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Monticello School District: Achievement Gap

Exploratory Assessment

METROPOLITAN CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Metropolitan Center for Urban Education (hereinafter, Metro Center) was contracted by the Hudson Valley BOCES to conduct an exploratory examination of the nature of the achievement gap at Monticello High School. This assessment focused on identifying factors that may be contributing to the racial and ethnic achievement gap. The findings were used to assist Monticello High School (MHS) with developing policies and practices during its restructuring.

Methods

The study's scope of work included three stages: Stage 1- A student-level analysis of administrative data provided by the Monticello School District to examine the distribution and patterns of academic achievement among and across students from different backgrounds. Other contributors that are known to be associated with academic performance (for example, discipline referrals and academic classifications among others) were also examined; Stage 2- An analysis of a student questionnaire administered by the Metro Center team based on findings from Stage 1. The questionnaire captured student perceptions around instructional quality, academic expectations, academic access, and school climate; and Stage 3 - An analysis of focus group transcripts from focus groups conducted with students, faculty, administrators, and staff. The focus group transcripts allowed the Metro Center team to gather more detailed and unstructured perceptions around policies, practices, and beliefs that may be associated with academic performance.

Key Findings:

Academic Performance Findings

- Differences in academic performance by race/ethnicity and gender when students enter MHS are already very well established and remain relatively unchanged during high school. As such, effective interventions should include a district-wide strategy to address these disparities in academic performance.
- Black males (14.6%) and Hispanic males and Hispanic females (16.3% and 13.8% respectively) are disproportionately “off-track” for graduation compared to their White peers (8.6% males and 7.5% females). While the risk for minority males is greater among all groups, this finding also suggests that particular attention is warranted on Hispanic females.

Academic Expectations Findings

- The vast majority (90%) of students surveyed expected to attend a college or university, regardless of race or gender. In addition, discrepancy in expectations between students and teachers was evident in the findings, which influenced the achievement levels of students.
 - Controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition, students who reported being more challenged in their coursework reported significantly higher grades than their peers.

Academic Access Findings

- Focus group findings with teachers, administrators, school staff, and students reveal that there are different expectations about student achievement and academic rigor. For instance, the idea that all students should be “college bound” is not uniformly accepted.
- Almost one-fifth (19.6%) of all students were enrolled in at least one honors course in 2009; however, the relative disproportionate representation by race and gender suggest that minority students, in particular Black and Latino Males, have significantly less access to honors courses. This suggests a relationship between race and gender dynamics, placement in accelerated classes, and perceptions around how challenging students find the work. Controlling for demographic factors, students on the student survey who reported being more challenged in their coursework reported significantly higher grades than their peers.

School Climate Findings

- Economically disadvantaged students and students who were sent to the principal’s office more often were more likely to feel that their teacher did not have high expectations of them.
- In general, students who were disciplined more often (by teacher or sent to the office) were less likely to associate or “hang out” with students who pressed them to do their best in school.
- Honors students and students from more affluent and well-educated families were more likely to associate or hang out with students with high-performing peers.
- Nearly 4 out of every 10 Black males (37.7%) and Hispanic males (39.2%) received more than 5 discipline referrals. Meanwhile, White females maintained the lowest rate of receiving more than 5 discipline referrals (15%). Controlling for all demographic factors, including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and

household composition, students who were sent to the office and detention relatively more often reported significantly lower grades than their peers.

- School Climate ratings by students who took the survey were fairly flat. While students reported that the school was generally safer than in previous years and teachers reported the diversity of their school as a strength, the average (2.5 on a scale of 4) is lower than is generally found in other research studies, where ratings are generally .5 points more positive than found at MHS.

Recommendations

Overall, The Metro Center research team recommends the development of a comprehensive service plan over several years that utilizes a K-12 approach to addressing the achievement gap in the Monticello School District, as well as targeted work at the high school level. Our key recommendations are outlined below, divided by district-wide and high-school level recommendations:

District-wide

Because achievement trajectories appear to be set in terms of performance early on in a student's academic career, the team recommends a proactive approach that involves early and ongoing intervention as follows:

- The development of early detection systems for students at risk of academic failure before testing begins (before the 3rd grade) and at key transitions to middle school and then into high school, as well as utilization of the on-track indicator starting in both the middle school and high school. The on-track indicator should begin at the first marking period when a student enters the school.

- Proactive academic support and enrichment for all students to ensure high expectations, exposure to rigor, and high engagement for all students from K-12.
- Training in Culturally Responsive Policies and Practices across all school levels to improve performance of all students, in particular those most at risk for underperformance. The training should promote a college-bound culture district-wide and should also assist faculty, administration, and staff with discussing issues around race and ethnicity.

Recommendations for Monticello High School

In addition, the team recommends the following targeted work at the high-school level as follows:

- An examination of student scheduling to research the extent to which students have access to a broad array of coursework, including challenging courses.
- The development of school-wide policies that provide consistent and explicit expectations by grade and content level to ensure that all students are held to the same standards.
- An investigation and monitoring of discipline practices to identify how students are given referrals in order to understand and address the ways in which students are referred and the reasons. As well, the investigation and monitoring should begin to address which teachers may be using referrals as a classroom management strategy.

Introduction

The Metropolitan Center for Urban Education (hereinafter, Metro Center) was contracted by the Hudson Valley BOCES to conduct an exploratory examination of the nature of the achievement gap at Monticello High School. This assessment focused on identifying factors that may be contributing to the racial and ethnic achievement gap in order to assist with developing policies and practices to assist the school during its restructuring.

The study's scope of work included three stages: Stage 1- A student level analysis of administrative data provided by the Monticello School District to examine the distribution and patterns of academic achievement among and across students from different backgrounds, along with contributors that are known to be associated with academic performance such as attendance, discipline referrals, and academic classifications; Stage 2- Based on findings from Stage 1, analysis of a student questionnaire administered by the Metro Center team to capture student perceptions around instructional quality, academic expectations, academic access and school climate ; and Stage 3- An analysis of focus group transcripts from focus groups conducted with students, faculty, administrators and staff to gather more detailed and unstructured perceptions around policies, practices and beliefs that may be associated with academic performance.

The Metro Center was contracted Hudson Valley BOCES to conduct an exploratory examination of the nature of the achievement gap at Monticello High School and report their findings. This report is divided into three major sections: 1) The first section provides a brief explanation of the methods employed and the demographic profile of the students who attend Monticello High School; 2) We then present the findings of our study, which are subdivided into three central areas, including academic findings, academic access findings, and discipline and

school climate findings; and 3) Finally, the last section provides discussion and conclusion of the overall findings, including areas of strengths and challenges as well as outlined recommendations.

Methods

An examination of the administrative data show a disproportionate representation of Black and Hispanic males specifically in a number of categories related to academic performance. Previous research points to three general areas that have been implicated in these gaps and that may apply to MHS: 1) Academic expectations; 2) school climate; and 3) access to high-level coursework, including academic support services and other services (e.g. enrichment and extracurricular activities). To examine these three areas, the research team applied a number of approaches including: a student survey (768 surveys were administered and 90% completed), where students were asked about their perceptions and experiences related to these three areas; student focus groups (9 groups of 4-6 students) made up of friendship groupings representing a variety of students in terms of performance, background, and interest; and adult focus group of 3-8 people with administrators (2), teachers (10), and support staff (2) including behavior specialists, teachers aides, and counselors (see Appendix to see student survey and focus group protocols).

Demographic Profile

The section below outlines the composition of the student body as of the Spring 2010 school year. Our sample consisted of 1018 students in grades 9-12 from administrative data supplied by the district office. Table 1, below provides an overall profile of student demographics in the school.

Table 1: Student Demographics

	Male	Female	Total
	%	%	%
<i>Grade Level</i>			
9th Grade	14.7	14.5	29.3
10th Grade	12.7	13.3	26
11th Grade	12.6	13.4	26
12th Grade	9.4	9.3	18.7
<i>Special Populations</i>			
Special Education	12.9	8	20.9
English Language Learner	0.4	0.3	0.8
Free or Reduced Lunch Qualification	22.1	21.3	43.4
Enrolled in Honors/AP classes in YE2009	17.4	21.8	19.6
<i>Race</i>			
Black	10.4	9.4	19.8
Hispanic	10.8	10.2	21
White	26.5	29.9	56.4
Asian	1.4	0.8	2.2
Multiracial	0.1	.	0.1
American Indian	0.1	0.3	0.4

Free/Reduced Lunch Status

Table 2 illustrates the percentage of students eligible for the Free/Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP) by race/ethnicity and gender. Among the high school population, a little over half (54.6%) are eligible for FRLP. When examining by race/ethnicity and gender, among Black and Hispanic students at least two-thirds were eligible for FRLP. Meanwhile, only a quarter of White students were eligible for FRLP. Black students are also significantly more likely to be living in families that are homeless than their White and Hispanic male peers, and Hispanic females in particular are much more likely to be homeless than Hispanic males.

Table 2. Percentage of Students Eligible for FRLP by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Overall	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female
% Qualified for Free or Reduced Lunch	45.4	68.0	62.7	71.7	72.8	27.5	25.2
% Homeless	3.2	8.2	6.4	3.3	5.8	0.4	2.0

Attendance Patterns

Table 3 provides the attendance and tardiness percentage by various demographic factors. Across all categories, student population maintained a high attendance percentage rate of 91.3%. The difference between groups was not significant. However the percentage of students tardy to class shows a slightly different pattern. The groups with the highest rate of tardiness, Black males (7.7%) and Hispanic males (7.3%), are almost double the rate of the group with the lowest rate of tardiness, White females (3.9%). These differences can be interpreted in a number of ways. Black and Hispanic males may in fact be tardy much more often than their female or White peers, but they may also be marked tardy at a higher rate than other groups. Or it could be a combination of both. This would be worth investigating further.

