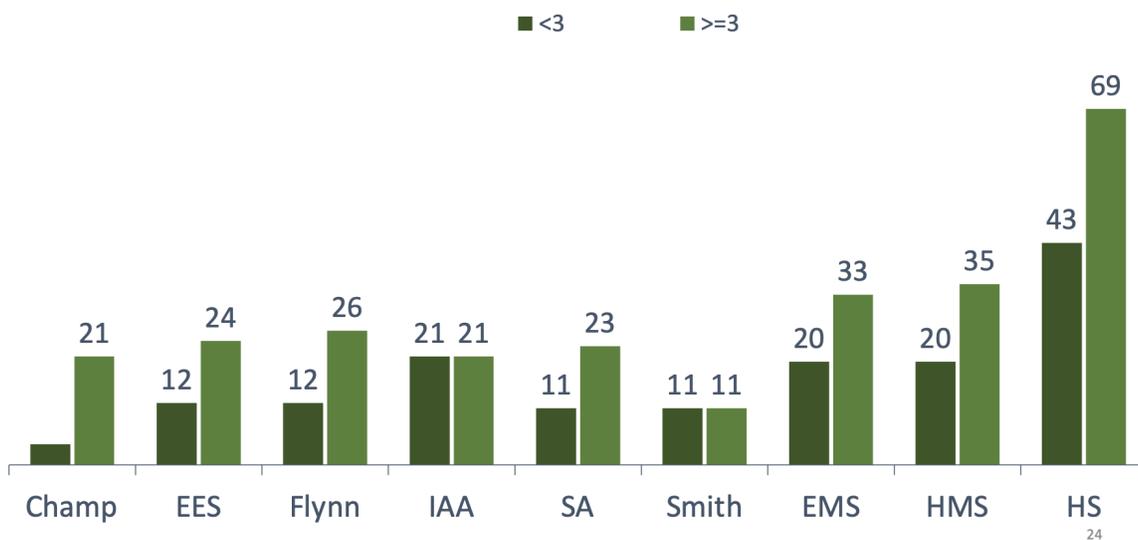
WIDA ACCESS is a multipart assessment of the proficiency of English Learners in reading, writing, listening, and speaking for academic purposes. The State of Vermont belongs to the WIDA Consortium and relies on WIDA ACCESS to meet the federal requirement for the annual assessment of ELs for English language proficiency. The WIDA ACCESS is administered during a short window in the early spring of each school year. All students except kindergarteners and those students whose IEP designates an Alternate WIDA ACCESS are required to use

Chromebooks or iPads to complete the test. The WIDA speaking subtest requires students to speak into a headset and “interact” only with the computer. These are important considerations as these ways in which WIDA ACCESS assesses proficiency are not necessarily the same ways BSD teachers and staff might recognize proficiencies in a classroom setting.

Although we recognize that annual WIDA ACCESS scores are only one very limited way of looking at EL growth, we also feel great responsibility for analyzing and using these data to inform programmatic decisions and instructional design. All educators who work with English Learners also have access to data about EL achievement and growth in math, in literacy, and in other content areas.

**Chart 1**

## STUDENT WIDA-ACCESS SCORES, 20-21



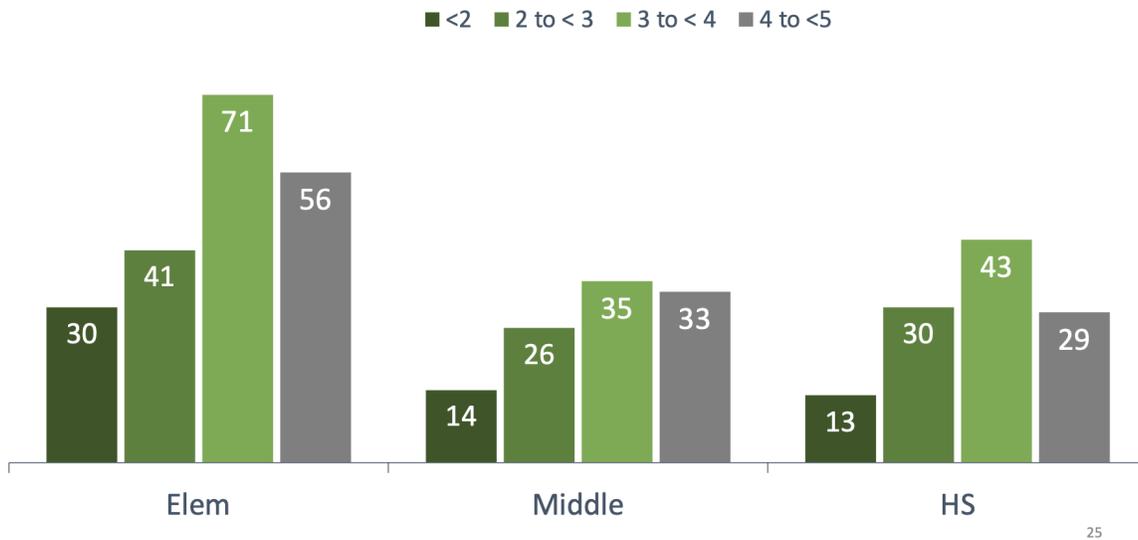
There are several important considerations to accompany the data highlighted in Chart 1. The range of possible scores on the WIDA ACCESS is from 1-6. The cutoff for full proficiency in Vermont is an overall score of 5. As there are four different subtests, a single domain (for example, Speaking) could prevent a student from achieving an overall score of 5. This chart shows that in most schools there are larger numbers of students in the Intermediate to Advanced levels of proficiency (scores greater than 3) than there are at the beginning levels. Exceptions are seen at IAA and Smith. It is to be expected that the proportions of students scoring under a Level 3 and over Level 3 would shift as the population of English Learners (ELs) in our district shifts.

