RECOMMENDATIONS ON MMSD BLACK EXCELLENCE
JUNE 24, 2019

Black Excellence Coalition and Think Tank

Madison, WI

Report compiled by Nichelle Nichols, Family, Youth & Community Engagement, Madison Metro School District
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INTRODUCTION & OPENING STATEMENT

This document and set of recommendations is compiled from the rich array of perspectives from the Black Excellence Coalition, Think Tank and community allies. The expectations, ideas and recommendations represented in this document reflect the voices of Black graduates of the Madison School District, Black educators and administrators in the Madison School District, parents and grandparents of currently enrolled Black and multi-racial students, students, community partners, scholars, higher education faculty, community professionals, activists and concerned citizens. During the process of bringing people together we heard a mix of concerns and unwavering support for the Madison School District to "make things right" for Black students and their families.

As one of the Black Excellence Think Tank members stated, “If the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) is serious about achieving and promoting Black Excellence, it must admit there is an obstructive culture that is a barrier to realizing its stated goal.” There is an appreciation for the stated goal and aspirational claim for Black Excellence in MMSD. Yet, given MMSD’s long history of failing to make space for and to nurture the excellence of Black children and their families, there is an assertion that MMSD must undergo fundamental changes in its organizational culture and practices. Historical and current issues with Black students and families in MMSD have persisted and unfortunately have been highlighted in far too many media outlets and reports to list.

Our recommendations aim to identify and change the conditions that have and continue to impede the expression and nurturance of Black Excellence in the district. Given the complex and dynamic nature of the issues that affect the lives of Black children and their families in Madison, this requires constant vigilance, assessment, and analysis of district efforts by and with Black people so that we can make informed, adaptive changes as necessary in service to the fulfillment of Black Excellence.

We want to see: - Shift in the sense of belonging for Black children and youth - A multi-generational approach to the work - The centering of youth voices - An expansion of resources and access to opportunities – More community participation and sustained engagement – Budget and policy analysis – Sharing of power with those impacted – Support for Black families and staff – Gender justice – Our Black children protected and believed.
BLACK EXCELLENCE COALITION

Why a Coalition?

The Madison School District knows that it cannot create solutions for Black students in isolation. The District recognizes that it must include and honor those who hold expertise and lived experiences to share our success and address persistent issues that hinder our commitment to Black Excellence. The forming of a Black Excellence Coalition has been an inclusive and intentional approach on the District’s part to partner and share power with those who are impacted across and within the school system. Several groups of individuals have been engaged around a common goal: To ensure that Black students, their families, and staff working inside the system receive the support they need to thrive. These individuals have been instrumental in forming the recommendations and will be critical to the success of future strategies that will positively impact Black students, families and staff. The Madison Metro School District knows that coalition building takes time and sustained effort and we commit our energy and resources to build, grown and sustain this Coalition.

Purpose of the Coalition

The Black Excellence Coalition is charged with the task of applying analysis, developing recommendations and challenging the District to actualize on its stated goal for Black Excellence.

Guiding Principles of the Coalition

- We will center the voices of our Black students and generate ideas and examples that will provide Black students with liberating experiences that value and affirm their strengths and gifts instead of focusing on deficits.
- We want MMSD to pay attention to what Black families and staff are sharing about their experiences with the District and we hold an expectation that these issues will be acted upon with urgency.
- We want to help identify a new set of metrics that will help the District measure the wellbeing of Black students.

2018-19

The District’s Family, Youth & Community Engagement Department began holding meetings on February 26, 2019 for parents of Black children. It should be noted that White parents of bi-racial and adopted Black students have been included. The group developed conversation agreements for the meetings, listened and supported each other and engaged in a variety of topics to help inform the recommendations. The coalition has provided a space for parents (and staff) to talk about their experiences and to also learn what the District is doing in some key areas that were of most interest to Black Excellence. Approximately 75 people attended eight (8) meetings between February – June, 2019. See appendix for meeting notes.
Black Excellence Think Tank

The Black Excellence Think Tank is an invited group of brilliant thinkers and GET-IT-DONE Black folx dedicated to Black people in the greater Madison area. This group was formed to help accelerate the thinking on what it will take to achieve Black Excellence in MMSD.

Members of the Black Excellence Think Tank

- Astra Iheukumere, Director of Strategic Partnerships, MMSD and graduate of MMSD
- Brandi Grayson, Parent, Activist, Founder of Urban Triage, LLC
- Camara Stovall, Parent, Teacher, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute
- Christin Calloway, Race to Equity Policy Associate, KidsForward
- Dr. Gloria Ladson, Professor Emeritus, UW-Madison, School of Education
- Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, Founder, Natural Circles of Support
- Jasmia Hamilton, Parent, Race & Gender Equity Coordinator, YWCA
- Mahner Dahnweih - Community Power Building Coordinator, Freedom Inc.
- Marian Slaughter, Facilitator, Natural Circles of Support
- Matt Braunginn, Senior Associate with the Mayors Innovation Project, Center on Wisconsin Strategy
- Prenicia Clifton, Precollege Director, UW-Madison
- Qiana Holmes-Abanukam, Parent, Education Specialist, Road Home
- Roderick “Rudy” Bankston, Restorative Justice Coach, MMSD
- Vanessa McDowell, CEO, YWCA of Madison

What does Black Excellence mean to you? “A black person being the best person they can be. Not succeeding by everyone else’s standards, but by succeeding by the standards we set ourselves.” - 12th Grade, West High
Expectations of the Black Excellence Coalition and Think Tank

Those who have participated have given their time and talent freely to identify the major areas of concerns and areas of opportunity regarding Black Excellence. It was important to those involved to know that their dedication and expertise are valued by the District. Thus, the following expectations:

1. We expect to influence and/or review policy around systemic Black Excellence within MMSD. We would like to be part of a policy group that assists with policy review focused on the impact on Black students. We know we add value to identifying systemic issues and barriers that prevent Black excellence from being achieved.

2. We expect that members of this group are part of a regular agenda with Administrators and Board of Education members, depending on our requested needs.

3. We expect to evaluate and improve upon these recommendations along the way. We offer these initial recommendations in June, 2019 and will continue to refine and evaluate them as the work and investments continue over several years. We will monitor how the recommendations are implemented.

4. We expect that Black Excellence will be a budget priority in the next fiscal budget (2019-2020). We see the proposed $350,000 as an initial investment. We expect to see a permanent line item with room to grow dedicated to Black Excellence infrastructure and initiatives in the future.

5. We expect to be in partnership with MMSD on developing the proposals and ideas of how dedicated funds are spent and guided by our recommendations.

6. We expect to be able to hold the District accountable for the Black youth experience in MMSD. Specifically, we expect that the District and schools create a culture of high expectations and academic success for Black students and their families. We want to ensure that the social and emotional needs of Black students are being met, with a specific effort to use culturally responsive, restorative and trauma-informed practices in schools and community. We expect to help determine and the academic supports needed that will help Black students thrive and excel.
We want to center the voices, ideas and experiences of Black youth first and foremost. We believe our recommendations address the systemic issues that we know must be addressed in order for MMSD to achieve its goal. We are not starting with traditional academic data. Instead, we focus on the voices of our youth. The following pages (7-12) highlight what they say about Black Excellence.

