Clemson University Inclusion and Equity Report:

HOW MUCH DO WE CARE?

A Comprehensive Look at Closing the Readiness Gap
for the Children of Charleston County

"We face a mounting imperative for our system of public education to ensure that all of our students can access [plentiful] opportunities. We must address the wide achievement gap for our students with the greatest needs; we must provide equitable access to programs and schools that prepare our students for success in 21st century local and global job markets and opportunities. Most important, **we must put student learning and well-being first in every decision we make. We must make students the heart of our work.***"*

Charleston County School District Strategic Plan

Prologue

The Charleston County School District fails nearly half of its students. Those students who are already at or above grade level are well-served by the district. Those students who are not, are not. In effect, the district is comprised of two parallel school systems: one successful and predominately wealthy and White; the other rife with failure, mainly poor, with mostly Hispanic and African American students. The district's job, first and foremost, is to close this readiness gap. Its leaders, and the community, must be prepared to do whatever it takes to meet this challenge.

Here is the central question:

- What will we do to ensure that every child leaves our schools with the skills needed to thrive, and with a realistic prospect of leading a fulfilling, productive life?

This raises additional questions:

- Do we really care about all students, regardless of race, wealth, or background?
- Are we ready to put aside personal agendas and outdated attitudes?
- Do we have the courage and the commitment to make drastic changes?
- Are we willing to try, and to do, whatever it takes?
- In short, **how much do we care?**

Many of the observations and recommendations in this report are not new. The district has spent significant sums of money on previous studies, only for their strong findings and recommendations to be ignored or rejected. The greatest concern of the authors is that this comprehensive report will suffer the same fate. Indeed, several people raised the valid question:

> *"Why spend more money – scarce money – on yet another study? Why should anyone believe that this time, things will be different?"*

Previous studies resemble this one because so little has changed in their wake. Nothing will change now if this study, too, is allowed to simply gather dust on a shelf. The authors sincerely hope that, this time, stakeholders will be incensed enough to demand bold change, and to hold people accountable if that change is timid, inadequate, or ineffective.

Taken together, this and other studies speak with a single voice. It is time – past time – to take informed, bold, and even disruptive measures. Mere tinkering and technical change will not do. And certainly, what has already been tried, and failed, won't magically work this time. At the same time, it is pointless to dismiss previous suggestions that were not given a fair chance.

We need to question our hidden assumptions, and raise our expectations. Too many of us seem to assume that some children simply cannot learn, and act as if some of our children matter more than others. Too many seem to believe that having several world-class schools makes up for having other

failing, even deplorable ones. Too many seem to believe that it is enough to provide a quality education for one's own children, while others languish. This must change.

Holding the Superintendent accountable for student achievement is both fair and necessary. But there can be no accountability unless and until she and other education leaders are given the authority to make critical decisions, and the resources to implement them.

Some mistakes will be made. Some necessary decisions will be unpopular. Some individuals and constituencies will feel threatened, offended, or angered. But the current situation is untenable. The time for studies is over. It is time to act.

Snapshots of an inequitable education system:

- **<u>Significantly less than half</u> of all 5th and 8th grade students met or exceeded expectations** (standards) **for the 2017 SC Ready ELA** (averaging 41%) **and Math** (averaging 36%) **tests. In other words, more than half of the students moving up to middle and high schools are not prepared.** For African American students, the average percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations for ELA and math were 19% and 16% respectively. Only about 24% of Hispanic students met or exceeded expectations.
- On average, <u>only 20% of students</u> **in the Charleston County School District scored "Ready" on all sections of the ACT tests. The ACT is given to students in their third year of high school and measures readiness for college.** The average percentage for White students was 47%, for Hispanic students, 12%, and an appalling 7% for African American students.
- Enrollment in **schools <u>not offering</u> Gifted and Talented** classes is predominantly African American. This is also true for schools not offering classes in physics and calculus. Thus, **the majority of students who ARE taking these classes so critical for college are White.**
- While graduation rates have improved over the years, and the median graduation rate for all schools in the district in 2017 was 81%. However, the rate varies considerably by school, and is substantially lower in predominately African American and Hispanic schools**. Meanwhile, elite, high-performing (and overwhelmingly White) charter and magnet schools see virtually all of their students graduate and go on to college.**

Recommendations for Further Action

The following six areas are especially critical and are offered as issues where actions must be developed for inclusion in Charleston County School District Strategic Plan:

- **Close the Gaps in Performance and Achievement:**

  CCSD must address the stark divide between high-performing and low-performing schools due to the low achievement by children of color and poverty that exists at all academic levels of the system. Solutions to address the historically under-achievement by a high percentage of the district's children of color and poverty must involve the wider community.

- **Make School District Governance More Efficient, Accountable, and Credible**:

  CCSD must address the governance structure related to the constituent districts, which has deepened the district's divisions by race, poverty, and political status. Additionally, any actions undertaken by CCSD or its governance boards must include as a critical component the impact that any action taken will have on building or eroding of trust among all groups.

- **Reform the System to Ensure Access to Quality Schools:**

  CCSD must address the effectiveness of the district's magnet and choice programs in terms of determining if they are achieving the goals under which they were formed. The Board must be willing to take actions to open, close, merge, and redesign ineffective schools or programs. The district must also ensure equitable access to high-quality programs and courses for all students.

- **Engage Community Stakeholders:**

  CCSD must address the disconnect between the economic growth of the community as a desirable place to live and conduct business and the high number of areas where the schools do not mirror that message. Stakeholders from throughout the district must be engaged as partners with CCSD to ensure that public schools in the District contribute to a higher quality of life.

- **Restructure utilizing the 2020 School Improvement Referendum as a catalyst to achieve equitable opportunities for all students**

- **Follow through:**

  Recommendations in this and other reports should be promptly analyzed, prioritized, and implemented as appropriate.

Actions for Consideration

As the District develops plans and actions to address the identified critical areas, there will have to be additional conversations with all segments of the CCSD stakeholders in the coming months. Those plans and actions will need to be added to the CCSD Strategic Plan and carried out with utmost urgency. The following are offered as possible actions to be discussed as steps to address these critical areas:

I.   **Close the Gaps in Performance and Achievement**

       The Charleston County School District will:

- Dramatically raise the achievement of poor and minority students within the next five (5) years, annually measuring progress on ambitious goals and objective benchmarks.
- Identify, support, and incentivize principals and teachers who have a track record of success with low-performing student populations, and assign them to schools with high numbers of students whose educational achievement are below grade level.
- Provide principals with the resources, training, and other support needed for their success.
- Closely monitor the performance of students and schools and make timely changes to staff, facilities, or programs as needed to create the optimum conditions for success.

Rationale: After decades of studies, recriminations, and hand-wringing, the Charleston County School District continues to be divided between haves and have-nots in education. It is time to exert the will and effort to bring transformational change.

Concrete Actions:

1) Create a team of experts from within and outside the district tasked to determine the resources and management authority needed to improve the performance of students at identified challenging and distressed schools. The team's initial recommendations should be presented to the Board within three months of inception.
2) Set realistic but firm time frames for principals, teachers, and schools to show progress. This means giving them the time and the ability (resources, training, authority) to succeed, but also making them accountable if they do not. It also means establishing objective measures of success.

     a. Reward successful teachers and principals monetarily, and make them trainers and mentors for others. Identify master teachers and principals based on objective data.

     b. Make timely changes to staffing or programs that are not having a positive impact on students' performance on success measures.

     c. Close or repurpose schools that continue to fail their students based upon agreed upon measures.

3) Determine whether and how promising existing district schools can be replicated and scaled to serve additional students.

4) Research successful national and state public/private partnerships for school management and determine desirability and feasibility for possible implementation for a small-scale trial.

5) Require uniform data collection for all schools, and regularly publicize the results. Assess all actions and policies in light of the data.

II.   Make School District Governance More Efficient, Accountable, and Credible

The Charleston County School District will:

- Acknowledge that the district's stakeholders have widely differing views on whether the Board of Trustees is functional or dysfunctional.
- Recognize that the Constituent Districts perpetuate divisions of race and wealth, and work with elected leaders for appropriate statutory reforms.
- Establish greater accountability and oversight of the County and Constituent Boards.

Rationale: It is time to move beyond arguments about who bears responsibility for the Board's serious problems, and to take firm steps to solve them. Many if not most interviewees expressed dismay at the poor reputation and inappropriate conduct of some the Board members, as well as the rancor and in-fighting among Board members. These concerns are largely confirmed by videos of Board meetings. Restoring trust in district governance is crucial to future progress.

Concrete Actions:

1) Empower an independent group of qualified individuals (such as civic, business, and political leaders) to periodically review and publicly report on the conduct of Board meetings and members.

2) Adopt a rule that all Board members receive a minimum of four (4) hours of training, and institute financial or other consequences for non-compliance.

- Training should include the proper role and authority of the Board and its members; the relationship of the Board to the Superintendent and other District staff; conflict of interest; rules of procedure; and rules of conduct.

3) Designate a Parliamentarian to oversee procedures and conduct at Board meetings, in accordance with Board Rules.
4) Require that all Constituent Board members receive training before presiding over disciplinary cases. Use District or *pro bono* attorneys to ensure that hearings are orderly, follow the rules of evidence and procedure, and respect due process rights.

III.   Restructuring/ Building Referendum

The Charleston County School District will:

- Utilize the 2020 School Improvement Referendum as a catalyst for restructuring the school district to achieve equitable opportunities for all students.

Concrete Actions:

1) Define the program of instruction, by grade and school level, that all students in the Charleston County Schools should receive, and determine the funding necessary for delivery.
2) Identify optimal school enrollment ranges to ensure delivery of the defined program of instruction.
3) Explore options to draw or redraw attendance zones to minimize the wide range of differences in poverty levels that currently exists in the District.
   a. Where appropriate, adjust the schools' funding allocation structure to ensure that all students are adequately supported.
   b. Provide schools that are seriously underperforming in reading or math with intensive support such as extended learning time (pre-school, after-school, summer enrichment); highly capable teachers trained in evidence-based instructional practices; and other assistance such as parent engagement, counseling, tutoring, and medical services.
   c. Students performing at or above grade level should receive support to continue or accelerate their growth, such as personalized learning programs, enrichment opportunities, and access to Gifted and Talented programming and materials.