Research indicates that it takes many students from five to seven years (and sometimes longer) to achieve full proficiency in English. We must review our data to learn what we can about how long it takes our students to reach the Level 5 score. Age at arrival and prior educational experiences are also key factors to consider.

In recent years we have been following other trends in scores on the WIDA ACCESS. One of the most challenging is that scores in the Speaking subdomain have decreased. We have several ideas about why this might be the case, including the challenge of having an interactive skill assessed by means of a student voice speaking into a headset.

**Chart 2**

## STUDENT WIDA-ACCESS SCORES, 20-21



In Chart 2, we see at every grade level band that the greatest number of EL students who took the WIDA ACCESS test in 2020-2021 scored in the high intermediate range, which WIDA terms as Developing and Expanding. The fewest number of students at each grade level band scored at the Entering and Beginning levels. The proportions are approximately the same across grade level bands.

These data have clear implications for our practice. It underscores our core values and belief that not all English Learners are the same. The present level of proficiency, age, prior opportunities for formal education, and many other factors must be considered when designing appropriate educational experiences for EL students. The growing number of EL students who are Developing and Expanding in English proficiency pushes us to think of even more ways to fully include and challenge these students with grade-level content and appropriate support.

Stand-alone and pull-out models of EL service delivery are unlikely to help these students achieve what they can, and may further deepen inequities. The Department of Multilingual Learners has begun a deliberate and well-supported effort to increase program options for diverse ELs, including co-taught content classrooms. At the same time, a language-rich “soft landing” is still needed for students who are genuine newcomers at the

early stages of acquiring English. Our programs must preserve ways to support these students and help them move forward when they are ready.

We have begun gathering data on the academic achievement of students who have exited EL status. It should always be our expectation that students who were once classified as EL and who have since achieved full proficiency per the WIDA ACCESS will be afforded and take full advantage of opportunities such as dual enrollment, honors courses, and advanced placement classes. At earlier grade levels such students must be challenged with grade-level work. In the fall semester of the school year 2021-2022, there were 12 former EL students enrolled in one or more AP courses and 14 former EL students enrolled in one or more Honors courses.

Qualitative data collected in interviews with students over the last 18 months reveal that EL students are aware of and oriented toward their own growth. Interviews quoted below show how some students appreciate both the challenge and the support that EL teachers provide. However, this is not the experience for all students in BSD, as some of the quotes highlighted below show, and we must work to ensure all students feel their linguistic and cultural backgrounds are honored and included.

- *“My EL teachers helped me so much! But I didn’t really understand what high school was all about until I wasn’t an EL.” - BSD Student*
- *“When I read [book title] with Ms. [teacher name] it was the best book I ever read, and I wanted to read MORE! I read bigger books with harder words this year than I did last year.”- BSD Student*
- *“I felt that I was forced to abandon my cultural heritage and identity when my family moved to Burlington. Now I can maintain my cultural identity because I take Arabic course at BSD...” - BSD Student*
- *“Most kids who speak other languages aren’t given the opportunity to speak their native language.” - BSD Student*
- *“I think the EL teachers do a great job individualizing the curriculum for each kid and working at the level that seems to best fit each kid.” - BSD Student*

