

# Summary of Results from East Lansing High School Student School Experience Survey

*A Research Inquiry of the Achievement Gap Initiative  
Presented to the  
East Lansing Public Schools School Board  
January 23, 2012*

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# Survey Overview

- Developed by Dr. Carter and a team of graduate students at MSU
- Administered June 4, 2010 at East Lansing High School under the principalship of Paula Steele
- 68 items
- 2 open-ended response questions
- 42 Likert-scale items (1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5=Strongly Agree)



# Survey Overview

- Subscales
  - School Culture & Climate (10 items)
  - Experiences with Discrimination (1 item)
  - Perceptions of Teachers (13 items)
  - Enjoyment of Schoolwork (3 items)
  - Engagement in School (5 items)
  - Attitude Toward Curriculum & Extracurriculars (5 items)
  - Relationships with Adults in School (3 items)
  - Relationships with Peers (2 items)
- Open-Ended Questions
  - Please comment below about what you like most about your school (#67)
  - If you could give your principal some suggestions on how to improve your school, what would you say? (#68)



# Questions Guiding Survey Administration

1. How, if at all, does students' racial identification/categorization shape their schooling experiences at and perceptions of ELHS?
  - a. Are there racial differences in how students perceive the culture and climate at ELHS?
2. How, if at all, does socioeconomic status shape students' schooling experiences at and perceptions of ELHS?
3. How, if at all, does gender shape students' schooling experiences at and perceptions of ELHS?
4. How are students' overall attitudes about ELHS as a good school informed by their racialized, classed, and gendered experiences at ELHS?



# Profile of Respondents

| Respondent's Background (n=738)     | (%)  |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Gender                              |      |
| Male                                | 48.7 |
| Female                              | 49.7 |
| Race/Ethnicity                      |      |
| White                               | 53.6 |
| Black/African American              | 17.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino                     | 4.9  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander              | 5.6  |
| Am. Indian/Alaska Native            | 1.4  |
| Multi-racial                        | 9.8  |
| Other                               | 7.4  |
| Residency                           |      |
| In-District Residents               | 73.2 |
| Schools-of-Choice                   | 24.3 |
| Primary Language of Parents in Home |      |
| English                             | 77.3 |
| Non-English                         | 22.7 |
| Number of Computers in Home         |      |
| None                                | 3.0  |
| 1                                   | 25.3 |
| 2                                   | 71.7 |
| Number of Books in Home             |      |
| <10                                 | 4.7  |
| 10-50                               | 19.0 |
| 51-100                              | 23.3 |
| > 100                               | 53.0 |