IV.   Reforming the System to Ensure Access to Quality Schools

The Charleston County School District will:

- Provide students from all parts of the district with access to quality educational programs, utilizing a mix of school enhancements, choice schools, magnet schools, effective virtual courses, and public/private partnerships to ensure that students of

color, in poverty, and from rural communities have opportunities and support for success.

- Increase access and opportunity for students throughout the district to attend choice, existing magnet and charter schools.
- Ensure that application procedures, transportation, school or activity fees, and other similar issues are not a barrier for students to attend magnet and choice schools.

Rationale: It is time to acknowledge that choice and magnet schools, for all their merits, currently perpetuate inequity and disparate achievement. The goal should not be to cut resources or lower standards for these (or any) schools, but to open up high performing schools to students from all areas and backgrounds.

Concrete Actions:

1) Ensure that every school offers the classes and courses (*e.g.* advanced math) required for admission and success in magnet schools.
2) Review magnet schools' residency rules and other preferences (including siblings and testing barriers) that may hinder the application or enrollment of poor and minority students. Make needed changes to increase access.
3) Develop and implement a transportation solution for all students who attend magnet schools to ensure that the lack of transportation is not a barrier to attendance.
4) Implement user-friendly application procedures and forms (including paper forms), and offer advice and assistance to parents who wish to enroll their children in a magnet school.
5) Hold magnet and charter schools accountable for achievement and progress in the same manner as regular base schools.
6) Acknowledge the inequity of a system of charter and magnet schools that disproportionately serve the wealthy White population, and currently are largely inaccessible to minority and poor students.
7) Review and identify the outcomes and impacts of the system of choice schools on minority and low-income students and base schools.

V.   Engaging Community Stakeholders

The Charleston County School District will:

- Engage the community – businesses, faith communities, community agencies and organizations - to build alliances and partnerships to benefit the neediest schools and students.

- Work with community partners to ensure that all district schools have sufficient resources for after-school programs, enrichment, and extracurricular activities.
- Work with disparate groups and constituencies to reach a consensus on how best to promote the greater good, and to push shared futures.

Rationale: Many local leaders in business, as well as of community agencies and organizations, express a desire to support the school district and its students, but report feeling unwelcome in such efforts. Others point out that such efforts must be coordinated if they are to be helpful. Partnerships and cooperation will build stronger schools and communities.

Concrete Actions:

1) Participate in a system in which major businesses and employers adopt a challenged or distressed school to meet the needs of its students.
2) Similarly, facilitate a system in which local organizations and agencies adopt a challenged or distressed school to meet its students' needs.
3) Create or identify a non-profit organization(s) that will coordinate with the District to channel volunteers, funds, and other resources to poor or distressed schools.
4) Implement a comprehensive communication plan designed to articulate the benefits of and need for structural reform, foster transparency, and rebuild public confidence in the District's operations. This effort should include:
   a. Two-way communication between parents and school officials through public forums and listening sessions held on school facilities and at off-school sites.
   b. Regular interviews with print and broadcast media to share news and take questions.
   c. Outreach through increased school district officials' attendance at civic and service organization meetings, community events, and similar opportunities.

VI.   Follow Through

- Evaluate and prioritize recommendations in this Report.
- Create timelines and assign specific responsibility for implementing selected recommendations.
- Monitor their implementation, and evaluate success.
- Formulate additional recommendations.

Rationale: Recommendations in this report need to be promptly discussed, evaluated, and prioritized. Any loss of momentum now jeopardizes urgently needed change.

Concrete Actions:

1) Select and retain a group of independent outside consultants to assist the District in moving forward on recommendations in this report.
   a. The consultants must have proven experience and expertise in promoting diversity and inclusion in large systems, as well as the ability to facilitate dialogue in difficult or contentious relationships.
   b. The consultants should be independent of the district and free from obligations to local business or political leaders.
   c. The consultants should agree to an ambitious timeline to carry out their assigned tasks.
2) In consultation with community stakeholders, formulate additional recommendations to support the goals in the District's Strategic Plan.
3) Implement recommendations through a benchmarked action plan

Additional Items for Possible Action

The following is based on the team's observations, interviews, focus groups, school visits, and analysis of economic and education data (*See* Appendices A through D for specific sources and accompanying data). These recommendations supplement the priority items (above).

<u>Provide intervention and ultimately close programs and schools that fail to reach specified benchmarks for achievement and progress.</u>

- Set firm, ambitious goals for challenging and distressed schools to improve students' academic achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics.

- Using rigorous performance targets, provide intensive support and intervention in underperforming schools, including those with persistent lags.

- Revisit purposes, processes, and performance targets among existing magnet and charter schools to assess success, scalability, and potential replication.

- Innovate, fundraise, and allocate, with accountability, necessary resources for ensuring students' readiness for any and all options to programs throughout the system.

- Involve businesses, community groups, and elected municipal officials in supplementing transportation costs and other fees to raise understanding of and access to program and curriculum options.

<u>Redress Disparities in Curricula and Educational Experiences</u>

- Guarantee access to classes (e.g. algebra) that are prerequisites for admission to magnet schools.
- Guarantee access for all students to foreign language instruction.
- Offer extracurricular and enrichment activities accessible to all students (including transportation, equipment, fees, and other costs) at all schools.
- Establish rigorous, evidence-based, and innovative program and student success targets.

Rationale: Ensure that every student graduates with the competencies and hard and soft skills, in accordance with state mandates and the requirements of business, industry, and post-secondary institutions.

Strengthen and Diversify Educational Leadership

- Recruit, support, and retain highly committed educational leaders, rewarding those who demonstrate the ability to improve student learning.
- Assign principals and assistant principals where their skills and experience are most needed.
- Groom future principals and assistant principals through a leadership academy, professional development, and peer mentoring.
- Provide mentoring and other support to all principals and assistant principals in the first two years in the position, and one year for those serving in a new school.
- Provide mentoring and additional professional training to principals and assistant principals who face special challenges or whose schools are not on track to make expected progress.
- Remove or reassign educational leaders who do not meet performance standards within three years.

Rationale: Perhaps no other factor is more important to a school's success than the effectiveness of its leadership.

Build and Strengthen the Teacher Corps

- Enlist business and corporate support to provide scholarships and support for career changers to become educators.
- Coordinate with Schools of Education in feeder colleges and universities to promote more effective teacher preparation for working in challenging schools.
- Enlist business and corporate support to supplement down payments and mortgages for school personnel, and/or support applications for existing SC housing for educators.

Promote meaningful Diversity and Inclusion efforts at all schools

- Train school leaders and teachers in inclusive instructional techniques
- Incorporate themes of diversity and inclusion into curricula and instructional methodology
- Ensure that district and school diversity-themed activities are not limited to the MLK holiday or African American History Month, but reflect widespread diversity in many forms, including gender, ethnicity, race, religion, language, different abilities, and differing backgrounds.

Rationale: While increasing diversity is an urgent goal, racial disparities in school populations and teaching staff will continue in the immediate future. This makes creating a climate of diversity and inclusion in every school more difficult, and more critical.

Establish Independent Education Foundation

- Focus financial resources on schools that lack resources for co-curricular and extra-curricular educational activities
- Establish Adopt-a-School programs to focus business and community services projects on schools and communities in most need.

Rationale: Address inequities in student opportunities and between school differences in per student expenditures.

Empower and Engage Student Voices

- Engage in district-wide student governance activities at least quarterly to formulate student-friendly policy recommendations to the Board and Schools.
- Augment School Improvement Councils with *ex-officio* student representatives.
- Enlist students in restorative justice programs.
- Students innovate and design peer-appropriate rules.
- Enlist student volunteers for buddy systems and near-peer orientation for new students
- Set up student-led Bus Councils for near-peer rule development and mediation as well as establishing stronger relations between bus personnel and students/families

Rationale: Students experience reduced tension leading to fewer disciplinary incidents and increased student attendance. Students report peer absences and mediate potential bus conflicts.

Engage and Empower Families

- Strengthen parent access to school conferences and events through flexibility in scheduling, varying locations, provision of child care, and affirmative outreach.
- Conduct summertime school-to-home visits, especially for critical periods such as Early Childhood, entrance to kindergarten and transition to middle and high school
- Encourage businesses and corporations to provide at least 2 days of Family-School Conference/Service benefits to those with students in schools
- Provide translators for non-native English speakers at school meetings, events, and similar activities.

- Provide parent advocates for conferences on academics, discipline, and special education.
- Increase school/family communication to include positive feedback
- Increase opportunities for families to learn about educational issues, using delivery methods such as Parents Academy.

Rationale: Better communication between school and family will strengthen parental support for students' attendance, homework, and behavior, as well as for graduation.

Support Educational Innovations
- Enlist business, corporate and higher education institutions to provide guest presenters/experts to support classrooms in subjects with rapidly developing knowledge (e.g. STEM).
- Provide teachers with externships for hands-on participation in changing work, career, and technology across the local economy

Rationale: Increase student attendance and awareness of potential careers Increased awareness and acknowledgement of the role of racism, wealth, and power differentials in inequities across the school district.

Engage with School District Advisory Councils
- Solicit widely-respected leaders in various areas, including parent volunteers, faith leaders, retired educators) to engage in advisory councils
- Provide recommendations and other input to the Superintendent and Board of Education

Rationale:
- Influx of new ideas and opportunities for cooperation and a better relationship between the district and stakeholders.
- Increased confidence in district approach and use of constructive criticism.
- Increased confidence in district commitment to positive change.

Conduct and Distribute County-Wide Asset Maps
- Develop and distribute a county-wide community resource guide for all schools, and provide professional development to district and school personnel to ensure its use
- Provide district-wide specialized orientation about receiving school and its communities to incoming teachers and principals.

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- Establish a coordinating council to monitor ongoing community-based initiatives and support for schools, ensuring system wide access for students and families.

Rationale: Increase awareness and access for students, families, and school personnel to community agencies and services.