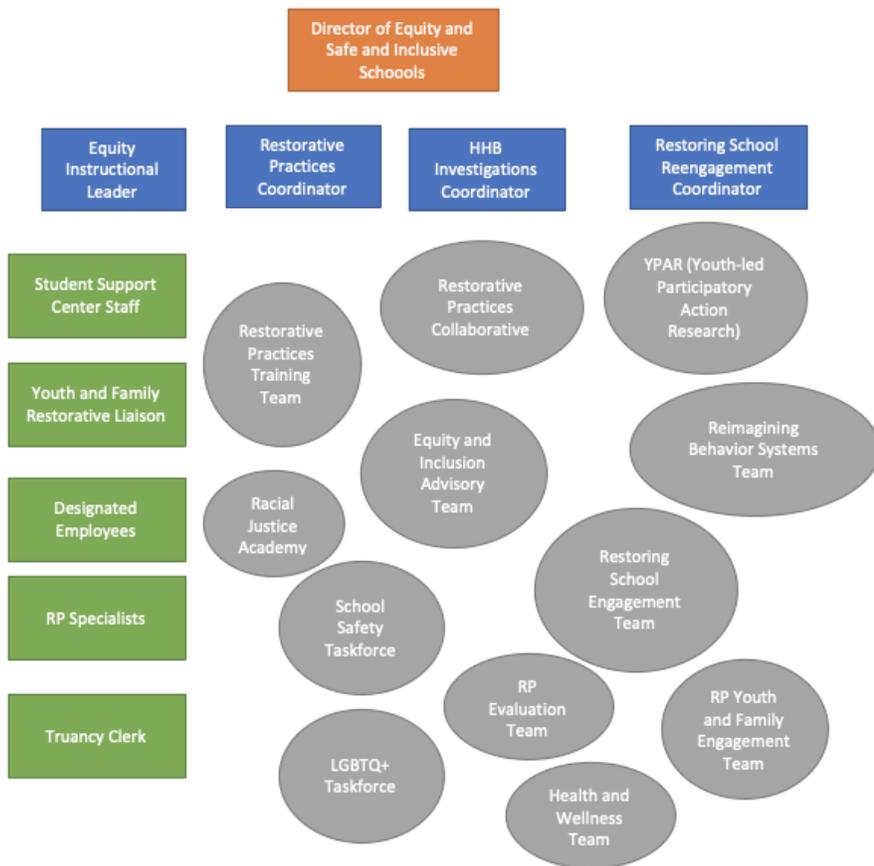
## Office of Equity

In the summer of 2020, Superintendent Flanagan created BSD’s first. [Office of Equity](#), a fully staffed and resourced office to drive key strategies of the cross functional work to address inequities in our district. This includes the full implementation of Restorative Practices (RP), anti-racism initiatives, culturally responsive curriculum, hazing/harassment/bullying (HHB) investigations, school engagement, health and wellness, Student Support Centers, and more.

**Burlington School District Equity Statement:** In Burlington School District, equity means meeting the needs of ALL students. Educational equity is a Districtwide and individual commitment to an assets-based approach

defined by personalized support and equitable access to opportunity. In the BSD, we strive to ensure that all members of the educational community receive this support to develop academic, social and emotional growth inclusive of race, class, ability, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, language, culture and creed. Equity involves actively working to remove the predictability of success or failure that currently correlates with any social, racial or cultural factors. Equity in education means creating a culture that actively works to ensure access by acknowledging and addressing bias and discrimination that negatively affect our students, their families, and our staff and working to dismantle systems of oppression and White supremacy culture in schools.