In June 2019 the Madison Metro School District administered a Black Excellence survey to students who are identified as African American and Multiracial students with Black/African ancestry in grades 6 through 12. The results are as below and indicate what youth say they need. (As of June 11, 2019, n= 608 respondents). Open-ended responses from students were coded into themes by MMSD Data & Survey Analyst. We have also included some examples of direct quotes from students in response to questions.

“Black Excellence is not just something that should be talked about, but should be represented. Make students comfortable in class, reach out for student voice, and share cultures. It’s not even just about education, it’s who we are individuals and what we’ve accomplished in our past, present, and what we will accomplish in our future. So, Black Excellence can mean 1,000 things, but it's how we live through it and cherish it as much as we can.” – 8th grade, Sennett Middle School

In your school, have you heard teachers, staff or your peers talk about Black Excellence?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>608</td>
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</table>
What does Black Excellence mean to you? Choose all that apply.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black people come from excellence - our history includes amazing people</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black people do great things - we are excellent in many things that we do</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black students can accomplish excellence in school, college and careers</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black students with really good grades and test scores are excellent</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have pride in being Black and celebrate my people, my culture</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ideas, please tell us what they are:</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other ideas (coded by theme): Celebrating Perseverance (31% / 15 responses);
Excellence applies to all (18% / 9 responses); Setting High Standards for Oneself (8% / 4 responses)

- “Black Excellence is black people coming together, uplifting one another and accepting who we are by loving ourselves and our history even though it holds a lot of pain.” - 10th Grade, Shabazz High
- “Black Excellence is more than just resilience, strength, courage, patience, etc. My people have been taken advantage of, beaten, lynched, accused, bruised and yet we still get back up and try again. We continue to prove those who doubt us wrong and then the same breath pray for their lives to be filled with joy. I could have easily said that I have great pride in my culture and my people, however I just wanted you to get a little feel of just how important it is to me.” - 12th Grade, West High
- “Black excellence is lifting our brothers and sisters up with no judgment or corruption. Regaining our true history and loving our true selves despite the circumstances placed upon melaninated humans” – 8th Grade, Hamilton
- “Taking our color, the current oppressions and our history and using it as motivation to achieving great things.” – 9th Grade, Memorial High School
- “Thriving in a school environment that’s not necessarily pro black” – 10th Grade, West High School
- “Black excellence is all black people. It’s the way we talk the way we walk and the way we carry ourselves in a nation that has no respect for our people” – 11th Grade, Capital High
- “Black excellence is every African- American person, it is not described by what they do but what they strive for and believe. (Black excellence is just being yourself)” – 6th Grade, Cherokee
- “Multiracial equality” – 7th Grade, Badger Rock
- “We also can do bad things but that does not mean we are bad people, or violent” – 6th Grade, Cherokee
- “Black excellence to me is a black person who finds something they’re good at and pushes that ability to become the best. Whether it is speaking, writing, drawing, playing an instrument, or anything. If they realize their potential ability and use it to push themselves or speak out to others in any way possible, that would be a black person, showing and supporting black excellence.” – 8th Grade, Jefferson
What makes you feel valued as a Black youth?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating Black History &amp; Culture</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Recognized &amp; Heard</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelling Academically or Personally</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in Black Student Groups</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Peer &amp; Adult Support</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Around Family</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Hair or My Skin Color</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Treated Equally</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a Role Model or Leader</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- “I feel valued when there are teachers that look like me” - 8th Grade, Black Hawk Middle School
- “What makes me feel valued is being believed in and being pushed to newer limits. The bar right now is too low for Black students, and I appreciate being held to higher standards.” - 8th Grade, O’Keeffe
- “Knowing that I’m making a change for those who were unable to.” - 12th Grade, La Follette
- “I feel valued as a black youth when my history is embraced in a positive light other than my ancestors just being slaves. Also, when people take the time to realize how much black culture has influenced today’s society.” - Grade 8, Sennett
- “That I can share my experience of being an African American with other African Americans.” – 7th grade, Spring Harbor
- “I feel valued when I’m in black clubs like sisterhood and BSU” – 9th grade, East

Does your school offer groups that meet the needs of Black youth?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>Definitely yes</td>
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<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probably yes</td>
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<td>134</td>
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<tr>
<td>Might or might not</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably not</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely not</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>415</td>
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What could the school change to help students feel better about being in the school?

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<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Update Curriculum/Classes</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Support Systems</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hire Black Teachers</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address Racism</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Groups for Black Youth</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat Students Equally</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Black History Month</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Staff Behavior</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- “When teaching lessons in classes like social studies; not only focus on what happened in white history because that’s what they focus on the most (white history) and the only black history they talk about is slavery when there is so much more than that! They are teaching us that since in the past that black ppl were slaves, that they are basically not strong and kind of less than everyone! and, the only time when everyone takes the time to learn about black people, in general, is in February.” – 7th Grade, O’Keeffe
- “Inform students on the importance of not saying racial slurs, Black Student Union, Maybe when talking about black history, talk about what happened with our history, history about our ancestors history letting students know that our history isn't only slaves, MLK, and Harriet Tubman.” – 7th Grade, Spring Harbor
- “Have more groups for us.” – 8th Grade, Whitehorse
- “Have the Multiracial, Black, and just colored all around people talk in a group to each other about how they feel about their school.” – 7th grade, Black Hawk
- “Maybe doing like how they do in college having a room dedicated to black kids to walk in hang out, study, talk, get extra help. Also, having a multicultural office for colored kids period instead of just having a student services.” – 11th Grade, Memorial
- “A more culturally accepting place where students can depend on each other and on staff members to get help. But most importantly, MORE BLACK TEACHERS. Not support staff, not special ed teachers (though we could always use more of them), but Black classroom teachers that can be there to support students all day.” – 8th Grade, O’Keeffe
- “Change the book in history class. Fix the gap that forms between minority and white students. Have support systems in place that are made up of mainly black staff so that they’re on the same wavelength as the students they’re talking to. Encourage the sharing of African culture and knowledge in the classroom” – 11th Grade, East
- “Help the people who really need the help, even though some may not want it. Or have BLACK teacher teach them so they feel more comfortable.” – 8th Grade, Sherman
What are your ideas for making Black Excellence a reality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create Clubs/Activities for Black Students</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broaden the Curriculum</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise Expectations for Black Students</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Black Students</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize Student Achievement</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire Black Teachers</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect with Successful Black Adults</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
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- “1. Create clubs and events, and even activities to help Black, Multiracial, etc. students feel like they belong and that they don’t have to be shy to speak on what they believe; 2. Have meetings with students on how they are doing, how’s their day going, and just to check in one their daily life; 3. make sure all of the students feel welcome at La Follette” – 9th Grade, La Follette
- “Have groups at community centers and having pot lucks and picnics that surround black excellence” – 8th Grade, Black Hawk
- “Have more black groups BSU, etc. Celebrations, show off black students” – 9th Grade, East
- “Having black excellence campaigns and afterschool actives involving black excellence” – 6th Grade, Cherokee
- “Having more groups and events to support black youth and just schools showing kids that they can exceed in so much more then what they might see in movies or everyday life” – 7th Grade, Spring Harbor
- “I’ve been thinking about a project that I call W.E.B.S. Which stands for Woke Educated Black Students. I want this project to help students (especially Seniors in Highschool and College) find where they’re going next in their lives. Help them through hardships and help them achieve their dreams and goals. I’m still planning project W.E.B.S but I think it will be a phenomenal change to our educational system. Helping students of ANY age make it big in their lives. I hope you consider this plan.” – 8th Grade, Sennett
- “More black clubs and groups” – 11th Grade, East
- “I feel like it’s about showing our skills and what we have learned and how we have improved over time.” – 8th Grade, Sherman
- “Black Excellence is already a reality, it’s just a matter of encouraging other students to believe that it is within them. Let them find the subjects and the places where their black excellence can shine. For a lot of black students, they are simply not given the opportunity to reach out or improve. Allow them to do more.” – 11th Grade, West
- “We need to readjust something’s about our curriculum. We need to make what we learn about more culturally diverse. I’m tired of hearing about slavery, I’m tired of hearing about how black people couldn’t fight wars with white people until the Tuskegee airmen, I’m tired of hearing about Martin Luther king for two days and then totally dismissing his power. Let’s learn about successful black people that aren’t athletes or rappers, and implement that into what we are told to learn by the district.” – 9th Grade, La Follette
Rank suggestions about Black Excellence, with 1 being most important and 5 being the least important idea.