Promote Development Programs for All Support Staff

- Designate an official to oversee the narrowing of opportunity and achievement gaps, other school safety and diversity concerns, and to ensure system wide intercultural competence
- Provide career development opportunities among support staff including pathways to teaching and school leadership with access to staff organizations and regional/state meetings
- Create a system for school and district personnel to report concerns about inequities, discrimination, and other workplace issues, including the option of anonymous reporting.

Rationale:
- Retention of school staff and advancement of their opportunities and skills.
- Tighten system operations with data-based improvements.
- Increase positive workplace environment, safety, and trust.

Improve Internal and External Relationships

- Create a system to confidentially address questions, suggestions, and complaints, incorporating an independent channel for all employees and stakeholders.
- Host open houses and public forums at a variety of venues (including non-school sites) to promote and celebrate student success
- Showcase student projects and partnerships in work-based learning
- Solicit suggestions for other opportunities to support students and schools
- Provide incentives for better ideas from employees to encourage suggestions and report concerns for improving their schools
- Train all district personnel on the procedures, rules, and requirements ensuring that complaints and concerns are addressed in a consistent, fair, and equitable manner
- Hold listening sessions on non-school campuses and community gathering places

Rationale:
- Increased transparency about education throughout the county.
- Increase trust among employees and stakeholders.
- Increased stakeholder participation and engagement.

Sources

Clemson's team spent more than 500 hours in interviews, focus groups, and site visits, and traveled hundreds of miles crisscrossing the Charleston County School District (*see* Appendix A). Stakeholders from within and outside school district operations offered candid insights about the school system's strengths, challenges, and opportunities in supporting students. The team supplemented this information with documents and data about the CCSD's schools, finances, and communities (*see* Appendices C & D).

Findings

The recommended actions (above) represent the consensus of the members of the Clemson team. (*See* Appendix D). The following broad findings underpin these recommendations. *See also* Appendix B (summary of salient themes from interviews and focus groups).

All stakeholders want an effective, supportive education system that serves every student well.

Stakeholders expressed passionate views about their cultures and history; their schools and communities; their students and experiences at schools; and how all of these factors help or hinder students' futures. Despite sharp differences, all groups and participants understand the urgent need for a strong educational system strongly committed to support necessary improvements for the benefit of each student. Every discussion, disagreement, and decision must honor this shared goal.

Fragmentation interferes with cooperation and progress on shared goals.

Despite this broad consensus, the county and school district are highly fragmented by location, history, tradition, and heritage. Rather than embrace their shared interest in ensuring every student's success, stakeholders attack each other's motives and actions. Media accounts, school board minutes, and hours of candid conversations confirm this contentious relationship. In

short, pervasive political and social divisions disrupt systematic, consistent, and fair approaches to education, and sabotage shared aspirations for students and their communities.

In the district, *where you live determines your educational destiny*. The county's population, social, and education data exposes a stark divide between consistently high-performing schools and persistently low-performing ones. Similarly, *your wealth is closely related to your educational opportunity.* Academic achievement closely tracks the socio-economic status of the school's area or of its students. Relationships between families and schools are often fraught and fractured in high poverty zones. Also, *your race closely predicts your educational future.* Stark racial disparities are evident not only in academic achievement, but in statistics on discipline and special education. In addition, the disproportionate number of White school personnel compared to the student population contributes to suspicion, misunderstanding, and frayed relationships.

Opportunities and offerings vary widely. Some less affluent area schools cannot provide even the basic programs required by the state's school accreditation criteria. In contrast, students in affluent schools can access Honors or Advanced Placement courses, foreign language instruction, physics, advanced mathematics, and specialized arts education. Many also benefit from innovative learning experiences and programs (such as STEM coaches and high-tech science labs) not available at less affluent schools. Moreover, any imbalance in school resources is magnified by supplemental funding from wealthy parent groups, individual parents, school-specific financial arrangements, or community members and organizations.

Divisions by wealth, race, and history lead to tension, lack of trust, and conflict. Ultimately, these divisions harm all students in the school district and threaten the entire community's future.

Distrust and resentment rooted in history disrupts every level of district and school communication.

Distrust permeates the CCSD from the top down, the bottom up, and across levels. Communication and relationships suffer from the lingering effects of a complex and difficult history. A central disagreement stems from competing cultural experiences and narratives regarding slavery and race. For example, tourism celebrates a White romanticism of gracious antebellum houses and elegant carriage rides, while downplaying the region's significant role in the slave trade and the African Diaspora. This troublesome history was highlighted recently with the resolution by the City of Charleston that apologized for slavery and its repercussions on the African-American community. While such an apology is a step toward addressing longstanding community issues, far more is needed to bolster all students' futures and experiences in the CCSD, which has its own history of racial division.

The school integration battle of the late 20th Century is largely unresolved, and remains a divisive element in this county-wide district. A relic of this conflict is the fault lines of distrust established in 1967 through eight constituent districts, highly gerrymandered school zones established by Act 340. Misconceptions abound. For example, the claim that constituent districts preserve community identity belies the fact that over 50 years later these lines fail to represent 21st Century population shifts and areas of economic development. Similarly, Act 340 and South Carolina Attorney General opinions suggested that these constituent configurations supported a unitary district for purposes of integration. To the contrary, these eight districts deepened divisions by race, poverty, and political status.

The conduct of some members of the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees exemplifies these divisions. Indeed, in the team's interviews and discussions, the word most frequently used to describe the Board was "dysfunctional." Members aggravate their already-high levels of distrust and animosity by engaging in stark incivility and lack of decorum, both in and outside of meetings. Their constituencies bring these conflicts into the wider civic arena. Parents, educators, and ordinary citizens, as well as members of the media, look on aghast at the spectacle. Meanwhile the students suffer.

This report is not the first make these observations about the CCSD system's governance structure or the divisions sectored throughout the school district. The virtually unanimous perspective from these multiple credible sources, and the opportunities for helping students that have been lost due to dissension and delay, underscore the vital importance of taking bold, effective action now.

In an improved and civil climate, the shared goals of stakeholders would open up opportunities to build a strong and equitable school system. Each stakeholder group offers important insights and expertise for achieving student success throughout the school system and across the county. They must find a way to get past the current stalemate and paralysis. They must, at long last, put the critical needs of students ahead of feuds and personal animosity.

Stakeholders

Each of the 400,000 residents of Charleston County has a stake in the District's mission. Everyone shares in the potential benefits of a well-designed and supportive learning environment throughout CCSD, just as everyone will pay the heavy cost of continued inequity and failure. Thus, everyone has a responsibility and role in establishing and maintaining the schools' learning environments.

For this report, we considered these key stakeholder groups:

- **Students**
- **Students' Families**
- **The Business Community**
- **Civic and Community Institutions, Organizations & Agencies**
- **School Building Personnel (teachers and principals/ assistant principals)**
- **District Leadership & Governance**
- **Elected Leaders**

Stakeholders' uniform desire for an equitable school system drives all of the recommendations of this Action Plan. The proposals for each stakeholder group support goals adopted in the current CCSD Strategic Plan, proclaiming that "*Students are the Heart of Our Work*[1]."

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[1] CCSD's 2017 Strategic plan includes eight goals which implicitly require equity standards in every aspect. However, the following four goals explicitly recognize conditions for equity that require awareness of diversity and the responsive and responsible exercise of inclusive practices.

> **Goal 3:** Ensure a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for every student and adult in the system.
> **Goal 4:** Implement a pipeline that recruits, supports, retains, and rewards talented teachers, principals, and staff for every school.
> **Goal 7:** Communicate student progress. Seek feedback and cultivate family and community partnerships to ensure success for every student.
> **Goal 8:** Address local priorities to ensure system equity.

Inception

This report was undertaken at the request of the Board of Trustees of the Charleston County School District (CCSD). By vote on December 11, 2017, the Board demonstrated its commitment to address longstanding concerns about disparate achievement by entering into contract with the Clemson University Division of Inclusion and Equity to support the goals of the District's Strategic Plan by providing "an analysis of the climate of diversity and inclusion, and [to]... identify[ing] sources of tension in the District." Accordingly, the Clemson team conducted an audit of diversity and intercultural competence throughout the district's schools and offices, and among community stakeholders including students, families, teachers, principals, support personnel, faith leaders, businesses, civic and community organizations, and municipalities. In addition to the observations and suggestions offered throughout the county, the team reviewed county economic, population, and education data as well numerous statutes, policies, reports., and other documents. The recommendations in this report reflect these sources and perspectives about diversity, inclusion, equity, and cultural heritages throughout the district.

We wish to extend special thanks to the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees, for its bold vision and determination to address these concerns through this report and other initiatives, to hundreds of citizens and school personnel for their time and candor in this project.

Appendix A: Onsite sources for this report

Individual & Group Interviews
> NOTE: Includes contact hours only which does not include room setup, post interview debriefing, notes, or summaries

Individual Interviews
> NOTE: number of interviewers ranged from 1 through 3, averaging 2 team members per interview

BOE members	9 interviews
Superintendent	2 interviews
CCSD Administrators	11 interviews
CCSD retired educators	6 interviews
CCSD BOE (former members)	3 interviews
Mayors	4 interviews
Legislators	3 interviews
Other individuals (civic, business, non-profit, faith, education professionals, law enforcement, media, higher education, etc.)	36 interviews

Total individual hours	74 hours
Sub-Total team person-hours:	**148 team hours of individual interviews**

Small Group Interviews
> NOTE: average of 2 team members per small group

Constituent BOE members	3 people
Other (includes parents, teachers, students, other)	8 people
Total small group hours	11 hours
Sub-Total team person-hours:	**22 team hours of small group interviews**

Large Group Meeting of clergy/faith leaders ≈ 20+/- people with two team members over 2 hours

Sub-Total team person-hours:	**4 team hours of large group meeting**

Focus groups
> NOTE: 2 Clemson team members per focus group for two hours

Includes food service, information technology, maintenance, clerical, teacher assistants, teachers, students, parents, special education parents

Total focus groups	17
Sub-Total team person-hours:	**34 team hours of focus groups**

BOE Meetings = 2 @ 2 hours/meeting
    NOTE: average of 11 Clemson team members attended (10 at first, 12 at second)

Total hours BOE meetings	4
Sub-Total team person-hours:	**44 team hours**

School Contacts

School Visits	84
School Personnel Contacts	160
Sub-Total team person-hours:	**252 team hours**

Mileage within the District	1600 miles

TOTAL CLEMSON TEAM PERSON-HOURS: **504 hours**

Appendix B: Summary of Salient Themes

The findings and recommendations in this report incorporate themes gleaned from hours of interviews and focus groups, and from observations of site visits to district schools. (*See* Appendix A.) The diversity among participants elicited varied and sometimes contradictory points of view, but demonstrated general agreement on many points. The most salient themes are summarized below.