### Burlington School District Office of Equity

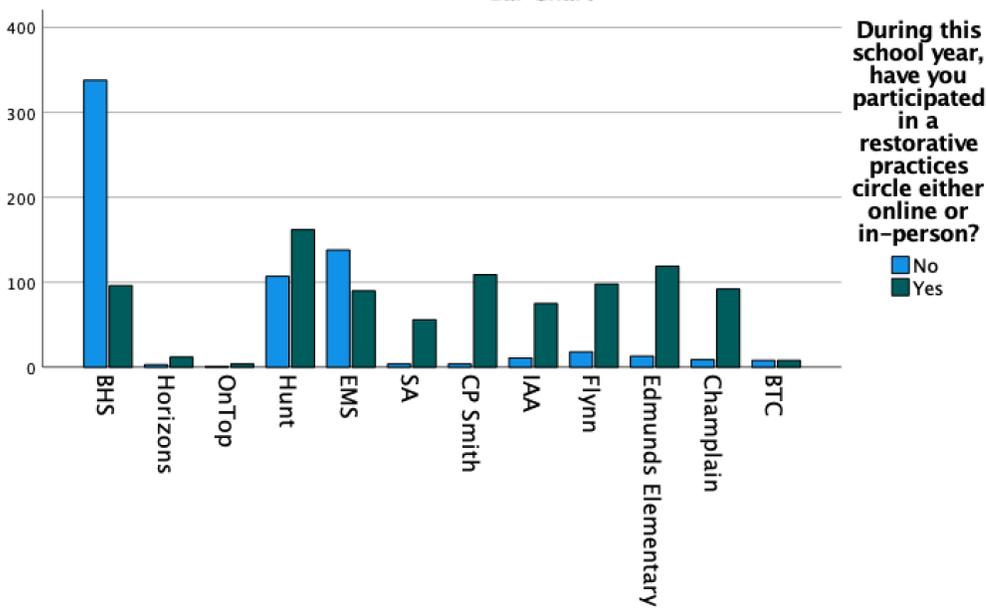


**The means to achieve the goal of educational equity in our schools includes:**

- Interrupting and dismantling inequitable systems, practices, policies, and procedures; continually examining and re-examining biases
- Replacing inequitable systems, practices, policies and procedures with just and equitable systems, practices, policies and procedures
- Creating inclusive, anti-racist, culturally relevant curriculum and school environments for adults and children
- Redistributing District resources based on academic, social and economic data to better serve our most marginalized students and families
- Collaborating and including students, families and community members to build a truly inclusive community where all voices are valued

The Office of Equity leadership team reviews every two weeks, at a minimum, all school-site and District aggregate data related to office discipline referrals, out-of-school suspensions, HHB investigations, attendance, and ongoing equity-related behavioral/disciplinary processes. The leadership team utilizes data dashboards that draw from PowerSchool (BSD’s data platform) in real-time. These data dashboards allow for the identification of disparate discipline usage in a very timely manner, which gives the Office of Equity the information needed to act on these disparities when they occur rather than waiting for an annual data review. For example, data from the fall 2021 semester indicated a concerning amount of variability in what behaviors students across BSD were suspended for and for how long. Given this data and its implications, the Office of Equity is drafting a District-wide restorative code of conduct to reduce the potential for bias in how suspensions are utilized.