# Main Findings

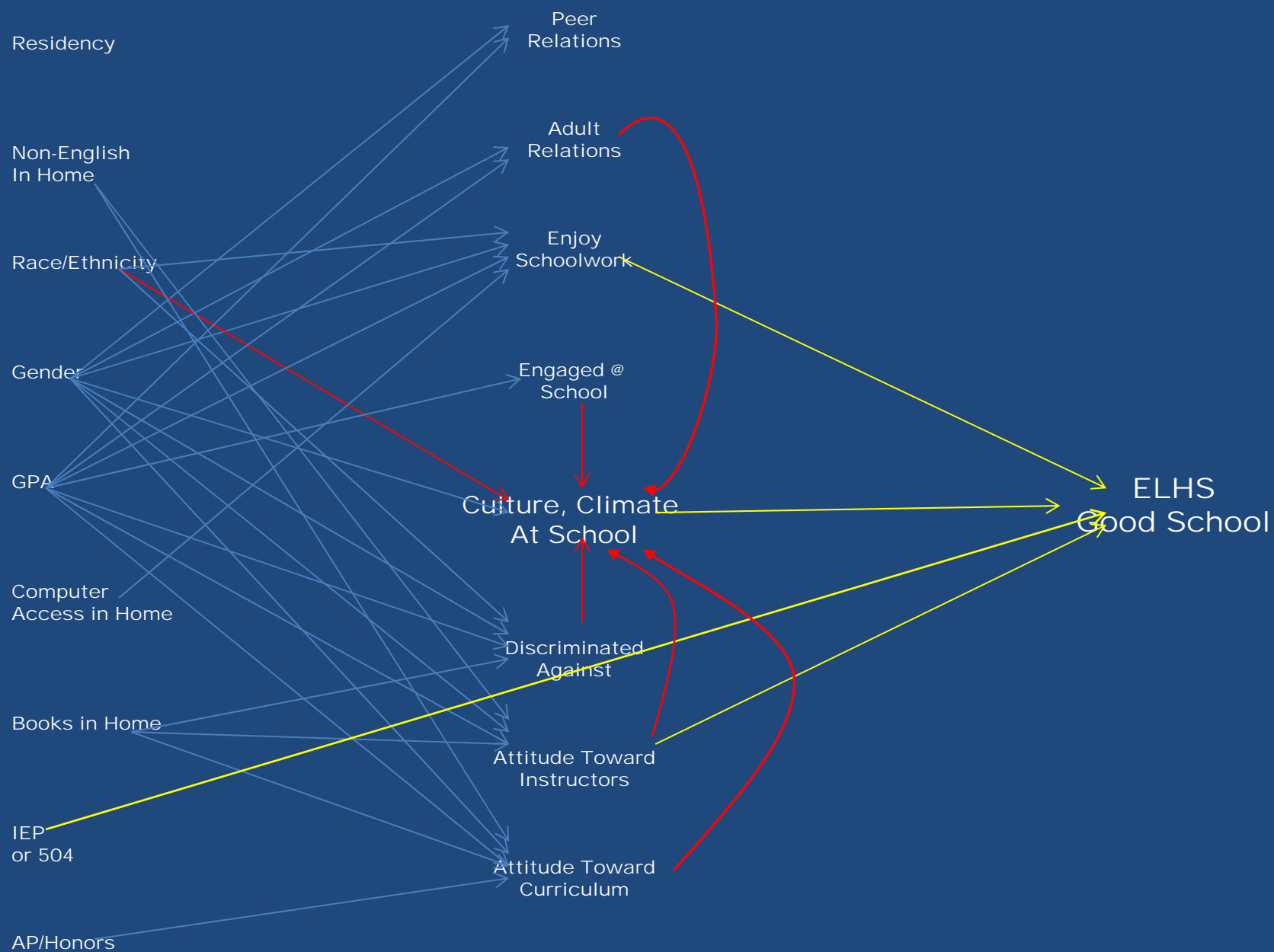
- The four significant predictors of **students' perceptions of ELHS as a good school** were (in rank order):
  - Attitude about the culture and climate of the school;
  - Attitude toward/opinions about instructors;
  - How much they enjoy schoolwork; and,
  - Whether or not they have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504.



# Main Findings

- The six significant predictors of **students' view of the culture and climate** at ELHS were (in rank order):
  - Attitude toward/opinions about instructors;
  - Attitude toward curriculum and extracurricular activities;
  - Views on discrimination;
  - Race;
  - Engagement in schoolwork; and,
  - Views on relationships with adults in school





Path Diagram for ELHS Student Survey – Administered June 4, 2010

# Culture and Climate

- Main Findings
  - On average, students were less positive about their ability to make decisions that affect them in school and the inclusion of their family in school activities.
  - Students who are typically marginalized in schools (students of color and students with language minority parents) are generally less favorable of the culture and climate at ELHS.



# Culture and Climate

- Main Findings

- With regard to race/ethnicity:

- Non-white students had significantly less favorable attitudes about adults' respect for students' cultural differences and administrators' modeling respectful behavior. Black students had the least favorable attitudes, of any racial/ethnic group, about teachers and administrators respecting students' cultural differences.
    - Non-white students had significantly less favorable attitudes than white students about fair discipline at ELHS. Black students were least favorable of all racial/ethnic groups regarding fair discipline.
    - Multiracial and 'Other' students were least favorable of all racial/ethnic groups about being valued members of the school community.
    - Non-white students were significantly less favorable than white students about the inclusion of their family in school activities.

- With regard to gender:

- Boys had significantly less favorable attitudes than girls about the high school's ability to include family members in school activities.



# Discrimination

- Main Findings (n=685)
  - Approximately 40% of students reported experiencing discrimination at ELHS from some source.
  - 28.7%: discrimination from peers
  - 13.1%: discrimination from teachers
  - 11.1%: discrimination from administrators
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# Discrimination

- With regard to gender
  - Of the girls that responded to the item, 40% reported experiencing discrimination at ELHS from some source.
    - 30% - from peers; 12% - from teachers
  - Of the boys that responded to the item, approximately 39% reported experiencing discrimination at ELHS from some source.
    - 26% - from peers; 13% - from teachers



# Discrimination

- With regard to race/ethnicity

| Race/Ethnicity | Peers<br>** | Teachers<br>** | Administrators<br>** | Front<br>Office<br>Staff ** | Counselors/<br>Social<br>Workers ** | Security<br>Officials | Others* | None<br>** |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|------------|
| White          | 21.1        | 5.4            | 3.1                  | 5.1                         | 1.7                                 | 1.7                   | 5.1     | 72.4       |
| Non-White      | 36.6        | 21.3           | 19.5                 | 12.0                        | 5.4                                 | 3.3                   | 9.0     | 47.1       |

\*p(F) <.05; \*\*p(F)<.01

- There were significant differences in reports of experiences with discrimination between white and non-white students.