Widespread perceptions, whether true or erroneous, can gain the same force as objective facts. In some cases, it is possible to show that a claim is not accurate. For example, there is no evidence for the assertion that African American students receive and use hand-me-down books from predominately White schools. However, this claim does have a factual basis in historical and inequitable practices that, fortunately, ended decades ago. Moreover, financial and systemic inequities do disadvantage some schools, mainly rural and with predominately African American enrollment. Such schools do not offer classes in advanced mathematics or foreign languages found elsewhere.

The following observations and concerns were raised by a sufficient number of people to suggest that they have wide currency in the district. Until they are addressed, they will continue to shape the community's beliefs and attitudes.

OVERRIDING ISSUE: The Achievement Gap

- Wide gap in student achievement
  - "We're failing 50% of our students"
  - Students on grade level are well-served; others are not
- District's "Excellent" rating is belied by performance gap
- Students in affluent communities are better served by their schools than others are
- "Promises, promises"
  - This situation has existed for decades, and has never been effectively addressed
  - Previous studies have identified the same problems and made recommendations that were ignored – why is this time any different?

CENTRAL OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATION

- Concerns about transparency, particularly regarding expenditures
- Bringing on the Chief Financial Officer is a positive step

- Clear communications strategy and messaging
- Some school leaders are very unclear about the district's directions and policies
- Some school leaders feel disconnected from the Central Office

Superintendent
- Her entry was tainted by the selection process
  - Secret interviews
  - Outside influences
  - Timing of the vote
- However, she has gained the confidence and provisional support of some early doubters
- Some community and board members actively oppose her and are "waiting it out" until she departs
- Her attempt to transfer principals was defeated by interest groups
- Her early focus on the statistics was effective
- Competition for her time and attention spreads her too thin
- Some do not see her as accessible enough
- Expectations for early progress in student achievement numbers were (a) not met, or (b) unrealistic and premature
- Needs to show tangible gains in the next few years
- Cannot hold the Superintendent accountable unless she is given the authority to carry out her decisions and policies

RACE

- Differing attitudes about racism:
  - Racism is alive and well in Charleston County, and nothing has changed in the last 50 years
  - Racism may have receded, but its effects remain
  - Racism did exist once, but it's time to move on
  - We should be color-blind
  - "Poor" is a code word for "African American"
  - African Americans are too quick to play the race card, and try to make everything about race
- Many White people say the "right" things about race and equality, but their actions speak louder than words.

- o Their agenda is to keep their advantage, and even to prevent Black children from receiving a proper education
- The culture of outward politeness means that many truths are unspoken

GENDER

- Some resistance to strong women (regardless of race) in leadership positions
- Disparity in numbers of male and female teachers
- Disparity in numbers of male and female principals

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- "Dysfunctional":
  - o Members do not seem to like or trust each other
  - o Assume the worst about each other's motives
  - o Unable to work together, even for the greater good
  - o "Infighting is a 'blood sport'"
- Meetings lack decorum, order, and civility
- Some members are not prepared or attentive at meetings
- Lack a clear understanding of the role and duties of board membership
  - o Attempts to micromanage schools and administration
  - o Too much involvement in personnel decisions
  - o Use their position to influence the assignment of principals
- Real or perceived conflicts of interest
- Current board includes no education professionals
- Some members view the office as a stepping stone to other positions
- Some are "in it for themselves, not the children"
- Lack familiarity with many schools and their real-world problems
- Don't attend events and activities outside of regular meetings
  - o They don't care
  - o This is difficult because of their work schedules

CONSTITUENT BOARDS

- Mission and role are unclear to some of their own members
- Community members are also unclear about the role of the constituent boards
- Student discipline hearings and outcomes are inconsistent from district to district

- Outcomes of hearings seem influenced by who the members know
- Rules of evidence and procedure not always followed
- Residency lines are based on racial considerations

SCHOOL PERSONNEL

<u>Principals</u>
- Principal "churn" (turnover) leads to lack of consistency in school policies
- Leadership Academy should be reinstated
- New principals should be kept at their schools for several years
  - Need support, even if they are struggling at first
  - Blamed for problems that are not under their control
- Expected to advocate for resources for their schools:
  - "The squeaking wheel gets the grease"
  - Some advocate more strongly than others
  - New and minority principals do not understand how this system works
- Some are more likely than others to have the ear and attention of the BOE

<u>Teachers</u>
- High teacher "churn" (turnover) especially at challenging, lower performing schools
- Salary is not competitive with other districts and states
- Teachers cannot afford to live in the school's area
- Teacher corps is disproportionately White and female
- Need for more African American teachers, especially males

<u>New teachers:</u>
- Many choose teaching because they are idealistic or naïve – "They have no idea what they're signing up for"
- Colleges and universities do not prepare them for urban school environment
- Some are motivated by student loan forgiveness, and just "put in their time" until they can go to a less challenging, more attractive assignment
- Lack the cultural competence to relate to the students and parents
- Burnout is a problem, sometimes within first weeks or months
- Inexperienced teachers are teaching the students with the greatest gaps
- Either coddle minority students ("love them to pieces") or are disproportionately harsh
- Need to have high expectations

- "I can't expect this student to learn"
- Would benefit from team teaching, more mentoring

EMPLOYEES (Non-Professional)

- Strong hierarchy hampers communication
- Most support the district and care about children
- Many are concerned about their job security
- Some indicated a reluctance to speak openly about problems for fear of reprisals

SCHOOLS

Overall
- Facilities have been generally improved and most schools are in good physical condition
- Some District schools are world-class
  - They serve as a source of pride for some, and of resentment for others.
  - Different demographic groups have widely differing views of Burke, Wando, the Academic Magnet, and other schools.
- Gentrification is skewing the demographics of some schools.
- Some schools in poor neighborhoods are performing above expectations.
- Some have unwarranted negative reputations
- Some lack order and control (per staff)
- Physical facilities have generally improved in recent years
- Some schools get more and quicker response to maintenance calls (etc.)
- Establishing a culture of "community" and "family" is critical to success
- Minority students can get "lost in the cracks" at large, predominately White schools
- Predominately African American rural schools have cultural and historic significance that outweighs their low performance

Magnet/ Charter Schools
- Source of pride for their communities and for the district
- View by some as a means to perpetuate school segregation
- Not open and accessible to all students
- Means of maintaining privilege and segregation
- Affluent parents use magnet and charter schools to keep their children out of predominately African American schools
- Seem designed to limit enrollment of minority students

- Attendance zone can mean few openings in "partial magnet" schools
- Sibling preference reinforces existing school demographics
- Application process is intimidating and confusing for some
- Transportation requirement is a barrier
- Prerequisites to attendance are not offered at some potential feeder schools

<u>School Resources</u>
- Need for more mental health professionals and counselors
- Need for more parent advocates
- Need for more behavior interventionists and for quicker response to disruptive students
- Wealthy PTOs aggravate funding disparity
- Teacher assistants want professional development, more responsibility, less emphasis on discipline

COMMUNITY LEADERS

- Are working on behalf of students but feel disconnected from schools
- Waiting to be invited into a productive relationship
- Tired of being asked for money only
- Do not feel connected to the Superintendent or the district
- Lack confidence in the board's decisions, especially about allocation of resources

BUSINESS LEADERS

- Want and need employees who possess "soft" skills (work ethic, punctuality, etc.), and then would train them to do the work
- Some lucrative apprenticeship opportunities are not taken
- Some feel unwelcome when contacting schools
- Will recruit employees from out of state if necessary
- Tired of being asked for money, and are suspicious about how money is spent
- Need to see concrete progress on a few discrete goals before they will engage fully
- Some community members are suspicious of the business community's motives and goals

PARENTS

- Affluent White parents are more vocal, active, and effective in advocating for their schools; they have the Board's ear and are always able to get their way
- Stay-at-home parents are more able to volunteer, have presence in schools
- Affluent parents are more likely to hold schools to account for low performance or other issues
- Less affluent parents may assume that their child's school is higher performing than it is
- Working parents may lack the time or energy to volunteer or be involved in the schools
- Some parents do not know their rights: need for more parent advocates
- Some parents do not understand importance of schoolwork and attendance
- PTOs in wealthy areas generate funds to support local schools, which aggravates disparity
- PTOs in rural or working-class neighborhoods need to be more active
- Some poor parents are suspicious of magnet, charter, or Montessori schools, seeing them as "for Whites only," or not rigorous enough
- Many parents in low-performing schools are upset that a few misbehaving students are allowed to interfere with the education process

MEDIA

- Tense relationship between the district and the media, especially with the Post & Courier
- Seen as accenting the negative and not covering the positive
- Representatives express interest and willingness to help school district succeed

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Appendix D: School & District Data

Racial and Poverty Concentrations [R&PC]

R&PC Table 1. Enrollment in Charleston County Public Schools by Race and Ethnicity: 2017

	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
Number	19,183	4,624	23,311	2,287	49,405
Percent	39%	9%	47%	5%	100%

Note. Data from the SC Department of Education 2017 135-day student count. Race/ethnicity was not reported for ten students.

Note to R&PC Table 1.
Although the student population in Charleston County is predominantly White, the combined minority/non-White students outnumber White students 53% to 47% district-wide.

R&PC Table 2: Race/Ethnicity and Poverty Level by Constituent District

Constituent District	Afr. Am.	Hispanic	White	Other	Median Poverty Level
District 1 - St James-Santee	94%	0%	4%	1%	90%
District 23 - St. Paul's	76%	12%	10%	2%	90%
District 20 – Peninsula	73%	1%	23%	3%	85%
District 4 - Cooper River	57%	20%	18%	5%	85%
District 9 - St. John's	47%	26%	23%	3%	83%
District 10 - St. Andrews	37%	5%	51%	6%	54%
District 3 - James Island	23%	3%	70%	4%	39%
District 2 - Moultrie	10%	3%	83%	5%	18%

Note. Data calculated from the SC Department of Education 2017 135 day student count and the 2017 Poverty Index

Note to R&PC Table 2.
Over 90% of the variation in poverty in Charleston County public schools can be accounted for by race.