Table 3. Percentage Present and Tardy by Demographics

Attendance	Percent Present	Percent Tardy
Overall	91.3	5.3
Free or Reduced Lunch	90.6	6.3
No Free or Reduced Lunch	91.8	4.5
Black Male	90.8	7.7
Black Female	91.2	6.7
Hispanic Male	90.3	7.3
Hispanic Female	90.3	6.4
White Male	92.2	4.4
White Female	91.2	3.9

Academic Findings

Academic findings are divided into three subsections. 1) First, an overview of academic performance is presented, including GPA for the 2008-2009 school year and 8th grade performance of math exams as an indicator of performance prior to entering high school. Here we find that prior performance is remarkably similar between when a student first entered high school and their current GPA; 2) Next, we present findings from an examination of course failure rates. While the vast majority of students did not fail a single class in 2008-2009, Hispanics were found to be a disproportionate risk for course failure; and 3) Finally, we present an indicator that can be used to predict future academic outcomes in order for the district to better monitor students at risk for dropout. While we only had access to two of the three indicators, here we also find that Hispanic students, as well as Black males, are disproportionately “off-track” compared to their peers, and more at risk for future drop out.

Academic Performance

Table 4 provides the percentage of academic performance by race/ethnicity and gender. On average there is a difference in GPA across all groups; Black males having the lowest GPA (69.2%) and White females having the highest (79.7%). This pattern is consistent in ELA and Math as well. Finally, the differences in the average 8th grade math scale score demonstrate at least a 20 scaled point difference between the lowest group (Black males) and the highest group (White females). This finding suggests that students arrive at the high school with differences in academic performance by race and gender that are maintained, if not widened, during their high school years.

Table 4. Percentage of Academic Performance by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female
GPA	69.2	74.9	71.6	71.8	73.6	79.7
ELA	73.7	77.6	72.2	77.5	76.4	82.4
Math	69.4	71.8	69.2	73.0	70.5	75.8
8th grade math exam	641.5	648.3	650.9	656.9	663.2	664.7

Further, a comparison of 8th grade performance on the State Math exam to current GPA suggests that there is little change in how students perform relative to each other by race and gender over time. This finding suggests that differences in academic performance by race/ethnicity and gender are already very well established when students enter the high school and remain relatively unchanged during high school. As such, effective interventions should include a district-wide strategy to address these disparities in academic performance.

Course Failure Rates

Table 5 provides the percentage of course failure by race/ethnicity and gender. Overall, 80% of the student population did not fail any classes. However, when examining within group differences a striking pattern appears. More than 20% of Black and White males, 18% of Black females, 28% of Hispanic males, and 24% of Hispanic females failed a class. Meanwhile White females maintained the lowest course failure rate (12%).

Table 5. Percentage of Course Failure by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Overall	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female
Failed No Classes	80.8	77.9	81.8	71.7	74.8	79.6	87.7
Failed 1 Class	9.4	9.8	9.1	15.8	14.6	7.8	6.6
Failed >1 Classes	9.8	12.3	9.1	12.5	10.6	12.7	5.7

Monitoring Student Performance: Using the “On-Track” Indicator

As part of its efforts to help principals in Chicago identify students at risk of dropping out of high school early on, Allensworth and Easton (2007)¹ analyzed dropout patterns and identified three key indicators that could predict whether or not a student was “on-track” to graduate, as early as the completion of a student’s first semester in high school. The indicator is comprised of three key measures:

- Credit Completion -
- 10 credits per year (or as required by school district to be promoted one grade) **Plus**

¹ Allensworth, E., & Easton, J. Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago Public High Schools: A close look at course grades, failures and attendance in the freshman year*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

- No failing classes ***Plus***
- Attendance rate of at least 90% (*even one week of school in a year can place a student at risk for future dropout*)

While we did not have official dropout or graduation data available to us, nor credit completion data, we examined data for the 2008-2009 school year on two of the three key measures: course failure and attendance. Our findings are presented below in Table 6.

As demonstrated in Table 6, over 1/5th of the student population is “off-track” on one of the two measures (either course failure or attendance but not both); however, Black Males (27.4%) and Hispanic student (26.3% of males and 28.8% of females) are particularly off-track at higher rates. These differences become magnified when looking at both measures. Now, we find that White males and females are at much lower risk of dropping out of school than their Hispanic and Black peers. These differences were found to be statistically significant, suggesting that Black and Hispanic males and Hispanic females are disproportionately “off-track.” In interpreting these findings, note that the “risk” for dropout related each indicator is additive. For example, while an attendance rate of less than 90% needs to be addressed, when combined with failure of at least one course the student is increasingly at risk for later dropout. Given the high average rates of attendance, these findings suggest that attendance is an issue for only a small subset of students.

While the risk for minority males is well understood, this finding also suggests that particular attention is warranted on Hispanic females. In addition, an investigation into grading policy is recommended due to the high correlation found between attendance and grades. Typically, high

absences results in a lower rate of assignment completion, which in turn results in a lowered grade or course failure. To ensure that students do not suffer from “double jeopardy” grading policies should not include attendance directly into the calculation of course grades.

Table 6. Calculating “Off-Track” Risk on Two Indicators: Attendance and Failed Courses in 2008-2009 School Year

	Off track on one indicator	Off track on attendance & course failure
Black Male	27.40%	14.60%
Black Female	23.60%	10.10%
Hispanic Male	26.30%	16.30%
Hispanic Female	28.80%	15.80%
White Male	23.00%	8.60%
White Female	20.40%	7.50%
FRLP lunch	23.80%	13.80%

Academic Access Findings

The academic findings suggest the presence of obstacles that impede students’ abilities to access pathways to college and academic support systems. In terms of academic rigor, controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition, students who reported being more challenged in their coursework reported significantly higher grades than their peers.

The data show trends in which certain students—particularly minority males—make up a disproportionate share of the special education population, tend to be underrepresented in honors

and pre-college courses, and are overrepresented in disciplinary referrals. Finally, while the school does not meet the state definition of severe disproportionality, indicators suggest differences in terms of race and gender both within and across special education classification. Focus group findings with teachers, administrators, school staff and students reveal that there are different expectations about student achievement and academic rigor that may be due to ongoing issues related to these inequities.

Academic Rigor

Survey findings revealed that students generally did not feel academic pressure to succeed—from peer groups, teachers, or in their coursework. Based on a Likert scale of 1-4, where 4 denotes the highest press and 1 the lowest, the survey showed that there was not much difference in perception across race and gender groupings. Probably most alarming are the low scores given to course challenge, where students generally report not being challenged in their coursework. Table 7 shows academic press mean ratings by race/ethnicity and gender.

While groupings based on race and gender did not generally respond differently to the questions around academic press, after controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition the following differences did emerge:

- Economically disadvantaged students and students who were sent to the principal's office more often were more likely to feel that their teacher did not have high expectations of them.

- In general, students who were disciplined more often (by teacher or sent to the principal’s office) were less likely to hang out with students who pressed them to do their best in school.
- Honors students and students from more affluent and well-educated families were more likely to hang out with students with high-performing peers.
- Controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition, we found that students who reported being more challenged in their coursework reported significantly higher grades than their peers.

Table 7. Academic Press Mean Ratings by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Overall	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female
Peer	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.8
Teacher	3.0	2.9	3.4	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.1
Course challenge	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.8	2.0

In focus groups, school staff stated that it was difficult to support students at various academic levels and challenging to meet standards while pushing students to perform at top levels. “Well, it’s not always easy, just maintaining that balance of teaching to state standards and state tests. We use all the resources we have, but it becomes trial and error sometimes. Some days it works. Some days it doesn’t,” reported a teacher at MHS.

Furthermore, students also described that peer influence affected their performance. One student reported, “I think sometimes who people hang around with definitely affects their grades.”

Teachers agreed that peers influence students’ expectations and performance. “Well, I think for the achieving students it’s peer pressure (to perform), but unfortunately, for many kids grades aren’t it.” Survey data confirmed this influence by showing both peer and teacher academic press to be lower for some racial groups and higher for others.

Teachers also disagreed on academic goals for all students. One teacher said, “We hope that we’re preparing the kids for their next steps. In many cases we want them to seriously considering going on to college and becoming the first in their families to graduate from college.” Many other teachers expressed the sentiment that college isn’t appropriate for everyone. As one teacher said, “I think that there are a lot of kids for whom college isn’t the appropriate choice.”

The difference in expectations for some students is reflected in students’ perceptions of the academic rigor. Many accelerated students did not feel challenged by coursework or felt underwhelmed with the amount of academic support they received from their teachers. “It’s not that hard to, like, be a model and be like a leader. There’s not, like, a lot of competition here in our school,” stated a female honors student. Another honors student said, “I’m on high honor roll stuff, but I feel like this year our teachers just stopped caring.”

Students in the general education classes expressed a similar lack of academic rigor. One ESL student said, “They don’t want to help you ‘cause of the work. They think you can do it on your

own and you really can't." Despite overall reporting of low academic expectations, students in honors classes felt their classes were more rigorous and believed that students in honors classes were more likely to perform well in school. When asked what makes a good student, a female honor student remarked, "Stay in your honors classes. That helps."

Enrollment in Honors Courses

However, the enrollment data suggest that certain populations benefit from honors courses more than others. Table 8 provides the percentage of honors class enrollment by race/ethnicity and gender. Nearly a fifth (19.6%) of the total student population is enrolled in honors classes. Of this group, White females maintain the highest enrollment (25.2%), which means that 1 in every 4 White females, is enrolled in an honors course. White males make up the second largest enrollment in honors courses (21.6%). The rate of enrollment for minority students is significantly lower. Hispanic females make up the largest minority population enrolled in honors classes (18.4%), followed by Black females (14.5%) and Hispanic males (13.3%). Black males (11.5%) represent the lowest minority population represented in honors programs.