Change the books we read, teach us about our history

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>284</td>
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Create social or interest groups focused on the needs of Black youth

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<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>284</td>
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Have a dedicated space for the Black student union or a culture center

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<th>4</th>
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<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>284</td>
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Display artwork that reflects Black culture

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<th>5</th>
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<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>284</td>
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Hold special events like assemblies, celebrations for Black youth

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<th>Rank</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>284</td>
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STUDENT IDEAS – FROM BLACK STUDENT UNIONS

The Executive Director of Family, Youth & Community Engagement visited each Black Student Union to ask them their thoughts about Black Excellence during 2018-19. Students shared these comments about Black Excellence:

- “We need more celebrations – like a mini Essence Fest (music, artists)"
- “There could be a city-wide or school level showcase of arts & athletics”
- “We need more teachers of Color”
- “Draw upon African heritage, celebrate African culture, AFRO beats!”
- “Collaborate with other clubs – let’s show Unity with other students who feel marginalized”
- “BSU is the one place where I feel affirmed!”
- “We need more role models, especially Black female role models at our schools.”
- “We want more opportunities to do community service out in the community.”
- “We want to run our own events (that generate income for us)”
- “We want our own space (they have a designated room, but sometimes are kicked out of the space).”
- “Hold an assembly for the Black students. We could have a panel of speakers and just an opportunity to talk about stuff.”
- “Encourage more community members to get involved”
- “Share Black history facts on the monitors in the school, year round, not just during Black History month.”
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on lived experiences, recent community responses to racialized events in MMSD and information presented by District staff at Black Excellence Coalition meetings. These recommendations are not exhaustive, but are aimed to change the conditions that have and continue to impede the expression and nurturance of Black Excellence in the district.

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| Invest in Our Black Students            | 1. Create a report that uses qualitative and quantitative data that establishes a baseline of experiences that Black students are having in schools. We want to know about experiences of culture, climate, acts of racism and how students experience adult responses to behavior. We strongly recommend that some of the funding for Black Excellence be used to contract with an external organization to capture authentic Black student experiences.  
2. Invest resources to empower children and youth with tools on how to self-advocate and report on racist incidents and other acts of discrimination. | 1. 2019-2020 (year 1)  
2. 2019-2020 (year 1) |
| Address Discipline Disproportionality   | 1. We want the implementation of the Behavior Education Plan to address racialized outcomes for Black students that are indicators the school-to-prison pipeline. We expect to see increased investment in restorative justice and other support services to students.  
2. If any school decides to pilot the removal of a School Resource Office there should be a comprehensive evaluation plan so there is accuracy and transparency about the effects on students and staff. | 1. 2019-2020 (year 1)  
2. TBD |
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| Budget Investments             | 1. Dedicate an investment in Black Excellence beginning in 2019-2020. We support the proposed $250,000 from Fund 80 and the $100,000 from Local (Fund 10). This investment is a starting point; we do not believe it will be enough to have significant impact over time.  
2. Use Black youth in the process to help determine programming and supports they say they want and need. We want them to feel the impact. Funding process and spending plan should be guided and aligned by results of the Black Excellence survey and directly by youth participation. | 1. 2019-2020 and subsequent years.                                                                                                                   |
| Change Curriculum and Enhance Community Role in Black History | 1. We propose that Black community members and partners can play a critical role in enhancing efforts on teaching Black history and racial socialization for students. MMSD needs to include Black people in the design to teach Black history. | 1. 2019-2020 (year 1; meet with Social Studies to scope out work)                                                                                   |
| Human Resources                | 1. Performance management of teachers: Consider using a quality assessment checklist for teachers to use in the classroom to increase feelings of belonging and respect (such as Youth Program Quality Assessment)  
2. Benchmark against other Districts that are using Human Resource processes and trainings to prevent and disrupt racism and discrimination in the classroom (similar in the way that | 1. 2019-2020 (year 1; meet with Social Studies to scope out work)                                                                                   |
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| Professional Development of staff – racial equity / cultural competence | 1. Professional learning of teachers on issues of race, culture and equity should be **measured through** student surveys / focus groups at least quarterly. We want to know how learning by teachers results in relationships with students.  
2. Set an expectation that **all staff** have to be culturally competent and emphasize they have to do the work (it is not the job of People of Color). Train staff on how to have uncomfortable conversations and (2a). Create support systems for teachers to process. MMSD must create the spaces for teachers to do this reflective work.  
3. Invest in professional learning to help teachers learn how to differentiate their instruction and develop lesson plans to engage students. Too many students say they are not engaged. We need Black Excellence inside classrooms.  
4. Invest in **all staff** (not just behavior responders) having trauma informed care training using techniques that are culturally relevant.  
5. Engage youth in identifying teachers and staff who are excellent in equity and feature them. | 1. 2019-2020 Report out Spring 2020  
2. Begin 2019-2020; multi-year  
3. 2019-2020 (meet with Professional Learning Department to scope out) |---|
| Support Families                             | 1. Due to the economic conditions that many Black families endure in this community, we want to see Black parents who can serve as liaisons or | 1. 2019-2020 (year 1 – explore options)  
2. 2019-2020 (year 1-expect options) |---|
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|                                  | advocates get paid (perhaps as Peer-to-Peer advocates). Invest in training parents.  
2. Create an independent Ombudsman office so that families have ability to share concerns and incidents with “neutral” office.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                    |
| Engage community partners in impactful ways | 1. Create a list of all community partners who currently work with District and set a goal that if community partners receive any District funds they must demonstrate which students they serve. Set a priority for those who serve majority Black students.  
2. Use community partners in new and innovative ways to provide solutions for Black students and families. Convene community partners to generate ideas that can be implemented; partner with the City of Madison too.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1. & 2. (2019-2020)                |
| District Level Accountability    | 1. Include Black parent and student input on the hiring of the next Superintendent – we want influence and power. We also want to have ongoing interactions with leadership as we need.  
2. Ensure that bargaining teams with MTI reflect the % of Black student body  
3. Work with the Black Excellence Coalition / Think Tank to develop a multi-year plan. We want to see more evidence that there is a long term plan that will survive through any leadership changes at MMSD.  
4. Add staff capacity to the Family, Youth & Community Engagement Department so that Black Excellence work can                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | District level can start in 2019-2020 |
**Category**

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<tr>
<td>continue. There needs to be adequate staffing for Black Excellence.</td>
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<td>5. Ensure that all major plans across the District that impact students, teaching and learning have a real commitment to Black Excellence.</td>
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**Data Requests and Future Reports**

We know that data is important, however you will notice we did not lead our recommendations with a reference to traditional academic data. We want to expand our thinking beyond the ways that Black children and youth are defined. We will hold the District accountable for educating Black children and youth and will keep our eyes on the data, but we want to capture other data points.