R&PC Table 3. High Minority and High Poverty Schools by Constituent District: 2017

School Context: Predominantly African American/High Poverty

Constituent District	School	Percent Afr. Am.	Percent Poverty
District 1 - St James-Santee	St James-Santee Elem	94%	90%
District 10 - St. Andrews	Stono Park Elem	83%	91%
District 20 - Peninsula	Simmons Pinckney Middle School	99%	97%
District 20 - Peninsula	Mitchell Elem	97%	96%
District 20 - Peninsula	Sanders-Clyde Elem	96%	94%
District 20 - Peninsula	Burke High	95%	92%
District 20 - Peninsula	Charleston Progressive	98%	91%
District 20 - Peninsula	Memminger Elem	86%	85%
District 20 - Peninsula	Charleston Develop. Charter	97%	82%
District 23 - St. Paul's	Minnie Hughes Elem	89%	95%
District 23 - St. Paul's	Baptist Hill High	80%	86%
District 4 - Cooper River	Greg Mathis Charter High	97%	95%
District 4 - Cooper River	Chicora Elem	94%	93%
District 4 - Cooper River	Edmund A Burns Elem	90%	93%
District 4 - Cooper River	Mary Ford Elem	97%	93%
District 4 - Cooper River	Prestige Preparatory Academy	93%	92%
District 4 - Cooper River	Garrett Academy of Tech	92%	88%
District 4 - Cooper River	North Charleston High	82%	87%
District 9 - St. John's	Edith L Frierson Elem	92%	89%

Note. Data calculated from the SC Department of Education 2017 135-day student count and the 2017 Poverty Index

R&PC Table 4. Low Minority, Affluent Schools by Constituent District

School Context: Predominantly White/Affluent

Constituent District	School	Percent White	Percent Poverty
District 2 - Moultrie	East Cooper Montessori Charter	89%	11%
District 2 - Moultrie	Sullivan's Island Elem	96%	12%
District 2 - Moultrie	Laurel Hill Primary	84%	17%
District 2 - Moultrie	Belle Hall Elem	79%	18%
District 2 - Moultrie	Charles Pinckney Elem	86%	18%
District 2 - Moultrie	Laing Middle	81%	18%
District 2 - Moultrie	Thomas C. Cario Middle	87%	18%
District 4 - Cooper River	Academic Magnet High	81%	7%
District 4 - Cooper River	Charleston School of The Arts	75%	16%
District 20 - Peninsula	Buist Academy	80%	14%

Note. Data compiled from the SC Department of Education 2017 135-day student count and the 2017 Poverty Index

Note to R&PC Tables 3 and 4.
Both tables display significant racial and poverty concentrations in Charleston County schools with the majority of schools that are predominantly African American and high poverty located in two districts: The Peninsula district (District 20) and the Cooper River district (District 4) and the predominantly White, affluent schools located mainly in the Moultrie district (District 2).

Academic Outcomes [AO]

AO Table 1. The 2017 SC Ready Test by Race and Ethnicity

Mean Percentage of 5th and 8th Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations for the SC Ready Test by Race/Ethnicity: 2017

	ELA	Math
African American	19%	16%
Hispanic	24%	24%
White	67%	62%
All Students	41%	36%

Note. Data calculated from the SC Department of Education, *2017 South Carolina College and Career Ready Assessments (SC READY) Test Scores,* at https://ed.sc.gov/data/test-scores/state-assessments/sc-ready/2017/ . Value is rounded from the 5% trimmed mean.

Note to AO Table 1.

While the overall percentages of Charleston County students meeting or exceeding expectations for English Language Arts and Math are relatively low at 41% and 36% respectively, those for African American and Hispanic students are substantially lower. Low performance for these groups will resonate throughout their academic careers, severely limiting their future choices. This data demonstrates a need for a systemic approach to improve student achievement, including ongoing district-wide professional development for CCSD faculty and staff that is both consistent and required for all districts.

AO Table 2. The 2017 SC Ready Test by School Context

Mean Percentage of 5th and 8th Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations for the SC Ready Test by School Context: 2017

	ELA	Math
Predominantly African American/High Poverty	19%	13%
Racially Mixed/High Poverty	17%	15%
Racially Mixed/Mixed Income	35%	29%
Predominantly White/Mixed Income	72%	65%
Predominantly White/Affluent	77%	75%

Note. Data calculated from the SC Department of Education, *2017 South Carolina College and Career Ready Assessments (SC READY) Test Scores,* at https://ed.sc.gov/data/test-scores/state-assessments/sc-ready/2017/ . Value is rounded from the 5% trimmed mean.

Note to AO Table 2.

While AO Table 1 illustrates disparities by race and ethnicity, AO Table 2 shows that these disparities are mirrored across schools in a systematic way.

AO Table 3. The 2017 SC Ready Test by Constituent District

Mean Percentage of 5th and 8th Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations for the SC Ready Test by Constituent District: 2017

	ELA	Math
District 23 – St. Paul's	19%	11%
District 4 – Cooper River	22%	19%
District 1 – St. James - Santee	29%	19%
District 20 – Peninsula	33%	25%
District 9 – St. John's	37%	32%
District 3 - James Island	53%	45%
District 10 – St. Andrew's	53%	49%
District 2 – Moultrie	70%	66%

Note. Data calculated from the SC Department of Education, *2017 South Carolina College and Career Ready Assessments (SC READY) Test Scores,* at https://ed.sc.gov/data/test-scores/state-assessments/sc-ready/2017/ . Value is rounded from the 5% trimmed mean except where not applicable.

Note to AO Table 3.

Again, disparities are evident across districts and correspond with racial and income distributions. The schools in St. Paul's, a high poverty district with both predominantly African American and racially mixed schools, are the lowest performing schools overall. In the Cooper River district, another low-performing district, the majority of schools are racially mixed, high poverty and mixed income schools. The only school in District 1, St. James – Santee, is predominantly African American and high poverty. Conversely, the James Island District is one of the three highest performing districts and has no high poverty schools. Schools there are all mixed income schools with some schools being racially mixed and others being predominantly white. Most schools in the high performing St. Andrew's District are both racially mixed and mixed income schools; however, almost a third are predominantly White. Only one school in St. Andrew's district is predominantly African American and high poverty; one other school is racially mixed and high poverty. All of the schools in Moultrie, the best performing district, are predominantly White. They are almost evenly matched between mixed income and affluent schools with a slim majority being White, affluent schools.

AO Table 4. The ACT Test by Race and Ethnicity

Mean Percentage of ACT Test Takers Scoring "Ready" on All Tests by Race and Ethnicity: 2017	
African American	7%
Hispanic	12%
White	47%
All Students	20%

Note. Calculated using data from the SC Department of Education, *ACT,* at https://ed.sc.gov/data/test-scores/national-assessments/act/. Value is rounded from the 5% trimmed mean except where not applicable.

Note to AO Table 4.

The ACT is given to students in their third year of high school and measures their readiness for college. Students are determined to be "Ready" or "Not Ready." This test shows obvious disparities in the scores with African American students scoring 40 percentage points lower than White students and Hispanic students scoring 35 percentage points lower than their White peers.

AO Table 5. The ACT Test by School Context

Mean Percentage of ACT Test Takers Scoring "Ready" on All Tests by School Context: 2017	
Predominantly African American/High Poverty	4%
Racially Mixed/High Poverty	5%
Racially Mixed/Mixed Income	18%
Predominantly White/Mixed Income	46%
Predominantly White/Affluent	75%

Note. Calculated using data from the SC Department of Education, *ACT,* at https://ed.sc.gov/data/test-scores/national-assessments/act/. Value is rounded from the 5% trimmed mean except where not applicable.

Note to AO Table 5.

Given the extremely low percentages of test takers scoring "Ready" for college, there appears to be significant barriers for students in schools with high poverty populations. This is also true to a somewhat lesser extent for those in racially mixed, mixed income schools. It appears that only in schools that are predominantly white and affluent are a substantial majority of students ready for college. This finding reinforces the need for a system-wide intervention that includes professional

development for faculty to target student achievement, as well as intercultural competence and diversity training.

AO Table 6. The ACT Test by Constituent District

Mean Percentage of ACT Test Takers Scoring "Ready" on All Tests by Constituent District: 2017

District 23 – St. Paul's	7%
District 20 – Peninsula	13%
District 9 – St. John's	13%
District 10 – St. Andrew's	14%
District 4 – Cooper River	23%
District 3 – James Island	35%
District 2 – Moultrie	46%

Note. Data from the SC Department of Education, *ACT,* at https://ed.sc.gov/data/test-scores/national-assessments/act/.
Value is rounded from the 5% trimmed mean except where not applicable.

Note to AO Table 6.
The lowest scoring district, St. Paul's, has only one high school, Baptist Hill High School, a predominantly African American, high poverty school. The Peninsula District, another low-scoring district has two schools; Burke High School which is also predominantly African American and low income and the Charleston Charter School for Math and Science, a racially mixed, mixed income school. Only 6% of Burke's students scored "Ready" on all ACT tests compared to 20% for the Charter School for Math and Science.
The two schools with the largest percentage of college-ready students are in the Cooper River district; the Academic Magnet School a predominantly white, affluent school and the Charleston School of the Arts, also predominantly white and affluent. At the Academic Magnet School, 92% of students tested "Ready" for college. For the Charleston School of the Arts, that number was 58%.