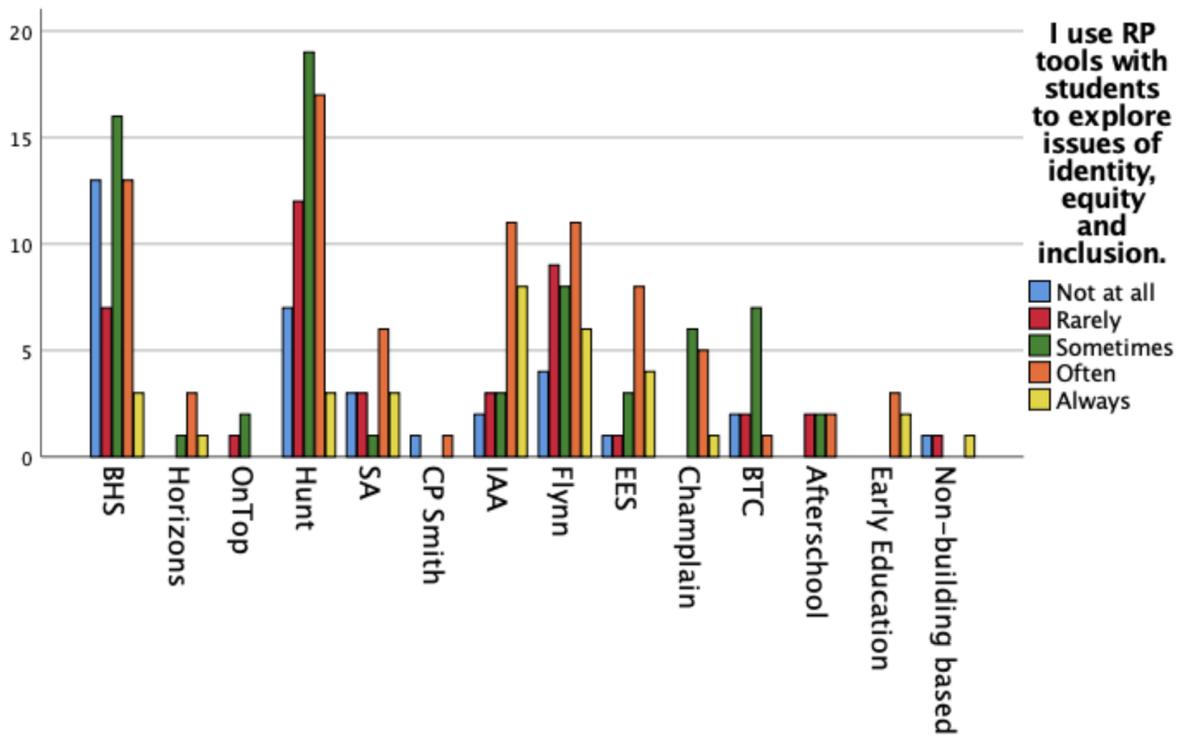
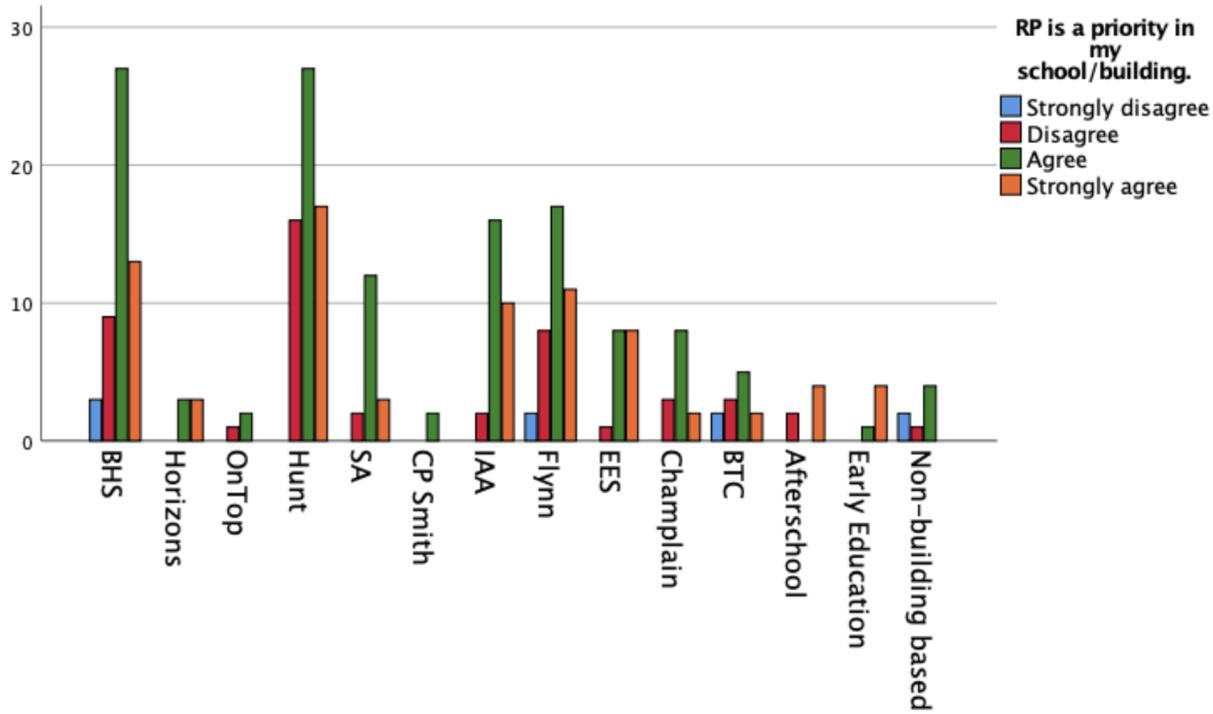
**Restorative Practices:** BSD is committed to utilizing RP as a way to proactively build respectful and trusting relationships among staff and students, and also as a tool to repair these foundational relationships if and when a harmful incident occurs which breaks that trust and connection. A detailed overview of the District’s RP implementation efforts over the last 6-7 years can be found in the [RP Annual Report](#).



**School Year 2020-2021 RP Data from Student Surveys**  
 This chart shows student responses (yes/no) on whether or not they participated in an RP circle during the 2020-2021 school year.

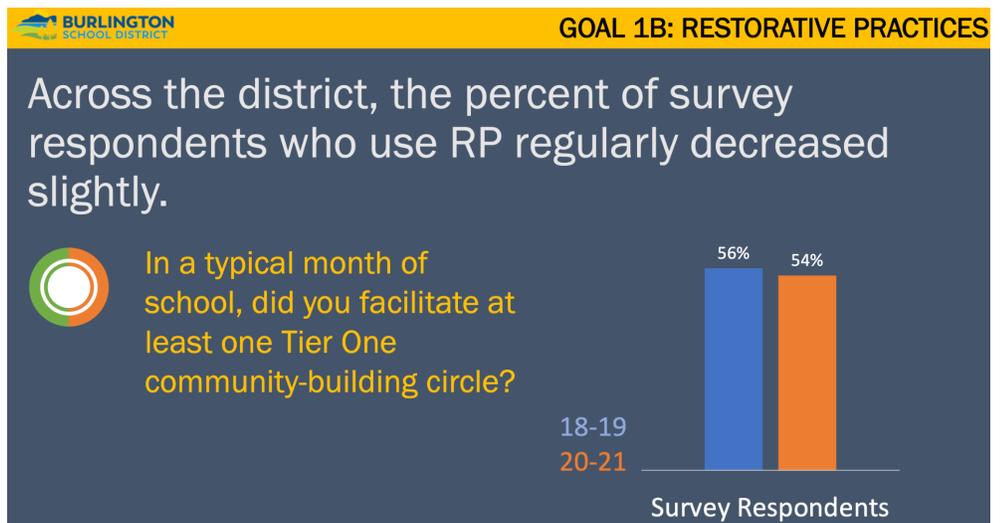
### School Year 2020-2021 RP Data from Staff Surveys

The two charts below highlight select questions from the RP Adult Survey from 2020-2021.