- We expect there will be an annual report on the metrics connected to Goal 3 and what key actions the District is taking to impact the metrics.
- We want students and their families to know there is accountability for the emotional trauma of discipline and other racist acts. We want regular reporting on how these issues have been handled.
- We want to see the budget analyzed to show total investments across District in Black children (not just children of Color).
- The topic of curriculum and teaching our Black students about the history of the Diaspora continues to surface. We want a report on what efforts are being made to diversify the books and curriculum being used in schools per grade level and the process for selection.
- MMSD has recently hired a recruiter. We want a bi-annual report on the recruitment strategies that will bring in more Black educators; a report on the retention rates for Teachers of Color and specifically Black teachers and staff. We want this separated from teachers and staff of Color and support staff. Include efforts made to retain the Black teachers you have.
- Report out on what professional learning is happening specifically on race & equity (content and frequency).
- We request that the District be transparent about how it is using data. The District should articulate which students are defined as Black in data sets and reports.
Next Steps

These recommendations signify the completion of one benchmark and the beginning of the next phase of work.

Below is a general outline of the next phase of work for 2019-2020:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
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<tr>
<td>Develop funding process for Black Excellence investments</td>
<td>July – August 30, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Announce Funding Process and selection cycle for Black Excellence investments</td>
<td>September 1 – October 15, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write a multi-year plan to incorporate these recommendations and prioritize which will directly impact youth in 2019-2020 (along with budget).</td>
<td>August – October 30, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold meetings, gather data and determine timeline for requested reports and evaluation</td>
<td>July – December, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold meetings, monitor implementation of recommendations and assess impact of funding process</td>
<td>January – April, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refine recommendations for 2020-2021</td>
<td>April – May 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget requests for 2020-2021</td>
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Appendix
Coalition Meeting Notes
Previous Feedback from EQTbyDesign, LLC
Black Excellence
Meeting Notes on 2/26/19
Meeting #1
JC Wright Middle School (LMC)

We had 16 parents attend the meeting.
Racial representation of families appeared to be: 10 Black, 5 White, 1 Multi-racial
Parents represented Leopold, Franklin, Chavez, Shorewood, Crestwood, Randall, Glen Stephens, Lindbergh, Hamilton, JC Wright, West, Jefferson, East, West and La Follette

Purpose of the meeting:

- Learn more about MMSD means by Black Excellence and the goal on African American students
- Share feedback and reactions
- Discuss racial composition of Black Excellence Coalition members
- Identify next steps that can be taken to keep the momentum going

Initial reactions/ comments to the presentation (verbal sharing in the group)

- It’s about accountability. How is the District going to deliver?
- Who is teaching the PD?
- Kids don’t learn from people they don’t like. Why do you keep staff who aren’t on board?
- Do teachers have a safe space to voice their biases? You have to know what they are really thinking and feeling.
- Why can’t we bring amazing Black folks from the community into the PD? That’s where the Coalition and the PD/ Learning should come together. Representation in the PD matters. Experience of what happens also matters. Let us be in the role plays.
- What are the resources for Black Excellence?
- What is being done to change the curriculum?

What are your initial reactions to Black Excellence? (Written responses)

- Needed! Huge task on several fronts
- Love it!!! Great start. Need more resources
- I think it’s a huge hill to climb but necessary to do
- Much needed. Long overdue discussion.
- Not a product, but a process. Collaboration is essential.
- Not about perfection, but progress.
- It’s great and we have a great need and plenty of work to do.
- Black Excellence is a mindset that does not have a one size fits all definition, but needs to be felt, heard and experienced at every school.
- Accountability for racist teachers.
- Set measureable goals/minimum for engagement.
- What is on the ground?
• Culturally relevant materials are needed.
• Black Excellence doesn’t have one single definition.
• Budget shift from ERO to resources
• About time!

What role do you think you can play? (Written responses)
• Participate on committee meetings (evenings are better).
• Lead on an educator’s perspective (White educator)
• School ambassador. Each schools should have some parents designated as Black Excellence ambassadors.
• Educate myself so I can speak to it and be part of the solution instead of the problem.
• I can be an ambassador when the money is here.
• As a white parent I want to hear, listen, learn and become an intentional ally.
• Will be willing to align my business with the goals.
• Not focusing on racism but helping to create/educate/awareness of equity.
• Setting action items.
• Combine community coalition with anti-racist education and professional development team.
• Whatever role is needed.

Other thoughts (written responses)
• Hiring of Black staff. I’d love to figure that out.
• Happy to participate. Happy to sit out if that helps too
• Being part of the discussion of how the road will look to get there.
• Not complaining about problems, but develop solutions. Focus on the positive.
• Let’s get started and start with the children and families.
• Thank you for getting this to the forefront of the framework.
• How does DLI play into Black Excellence?
• What about IEPs and 504 Plans?
• How can we strive for Black Excellence when there’s a dis-connect with MMSD & families?
• What about quality early education?
• Can funding be shifted from EROs to Black Excellence?
• Start with who you have – this should be a movement focused on everyone who strives for Black Excellence.

Suggested Next Steps
• Have another meeting in March. Use email and FB to communicate. Let’s keep it going! (Nichelle needs to find a date in March before Spring Break)
• You need to tell us what we can do! (Let’s turn this into action)
• Next meeting – we want to focus more on the Coalition description, make edits, and get clear about how to turn this into real work.
We also need to build relationships with one another, get to know each other (we need to establish ground rules for how we want to engage with each other and determine how white parents of Black children will play a role in the Coalition). Someone suggested the guidelines from the Color Brave Space.
Black Excellence
Meeting Notes on 3/19/19
Meeting #2
JC Wright Middle School (LMC)

We had 17 parents and staff attend the meeting. Racial representation of attendees appeared to be: 11 Black, 5 White, 1 Multi-racial. Two parents were present from the first meeting on 2/26/19. Parents represented Midvale/Lincoln, Leopold, Franklin, Chavez, Shorewood, Crestwood, Randall, Marquette, Van Hise, Hamilton, JC Wright, West, Jefferson, Sennett, East, West and La Follette

**Purpose of the meeting:**

- Determine our group values and agreements
- Build community with one another
- Review purpose of the Coalition and make suggested edits
- Identify topics for future meetings in April

The group was provided with a self-reflection worksheet from “Being Color Brave” as a way to share and meet with others in the group. Attendees enjoyed getting to meet people, but it was noted that the worksheet was centered in whiteness and should not be used at a Coalition on Black Excellence.