Table 8. Percentage of Honors Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Overall	Black	Black	Hispanic	Hispanic	White	White
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not Honors	80.4	88.5	85.5	86.7	81.6	78.4	74.8
Honors	19.6	11.5	14.5	13.3	18.4	21.6	25.2

Given that 19.6% of all students were enrolled in at least one honors course in 2009, the relative disproportionate representation by race and gender suggest that minority students, particularly Black and Hispanic males, have significantly less access to honors courses. This suggests a relationship between race and gender dynamics, placement in accelerated classes, and perceptions around how challenging students find the work. Controlling for demographic factors, students on the student survey who reported being more challenged in their coursework recorded significantly higher grades than their peers.

Even when access to accelerated or advanced classes is open, teachers' expectations about students' abilities may limit a student's access to these courses. The school offers a College in the Classroom (CIC) program that is open to all students. "The CIC program is a no gates program," said one teacher. "So if a kid wants to participate in a College in the Classroom course, they can." Some teachers agreed that the goal of the CIC program is to give all students access to advanced level courses. "We're trying to, within the high school, give kids an opportunity to take more college-level course work to kind of prepare them for the educational world outside of high school. So I think the goal would be to expose as many kids as possible," said one teacher.

Yet, despite the open access policy, many teachers and administrators said they did not believe all students should be considered "college bound." For example, one administrator said, "I don't happen to believe that college is the be all and end all. One teacher noted, "I think recently it's [the administration] been pushing all students to a college experience and in my experience... that's not necessarily the right answer." These findings may suggest that only certain students are

encouraged to take these advanced courses. Further research to discern exactly who accesses CIC courses would be needed to further understand the correlation between teacher expectation and student aspiration.

Special Education Classification

While an underrepresentation of students exists by race and gender in honors courses, minority students are generally overrepresented in their classification as Special Education students.

Table 9 shows that overall 21.8% of the student population is designated as requiring Special Education classification. Black males make up the highest segment of the Special Education population followed by Hispanic males (26.1%). White males make up a significant segment of the Special Education population as well (25.6%). Overall, males make up almost 75% of the Special Education population.

Table 9. Percentage of Special Education Classification by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Overall	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female
General Education	78.2	68.0	80.9	75.0	80.9	74.3	84.7
Special Education	21.8	31.9	19.1	26.1	17.4	25.6	15.3
Honors	19.6	11.5	14.5	13.3	18.4	21.6	25.2

Within the classification of Special Education, disparities also emerge. *Figure 1* shows that of the 25.6% of White males classified as Special Ed, about a third of those students are classified

as a 504. A 504 is a behavior plan accommodation that differs from an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in that it provides accommodations for discrepancies in learning styles and is not considered stigmatic. Students who are classified as IEP are identified as having major to minor learning disabilities. Students with IEPs are often placed in separate and special classes. Students with a 504 behavior plan accommodation do not require an IEP and are not held to the same requirements.

Figure 1. White Male Special Education Classification

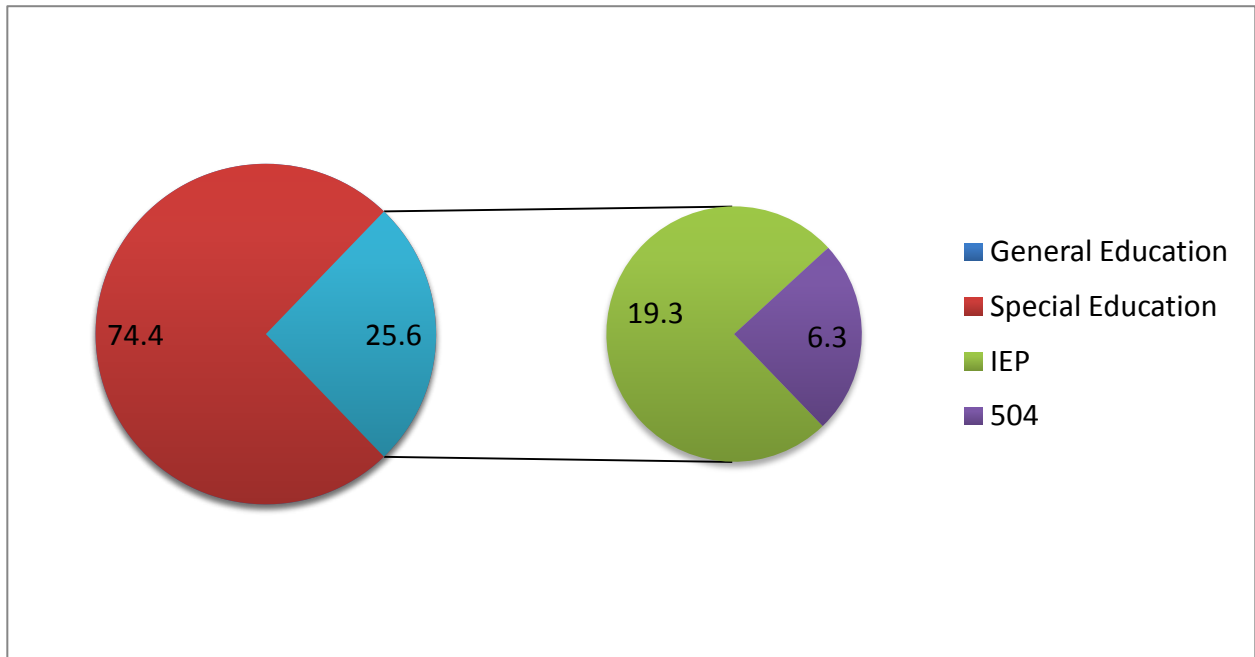


Figure 2 shows that of the 26.1% of Hispanic males who are classified as Special Ed, only 3.5% receive a 504 accommodation. For Black males the figure is even lower. Although Black males represent the largest segment of the Special Ed population at 30.3%, only 1.6% of Black males receive a 504 accommodation. This suggests that Black males do not get the academic accommodation afforded to a 504 classification. Further research needs to be performed to

explore why the rate of 504 classification is so high in the White male population and how this impacts pathways of access for minority populations.

Figure 2: Hispanic Male Special Education Classification

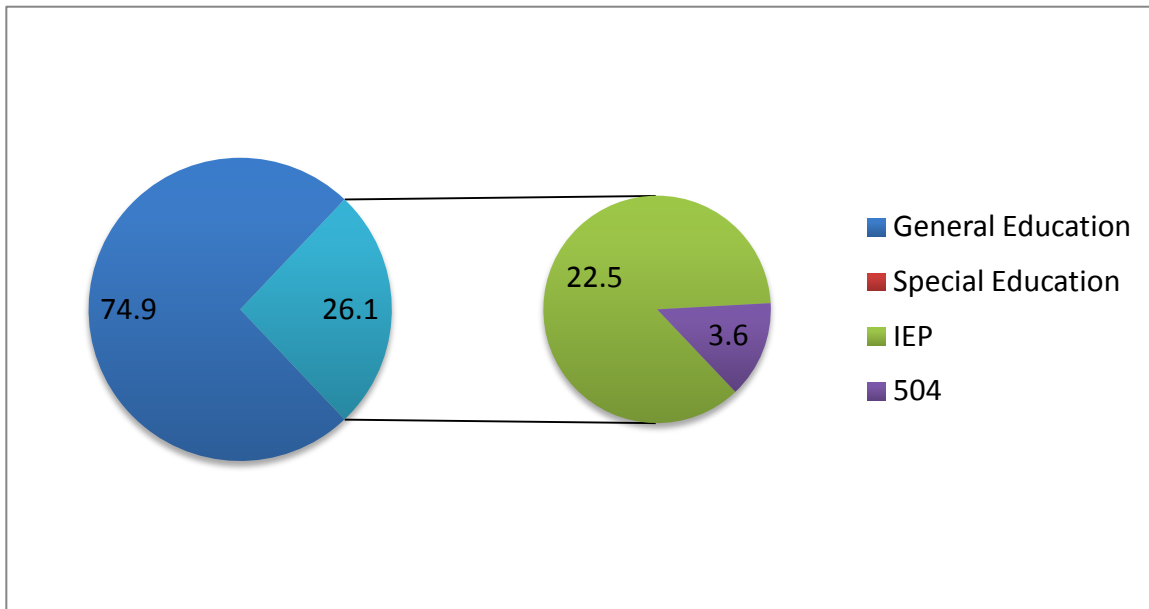
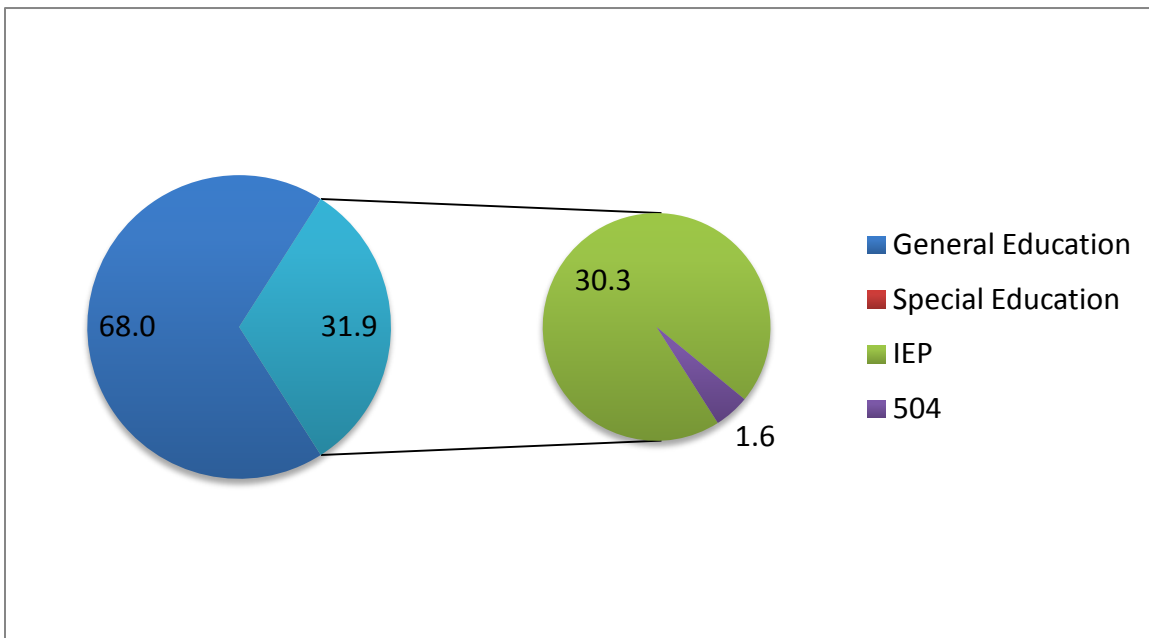


Figure 3. Black Male Special Education Classification



In general, the research shows that minority students are significantly more likely to be classified as Special Ed, more likely to be classified as an IEP, and less likely to be enrolled in honors courses. This filtering of minority students blocks their access to pathways that enhance academic achievement. In fact, the research shows that students who reported being more challenged in their coursework—typically honors students who tend to be White females—are more likely to have higher grades than their peers.