AO Table 7. 2017 Graduation Rates by Race, Ethnicity and Poverty Level

	Mean Percent Graduating	Median Percent Graduating
African American	76%	84%
Hispanic	79%	82%
White	89%	95%
Students in Poverty	85%	90%
All	69%	81%

Note. Data calculated from the South Carolina Department of Education's "Overall Graduation Rate" file at https://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/state-report-cards/2017/data-files-for-researchers-2017/

AO Table 8. Postsecondary Outcomes: 2016

Postsecondary Outcomes for Charleston County Public High Schools: 2016

School	Completers 2016	Graduation Rate 2016[a]	4-Year College	2-Year College	Technical School	Employ ment	Armed Forces	School Context[b]	Constituent District	Percent of Total[c]
Baptist Hill High	60	76%	35%	0%	17%	23%	8%	Predom. Af. Am./High Poverty	23	83%
Burke High	59	77%	58%	0%	10%	25%	3%	Predom. Af. Am./High Poverty	20	97%
Garrett Academy of Techology	131	84%	29%	1%	29%	17%	10%	Predom. Af. Am./High Poverty	4	86%
Greg Mathis Charter High	20	19%	20%	10%	5%	35%	0%	Predom. Af. Am./High Poverty	4	70%
Lincoln High	25	89%	44%	16%	12%	4%	4%	Predom. Af. Am./High Poverty	1	80%
N. Charleston High	74	69%	18%	5%	23%	19%	10%	Predom. Af. Am./High Poverty	4	75%
Military Magnet Academy	45	91%	73%	0%	7%	9%	7%	Racially Mixed/High Poverty	4	96%
Charleston Charter Math/Science	56	96%	54%	0%	18%	16%	2%	Racially Mixed/Mixed Income	20	89%
James Is. Charter High	378	91%	51%	2%	25%	13%	5%	Racially Mixed/Mixed Income	3	96%
R.B. Stall High	254	65%	25%	6%	4%	19%	10%	Racially Mixed/Mixed Income	4	63%
St. John's High	45	57%	27%	0%	20%	38%	7%	Racially Mixed/Mixed Income	9	91%
West Ashley High	390	77%	42%	0%	31%	22%	5%	Racially Mixed/Mixed Income	10	100%
Wando High	899	91%	59%	2%	28%	5%	3%	Predom. White/Mixed Income	2	97%
Academic Magnet High	150	100%	99%	0%	0%	0%	0%	Predom. White/Affluent	4	99%
Charleston School of the Arts	134	97%	67%	6%	3%	0%	0%	Predom. White/Affluent	4	76%

Note. This data is from the South Carolina Department of Education's *College Freshman Report, Graduating Class of 2016, https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/*

[a] From the South Carolina Department of Education's *State Report Cards,* 2016 https://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/state-report-cards/

[b] Predominant/high designations represent racial and poverty concentrations equal to or greater than 80%

[c] Percent of total completers accounted for by these outcomes

Note to AO Table 8.

The average graduation rate for predominantly African American, high poverty schools was 69% in 2016. For racially mixed, mixed income schools, the average graduation rate was 77% and for predominantly white, affluent schools, the rate was 99%. Matriculation at a four-year institution shows a similar pattern; 34% for the predominantly African American, high poverty schools, 40% for the racially mixed, mixed income schools, and 83% for the predominantly White, affluent schools.

Teacher Diversity [TD]

TD Table 1. Teacher Diversity by Race and Ethnicity: 2015-2016

Teacher Diversity by Race/Ethnicity in Charleston County Public Schools and the State of South Carolina: 2015-16

	Percent of Non-White Students[a]	Percent Non-White Teachers	Percent White Teachers	Percent Afr. Am. Teachers	Percent Hispanic Teachers	Percent Other Teachers	Percent Not Reported
Charleston County	53%	15%	80%	13%	1%	0%	5%
South Carolina	48%	17%	79%	15%	1%	1%	4%

Note. Data from the South Carolina Department of Education, *South Carolina Teachers by Race and Gender* at https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/. Values may not equal 100% due to rounding.

[a] Calculated using data from the South Carolina Department of Education's *2015-2016 135 Day Active Headcount: District Headcount by Gender and Ethnicity* at https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/student-counts/active-student-headcounts/

Note to TD Table 1.

While over half of the students in the Charleston County School District are students of color, 80% of the teachers are white. There is a substantial body of literature indicating that non-White and male students need to see teachers/role models like themselves. We therefore recommend CCSD develop an intensive recruitment and retention plan for school leaders, teachers, and support staff that is reflective of the diversity of the district. Additionally, as some of the teaching and leadership force in CCSD comes from out of state (due to the ongoing educator shortage in South Carolina), new faculty and staff will strongly benefit from intensive professional development on the racial history of Charleston, intercultural competency, and diversity training.

TD Table 2. Teacher Diversity by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

Teacher Diversity in Charleston County Public Schools by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender: 2015-2016

	Charleston	South Carolina
White Males	15%	15%
White Females	65%	64%
Afr. Am. Males	2%	3%
Afr. Am. Females	11%	12%
Hispanic Males	0%	0%
Hispanic Females	1%	1%
Other Males	0%	0%
Other Females	1%	1%
Not Reporting	5%	4%

Note. Calculated using data from the South Carolina Department of Education, *South Carolina Teachers by Race and Gender at https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/*

Note to TD Table 2.
White females are still the main body of the teaching profession but considerable effort should be expended to hire teachers of color and male teachers.

Dollars Spent Per Pupil 2015 [$/P]

$/P Table1. Dollars Spent Per Pupil by School Type: 2015

School Type	Median Dollars Spent Per Pupil
Elementary	$9,210
Middle	$8,864
High	$11,716
District	$9,143

Note. Calculated using data from the South Carolina Department of Education's 2015 Report Card files. Data is not available for 2016 or 2017.

Note to $/P Table 1.

For elementary schools, the largest reported expenditures were for James Simons Elementary School ($53,708), Pattison's Academy for Comprehensive Education ($25,725), and Jane Edwards Elementary School ($17,992). The smallest reported per pupil expenditures were at James B. Edwards Elementary School ($2,983), Drayton Hall Elementary School ($6,101), and Charles Pinckney Elementary School ($6,318).

For middle schools, the largest reported expenditures were for Lincoln Middle-High School[2] ($28,406), Pattison's Academy for Comprehensive Education ($25,725), and Burke Middle and High School ($19,339). The smallest reported per pupil expenditures were at the Thomas C. Cario Middle School ($6,284), the Fort Johnson Middle School ($7,269), and the C.E. Williams Middle School for Creative and Scientific Arts ($7,392).

For high schools, the largest reported expenditures were for Lincoln Middle-High School ($28,406), Pattison's Academy for Comprehensive Education ($25,727), and the Greg Mathis Charter High School ($25,226). The smallest reported per pupil expenditures were at Wando High School ($7,125), the Charleston Charter School for Math and Science ($7,966), and the Charleston County School of the Arts ($8,536).

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[2] This school has been closed since this data was collected.

$/P Table 2. Dollars Spent Per Pupil by School Context: 2015

School Context	Median Dollars Spent Per Pupil
Predominantly African American/High Poverty	$10,823
Racially Mixed/High Poverty	$9,517
Racially Mixed/Mixed Income	$8,702
Predominantly White/Mixed Income	$7,846
Predominantly White/Affluent	$8,695

Note. Calculated using data from the South Carolina Department of Education's 2015 Report Card files.

Note for $/P Table 2.

For predominantly African American, high poverty schools, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for Lincoln High School ($28,406), Greg Mathis Charter High School ($25,226), and Burke High School ($19,339). The smallest reported expenditures were at the Charleston Progressive Academy ($7,116), the Charleston Development Academy Public Charter School ($8,860), and Morningside Middle School ($9,062).

For racially mixed, high poverty schools, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for St. John's High School ($19,794), Jane Edwards Elementary School ($17,992), and Malcolm C. Hursey Elementary School ($11,049). The smallest reported per pupil expenditures were for Northwoods Middle School ($7,544), Pepperhill Elementary School ($8,186), and A.C. Corcoran Elementary School ($8,356).

For racially mixed, mixed income schools, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for James Simons Elementary School ($53,708), Pattison's Academy for Comprehensive Education ($25,725), and Murray Lasaine Elementary School ($15,196). The smallest reported expenditures were for Drayton Hall Elementary ($6,101), Fort Johnson Middle School, and C.E. Williams Middle School for Creative and Scientific Arts ($7,392).

For predominantly White, mixed income schools, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for Harbor View Elementary School ($17,439), Montessori Community School ($16,566) and Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School ($9,908). The smallest reported expenditures were for James B. Edwards Elementary School ($2,983), Wando High School ($7,125), and Stiles Point Elementary School ($7,367).

For predominantly White, affluent schools, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for Sullivan's Island Elementary School ($12,454), the Academic Magnet School ($9,143), and the East Cooper Montessori Charter School ($8,868). The smallest reported expenditures were for Thomas

C. Cario Middle School ($6,284), Charles Pinckney Elementary School ($6,318), and Belle Hall Elementary School ($7,528).

$/P Table 3. Dollars Spent Per Pupil by Constituent District: 2015

Constituent District	Median Dollars Spent Per Pupil
District 2 – Moultrie	$7,640
District 3 - James Island	$8,724
District 4 – Cooper River	$9,132
District 20 – Peninsula	$9,185
District 10 – St. Andrew's	$9,559
District 9 – St. John's	$10,470
District 23 – St. Paul's	$12,132
District 1 – St. James - Santee	$20,536

Note. Calculated using data from the South Carolina Department of Education's 2015 Report Card files.

Note for $/P Table 3.
For District 1, St. James-Santee, there were only two schools, Lincoln High School at $28,406 per pupil and St. James-Santee Elementary School at $12,666 per pupil.

For District 2, Moultrie, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for Sullivan's Island Elementary School ($12,454), East Cooper Montessori Charter School ($8,868), and Laing Middle School ($8,506). The smallest reported expenditures were for James B. Edwards Elementary School ($2,983), Thomas C. Cario Middle School ($6,284), and Charles Pinckney Elementary School ($6,318).

For District 3, James Island, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for Harbor View Elementary School ($17,439), Murray Lasaine Elementary School ($15,196), and James Island Charter High School ($9,473). The smallest reported expenditures were for Fort Johnson Middle School ($7,269), Stiles Point Elementary School ($7,367), and James Island Middle School ($8,090).

For District 4, Cooper River, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for Greg Mathis Charter High School ($25,226), North Charleston High School ($14,368), and the Military Magnet

Academy ($13,196). The smallest reported expenditures were for Northwoods Middle School ($7,544), Ladson Elementary School ($7,560), and Hunley Park Elementary School ($7,904).