The group developed the following **Group Values & Agreements:**

- Confidentiality – take what you learn and protect the personal information
- Be solution focused
- Assume positive intentions with people
- Speak your truth without apology
- Keep Black students at the center
- Share air time
- Center Black voices
- White fragility will not derail the conversation

Small groups worked on the purpose of the Coalition and provided edits. *Changes are bolded and italicized.*
Purpose of the Coalition
The Black Excellence Coalition is charged with the task of making demands and recommendations developing key recommendations and actions that will have the following impacts for Black students, families and staff in MMSD.

- Affirm excellence
- Create conditions to shape and transform mindsets of educators
- Provide liberating experiences for our students to learn and affirm the richness of African and African American people and the way that racial inequities occur in educational systems
- Promote and nurture social emotional learning in our Black students Provide support groups (social – emotional, trauma) and meeting space/circles for mentoring/tutoring that is supported by parents
- Create a culture for success for students and their families
- Determine how we can create more safe spaces for honest, healing and growth for our Black students Create space for restorative justice
- Address academic supports and any other supports needed from the perspective of our Black students and families
- Black parent advocacy
- Reducing policing in schools (with accountability)
- All staff (including Black staff) maintain high standards for Black students
- Give parents tools to support students and be more present in the schools
- Engage and pay parents to influence / support students
- Engage staff in cultural competence and emphasize they have to do the work (it is not the job of People of Color). Train staff on how to have uncomfortable conversations.
- Hold administration and staff accountable
- Build relationships and trust with staff and administration
- Protect our children with excellence
- Identify and remove barriers to address inequities

Future topics in April

- Review data (where are we drawing it from?)
- Need to know more about hiring practices
- Want to know more about professional learning (who and what)
- We have to have youth voice centered in these recommendations
We had 8 parents and staff attend the meeting. Racial representation of attendees appeared to be: 5 Black, 3 White, 7 of 8 attendees have attended before.
Parents represented Chavez, Crestwood, JC Wright, West, Jefferson, Sennett, East, West and La Follette

**Purpose of the meeting:**

- Build community with one another
- Review recommendations on ways to engage more families and community members from EQT by Design report and strategize on ways to get more people involved
- Review purpose of the Coalition and tease out more recommendations

The group follows these **Group Values & Agreements:**

- Confidentiality – take what you learn and protect the personal information
- Be solution focused
- Assume positive intentions with people
- Speak your truth without apology
- Keep Black students at the center
- Share air time
- Center Black voices
- White fragility will not derail the conversation

The group used the EQT by Design: MMSD Report on Neighborhood-Centered Engagement Sessions recommendations from April 6, 2018 to determine next steps to broaden our reach and engagement as the Black Excellence Coalition.

It was noted:
We need to continue to have consistent spaces like we have been having to bring interested community members / families and staff together. It’s important for people to have a voice and a place to share their truth.

We need to “amp” up the commitment from those who have been attending. For instance, if you are part of the Coalition, make the commitment for a specific amount of time in order to get more traction. Nichelle said she needs to make this clearer.

We need to customize how we’re notifying people to come – use a variety of platforms to do so.

We should be leveraging parent liaisons and Principals and letting people know this group exists. Why are we asking schools to have a representative at these meetings?

We need to do more to build awareness. Do more informal networking using the Black Educators Network. Put an ad in Umojaa, Cap City Hues and work with Madison365.org Use word of mouth from this group. We need more people to know this is happening.

We need to build more trust in this process. People need to know that this is a safe space and we have a voice.

Change meeting locations. Get out to churches, community centers.

MMSD needs to show up differently.

We reviewed the revised purpose of the Black Excellence Coalition from the March meeting. It was noted that some of the edits actually incorporated specific recommendations and should be pulled out as recommendations. Nichelle Nichols said she would do that and bring back to the group.

Purpose of the Coalition (updated April 2019)

The Black Excellence Coalition is charged with the task of making demands and recommendations that will have the following impacts for Black students, families and staff in MMSD.

Students
• Provide liberating experiences for our students to learn about the richness of African and African American people and the way that racial inequities occur in educational systems
• Provide support groups to address social – emotional, trauma)
• Create space for restorative justice
• Reducing policing in schools (with accountability)
• Create a culture for success for students and their families
• Address academic supports and any other supports needed from the perspective of our Black students and families (mentoring / tutoring) and can be supported by parents

**Families**
• Give parents tools to support students and be more present in the schools
• Engage and pay parents to influence / support students
• *Black parent advocacy*

**Staff**
• All staff (including Black staff) maintain high standards for Black students
• Engage staff in cultural competence and emphasize they have to do the work (it is not the job of People of Color).
• Train staff on how to have uncomfortable conversations
• Build relationships and trust with staff and administration
• Hold administration and staff accountable
• Protect our children with excellence
• Identify and remove barriers to address inequities
We had 17 parents and staff attend the meeting. Racial representation of attendees appeared to be: 13 Black, 1 Multiracial, and 3 White. 5 of 17 attendees have attended before. Parents represented Chavez, Crestwood, Mendota, JC Wright, West, Jefferson, Sennett, East, West and La Follette, UW Madison, DVR

**Purpose of the meeting:**

- Build community with one another
- Hear and discuss the District’s plan to have staff complete professional learning in racial equity in 2019-2020.
- Make emerging recommendations regarding professional learning

The group follows these **Group Values & Agreements:**

- Confidentiality – take what you learn and protect the personal information
- Be solution focused
- Assume positive intentions with people
- Speak your truth without apology
- Keep Black students at the center
- Share air time
- Center Black voices
- White fragility will not derail the conversation

**The District’s Plan to advance racial equity through professional learning**

The Executive Director of MMSD Professional Learning was present to discuss the drafted plan. A PowerPoint was used to illustrate the drafted core beliefs and guiding principles for the District’s plan to implement a required 2.5-hours professional learning experience on issues related to race, racism and equity with all staff in 2019-2020. The PowerPoint also showed how the District embeds topics of racial equity in various professional learning
venues throughout the year. More detailed information was shared in a written plan that showed: induction of new principals, assistant principals and educators; quarterly institutes with school-based leadership teams; the plan for Welcome Back days in August at District and school level and the six (6) professional learning days scheduled into the school calendar.

The group was also told that MMSD is partnering with the YWCA to help us build internal capacity to facilitate the racial equity PD. In addition, some schools will go deeper and also complete the 16 hours of training in the YWCA curricula, led by trained facilitators.