# Discrimination

- With regard to race/ethnicity

| Race/Ethnicity | Peers<br>** | Teachers<br>** | Administrators<br>** | Front<br>Office<br>Staff ** | Counselors/<br>Social<br>Workers* | Security<br>Officials | Others | None<br>** |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|------------|
| White          | 21.1        | 5.5            | 3.2                  | 5.2                         | 1.7                               | 1.7                   | 5.2    | 72.3       |
| Black          | 38.5        | 29.9           | 23.1                 | 14.5                        | 6.8                               | 3.4                   | 6.0    | 40.2       |
| Multi          | 42.0        | 13.0           | 17.4                 | 5.8                         | 1.4                               | 0.0                   | 5.8    | 50.7       |
| Other          | 29.9        | 16.4           | 14.2                 | 10.4                        | 5.2                               | 3.0                   | 11.2   | 53.0       |

\*p(F) <.05; \*\*p(F)<.01



# Discrimination

- Students' experiences with discrimination from any source
  - 37% in-district students; 46% Schools-of-Choice students
- Students' experiences with discrimination from peers
  - 26% in-district students; 35.9% Schools-of-Choice students
- Students' experiences with discrimination from administrators
  - 17.3% students of non-native English-speaking parents; 9.2% students of native English-speaking parents



# Discrimination

- Main Findings
  - Peers were most often identified as perpetrators of discrimination, regardless of the variable.
  - Non-white students, schools-of-choice students, or students with ESL parents were more likely to perceive experiences with discrimination from various sources within ELHS than students who are white, in-district, or have parents who are native English speakers.

# Attitude Toward Instructors

- Main Findings
  - On average, students had moderately favorable attitudes about teachers at ELHS. Students were most favorable in their beliefs that teachers have high expectations of them.
  - Students were least favorable about teachers' use of material that relates to their life experiences.
  - Black and Multiracial students were least favorable on several items related to opinions of their teachers.



# Attitude Toward Instructors

- Main findings
  - With regard to race/ethnicity
    - Non-white students had significantly lower attitudes about teachers' expectations for them, modeling of respectful behavior, knowing their subject matter well, and encouragement to students to do their best.
  - With regard to gender
    - Males were less favorable than girls regarding teachers' use of material that relates to their life experiences.



# Enjoyment of Schoolwork

- Main Findings
  - On average students are moderately favorable about their enjoyment of learning; they do not perceive that they need extra help with schoolwork, and they moderately agree that class material is boring.
  - With regard to gender
    - Girls were more likely to report being bored with class material but were significantly more favorable of enjoying learning; girls were also more likely to report needing extra help with schoolwork.



# Enjoyment of Schoolwork

- With regard to race/ethnicity
  - Non-white students were more likely to report needing extra help with schoolwork; black students had the highest average response of any racial/ethnic group on this item.
  - Black students had the highest average response of any racial/ethnic group to beliefs of boredom with class material.
- With regard to Parents' Language Category
  - Students of non-native English-speaking parents were less favorable about their enjoyment of learning and had significantly higher responses to needing extra help with schoolwork.



# Engagement in School

- On average students do not look forward to coming to school and agree they could make better grades in school if they worked harder.
- Students had moderately favorable attitudes about their regular participation in class.
- With regard to gender:
  - Boys reported a significantly higher average response than girls to needing an incentive to do well in school.
  - Boys were also significantly more likely to report that they could make better grades in school if they worked harder.



# Engagement in School

- With regard to race/ethnicity
  - Non-white students reported a significantly higher response than their white counterparts to perceiving they could make better grades in school if they worked harder; black students had the highest average response of any racial/ethnic group.



# Attitudes toward Curriculum and Extracurriculars

- Main Findings
  - Of students surveyed, attitudes toward the curriculum (academic and extracurricular) at ELHS were moderately favorable.
  - Students were least favorable about being encouraged to participate in *academic* extracurricular activities and most favorable about being encouraged to participate in *social* extracurricular activities.