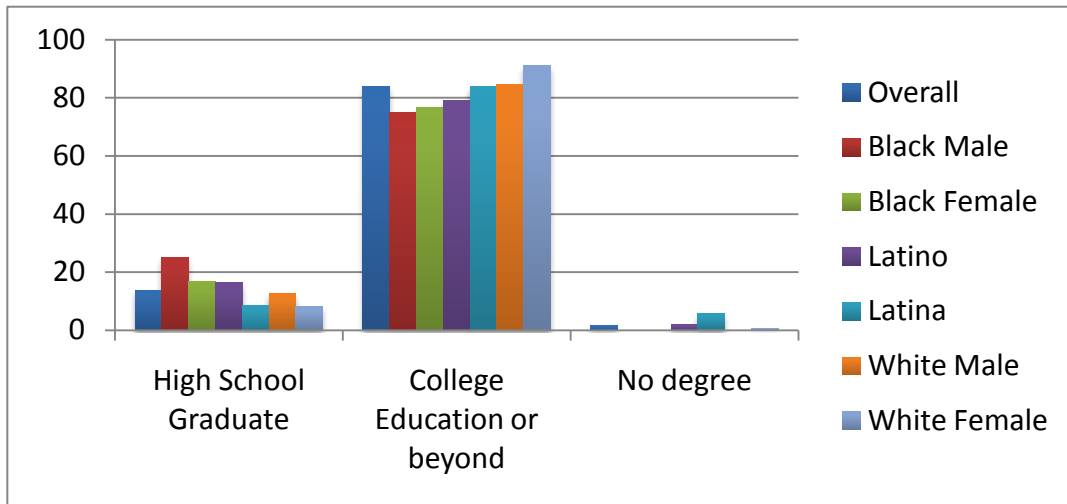
Academic Expectations Findings

Both qualitative and quantitative data revealed the student population, regardless of demographic background, anticipated graduating and moving on to college or beyond. Although the data are encouraging, faculty and administrators did not expect all students to progress from graduation to college. Faculty stated a general objective to prepare students for the world with life skills and the ability to be a productive member of the workforce.

Educational Expectations

In terms of educational expectations, most students planned on finishing high school and moving beyond. That being said, Hispanic females were about five times more likely (5.9%) to report that they did not plan on completing their high school degree than any other group (see Table 10 below). There was a general trend across race, where White students, and in particular White females, expected to graduate from college or beyond. This trend suggests that a key component for a college-going culture is already in place, as the vast majority of students aspires and expects to obtain degrees in higher education.

Table 10. Education Expectations: “As things stand now, how far in school do you think you will get?”



Faculty, administrators, and staff reported that students should be prepared with life skills and critical thinking ability and ready to join the workforce upon graduation. They did not convey that all students were expected to attend college. One teacher stated, “I know the goal is for us to equip our students to be able to be self-sustaining learners, you know, ready for the workforce, or ready for that next step that they choose to do in education.” In fact, faculty did not expect all students to continue on to college, although they acknowledged that students should be prepared with the ability to “access information, think critically about it, and be able to use all kinds of data to make informed decisions.”

Academic Resilience

Academic Resilience is the extent to which students perceive themselves as having personality characteristics related to academic success even when faced with adversity. These components include persistence, resourcefulness, self-confidence, and sociability. A score of 5 means highest levels of resilience and a score of 1 means little to no academic resilience. Table 11 suggests that on the whole and based on race and gender, the scores are middling. However, after controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition the survey suggests the following:

- Poorer students and Hispanic students were significantly less resilient.
- Honor students reported significantly higher levels of academic resilience.

Stereotype Vulnerability Based on Ethnicity

Stereotype Threat measures the extent to which individuals are vulnerable to negative stereotypes about the academic performance of one's ethnic or gender group. Research has found that when students internalize these beliefs they do less well in school. Table 11 shows the level of stereotype threat by race and gender, where 5 means extremely vulnerable and 1 means not at all vulnerable. As one would expect, minority students reported higher vulnerabilities to stereotype threat than other groupings. On the surface it doesn't look like much, however, while not immediately noticeable, after controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition, for Black and Hispanic students these differences became more profound and the higher vulnerability became statistically significant.

Table 11. Academic Resilience & Stereotype Vulnerability Based on Ethnicity Mean Ratings

	Overall	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female
Academic Resilience	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.4	3.7	3.7
Stereotype Vulnerability	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.1

This race and gender dynamic also reflects the overall disproportionate representation of Black and Hispanic males in areas related to academic underperformance, which suggests that Black and Hispanic males are vulnerable to stereotype threat.

Teacher and Peer Expectations

This vulnerability might be linked to teachers’ expectations. Students expressed that teachers had different expectations for different students. Notably, students in honors classes expressed a more positive scholarly experience and perceived teachers as available for help. For example, one female honors student said, “They [teachers] love what they’re teaching and they connect with you on a personal level, unlike the rest of the teachers.” Yet, many students suggested that teachers don’t share the same expectation of achievement for all students. For example an honors student observed that, “Some teachers don’t engage the whole class and maybe a certain set of students, which leaves other students in the class to wander off or travel off and once they’re not paying attention, they’re obviously not taking anything in. And then obviously you get more and more lost. You want to do the work, it’s not going to happen, because you have no idea how to do it or succeed in it. So, some teachers allow students to get a little bit too far off the trail because they try to get them back on where you can’t.”

Another male student said, "...I hate to say it, but maybe even sometimes teachers view the students in the class as a lost cause..." Indeed some teachers verbalize this lowered expectation. One teacher said, "I don't think college is the answer for everybody. I don't think it is, because we need all sorts of people in this world, and not everybody is even ready for college."

Students stated that some teachers had generally high expectations, while others did not. Often this affected student performance. "I get really good grades; I'm on honor roll and stuff, but I felt like this year our teachers just stopped caring," reported an advanced-level student in a focus group. Another responded, "In elementary, also, I definitely felt like I got pushed more than I do in high school." Students who identified faculty members as 'having high expectations' also considered them as 'favorite' teachers. In addition, students reported that faculty had higher expectations for some students and lower expectations for others. One student who does not attend honors courses remarked, "I think there's a lot of favoritism in this school."

In summary, most students reported that their expectation upon graduation was to attend college, not simply graduate and join the workforce. Academic expectations, stereotype threat, and academic resilience are factors that make the path more difficult for minority students.

Nonetheless, data reflect that almost 90% of students expected to attend a college or university, regardless of race or gender. Discrepancy in expectations between students and teachers was evident in the findings, which influenced the achievement levels of students.

Discipline and School Climate Findings

Discipline Referrals

The school’s disciplinary practices appear to provide another obstacle to student performance. Many teachers cited discipline as a major challenge. “I believe there’s a decided lack of emphasis on discipline and on consequences for behavior, and I think until such time as we send a strong message, school-wide, that [breaking] in-school rules will not be tolerated and that there will be consequences for behavior, we’re never going to get kids to understand it. It’s only by the grace of God that the place hasn’t gone berserk at this point.”

Table 12 provides the percentage of discipline referrals by race/ethnicity and gender. Across the student population, less than half (46.7%) are not receiving any discipline referrals, which represents an extremely low percentage. Meanwhile nearly 4 out of every 10 Black males (37.7%) and Hispanic males (39.2%) received more than 5 discipline referrals. White females (15%) maintain the lowest population receiving more than 5 disciplinary referrals. Controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition, students who were sent to the office and received disciplinary referrals more often reported significantly lower grades than their peers.

Table 12. Percentage of Discipline Referrals by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Overall	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female
No referrals	46.7	37.7	42.7	34.2	36.9	43.5	62.5
1-5 referrals	28.6	24.6	34.5	26.7	35.0	33.1	22.6
>5 referrals	24.7	37.7	22.7	39.2	28.2	23.4	15.0

While the data suggest a disproportionate number of Black and Hispanic students receiving behavioral referrals, teachers and administrators rarely discuss students in terms of race. For example, one administrator said, “We realized that there was a vast achievement gap, not only socially, but economically, ethnically, and racially. That was there, and we needed to provide our staff with the requisite skills to make sure that all of our students were problem solvers, critical thinkers, et cetera.”