**Questions and Comments from the group**

- “Those beliefs and the theory behind the professional learning is good, but will it happen?” [parent]
- “How are you selecting the facilitators?” [parent]
- “You say that a few schools will go deeper with the YWCA training – how will you select the schools?” [parent]
- “What exactly is the follow-up after induction of the new people?” [parent]
- “What about all the other people who aren’t new to the District?” [parent]
- “So all staff will have a 2.5-hours module and then what?” [parent]
- “We know there is White fragility with some of these teachers, there has to be something on this.” [parent]
- “There has to be choice in this required professional learning. There’s such a spectrum of what people understand about racism. I have gone out and done my own learning. Things get watered down by the time it get to the teacher level.” [staff person]
- “Will this change the curriculum? I want to know is it going to impact and translate in the classroom? What will be different?” [parent]
- “As teachers become more self-aware, it’s the beginning and it influences the way we teach and the curriculum we use” [staff person]
• “There’s so much stuff to deconstruct” [staff person]

• “What is the accountability for Principals? Because I hear something is happening at one school, but at my school it isn’t happening.” [parent and staff person]

• “Is this an on-going plan? Like, will this be the expectations for employees every year?” [staff person]

• “Why don’t you include an option where teachers volunteer 5-10 hours in the communities their students live in? Get out there and learn in a different way.” [staff person]

• “White people can’t teach something they haven’t lived.” [staff person and parents]

• “You need compassion in this type of learning.” [staff person and parents]

• “I still want to know what am I going to see that will be different. How are students being impacted and/or developed by the staff being developed? [parent]

What will accountability look like for professional learning of staff in MMSD?

• Everyone present felt that students and how they feel at school is one of the best ways to measure the effectiveness of the racial equity professional learning for all staff.

• A staff person who is a classroom teacher said the idea of “accountability” for professional learning was frightening, but recognized that it was needed. She wanted more tools afterwards to continue the learning on her own and with colleagues.

Suggestions to measure the impact of the professional learning included:

• Have a quarterly student survey asking them if they notice the curriculum changing and/or the interactions with teachers seem improved.

• Ask students how they feel at school. Do it frequently to see if the professional learning has had an impact beyond the August Welcome Back days.

• Share this professional learning with parents too. Build the community.
We had 16 parents, staff and community members attend the meeting and one (1) student. Racial representation of attendees appeared to be: 12 Black, 1 Multiracial, 1 Asian and 3 White. 12 of 17 attendees have attended before.

Attendees represented Chavez, Crestwood, Mendota, Thoreau, Lapham, Cherokee, JC Wright, West, Jefferson, Sennett, East, West and La Follette, UW Madison, Freedom Inc.

**Purpose of the meeting:**
- Build community with one another
- Learn about MMSD efforts to recruit and retain diverse staff
- Make emerging recommendations regarding hiring efforts

**The group follows these Group Values & Agreements:**
- Confidentiality – take what you learn and protect the personal information
- Be solution focused
- Assume positive intentions with people
- Speak your truth without apology
- Keep Black students at the center
- Share air time
- Center Black voices
- White fragility will not derail the conversation

**The District’s Efforts with Human Resources and Hiring Diverse Staff**

The Executive Director of MMSD Human Resources was present with two other staff from the Human Resources Department. A PowerPoint was used to illustrate the efforts that the Human Resources department has made to attract, develop and retain employees.

Highlights included:
Some of the early work in the Human Resources (H.R.) department under Deirdre Hargrove’s leadership was internally focused. She described what she faced as a bit of the “Wild Wild West,” and needed to get the “house in order.” She shared that when she arrived (in 2015?) schools were hiring the ways they wanted and the H.R. Department did not have common expectations for hiring.

Over the past few years, the H.R. Department has changed the interview and selection process to become more competency based (what can an applicant demonstrate); they have increased the beginner teacher pay (to be more competitive); they have moved the hiring timeline up so that they can compete for talented applicants earlier; they have revised marketing materials for recruitment; invested in the Grow Our Own program.

MMSD has now hired a recruiter and he was at the meeting.

They reported there are currently **360 Teachers of Color.** Teachers of Color does not mean exclusively Black teachers, it is inclusive of all staff who have a teachers’ contract (English as a Second Language teachers, Bilingual Resource Teachers, Counselors, Psychologists, Special Education Teachers and classroom teachers).

There are currently **100 Black staff with a teachers’ contracts** (this does not include support staff to classrooms like Behavior Education Assistants, Special Education Assistants)

If the teaching staff were to mirror the student demographics, Human Resources has set a goal of needing 1,500 teachers of color, which would be approximately 55% of all teachers in the District (2,700 teachers).

**Questions and Comments from the group**

1. *(After looking at the data on separation from the District by Race/Ethnicity)- Where are staff of Color going and why? Have you done Exit Interviews to better understand what is happening?*

The response from H. R. was that there is anecdotal information about micro-aggressions, racism and feelings of isolation. The Human Resources Department is planning to create a resignation site to capture information about why people are leaving the District. In addition, the department would like to conduct “stay” interviews with staff of Color to find out the reasons why they are staying in MMSD. This would help the District become more proactive.
2. What is the average tenure for Teachers of Color?

Human Resources said they could get that information.

3. What recruitment strategies have worked the best to get staff of Color here?

Human Resources said that they must have a multi-prong approach. They shared that direct recruitment to students enrolled in Schools of Education programs is actually hard to do via email or direct mail because student data is nearly impossible to access due to student privacy. Primary recruitment strategies to current and graduating college students majoring in Education is primarily through recruitment fairs. Yet, that will not be enough. The H.R. department also knows they need to invest in “grow your own” programs and work all of the other strategies like salary, getting outside of Madison to market the District and being competitive.

Human Resources also shared that one of the challenges in recruiting staff from out of state to MMSD is the Wisconsin certification through the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has been very challenging for newly hired staff. Apparently, it is hard to get certified, especially when staff from other states are hired with the requirement to gain the certification within a short amount of time to maintain their position. MMSD has been looking at alternatives to licensure to address this issue. They suggested that the Coalition might want to meet with DPI in the future.

4. [in response to recruitment] - How do you plan to sell Madison?

The newly hired MMSD Recruiter Najjah Thompson (Black male educator), said that the Strategic Framework and what MMSD stands for will be attractive for some applicants who want to work in an urban district. Human Resources also said that a welcoming community in Madison is also needed for staff of Color. As it was stated, MMSD can do its part but the
District needs the help of others in the community. Someone mentioned that the MMSD Recruiter should also collaborate with Principals of Color in recruitment efforts.

5. [in response to talent development] What is the development and training of staff? How do they get feedback?

Human Resources talked about their collaboration with the Professional Learning department. They also said another important component is performance management. One community member asked “how does MMSD identify anti-blackness in our practices and policies. For example, even if a Black teacher is in the classroom but the standard is Whiteness, how does this actually make a real different for students?” Another person in the group who recently moved to Madison from Texas commented in agreement “This is one of the racist places I have ever lived and even Black folks don’t speak to one another here, so I agree with this.”

What will accountability look like for hiring, retaining and developing teachers/staff of Color in MMSD?

- Everyone present felt that having a report on retention rates for Teachers of color and specifically Black teachers was important to see.
- In addition, it was suggested that length of tenure and exit information is also important to collect and share out with the public.
We had 13 parents and staff attend the meeting. Racial representation of attendees appeared to be: 13 Black. 8 of 13 attendees have attended before. Parents represented Shorewood, JC Wright, West, Sennett, Spring Harbor, Memorial.

**Purpose of the meeting:**
- Build community with one another
- Hear and discuss the District’s proposed budget for 2019-2020
- Give feedback regarding Strategic Equity Priorities – especially Black Excellence

The group follows these **Group Values & Agreements:**
- Confidentiality – take what you learn and protect the personal information
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**Proposed Budget for 2019-2020**

The Chief Financial Officer for MMSD was present to discuss the drafted preliminary 2019-2020 budget. A PowerPoint was used to illustrate the budget. Kelly Ruppel, CFO, explained that she wanted to get our feedback on the Strategic Equity priorities.