## School Based RP Implementation:

In order to support schools in building their capacity and bandwidth to fully implement restorative practices with students and staff, BSD has funded new positions using American Rescue Plan or ESSER funds in the high school, middle schools, and elementary schools focused on RP implementation and use. Six RP Specialist positions were created for school year 2021-2022 to provide professional development and coaching in RP to building staff and administrators and to work with students and staff when harm occurs to offer a restorative process and opportunity in lieu of traditional discipline.



**RP Youth and Family Engagement Team:** In 2021 BSD began partnering with [Up for Learning](#) to establish a new team that focuses on youth adult partnership. The team's goals are to elevate student agency, focus on racial justice, equity, and healing, participate in restorative circles, collect and analyze data, and create a vision for change in BSD. The team started meeting monthly in November 2021 and involves students, parents, school board members, and staff. The meetings are planned and co-facilitated by BSD youth from the Summer Racial Justice Academy.



**RP Peer Leadership Team at EMS:** In the fall semester of 2021, EMS launched a peer mediator program under the leadership of Assistant Principal Ellis. They led an initial training at EMS for 18 students of the global majority and have intentionally chosen students who have interacted with the discipline system in middle and elementary school in various capacities. These students have been uplifted for their leadership and are being thoroughly trained to become community mediators for EMS. Students meet weekly to learn how to facilitate circles and practice with mock circles to

get them ready to mediate real-life issues as they arise. AP Ellis shares, *“I am continually amazed by the way that the RP work that we have started to do has started to build that fire in the center of the community that provides the warmth that our students need to feel seen, welcomed, heard, and respected.”*

**RP at Parent University:** The Office of Equity partnered with Parent University to offer a series of classes series focused on RP with multilingual parents. Classes begin in January of 2021 and continued through the fall semester of the 2021-22 school year. Parents participated in the RP process under the guidance of skilled BSD circle keepers, sharing stories and discussing their experiences with school and the many challenges of parenting during Covid. This experience led to increased parental involvement with six parents from multilingual families volunteering to join the newly established RP Youth and Family Engagement Team.

**Restorative Truancy Support:** BSD recognizes the profound impact that Covid has had on students and families mental health and overall well-being. This has impacted student attendance, resulting in increased absenteeism and truancy. In keeping with our vision to be a restorative district, BSD established a new position in the Fall of 2021 to directly support students and families struggling with attendance to move away from the former punitive model that involved reliance on courts and the legal system to enforce attendance. The Restoring School Engagement Coordinator partners with truancy point people at every site and with the Howard Center to provide outreach to chronically absent students and families.

**Youth-led Participatory Action Research (YPAR):** Under the leadership of EMS teaching staff and in partnership with UVM, YPAR is a place where students have the power to influence systemic change that the schools need. With an established background in critical consciousness that is introduced at the 6th-grade level, YPAR students learn how to explore issues of inequity, investigate data, create their own research projects, and communicate their ideas to others. Some of the accomplishments so far from the EMS YPAR team are changing the BSD dress code policy, raising the Black Lives Matter flag, inspiring the creation of an anti-racist humanities curriculum for 7th and 8th grades, and raising awareness about ableism through a school-wide lesson. Additionally, the EMS YPAR Collective won the 2021 Impact Award from the American Educational Research Association and was invited to a panel at the Flynn Theater’s Diversity Speaker Series. The work of YPAR is so influential that BSD has worked to expand it to other schools with the program being offered currently at Horizons and starting with Critical Consciousness curriculum and Youth-Adult Partnership at HMS.

## Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying Work Within BSD

The BSD continues its work following the settlement agreement between the District and the US Department of Justice particular to Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying (HHB). In an effort to be accountable and demonstrate commitment to this area, we created BSD’s first Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying Investigations Coordinator position in 2021. The addition of this new position adds a new team member with significant experience in the investigative process and management of systems.