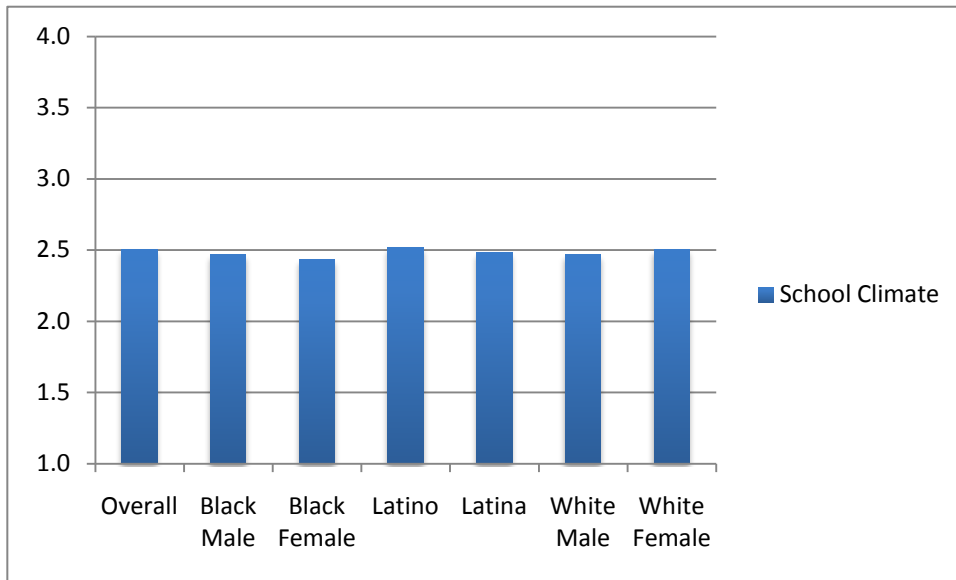
In addition, focus groups with school safety staff suggest that some behavior referrals represent issues with classroom management, rather than issues of safety. “[I]t's generally the same teachers—not all the time—that will write the referrals and that's where the bulk of that comes from,” said one staff member. Another elaborated, saying that some teachers do not have the discipline problems with students that others have because they manage the students in the classroom. “They know how to manage their students and we love it. If somebody is just misbehaving and they can manage it. They handle it. They don't just pass it on.”

School Climate

Overall, students' ratings of the school's climate on the student survey were lower than expected. As Table 13 displays, on a scale of 1-4, where 4 is very positive and 1 is very negative, on average students rated the school's climate as middling regardless of race and gender. As one would expect, when controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition, students who got in more trouble with teachers found the school climate to be much more negative than those who got in less trouble with teachers. Still, there was general agreement

across groupings that the school climate was not particularly promising, which points to an immediate area of need that the school may want to address.

Table 13. School Climate Mean Ratings by Race and Gender



While mean ratings by race and gender suggest overall agreement about the school’s climate, some students said that they have seen a change in the school climate. For example, one student said, “I would say that fights did calm down here.” Yet another female student said, “Yeah, before we came here there was like two girls fighting.” And a third student explained “We’re in lockdown. You can’t go anywhere,” as a response to three fights that occurred in the school recently. Still, one female honors student said, “I just think there’s like a lot of tension. I don’t think that safety is an issue, but I think there’s conflict within students.”

Racial Cohesion

In general teachers and administrators are proud of the school's diversity. "I have to say that I think they get along amazingly well considering the diversity of the building," said one teacher. Another teacher said, ". . . diversity can also be our greatest strength because . . . a lot of our students do get along very well day to day here in this school. We have so much diversity that it serves them well when they get out—that is the real goal. They're not sheltered here. They see a very diverse range of socioeconomics, you know, and academic abilities. So I think that part is a good thing." But another person on staff was not so optimistic. "I think there's division along racial lines at this school," he said.

When race is discussed, it is seen as an impediment to academic success. For example, one administrator said, "It's not cool, I think, a lot in the Black community—especially [what] I see here—it's not cool to be smart. And you're trying to act White if you take those college classes... so I think that there's a whole kind of [stigma] that keeps kids from challenging themselves, maybe, and then doing things." Similarly one student in a focus group reported that a teacher said to her, "This is an English-speaking country. If you don't like it, you can get out." While there is no way to confirm the incident, it does suggest that some students may perceive a lack of sense of belonging at the school.

Conclusion

In sum, key findings from the Metro Center research team’s exploratory examination of the nature of the achievement gap at Monticello High School resulted in the following key findings:

Academic Performance Findings

- Differences in academic performance by race/ethnicity and gender are already very well established when students enter the high school and remain relatively unchanged during high school. As such, effective interventions should include a district-wide strategy to address these disparities in academic performance.
- Based on two important measures of drop-out risk—attendance rate <90% and failure in 1 or more classes, Black males and Hispanic males and females are at greatest risk. These differences were found to be statistically significant, suggesting that Black and Hispanic males and Hispanic females are disproportionately “off-track” for graduation. While the risk for minority males is well understood, this finding also suggests that particular attention is warranted for Hispanic females.

Academic Expectations Findings

- The vast majority of students (90%) surveyed expected to attend a college or university, regardless of race or gender. In addition, discrepancy in expectations between students and teachers was evident in the findings, which influenced the achievement levels of students.
 - Controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household composition, students who reported being more challenged in their coursework reported significantly higher grades than their peers.

Academic Access Findings

- Focus group findings with teachers, administrators, school staff, and students reveal that there are different expectations about student achievement and academic rigor. The idea that all students should be “college bound” is not uniformly accepted.
- Almost one-fifth (19.6%) of all students were enrolled in at least one honors course in 2009; however, the relative disproportionate representation by race and gender suggest that minority students, in particular Black and Hispanic males, have significantly less access to honors courses. This suggests a relationship between race and gender dynamics, placement in accelerated classes, and perceptions around how challenging students find the work. Controlling for demographic factors, students on the student survey who reported being more challenged in their coursework reported significantly higher grades than their peers.

Discipline and School Climate Findings

- Economically disadvantaged students and students who were sent to the principal’s office more often were more likely to feel that their teacher did not have high expectations of them.
- In general, students who were disciplined more often (by teacher or sent to the office) were less likely to hang out with students who pressed them to do their best in school.
- Honors students and students from more affluent and well-educated families were more likely to hang out with students with high-performing peers.
- Nearly 4 out of every 10 Black males (37.7%) and Hispanic males (39.2%) received more than 5 discipline referrals. White females (15%) maintained the lowest rate of receiving more than 5 discipline referrals. Controlling for all demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, special needs status, economic and educational background, and household

composition, students who were sent to the office and detention relatively more often reported significantly lower grades than their peers.

- School Climate ratings by students who took the survey were fairly flat. While students reported that the school was generally safer than in previous years, and teachers reported the diversity of their school as a strength, the average (2.5 on a scale of 4) is lower than is generally found in other research studies, where ratings are generally .5 points more positive than found at MHS.

Recommendations

Overall, The Metro Center research team recommends the development of a comprehensive service plan over several years that utilizes a K-12 approach to addressing the achievement gap in the Monticello School District, as well as targeted work at the high school. Our key recommendations are outlined below, divided by district-wide and high-school level recommendations:

District-wide

Because achievement trajectories appear to be set early on, in terms of performance, in a student's academic career, the team recommends a proactive approach that involves early and ongoing intervention as follows:

- The development of early detection systems for students at risk of academic failure before testing begins (before the 3rd grade) and at key transitions to middle school and then into high school, as well as utilization of the on-track indicator starting in both the middle school and high school. The on-track indicator should begin at the first marking period when a student enters the school.

- Proactive academic support and enrichment for all students to ensure high expectations, exposure to rigor, and high engagement for all students from K-12.
- Training in Culturally Responsive Policies and Practices across all school levels to improve performance of all students, in particular those most at risk for underperformance, and promoting a college-bound culture district-wide. Training should also include assisting faculty, administration, and staff to discuss issues around race and ethnicity.

Recommendations for MHS

In addition, the team recommends the following targeted work at the high-school level as follows:

- A review of student scheduling to examine the extent to which students have access to a broad array of coursework, including challenging and pre-college level courses.
- The development of school-wide policies that provide consistent and explicit expectations by grade and content level to ensure that all students are held to the same standards.
- An investigation and monitoring of discipline practices to identify how students are given referrals in order to understand and address the ways in which students are referred and the reasons. The investigation and monitoring should begin to address which teachers may be using referrals as a classroom management strategy.

Appendix

1. Student Survey
2. Focus Group Protocols

Welcome to the Monticello Student Survey website.

Please click on "Next" below to enter the survey.

Dear Students,

Your opinions matter!

This survey was developed so that students could share their views about their experiences at their school.

The answers you give will be kept private. No one will know how you answer.

This is NOT a test. There are no right or wrong answers, and your participation in this survey is VOLUNTARY. If you are not comfortable answering a question, you can leave it blank.

Please do answer each question you are comfortable with answering.

This survey takes about 15-20 minutes to complete, but your responses will really help everyone better understand your experiences at your high school and let the school know what it is doing well to serve the needs of its students and ways in which it can improve the educational experiences of ALL the students who attend this school.

Thank you for taking time to share your views with all of us.

The questions begin on the next page.

The questions in this section of the survey are about the activities you participate in at school and after school, and about your learning experiences at your school. Just like in the rest of the survey, the answers you give will be kept private, and no one will know how you answer.

1. What grade are you in?

2. What school team are you in?

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Administrators treat students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers treat students from different backgrounds in the same way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my school, everyone has the same opportunity to get good grades.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The punishment for breaking school rules is the same no matter who you are.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safe at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everyone gets along in this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I fit in with the students at this school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People at this school are like family to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People care if I'm not at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my school, students make friends with students from different countries or cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my school, students from different racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds treat each other with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students from different religious backgrounds treat each other with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about a TYPICAL day at your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
All of the rules at school are the same no matter which class I'm in.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are disruptions during the school day almost every day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Each day at school follows the same routine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know what to expect at school from the moment I arrive to the end of the day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When someone gets in trouble for poor behavior, the consequences are almost always the same, no matter which class we are in.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. How much do you agree with the following statements about your relationships at school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
There is at least one adult in school I can always count on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that there is no one in school who can help me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers do not treat me with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have at least one friend at school who can help me figure out my homework.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I have a problem at school there is someone I can count on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers do not care about my future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is someone at school who makes me feel like a successful student.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School is a lonely place where no one cares about me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I have questions about school work, I can count on someone there to help me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. When I have a school-related problem, the person in SCHOOL I feel MOST comfortable talking to is...