**Revenue Forecast for 2019-2020**
• The revenue from the State is still unknown, but the MMSD budget is built on $100 per pupil revenue limit, which will result in $2.7 million dollars

• We will have $8 million from the November 2016 Referendum for Operating expenses in 2019-2020

This results in **$10.7 in new revenue** and $418 million in total operating revenue.

**Expenses for 2019-2020**

It was explained that of the $10.7 million in new revenue:

• $6.5 million will be paid in salary increases to staff (average 2.5% increase)

• $2.5 million will be paid to increases in health care costs for employees

• $1.2 million will be paid to new independent charter schools (and/or voucher programs outside of MMSD).

This leaves $500,000 for the rest of the District costs.

**Staffing Plan**

• It was explained that MMSD has a class size policy and the goal is to minimize both the low and high ends of class sizes. This means there are classes with fewer students than the policy and classes with students who exceed the policy. The goal is to get closer to the policy.

• There will be more investments in Cross-Categorical Teachers, Psychologists, Social Workers and Counselors.

• There will be an overall staffing decrease of 1% based on declines in student enrollment:
  
  o Teachers in 2018-19 = 2,659 / in 2019-20 = 2,628
  
  o Education Assistants in 2018-19 = 440.7 / in 2019-2020 = 435.5
  
  o Food Service in 2018-19 =104.2 / in 2019-20 = 96.0

**Comments about staffing**

 o “Overall, I don’t think the District should cut teachers.”

 o “Smaller classrooms are more effective”
o “How are increases in Psychologists, Social Workers and Counselors” handled? Are they going to middle and high schools?”

o “Is there a commitment to diversity in these new positions?” That’s what we need!

o “What about the ways that Counselors impact students? It is the interpersonal skills”

The CFO explained that MMSD has the smallest class ratios in the area. She also stated that MMSD is not increasing class size, rather, re-setting the class size ratio at the elementary level. She also shared that Human Resources is dedicated to diversifying the staff and they could better discuss that.

**Black Excellence Community Coalition Fund**

There is a proposed commitment of $250,000 of recurring Community Service Funding (also called Fund 80) for the Black Excellence Coalition to identify the community assets they wish to invest in and areas of expansion. The CFO wanted to know if this amount seemed to be enough and/or if the funding source would be considered too restrictive.

**More about Fund 80**

Fund 80 / Community Services funding was explained in more detail:

- The funds are not to be used to supplement core instruction during the day
- Funds are to be used for non-school specific activities, that in theory can be open to anyone in the Madison community
- Example of Fund 80 is Madison Schools Community Recreation (MSCR) which operates before school, after school and in the community programs.
- These funds often can be used to support community organizations.

Nichelle Nichols (with MMSD) who is convening the Black Excellence Coalition meetings also shared with the group that when the budget was presented to the Board of Education, the Superintendent had stated that these Black Excellence Funds would likely support “already existing programs in the community that serve Black students.” Nichols asked the CFO if the
Coalition is empowered to make recommendations on ways to spend the funds or to identify new things they think are critical, how they might go about that if the funds already seemed designated for existing programs. The CFO mentioned that things were not tied down and this was the feedback she needed to hear.

**Comments about Black Excellence Fund**

- “What portion of the MSCR budget is currently funded by Fund 80?” [answer: 75%]
- “Who is currently getting Fund 80 funding?” [answer: we could pull that list together]
- “How is it decided what programs are offered in Fund 80 now? This is more of a question about MSCR – how do they decide on the programs?” [answer: They ask students about their interests, they work with adults who want to sponsor clubs. We could have MSCR come out and talk to this group.”]
- “I’m curious, what is the annual allocation for Advanced Learning? What do they get and how does it compare to what is being proposed to Black Excellence?” [answer: we could look that up]
- “What are the outcomes for learning and academic achievement with Fund 80? Does it all have to be after-school clubs and recreation? [answer: academic achievement is not tied to Fund 80, but can include academic programs if we desire]
- “I’m wondering – how far is $250,000 really going to go? It’s a good start”
- “Will these funds be sustained year after year? This is not enough” [answer: yes the plan is to sustain these funds]
- “I think it may be better to focus on a few sites, take a concentrated approach to get more bang for the buck. You won’t get real impact with $250,000 spread over too many programs.”

**Ideas that emerged on Black Excellence Funds**

- Financial literacy for high school students – real world stuff.
- College planning. Too many kids don’t have the opportunities to get help with college planning.
- We need rites of passage type programs – something to help our girls and boys move into young adulthood.
We need more intra-Diaspora community building. We have a lot of African students who identify as Black but not African American and there should be more opportunities to bring the Diaspora of Black people together.

I think our males need focus. I see issues with low self-esteem, lack of understanding about who they are.

There is also an issues with our girls fighting and healthy girl identity.

We need a plan for more social interactions for high school students and middle school students.

Some kids really benefit from sports. We need more access to sports for some of our kids.

**Other Strategic Equity Priorities in the 2019-2020 Budget**

**Accelerated licensure in Special Education ($121,000 + Director at .25FTE for $34,000)**

It was explained that MMSD has a high need in the Special Education field and this priority helps to accelerate licensure for Cross-Categorical teachers in Special Education in partnership with UW-Madison.

**Comments about accelerated licensure in Special Education**

- “This should be an opportunity to recruit new teachers of Color. The branding of this should be it’s an Urban Special Education Accelerated Licensure. You could find more teachers who want to be in an urban district.”
- “I think it’s a good investment.”
- “But overall if there is a shortage in the classroom, is there a way to build from volunteers who want to work in the field and recruit them?”
- “UW Madison School of Education has its own equity issues – why isn’t the District looking at other sources?”

**Additional Strategic Equity Priorities**

**Social Worker Feeder Pattern Pilot ($87,000)**

**Expansion of mental health supports in schools ($116,400)**
Behavior Education Plan training and school support in restorative justice, developmental design and school specific culture and climate ($200,000)

**Comments about these priorities:**
- “I would like to know more about which feeder pattern.”
- “Yes to mental health supports!”
- “What is the plan to help with our kids fighting? It doesn’t seem fair that the Principal has to figure out how to find the resources on their own.”
- “Why can't the District invest more in Parent Liaisons instead of one social worker across an entire feeder pattern?”
- “All of these are a bunch of good ideas, but if the District hired more teachers of color we wouldn’t need all of these different investments. Hire more teachers of color.”

**Additional Budget Priorities**
We did not have adequate time to address all of the other priorities, but the CFO shared briefly:
- Early College STEM Academy expansion $200,000
- Adding more students to MicroSchool $325,000
- Expand Advanced Learning Specialists allocation at four schools (2.0 FTE), one new position to coordinate advanced programming at the secondary level; new professional development at K-2 grades ($50,000) and continue to consult with Equal Opportunity Schools ($75,000) to make sure students of Color get into Advanced Placement classes and succeed.

**Next Steps**
We concluded the meeting about the budget by sharing with the CFO
1.) We were not sure that $250,000 was enough but a good start
2.) We did not necessarily agree that the $250,000 should go to existing programs
3.) We might like to recommend that some of the funds be designated for programming that can happen during the school day and not be limited to the Fund 80 guidelines.