2021-22 HHB Goals		
<b>Goal 1</b>	Have available clearly identifiable HHB/Title IX teams at each of our school facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have school team members identified and trained prior to the commencement of an academic year (continuous)</li> <li>● Creation of team posters for each BSD facility (in effect for 2021-22)</li> <li>● Be prepared for a transition to new team members (continuous)</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2</b>	Provide to & Account for training in the field of HHB/Title IX to all team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Current 2021-22 team members have been trained by Lynn, Lynn, Blackman &amp; Manitsky, P.C. [lead trainer Heather Lynn]</li> <li>● Created a centralized training log for all team members</li> <li>● Currently accounting for vacancy in roles at Flynn Elementary(NDC) and Edmunds Elementary (Title IX)</li> <li>● Expansion/creation of new reporting/tracking material</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3</b>	Have the HHB Investigations Coordinator available for individual or team consultations on best practices & procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HHB Investigations Coordinator provides 3 to 5 consultations a week to HHB/Title IX district teams</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4</b>	Provide education to students, staff, and school families on “Their Rights” associated with HHB/Title IX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Office of Equity hosted an <a href="#">HHB webinar</a></li> <li>● Expanding education by utilizing existing school groups and associations</li> <li>● Expanding HHB/Title IX outreach by form a formal Athletic Department team</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 5</b>	Account for the longevity of HHB/Title IX roles in our district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identify who can support these positions as retention is an ongoing issue for these roles</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 6</b>	Meeting and exceeding responsibilities outlined by BSD/DOJ Settlement Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agreement in effect until 2023-24 academic year [status will be reassessed]</li> </ul>

**HHB Training:** Training in this area is assumed to be an ongoing process. Therefore to ensure BSD provides up-to-date training, focusing on best practices, we have acquired services from a leading legal industry expert, LYNN, LYNN, BLACKMAN & MANITSKY, P.C. Their lead trainer, Heather Lynn, brings BSD years of experience in the field of HHB. (Lynn also serves as a legal consultant to the State of Vermont in this field.) Lynn’s team has provided periodic training to all District HHB/Title IX staff. Leading to the mid-term, training sessions focused on an in-depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Building Nondiscrimination Coordinators (NDCs) and the Designated Employees (DEs) as well as the assigned staff as Building Title IX Coordinators.

Other areas covered were intake and assessment, documentation under Title IX, introduction to the Title IX process, and how to report inappropriate behaviors. BSD also worked with Lynn’s office to provide one-on-one sessions with each school-based team.

Along with these trainings, the HHB Investigations Coordinator held fifteen joint/individual trainings across the District and met 11 times with NDCs across BSD to clarify HHB and Title IX-related areas of interest. The HHB Investigations Coordinator is continuously called upon by school teams to provide consultation for in-progress investigations or to provide opinions of behavioral reports as a whole. Here are some of the training topics provided:

- HHB & Title IX Bootcamp, Sessions 1 & 2
- HHB NDC Training
- Title IX Training - Introduction Part 1, 2 & 3
- Individual/Small group legal counsel

**HHB Reporting:** BSD currently uses multiple systems to track and account for reports of HHB related behavior.

Behavior incidents are initially recorded in PowerSchool and HHB Teams also rely on data maintained in a DOJ-mandated spreadsheet. It is the responsibility of each school’s NDC to report on HHB behavior using these systems. It was discovered through our work that other reporting systems created redundancy that was not required. As a result, BSD created individual school data

dashboards providing “one-stop shopping” when considering behavior trends and accounting for HHB investigations. From these Confidential-Incident Data spreadsheets, NDCs complete their schools' Department of Justice (DOJ) Quarterly Reports. The following is data retrieved from DOJ First Quarterly reports. During the reporting period of August 25, 2021, to October 24, 2021, there were more than 600 documented behavioral reports. Of these, 42 HHB Investigations were initiated, 23 reports were substantiated, **15** Confirmed Bullying Incidents, **8** Confirmed Harassment Incidents, and **0** Confirmed Hazing.

Harassment and Bullying Incidents by School  
Midyear 21-22



Note: This chart shows incidents recorded in Powerschool that were tagged as potential Harassment or Bullying for the August-December time period. These data are not finalized.

It is expected that this process will be better improved once BSD implements the ISight data management system. In December 2021, BSD identified a new Project Manager to move this work forward. The ISight Project team expects to have the system deployed and available to BSD staff at the start of the 2022-23 school year.

## Reflections and Recommendations

This annual report offers BSD leadership and administrators an opportunity to reflect on the disparities that continue to persist within our district and to then turn this reflection into action on behalf of the students and families we serve. Our goal is to be transparent about areas we need to work on and hold ourselves accountable for changing these disparities. Below are recommendations and reflections that stem from the data reviewed in this report. These recommendations offer a roadmap for our work moving forward.