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> The assistant principal | <input type="checkbox"/> A school secretary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> A Dean | <input type="checkbox"/> A security guard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A social worker | <input type="checkbox"/> The nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> A janitor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The principal | <input type="checkbox"/> School or Teacher aide | <input type="checkbox"/> No one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | |

7. How much do you agree with the following statements about your friends?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My friends try hard in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends and I talk about what we did in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends and I help each other prepare for tests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends think that it is important to do well in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends and I help each other with homework assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends think it is important to attend every class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. The teacher in THIS class:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Expects me to do my best all the time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expects everyone to work hard.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Believes I can do well in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helps me catch up if I am behind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Notices if I have trouble learning something.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. In THIS class, how often:

	Never	Less than once per month	Less than once a week	Once or twice a week	Everyday or almost every day
Do you find the work difficult?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are you challenged?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does the teacher ask difficult questions on tests?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does the teacher ask difficult questions in class?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have to work hard to do well?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about yourself?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think I am a smart person.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I make friends easily.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I am a self-reliant person.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I give up easily.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I usually know what to do if something goes wrong.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I can't do much to change a bad situation at school into a good situation.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I am very determined to reach my goals.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I know how to get the help I need.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I am a positive thinker.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I can handle difficult situations at school.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
If I see someone I'd like to meet, I go to that person instead of waiting for him or her to come to me.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
My parents or guardians are proud of my good grades at school.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
My parents or guardians expect me to do well at school.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ

11. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Ethnicity is related to academic performance.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
Members of my ethnic group have trouble performing well in school.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
Prejudice has had a big effect on members of my ethnic group.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
Prejudice has strongly affected my life.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
Prejudice has negatively affected my school experiences.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
Teachers often expect lower performance from members of my ethnic group.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
Some people think I have less ability because of my ethnicity.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
In academic situations I often feel that others look down on me because of my ethnicity.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
My ethnicity does not affect other people's perceptions of my academic abilities.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
Some academic tasks are more difficult for people of my ethnicity.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ

12. In the first semester or term of this school year, HOW MANY TIMES did any of the following happen?

I was sent to the office.	<input type="text"/>
I was disciplined by a teacher.	<input type="text"/>
I received detention.	<input type="text"/>
I was suspended from school.	<input type="text"/>

The following questions ask you about your plans for your future and how your school is helping you prepare.

Just like in the rest of the survey, the answers you give will be kept private, and no one will know how you answer.

13. As things stand now, how far in school do you think you will get?

- Leave high school before graduation
- Graduate high school
- Attend college, but not complete a degree
- Graduate from college
- Obtain an advanced graduate degree (e.g. PhD, MD, MBA, JD)
- I don't know

14. If you are thinking about NOT going on with your education, which of the following are the MOST IMPORTANT reasons why you have decided NOT to continue your education past high school?

- I do not like school.
- My grades are not high enough.
- I will not need more education for the career I want.
- I'd rather work and make money than go to school.
- I do not feel that going to school is important.
- I need to help support my family.
- I do not qualify for Financial Aid, scholarships or other programs I need to afford college.
- It is impossible for me to continue my education for other reasons.

If you'd like, please explain why you think you will not continue your schooling after high school.

In this final section, we'd like to ask you a few questions about your background.

Just like the rest of the questions in this survey, nothing you share will be linked back to you personally and will be used for only for comparison purposes.

In other words, NOTHING will be shared about individual people.

15. How old are you?

Years

16. Are you a boy or a girl?

- Boy
- Girl

17. What language(s) do you speak at home with your family most of the time?

18. Were you born in the US?

19. Where were you born?

Country:

20. Where was your mother born?

Country:

21. Where was your father born?

Country:

22. How far in school did your mother get?

- Left high school before graduation
- Graduated high school
- Attended college, but did not complete a degree
- Graduated from college
- Obtained an advanced graduate degree (e.g. PhD, MD, MBA, JD)
- I don't know

23. How far in school did your father get?

- Left high school before graduation
- Graduated high school
- Attended college, but did not complete a degree
- graduated from college
- Obtained an advanced graduate degree (e.g. PhD, MD, MBA, JD)
- I don't know

24. Who are all the people that you live with right now? (Check all that apply)

- Mother
- Older Brother
- Foster Parent
- Father
- Cousins
- Other non-related children
- Grandmother
- Step-Mother
- Younger Sister
- Aunt
- Step-Father
- Younger Brother
- Other non-related adults
- Grandfather
- Older Sister
- Uncle
- Other family member (please describe your relationship):

25. Are you Hispanic or of Latino/Latina descent?

- Yes
- No

26. What race do you identify yourself to be?

- Asian
- Black
- Native American
- White
- Bi-racial/ Mixed race
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please list)

27. Are you enrolled in any Honors or Advanced Placement(AP) classes?

- No
- Honors classes
- Advanced Placement(AP)classes
- Both Honors & Advanced Placement(AP)classes

28. Do you receive any services to help you learn English (for example ELL, ESL)?

- Yes
- No

29. Are you enrolled in any services or programs provided for students with disabilities (physical disability, learning disability, etc.)?

Yes

No

30. What grades did you earn last semester? (Mark one response)

Mostly A's

Mostly C's

Half A's and B's

Half C's and D's

Mostly B's

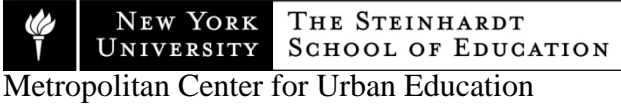
Mostly D's or less

Half B's and C's

YOU'RE DONE!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!

Focus Group Protocols



MONTICELLO ADMINISTRATOR FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Moderator _____ School: Monticello Date: _____ Time Start: _____ Time End: _____

Informed Consent Script (READ OUT LOUD TO GROUP)

Introduction:

Thank you for meeting with us. The purpose of this interview is to gain a better understanding of what you think about your experience as an administrator working in this school, your work with students, and your work with teachers, and in particular your thoughts on what contributes to various kinds of performance differences among the students in the school. The information you provide will be used to assist the school with identifying areas of need and strategies to better serve all of the students who attend Monticello High School.

Format:

Today we'll be having a discussion about your experience working at this school. We'll talk about the school's goals for its students, student achievement, administrative practices, and your professional needs.

Confidentiality:

None of your names will appear anywhere. I will ask you to record your name and position at the beginning of the discussion for our transcriber, just so she can keep track of the flow. We will use fake names for the transcript and the analyses. I promise to change your name in final reports, articles, or other written info. Actually, I am required to do so by law.

Risks: You may say something that contains sensitive information. If during the interview you say something that you wish you had not said, let me know and the statement will be erased and won't be transcribed. The chance that you may say something sensitive is a risk of this project.

Benefits: A benefit of this study is that your interview may help this school to either continue doing a good job or help them identify ways to better support you in your work and to serve to the needs of all students who attend Monticello.

Review group norms

Here are the suggested ground rules for our focus group.
(Read over)

Suggested Ground Rules for our Focus Group

Keep focused on our topic

If you think it, we want to hear it

Confidentiality applies to everyone in the group

Share airtime

One voice at a time

End on time

Does everyone agree? Anything we need to add?

OK, let's begin—

Focus Group Protocols

Note to Moderator: Check to see if tape works before you begin. Be sure to explain the recorder's role to the group.

Setting the recorder

Before we begin, please just

- Say your name, position, and how many years have you been working at MHS into the recorder,

REPEAT: Your name will not be transcribed and replaced with a fake name, but this is so the transcriber can recognize your voice when typing.

Background Information

Let's just begin with some basic demographic information from you:

- How many total years have you been a (NAME OF POSITION)?
- Have you worked anywhere else? (If yes) How many years in total have you worked in education in some capacity? What were your previous roles (e.g. teacher, counselor, parent coordinator)
- What was your major in university (UNDERGRAD IF IN US)? How far did you go in school?

School Goals & Taking Stock

First, let's talk about the school's goals are for its students.

1. When students graduate from Monticello, what do they walk away with (goals—what can they do?)
 - Probe for
 - Academic goals?
 - Navigating university?
 - Life skills?
 - Social?
 - Your goals?
2. How does the school/program get them there?
 - Probe...What are the key components?
3. Tell me a bit more about your specific job at the school and what are some of the things you do as an (NAME OF POSITION) to help students become (INSERT IDENTIFIED GOALS) ?
 - i. Probe for examples:
 - Can you give an example?
 - Please describe your work with teachers
 - Please describe your work with students
4. What are the different services available that help the graduates achieve these outcomes? (What are your resources?)
 - Probe based on what they noted for the goals e.g.
 - Academic achievement?, Enrichment?
 - Social
 - Counseling
 - Community, etc....

Focus Group Protocols

5. What kinds of activities are available to students before and after school?
 - Tell me more about the activities, i.e., describe the activities' content, who participates, how often?
 - What is the strength of these activities? What is the challenge of these activities?

Student Academic Achievement

6. Next, let's talk about student achievement in your school.
 - What do you think interferes with students getting good grades?
 - **Probe topics:** ask how do they or it interfere?
 - What do you think helps with students getting good grades?
 - **Probe topics:** ask how do they or it interfere?
 - Do you expect that most of the students in your school will finish high school? College? PROBE FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS OF STUDENTS
7. How do students get along at the school?
 - a. BASED ON THEIR RESPONSE FOLLOW UP WITH:
 - i. How do these dynamics INTERFERE WITH student achievement?
OR
 - ii. How do these dynamics FACILITATE student achievement?
8. Please describe the nature of the achievement gap in this school. PROBE FOR CLASS, GENDER, RACE, ABILITY, SPECIAL NEED ETC AS APPROPRIATE

Job Specifics

Finally, let's talk a little about the day in the life of a (ROLE).