For District 9, St. Johns, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for St. John's High School ($19,794) and Edith L. Frierson Elementary School ($13,848). The smallest reported expenditures were for Haut Gap Middle School ($9,051) and Angel Oak Elementary School ($10,316).
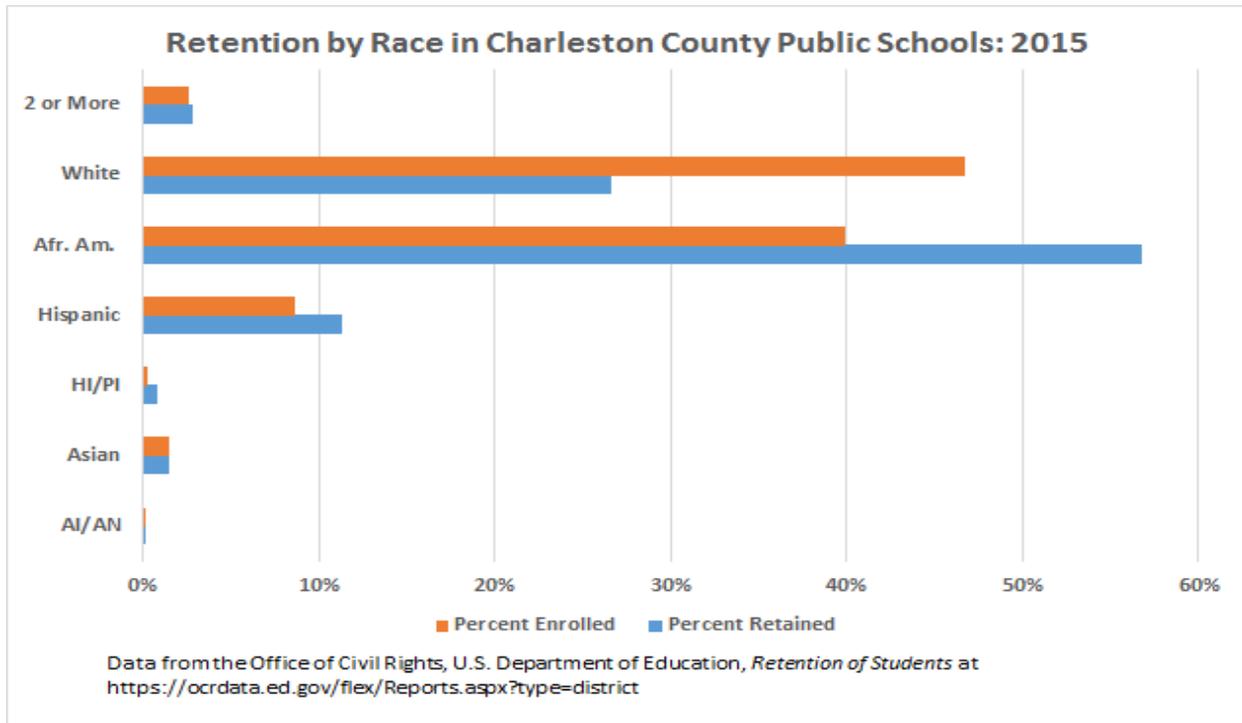
For District 10, St. Andrew's, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for Pattison's Academy for Comprehensive Education ($25,725), the Montessori Community School ($16,566), and St. Andrew's School of Math and Science ($11,640). The smallest reported expenditures were for Drayton Hall Elementary ($6,101), C.E. Williams Middle School for Creative and Scientific Arts ($7,392), and Springfield Elementary ($8,122).

For District 20, the Peninsula District, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for James Simon's Elementary School ($53,708), Burke High School ($19,339), and Sanders-Clyde Elementary School ($10,570). The smallest reported expenditures are for the Charleston Progressive Academy ($7,116), the Charleston Charter School for Math and Science ($7,966), and Buist Academy ($8,695).

For District 23, St. Paul's, the largest reported per pupil expenditures were for Jane Edwards Elementary School ($17,992) and Baptist Hill High School ($13,188). The smallest reported expenditures were for Ellington Elementary School ($9,545) and Minnie Hughes Elementary School ($11,076).

Diversity & Inclusion Status' Effects on Students [D&I]

D&I Table 1: Students Held Back in Grade

Retention by Race in Charleston County Public Schools: 2015

Data from the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, *Retention of Students* at https://ocrdata.ed.gov/flex/Reports.aspx?type=district

Note to Table 1.

African American students represent 40% of the enrollment, **but more than half** of the students who are required to repeat a grade. No education research shows benefits to students who repeat grades. Instead, such students are more likely to have increased absenteeism and more likely to dropout. This data highlights the need for district-wide guidelines for student retention that ensure equitable practices. Furthermore, the data indicates a need for system-wide intensive student intervention systems that progressively assist under-performing students through intensifying tiers of differentiated instructional and behavioral practices. Such interventions should be designed by district staff with expertise in behavior, curriculum and instruction. Nevertheless, the delivery of these interventions may involve community, business, and parent partnerships.

D&I Table 2: Over-identification in Special Education Categories by Race

Students with Disabilities by Race and Disability, Charleston County Public Schools: 2015

Category	AI/AN	Asian	HI/PI	Hispanic	Black	White	2 or More	Total
Autism	0%	0%	0%	1%	34%	65%	0%	100%
Deaf-blindness	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Developmental delay	0%	0%	0%	2%	69%	30%	0%	100%
Emotional disturbance	0%	0%	0%	0%	87%	13%	0%	100%
Hearing impairments	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%
Intellectual disability	0%	0%	0%	2%	77%	21%	0%	100%
Multiple disabilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%
Orthopedic impairments	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Other health impairments	0%	0%	0%	0%	63%	37%	0%	100%
Specific learning disability	0%	0%	0%	7%	64%	29%	0%	100%
Speech or language impairments	0%	0%	0%	2%	38%	60%	0%	100%
Traumatic brain injury	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Visual impairments	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note. Data from the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, *Students with Disabilities, by Disability Categories (2009+)* at https://ocrdata.ed.gov/flex/Reports.aspx?type=district

Note to D&I Table 2:

African American students fill more of the special education categories than their White or Hispanic peers with the exceptions of Autism, Orthopedic impairments, and Speech or language Impairments. African American students are most likely to be identified as exhibiting Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disabilities, and over 60% of several other disabilities classifications. While our team is unable to assess the factors that account for more African American students identified in Special Education services, the data showing such over-identification raises concerns about bias in the processes of tiered interventions practices. We recommend the district's Special Education Team review identification procedures and criteria to ensure consistent and equitable processes, and as well as intercultural competence and diversity training.

D&I Table 3: Disciplinary Actions by Race

Disciplinary Actions by Race in Charleston County Public Schools: 2015

Category	Instances	AI/AN	Asian	HI/PI	Hispanic	Black	White	2 or More	Total	LEP
Corporal punishment		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Out-of-school suspension	100%									
Students receiving one or more in-school suspensions		0%	0%	0%	5%	65%	27%	3%	100%	5%
Students receiving only one out-of-school suspension		0%	1%	0%	7%	71%	18%	3%	100%	7%
Students receiving more than one out-of-school suspension		0%	0%	0%	5%	82%	9%	3%	100%	4%
Expulsions with educational services		0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%	0%
Expulsions without educational services		0%	0%	0%	7%	67%	20%	7%	100%	0%
Expulsions under zero-tolerance policies		0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Transferred to Alternative School		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Referral to law enforcement		0%	0%	0%	13%	53%	21%	13%	100%	13%
School-related arrest		0%	0%	0%	14%	68%	14%	4%	100%	11%
Total enrollment		0%	2%	0%	9%	40%	47%	3%	100%	8%

Note. Data from the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, *Discipline of Students Without Disabilites* at https://ocrdata.ed.gov/flex/Reports.aspx?type=district

Note to D&I Table 3.
Although the overall distribution of disciplinary action reflects a nearly equal distribution between the enrollments of White and African American students, this table shows that African American students received 67% of the expulsions without provision of educational services. They have more referrals to law enforcement as well as more school-related arrests, which are all examples of the influences of race on the school-to-prison-pipeline in criminalizing student behavior. For this school district, the decisions about expulsions begin at the Constituent District Boards. This data strongly indicates a need for a system-wide approach to discipline based on equitable outcomes, in tandem with intercultural training for district personnel and Constituent Board members who are involved in disciplinary decisions.

**D&I Table 4: Race and the Combined Effects on Special Education and Discipline**

Discipline and Disability by Race/Ethnicity and Gender in Charleston County Public Schools: 2015

Category	Sex	AI/AN	Asian	HI/PI	Hispanic	Black	White	2 or More	Total IDEA	504 only	Total
SWD: Corporal punishment	M	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SWD: Corporal punishment	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SWD: Students receiving one or more in-school suspensions	M	0%	0%	0%	3%	38%	12%	2%	55%	21%	76%
SWD: Students receiving one or more in-school suspensions	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%	3%	0%	16%	8%	24%
SWD: Students receiving only one out-of-school suspension	M	0%	1%	0%	2%	37%	12%	2%	53%	20%	73%
SWD: Students receiving only one out-of-school suspension	F	0%	0%	0%	1%	14%	3%	0%	19%	8%	27%
SWD: Students receiving more than one out-of-school suspension	M	0%	0%	0%	3%	46%	8%	2%	60%	18%	78%
SWD: Students receiving more than one out-of-school suspension	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	3%	0%	16%	6%	22%
SWD: Expulsions with educational services	M	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
SWD: Expulsions with educational services	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SWD: Expulsions without educational services	M	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%
SWD: Expulsions without educational services	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SWD: Expulsions under zero-tolerance policies	M	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
SWD: Expulsions under zero-tolerance policies	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SWD: Transferred to Alternative School	M	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SWD: Transferred to Alternative School	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SWD: Referral to law enforcement	M	0%	0%	0%	0%	52%	14%	3%	69%	7%	76%
SWD: Referral to law enforcement	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	3%	0%	21%	3%	24%
SWD: School-related arrest	M	0%	0%	0%	4%	45%	4%	0%	53%	27%	80%
SWD: School-related arrest	F	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%	4%	0%	20%	0%	20%

D&I Note to Table 4.