- **Push our anti-racism work with staff deeper:** One of BSD’s goals is to hire and retain faculty and staff of the global majority so that our teaching core reflects our student population. Retaining people of the global majority is an ongoing challenge for BSD. When BSD hires people of the global majority, there are no safeguards to address the systemic racism they experience daily. Additionally If BSD is going to attract, hire, and retain people of the global majority, and support students, the District must:
  - Train white building administrators on how to respond to racial harm experienced by people of the global majority in real-time
  - Dedicate regular professional development time for teaching staff on how to dismantle white supremacy culture and engage in anti-racism work District-wide
  - Dismantle white supremacy policies and create policies that are restorative
  - Hold adults accountable that are causing harm to students
  - Inform parents and the community when incidents of racism occurs expeditiously
  - Ensure dismantling white supremacy culture and anti-racism work is incorporated in the BSD strategic plan with an appropriate process to evaluate this effort
- **Move from student/family voice to student/family partnership:** Another District goal is to broaden our capacity for youth involvement by devoting more time to authentic student and adult partnerships. The Office of Equity continues to work with the students who participated in last year's [Summer Racial Justice Academy](#). These students co-facilitate meetings with adults, serve on interview committees, and facilitate the [Office of Equity Community Conversations](#). If BSD is to take a deeper dive into equity work, students and families must become an integral part of the BSD decision-making process. BSD must move away from the notion of so-called student and/or family “voice” and move into authentic student and adult partnerships. This vision of authentic youth-adult-partnership will be expanded by:
  - Thoroughly reviewing the 2021 [Summer Racial Justice Academy Recommendations](#) and holding ourselves accountable on a shared commitment to change
  - Establishing youth-adult restorative practice partnership teams at all sites
  - Continuing to compensate youth for their involvement on District teams with community service hours, academic credit, or financial stipends
  - Supporting the advancement and expansion of YPAR (youth-led participatory action research)
  - Maintaining a District Youth and Family Engagement Team in partnership with Up for Learning
  - Continuing to offer the Summer Racial Justice Academy each year

- **Improve the quality of our internally collected data:** Internally designed data measures, such as surveys, should be co-constructed with students and families to ensure questions asked are relevant, accessible, and get at the most pressing issues facing our district. Additionally, we know that collecting quantitative data is a start to helping us make data-informed decisions about where our equity work needs to go, but it can only tell part of a story.. in order to gain a holistic understanding of the experiences of our students, staff, and families, we must collect more “street” or qualitative data to complement our quantitative data we collect.
- **Prioritize the health and wellness of staff and students:** As Covid-19 continues to be the District’s primary health concern, BSD leadership and others are having ongoing conversations regarding steps that can be taken to relieve staff and students, and families of persistently high levels of stress. These conversations have resulted in the following recommendations from faculty and staff, which should be fully reviewed and considered:
  - More opportunities to gather as a whole staff and funding to do joyful/relational activities
  - Create a system to assess the District’s wellbeing for students, staff, and, families
  - Develop a plan to address wellbeing issues as they arise
  - Respect differential working hours of colleagues by not expecting staff to respond on weekends or after the workday unless it’s an emergency
  - Create daily space for wellness time for staff and students
- **Develop sustainable ways to support mental health:** Supporting the mental health needs of students continues to be a challenge for the District, and we continue to see an increase in students needing mental health support. However, mental health counselors are reporting that they are feeling more burnout than ever. BSD should continue to explore different ways to evaluate how mental health services are rendered and how our current systems can operate more efficiently.
- **Create a more suitable approach for responding to harassment, hazing, bullying investigations:** BSD has to identify different ways of conducting HHB investigations. School counselors have raised concerns over the years, stating they should not be involved in HHB Investigations and have told the District that conducting investigations violates their Code of Ethics and, in some cases, severs the relationships they have with students and families. While District administration disagrees with this position, it is clear that changes still need to be made to avoid burnout and increase capacity for more thorough reporting.
- **Respond to the ongoing impact of racial harm on students and parents of the global majority:** Students of the global majority continue to experience racialized harm caused by adults. Teachers and other adults must be trained with a racial-equity focus and gain a deep understanding of how racism impacts students of the global majority’s social-emotional well-being and diminishes trust. Parents of the global majority have informed BSD leadership when their students experience racialized harm, so do they.

## Glossary of Abbreviations

- BA: building administrator
- BSD: Burlington School District
- DE: designated employee
- DOJ: Department of Justice
- EL: English learner
- FRL: free and reduced lunch
- IEP: individual education program (Special Education)
- LGBTQIA+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, +
- ML: multilingual learner
- NDC: nondiscrimination coordinator
- NFRL: non/not free and reduced lunch
- ODR: office discipline referral
- OSS: out of school suspensions
- PGM: people of the global majority
- RP: Restorative Practices
- SEL: social-emotional learning
- SRJA: Summer Racial Justice Academy
- YRBS: Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- YPAR: Youth Participatory Action Research

Respectfully submitted to  
Superintendent, Tom Flanagan  
From Burlington School District's  
Office of Equity