9. Tell me about a typical Tuesday in April. (PROBE FOR DETAILS, EXAMPLES, & ANECDOTES)

Reflection

10. Looking back at everything we've talked about, what is going really well? Strengths
11. What continues to be challenging for you? What supports do you need?
12. If you could change something what would it be?

Note to Moderator: At the end of focus group: Briefly summarize the main points of the discussion. Encourage some general agreement by saying something like: "What I have heard you saying this afternoon was...summarize...did I summarize your thoughts correctly? Is there anything you would like to add or amend?" THANK EVERYONE FOR ATTENDING.

Focus Group Protocols



Metropolitan Center for Urban Education

GENERAL ADULT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewer/Facilitator _____

School: _____

Date: _____

Time Start: _____ Time End: _____

Note to INTERVIEWER: If recording, check to see if tape works before you begin. If you are not recording, there should be a second person with you there taking notes. Be sure to explain the recorder's role. Have people complete the sign-in sheet as they walk in.

Introduction:

Thank you for meeting with us. The purpose of this interview is to gain a better understanding of what you think about your experience working in this school, and work with students, in particular your thoughts on what contributes to various kinds of performance differences among the students in the school. The information you provide will be used to assist the school with identifying areas of need and strategies to better serve all of the students who attend Monticello High School.

Format:

Today we'll be having a discussion about your experience working at this school. We'll talk about your goals and the school's goals for its students, student achievement, classroom practices, and your professional needs.

Confidentiality:

None of your names will appear anywhere. I will ask you to record your name and position at the beginning of the discussion for our transcriber, just so she can keep track of the flow. We will use fake names for the transcript and the analyses. I promise to change your name in final reports, articles, or other written info. Actually, I am required to do so by law.

Risks: You may say something that contains sensitive information. If during the interview you say something that you wish you had not said, let me know and the statement will be erased and won't be transcribed. The chance that you may say something sensitive is a risk of this project.

Benefits: A benefit of this study is that your interview may help this school to either continue doing a good job or help them identify ways to better support you in your work and to serve to the needs of all students who attend Monticello.

Focus Group Protocols

Review group norms

Here are the suggested ground rules for our focus group.

(Read over)

Suggested Ground Rules for our Focus Group

Keep focused on our topic

If you think it, we want to hear it

Confidentiality applies to everyone in the group

Share airtime

One voice at a time

End on time

Does everyone agree? Anything we need to add?

OK, let's begin—

Note to Moderator: Check to see if tape works before you begin. A second person should be there to take notes. Be sure to explain the recorder's role to the group.

Setting the recorder

Before we begin, please just

- **Say your name, subject area and grade levels taught into the recorder,**

REPEAT: Your name will not be transcribed and replaced with a fake name, but this is so the transcriber can recognize your voice when typing.

Background Information

Let's just begin with some basic demographic information from you:

- How many years have you been (NAME POSITION) at (NAME OF SCHOOL)?
- Have you worked anywhere else? (If yes) How many total years have you been a (NAME OF POSITION)?
- How many years in total have you worked in education in some capacity? What were your previous roles (e.g. teacher, counselor, parent coordinator)
- What was your major in university (UNDERGRAD IF IN US)? How far did you go in school?

School Goals

First, let's talk about the school's goals are for its students.

13. When students graduate from Monticello, what do they walk away with (goals—what can they do?)
 - Probe for
 - Academic goals?
 - Navigating university?
 - Life skills?
 - Social?
 - Your goals?

Focus Group Protocols

14. How does the school/program get them there?
 - Probe...What are the key components?
 - What are some of the things you do as an (NAME OF POSITION) to get them there?
 - Probe for examples: Can you give an example?
15. What are the different services available that help the graduates achieve these outcomes? (What are your resources?)
 - Probe based on what they noted for the goals e.g.
 - Academic achievement?
 - Enrichment?
 - Social
 - Counseling
 - Community, etc....
16. Looking back at what you outlined above, what is going really well? Strengths
17. What continues to be challenging?
18. If you could change something what would it be?

Achievement/School Experience

2. Next, let's talk about student achievement in your school.
 - What do you think interferes with students getting good grades?
 - **Probe topics:** ask how do they or it interfere?
 - What do you think helps with students getting good grades?
 - **Probe topics:** ask how do they or it interfere?
 - What is a good student?
 - Do you expect that most of the students in your school will finish high school? College? PROBE FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS OF STUDENTS
3. How do students get along at the school?
 - a. How do these dynamic INTERFERE/OR CONTRIBUTE to student achievement?

Student Support Services: Co-Curricular and After-School Activities **IF APPLICABLE**

4. What kinds of activities are available to students before and after school?
 - Tell me more about the activities, i.e., describe the activities' content, who participates, how often?
 - What is the strength of these activities? What is the challenge of these activities?

Classroom Practices

Finally, let's talk about your classroom practice. We asked you to bring a copy of your grading policy, behavior expectations, and a favorite lesson or unit plan. We will be collating these (without names

Focus Group Protocols

unless otherwise instructed) so that you can learn from each other. (If they withdraw their docs, it's all good)

5. How do you assess student learning? What is your grading policy (encourage them to share grading policies))
6. What are your expectations for behavior in your classroom? What are the consequences for noncompliance (encourage them to share their classroom discipline policies)
7. Finally, we asked you to bring a favorite lesson plan or unit plan. We will be collating these so you have the opportunity to learn from each other. (IF TIME HAVE THEM SHARE A HIGH LIGHT FROM IT

THANK YOU!!!

Focus Group Protocols



Metropolitan Center for Urban Education

MONTICELLO NON-TEACHING STAFF GENERAL FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Moderator _____ School: Monticello Date: _____ Time Start: _____ Time End: _____

Informed Consent Script (READ OUT LOUD TO GROUP)

Introduction:

Thank you for meeting with us. The purpose of this interview is to gain a better understanding of what you think about your experience working in this school, and work with students, in particular your thoughts on what contributes to various kinds of performance differences among the students in the school. The information you provide will be used to assist the school with identifying areas of need and strategies to better serve all of the students who attend Monticello High School.

Format:

Today we'll be having a discussion about your experience working at this school. We'll talk about the school's goals for its students, student achievement, classroom practices, and your professional needs.

Confidentiality:

None of your names will appear anywhere. I will ask you to record your name and position at the beginning of the discussion for our transcriber, just so she can keep track of the flow. We will use fake names for the transcript and the analyses. I promise to change your name in final reports, articles, or other written info. Actually, I am required to do so by law.

Risks: You may say something that contains sensitive information. If during the interview you say something that you wish you had not said, let me know and the statement will be erased and won't be transcribed. The chance that you may say something sensitive is a risk of this project.

Benefits: A benefit of this study is that your interview may help this school to either continue doing a good job or help them identify ways to better support you in your work and to serve to the needs of all students who attend Monticello.

Review group norms

Here are the suggested ground rules for our focus group.
(Read over)

Suggested Ground Rules for our Focus Group

Keep focused on our topic

If you think it, we want to hear it

Confidentiality applies to everyone in the group

Share airtime

One voice at a time

End on time

Does everyone agree? Anything we need to add?

OK, let's begin—

Focus Group Protocols

Note to Moderator: Check to see if tape works before you begin. Be sure to explain the recorder's role to the group.

Setting the recorder

Before we begin, please just

- Say your name, position, and How many years have you been working at MHS into the recorder,

REPEAT: Your name will not be transcribed and replaced with a fake name, but this is so the transcriber can recognize your voice when typing.

Background Information

Let's just begin with some basic demographic information from you:

- How many total years have you been a (NAME OF POSITION)?
- Have you worked anywhere else? (If yes) How many years in total have you worked in education in some capacity? What were your previous roles (e.g. teacher, counselor, parent coordinator)
- What was your major in university (UNDERGRAD IF IN US)? How far did you go in school?

School Goals

First, let's talk about the school's goals are for its students.

19. When students graduate from Monticello, what do they walk away with (goals—what can they do?)
 - Probe for
 - Academic goals?
 - Navigating university?
 - Life skills?
 - Social?
 - Your goals?
20. How does the school/program get them there?
 - Probe...What are the key components?
21. Tell me a bit more about your specific job at the school and what are some of the things you do as an (NAME OF POSITION) to help students become (INSERT IDENTIFIED GOALS) ?
 - ii. Probe for examples: Can you give an example?
22. What are the different services available that help the graduates achieve these outcomes? (What are your resources?)
 - Probe based on what they noted for the goals e.g.
 - Academic achievement?
 - Enrichment?
 - Social
 - Counseling
 - Community, etc....

Focus Group Protocols

Student Academic Achievement

23. Next, let's talk about student achievement in your school.
- What do you think interferes with students getting good grades?
 - **Probe topics:** ask how do they or it interfere?
 - What do you think helps with students getting good grades?
 - **Probe topics:** ask how do they or it interfere?
 - What is a good student?
 - Do you expect that most of the students in your school will finish high school? College? PROBE FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS OF STUDENTS
24. How do students get along at the school?
- a. BASED ON THEIR RESPONSE FOLLOW UP WITH:
- i. How do these dynamics INTERFERE WITH student achievement?
OR
 - ii. How do these dynamics FACILITATE student achievement?

ONLY IF APPLICABLE TO POSITION (ELSE SKIP TO JOB SPECIFICS)

Student Support Services: Co-Curricular and After-School Activities

25. What kinds of activities are available to students before and after school?
- Tell me more about the activities, i.e., describe the activities' content, who participates, how often?
 - What is the strength of these activities? What is the challenge of these activities?

Job Specifics

Finally, let's talk a little about the day in the life of a (ROLE).

26. Tell me about a typical Tuesday in April. (PROBE FOR DETAILS, EXAMPLES, & ANECDOTES)

Reflection

27. Looking back at everything we've talked about, what is going really well? Strengths
28. What continues to be challenging for you? What supports do you need?
29. If you could change something what would it be?