Given requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students expelled under zero-tolerance policies and those expelled without educational services raise a number of cautions. The distribution by disciplinary actions reinforce the information in Table 3 (prior) indicating multiple ways that race and special education play roles in the criminalization of student behavior on the school-to-prison-pipeline.

D&I Table 5. Gifted and Talented Program Enrollment in Charleston County Public Schools by Race and Ethnicity: 2015
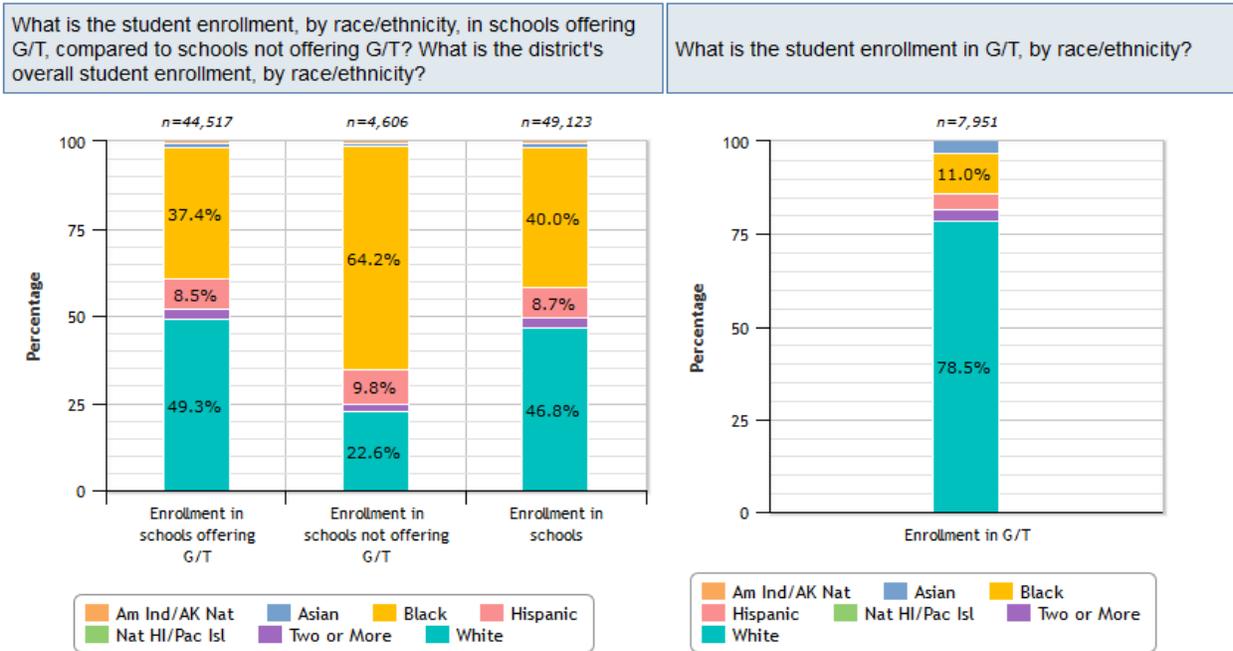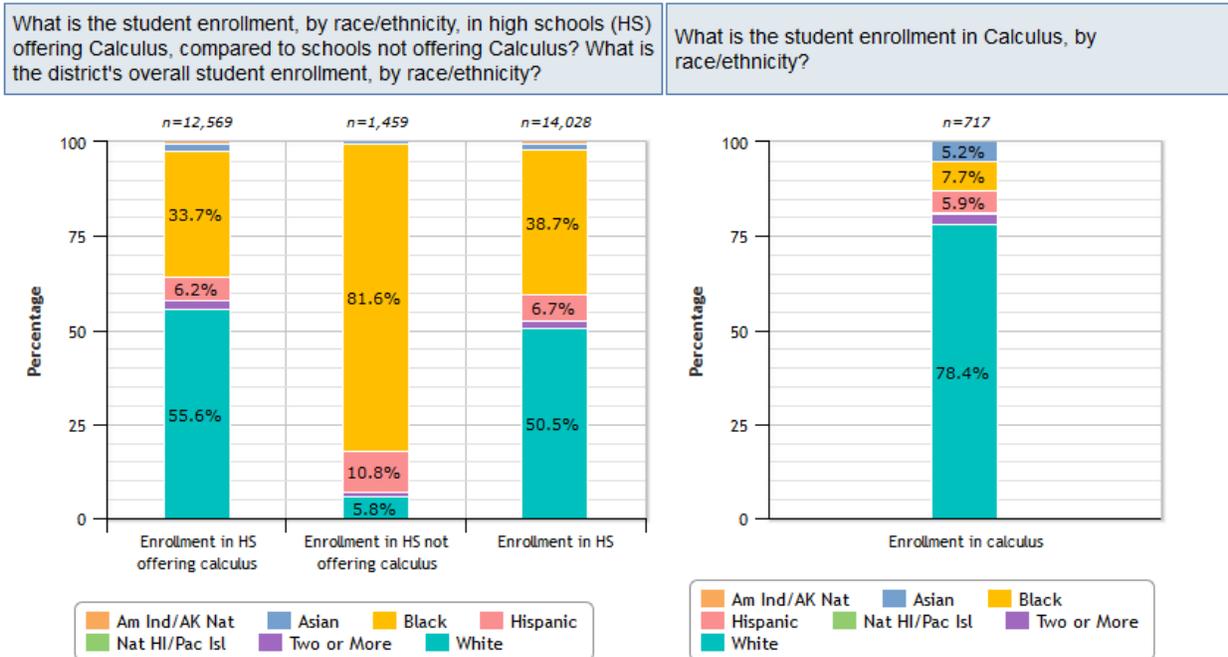

Note. Charts and data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, *Educational Equity Report* at https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Page?t=d&eid=31866&syk=8&pid=2540https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Page?t=d&eid=31866&syk=8&pid=2540https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Page?t=d&eid=31866&syk=8&pid=2540

Note to D&I Table 5.

Although students of color make up over one-half of the students in Charleston County, they are significantly underrepresented in classes for gifted and talented students, comprising only 22%. In addition, schools **without** gifted and talented classes also enroll a majority of students of color. We advise CCSD leadership to design district-wide guidelines that ensure equitable distribution and access to gifted and talented programs. This data also reinforces the need for a systemic plan to increase increases the intercultural competency of current district employees, especially in their sensitivity and analysis of student eligibility for programs for gifted and talented.

D&I Table 6. Calculus Enrollment in Charleston County Public Schools by Race and Ethnicity: 2015

Note. Charts and data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, *Educational Equity Report* at https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Page?t=d&eid=31866&syk=8&pid=2540https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Page?t=d&eid=31866&syk=8&pid=2540https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Page?t=d&eid=31866&syk=8&pid=2540

Note to D&I Table 6.

Research has shown that advanced math classes are critical predictors for college matriculation. However, even though they are nearly one-half of the high school enrollment in the district, students of color comprise only 22% of the students enrolled in calculus. Students of color also make up an overwhelming majority of student enrollment in high schools that do not offer calculus, significantly limiting their postsecondary educational opportunities.

D&I Table 7. Physics Enrollment in Charleston County Public Schools by Race and Ethnicity: 2015
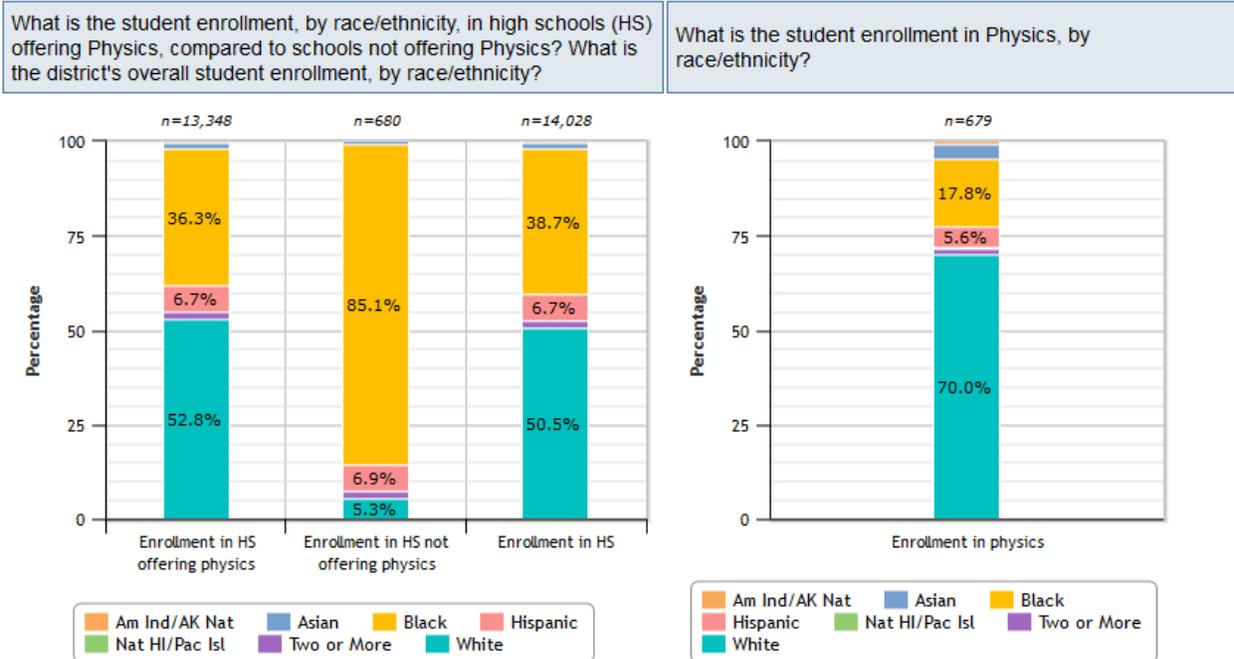
Note to D&I Table 7.

Like calculus, physics can be an important step toward college matriculation. While nearly one-half of students in district high schools are students of color, the proportion taking physics is less than one-third. Notably, high schools with high enrollments of students of color do not offer physics.

Appendix E: Acknowledgements