4.) We had a brainstorm session about some ideas tonight but did not want to be locked into those.

The MMSD Budget and Planning website states the following:
The 2019-20 revenue from the State has not yet been determined. Our draft budget, assumes a nominal increase to our revenue authority providing us with limited flexibility. However, we are committed to ensuring our budget is aligned with our Strategic Framework priorities, including our focused beliefs on Black Excellence. In this budget, you’ll see several proposed strategic investments, aimed at accelerating results for youth of color. These investments include:

- $425,000 to expand the number of dual enrollment seats in the Early College STEM Academy at Madison College, which focuses on getting more youth of color and women into post-secondary education and the STEM field
- $380,000 to increase access to advanced learning for youth of color
- $530,000 in school-based Psychologists and Social Workers
- $320,000 for MicroSchool options for youth re-engagement with a specific focus on those high school students who are most at risk of not graduating
- $50,000 in funding for restorative justice efforts, including training and research of different models through our existing community partnerships to support accelerated restorative justice system development in all schools
Black Excellence
Meeting Notes on 5/14/2019
Meeting #7
Goodman Community Center (Lau Room)

We had 11 parents and staff attend the meeting.
Racial representation of attendees appeared to be: 8 Black, 3 White
5 of 11 attendees have attended before.
Parents represented Lowell, Hawthorne, Mendota, Schenk, Badger Rock, Jefferson, Mendota, West, Sennett, Spring Harbor, Memorial,

Purpose of the meeting:
- Build community with one another
- Review the notes shared from the Protecting Our Children meeting notes from 2/23/2019
- Determine what recommendations we think should be added to our recommendations

The group follows these Group Values & Agreements:
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Meeting Notes from Protecting Our Children Meeting on 2/23/19
Printed copies of the notes from the Protecting Our Children town hall meeting on 2/23/19 were distributed to the group. Notes were available through the Progress Center for Black Women Facebook page (in a Google document). We used the printed notes to work in two small groups to highlight recommendations that we might want to push forward.
Major Categories of Issues in Notes

The notes from the February community meeting showed the following:

- **Overt racism** – this was cited 19 times by parents in attendance at that meeting. Examples listed: racial slurs, bullying of Black students by teachers, tokenism, abusive treatment by bus aides, white supremacy, anti-blackness dress code (particularly Black girls bodies), institutional/systemic racism is affecting our kids and post-incident retaliation of students by teachers.

- **Teacher issues** – this was cited 14 times by parents in attendance at that meeting. Examples listed: lack of Black teachers, Black staff not supported, teachers are poorly paid and trained, need for coaching and leadership on anti-racism, teachers take things personally (blind spots), “whitesplaining” (history teachers on topics of slavery, civil rights movement), bias in grading, “breaking the will of Black kids – spirit killing.”

- **Student issues** – this was cited 13 times by parents in attendance at that meeting. Examples listed: anxiety/panic attacks, boredom, feelings of invisibility.

- **Administration problems in schools** – this was cited 12 times by parents in attendance at that meeting. Examples listed: students of color disproportionately on IEPs, lack of transparency in communication, hyper-focus on “optics” rather than addressing root cause of problems, no accountability, centralization of power and authority at district staff

- **Policing** – this was cited 12 times by parents in attendance at that meeting. Examples listed: intervention/over-policing of Black children, police presence in schools, threats of arrest, police in schools support status quo, surveillance, disrespectful treatment/targeting kids of color

- **Segregation and disparities** – this was cited 11 times by parents in attendance at that meeting. Examples listed: segregation among students and teachers, cultural/academic segregation, the achievement gap, labeling Black children as violent/not smart, Black staff are primarily in lower paid positions – not teachers or administrators, Black parents are over burdened by the level of involvement needed to ensure their kids are well treated, lower expectations for students of color, Black students don’t get into Dual Language programs (DLI) in schools.
Other categories included parent issues, over-punishment, not listening, lack of programs.

**Solutions from the Protecting Our Children Meeting on 2/23/19**

We reviewed many of the solutions that parents generated that day, which included:

- Attend Board of Education meetings and email School Board
- Hold MTI accountable
- Support Freedom Inc. demands
- Whistleblower protection for students, staff, parents
- Get police out of schools
- IEP reviews / IEP experts to support parents during meetings
- Tracking physical brutality
- Staff/teacher diversity
- Connect with lawyers and get changes in the policy
- Trauma informed care
- Visiting classrooms / have allies go to
- Mental health support / trauma informed care
- A support group to help parents who struggle with children who have behaviors
- Create, support and allocated funds with affinity groups and restorative justice
- Advocacy for children
- Family resources for supportive services
- Fundraising / funding for people to advocate / fund legal
- White allies
- Accountability
- Diversity training for teachers/schools
- Organize a “know your rights” trainings
- Workshops for parents to explain IEPs
- Training in anti-racist actions
Let elected officials know we care about this

**Black Excellence Coalition Recommendations**

**Group 1:**

*What solutions will seem to have the most significant impact?*
- Diversify our workforce / school staff
- Hold Human Resources accountable for a performance management system
- Flood the Professional Development plan with race and equity work (not opt-in)

*What needs to move forward as recommendations?*
- How does Black Excellence live in every plan and policy in the District? We want to see it.
- Accountability top down and bottom up
- Curriculum / teacher lessons
- We want to know more about hiring efforts, onboarding, retention with staff
- Trauma informed care that is culturally sensitive for ALL staff, not just the required positions.

**Group 2:**

*What solutions will seem to have the most significant impact?*
- Education and training for teachers on how to differentiate their instruction
- Curriculum
- Address school structures

This group stated there was obviously “a dis-connect between teachers and students” in the classroom. Students with disabilities (IEPs) and students who need more challenge and are advanced learners are on both ends of a continuum. They stated that the majority of teachers teach to the “middle” because they do not know how to differentiate instruction for all of the learners in their classroom. They felt this would address many of the issues they saw in the Protecting Our Children notes.
What needs to move forward as recommendations?

- Professional learning on differentiation of instruction for teachers. They need to know how to teach for the variety of learners on the continuum.
- We need all of this – need radical change.

Summary

1. There is a real need for teachers to have more professional learning and coaching on how to differentiate instruction for all learners in their classrooms. People felt this is needed and will contribute to Black Excellence because we will have fewer Black students disengaged in the classroom.
2. There must be radically different experiences that bring out the humanity of each other. Stop using Black children as data points. People need relationships!
3. Racial Equity Professional Learning must get to classroom teachers and be mandatory. There must be accountability.
4. The District has to focus on recruitment, onboarding and retention strategies for teachers/staff of Color.
5. Black Excellence should live in every plan & policy of the District.
6. There needs to be a focus on curriculum and teacher lessons. Get Black Excellence inside classrooms.
7. All staff need to be trained in Trauma Informed Care.
June meetings of Black Excellence Coalition and Think Tank were focused on formulating and refining the recommendations in this report.

Black Excellence Coalition Meeting – June 6

Black Excellence Think Tank – June 5

Black Educators Network, Coalition, Think Tank, Freedom Inc. – June 17