Note to Moderator: At the end of focus group: Briefly summarize the main points of the discussion. Encourage some general agreement by saying something like: "What I have heard you saying this afternoon was...summarize...did I summarize your thoughts correctly? Is there anything you would like to add or amend?" THANK EVERYONE FOR ATTENDING.

Focus Group Protocols

Informed Consent Script (READ OUT LOUD TO GROUP)

Introduction & Format: Thank you all for coming today. The purpose of this discussion is to gain a better understanding of your experiences as a student at Monticello High School. We will talk about what you do in your classes, your relationships with adults and other students in the school, and seek your advice about how to help Monticello serve you the best it can. The information you provide will help the teachers and administration of the school better plan your classes, design effective, meaningful homework assignments, and improve the kinds of support available to you, whether it is with school work, college plans, or work experience.

Confidentiality: None of your names will appear anywhere. I will ask you to record your name and position at the beginning of the discussion for our transcriber, just so she can keep track of the flow. We will use fake names for the transcript and the analyses. I promise that your name will never appear in any written form. Actually, I am required to keep confidentiality by law.

Risks: You may say something that contains sensitive information. If during the interview you say something that you wish you had not said, let me know and the statement will be erased and won't be transcribed. The chance that you may say something sensitive is a risk of this project.

Benefits: A benefit of this study is that your interview may help this school to either continue doing a good job or help them identify ways to better serve to the needs of all students at Monticello.

Review group norms

Here are the suggested ground rules for our focus group.
(Read over)

Suggested Ground Rules for our Focus Group

Keep focused on our topic

If you think it, we want to hear it

Confidentiality applies to everyone in the group

Share airtime

One voice at a time

End on time

Does everyone agree? Anything we need to add?

OK, let's begin—

Note to Moderator: Check to see if tape works before you begin. A second person should be there to take notes. Be sure to explain the recorder's role to the group.

Setting the recorder

Before we begin, please just

- Say your name and grade level into the recorder,
- Tell us what where you see yourself in TEN years. What will you be doing?

REPEAT: Your name will not be transcribed and replaced with a fake name, but this is so the transcriber can recognize your voice when typing.

Focus Group Protocols

Background Information

Let's first begin with a couple of questions about your background (ROUND ROBIN—HAVE EVERYONE RESPOND)

- Were you born in Monticello? PROBE IF NOT—WHERE BORN?
- How about your parents—are they from Monticello?
- If it were my first day as a student at Monticello High School what should I know about this school? What advice would you give me?

Instruction

I'd like to ask you a few questions about your classes and your school work...

1. (COLLECTIVE QUESTION) **What do you do in your classes?** (Probe from conditions for cog engagement and list)?

POSSIBLE PROBES: writing your ideas, Group projects, taking notes, doing an experiment, working with a partner, class discussions, completing worksheets, etc....

(ONCE LIST IS GENERATED EACH STUDENT SHOULD RESPOND TO BELOW)

- a. From generated list:
 - i. **Which activities do you really like? Why?**
 - ii. **Which ones do you NOT like so much? Why?**
2. **Tell me about your favorite teacher** (you don't need to give him/her a name)
 - a. **What is it that makes him/her a great teacher?**
PROBE FOR EXPECTATIONS AND RIGOR e.g.
 - i. How hard does (s)he expect you to work?
 - ii. What does (s)he expect you to do after high school (or be when you grow up?)
 - iii. How does he/she challenge you to do your best?
 - b. **Are there any other adults or teachers in the school that have high expectations for you?**
PROBE TO SEE IF FAVORITE TEACHER IS EXCEPTION OR RULE
IF EXCEPTION PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES & SIMILARITIES, E.G.
 - i. How hard do others typically expect you to work?
 - ii. What do most adults at Monticello expect you to do after high school (or be when you grow up?)
 - iii. What is a typical lesson like?

Beliefs

(ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION ON THESE QUESTIONS AND REALLY PROBE)

3. The *good/bad* Student:
 - a. **What does a *good* student look like? What does it take to be a *good* student? Who is most likely to be a *good* student?**
 - b. **What might prevent someone from becoming a *good* student? Can you give me an example?**
4. **What does a *bad* student look like? How does someone become a "bad" student? Who is most likely to be a *bad* student?** (Probe for gender, and if comes up ethnicity)
 - c. **What might prevent someone from becoming a *bad* student? Can you give me an example?**

Focus Group Protocols

5. How would you describe yourself as a student?

School Climate

6. In your opinion, do students at the School feel comfortable or at home here? PROBE FOR REASONS

7. How does everyone get along in the school? PROBE FOR

- ADULTS-STUDENTS & STUDENTS-STUDENTS
- CLIQUES AND GROUPINGS...E.G.

- i. Do students hang in particular groups?
- ii. How are groups formed? In other words, how are friendship groups formed? (Probe only if you must...for example by interests, cultural backgrounds, race, etc...)
- iii. Do all the different groups get along? Are there some groups that never get along?
PROBE

8. Who do you go to when you need help with your schoolwork? (Probe for adults/kids/parent roles)

- How does he/she help you?

9. Who do you go to when you need help or advice on other things that happen at school?

- How does he/she help you?

10. If you were the principal at Monticello High School would you change anything? (PROBE FOR WHAT) Would you keep anything the same? (PROBE FOR WHAT)

Note to Moderator: At the end of focus group: Briefly summarize the main points of the discussion. Encourage some general agreement by saying something like: "What I have heard you saying this afternoon was...summarize...did I summarize your thoughts correctly? Is there anything you would like to add or amend?" THANK EVERYONE FOR ATTENDING.

Focus Group Protocols



Metropolitan Center for Urban Education

MONTICELLO TEACHER FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Moderator _____ School: Monticello Date: _____ Time Start: _____ Time End: _____

Informed Consent Script

Introduction:

Thank you for meeting with us. The purpose of this interview is to gain a better understanding of what you think about your experience working in this school, and work with students, in particular your thoughts on what contributes to various kinds of performance differences among the students in the school. The information you provide will be used to assist the school with identifying areas of need and strategies to better serve all of the students who attend Monticello High School.

Format:

Today we'll be having a discussion about your experience working at this school. We'll talk about the school's goals for its students, student achievement, classroom practices, and your professional needs.

Confidentiality:

None of your names will appear anywhere. I will ask you to record your name and position at the beginning of the discussion for our transcriber, just so she can keep track of the flow. We will use fake names for the transcript and the analyses. I promise to change your name in final reports, articles, or other written info. Actually, I am required to do so by law.

Risks: You may say something that contains sensitive information. If during the interview you say something that you wish you had not said, let me know and the statement will be erased and won't be transcribed. The chance that you may say something sensitive is a risk of this project.

Benefits: A benefit of this study is that your interview may help this school to either continue doing a good job or help them identify ways to better support you in your work and to serve to the needs of all students who attend Monticello.

Review group norms

Here are the suggested ground rules for our focus group.
(Read over)

Suggested Ground Rules for our Focus Group

Keep focused on our topic

If you think it, we want to hear it

Confidentiality applies to everyone in the group

Share airtime

One voice at a time

End on time

Does everyone agree? Anything we need to add?

OK, let's begin—

Focus Group Protocols

Note to Moderator: Check to see if tape works before you begin. Be sure to explain the recorder's role to the group.

Setting the recorder

Before we begin, please just

- Say your name, subject area and grade levels taught into the recorder,

REPEAT: Your name will not be transcribed and replaced with a fake name, but this is so the transcriber can recognize your voice when typing.

Background Information

Let's just begin with some basic demographic information from you:

- How many years have you been (NAME POSITION) at (NAME OF SCHOOL)?
- Have you worked anywhere else? (If yes) How many total years have you been a (NAME OF POSITION)?
- How many years in total have you worked in education in some capacity? What were your previous roles (e.g. teacher, counselor, parent coordinator)
- What was your major in university (UNDERGRAD IF IN US)? How far did you go in school?

School Goals

First, let's talk about the school's goals are for its students.

30. When students graduate from Monticello, what do they walk away with? (goals—what can they do?)
 - Probe for
 - Academic goals?
 - Navigating university?
 - Life skills?
 - Social?
 - Your goals?

Student Academic Achievement

31. Next, let's talk about student achievement in your school.
 - What do you think interferes with students getting good grades?
 - **Probe topics:** ask how do they or it interfere?
 - What do you think helps with students getting good grades?
 - **Probe topics:** ask how do they or it interfere?
 - What is a good student?
 - Do you expect that most of the students in your school will finish high school? College? PROBE FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS OF STUDENTS
32. How do students get along at the school?
 - b. BASED ON THEIR RESPONSE FOLLOW UP WITH:
 - i. How do these dynamics INTERFERE WITH student achievement?

OR

Focus Group Protocols

- ii. How do these dynamics FACILITATE student achievement?

Classroom Practices

Let's talk more specifically about the policies and strategies you implement in the classroom. We asked you to bring a copy of your grading policy, behavior expectations, and a favorite lesson or unit plan. We will be collating these (without names unless otherwise instructed) so that you can learn from each other. (If they withdraw their docs, it's all good)

33. How do you assess student learning? (PROBE FOR EXAMPLES)
34. How do you evaluate student work? What is your grading policy (encourage them to share grading policies)
35. What are your expectations for behavior in your classroom? What are the consequences for noncompliance (encourage them to share their classroom discipline policies) PROBE FOR EXAMPLES)

Reflection

36. Looking back at everything we've talked about, what is going really well? Strengths
37. What continues to be challenging? What supports do you need?
38. If you could change something what would it be?

39. Finally, we asked you to bring a favorite lesson plan or unit plan. We will be collating these so you have the opportunity to learn from each other. (IF TIME HAVE THEM SHARE A HIGH LIGHT FROM IT—but move them quickly)

Note to Moderator: At the end of focus group: Briefly summarize the main points of the discussion. Encourage some general agreement by saying something like: "What I have heard you saying this afternoon was...summarize...did I summarize your thoughts correctly? Is there anything you would like to add or amend?" THANK EVERYONE FOR ATTENDING.