# Attitudes toward Curriculum and Extracurriculars

- With regard to race/ethnicity:
  - Black students were least favorable of any racial/ethnic group regarding the curriculum at ELHS representing diverse perspectives.
  - Black students were least favorable of any racial/ethnic group for perceiving encouragement to participate in *academic* extracurricular activities; and, they had the highest average response for perceiving encouragement to participate in *social* extracurricular activities.



# Attitude toward Curriculum and Extracurriculars

- With regard to race/ethnicity:
  - Black students were least favorable of any racial/ethnic group to perceiving encouragement to take challenging academic courses at ELHS.
  - ‘Other’ students were least favorable of any racial/ethnic group to perceiving that the curriculum they are being exposed to at ELHS is challenging.

# Attitude toward Curriculum and Extracurriculars

- With regard to gender:
  - Boys were significantly less favorable than girls that the curriculum they are being exposed to at ELHS is challenging.
  - Boys were less favorable than girls regarding encouragement to participate in *academic* extracurricular activities.

# Most Important Qualities of a Teacher

- The two most commonly cited qualities were:
  - Explains material well to students (73.9%)
  - Uses fun and creative techniques (45.8%)
- The third most commonly cited quality was:
  - Gives students a lot of individual help with their work (by girls, black students, and 'Other' students)
  - Builds trust and respect with students (by boys, sophomore students, and white students)



# Overall Perceptions of ELHS

- When asked whether or not students think ELHS is a good school:
  - Average response: 4.23 (Agree)
  - Non-white students reported a significantly lower average response than white students.
  - Schools-of-Choice students reported a significantly lower average response than in-district students.
  - Students with one or no computer in the home were significantly more likely to have a less favorable overall opinion of ELHS.
  - Students reporting having fewer than 10 books in the home were more likely to have a significantly less favorable overall opinion of ELHS.



# Overall Perceptions of ELHS

- Students with an IEP or 504 were significantly more likely to have a less favorable overall opinion of ELHS than their non-IEP/non-504 counterparts.
- There were significant differences in opinions between students who have taken no AP course, one AP course and more than one AP course.



# Preparation for . . .

- When asked what ELHS is preparing students for, the two most commonly cited responses were:
  - College (93.9%)
  - To get good jobs (55.1%)
- In most cases, the third most commonly cited response was:
  - To interact with different cultures
- Only sophomores reported a third common response of ‘to be a good citizen.’



# Implications

1. Cultural competency goals should be established at a district-level and the School Improvement Plan at ELHS should include explicit goals related to building cultural competency with multiple constituents.
2. Strengthening student-teacher relationships and student-student relationships is key to enhancing the culture and climate at ELHS.
  - ✓ A continued focus on building cultural competency and engaging in critical self-reflection among staff in the district is necessary.
  - ✓ A strategic focus on building cultural competency amongst students is necessary to reduce students' perceptions of discrimination from peers and cultivate a culturally inclusive and affirming climate.

# Implications

4. Curricula needs to represent diverse perspectives and be more culturally relevant for students. This can help increase student engagement in learning.
5. High standards and expectations need to be held for all students regarding academic success within the high school.
6. Equal opportunity and encouragement to participate in rigorous coursework and academic extracurricular activities needs to be practiced by adults in the high school community.



# Implications?

7. Address opportunity gaps between white and non-white students and high-SES and low-SES students is critical for increasing academic engagement and performance.



# Recommendations

1. Establish spaces within the school building where students and adults can engage in critical dialogue about cultural diversity and societal inequities
2. Establish a course/sequence of courses at the high school that focus on building students' cultural competency.
3. Establish policies and procedures that promote regular assessment of culture and climate at ELHS.
  - This can help with achieving fair discipline tactics , improving teacher-student and student-student relationships.



# Recommendations connected to the work of the Achievement Gap Task Force

- Hire a Director of Cultural Inclusion and Educational Equity for the district. This can aid in enhancing student-teacher and student-student relationships at ELHS, diversifying curriculum to align with goals to build cultural competency across the district, and aid in establishing fair and equitable policies that promote student success.
- Continue Yearlong PD for teachers focused on race, class, and gender inequities in schooling and strategies for addressing these inequities.
- Establish cultural competency series for school board members.



# Connections to Cultural Competency Initiatives in AY 2011-2012

- MSU Transforming Theatre Ensemble sketches for all faculty (currently taking place)
- February 21<sup>st</sup> district-wide cultural competency PD (in planning)
- Teaching Across Cultural Differences yearlong PD seminar (for teachers) (currently taking place)
- Leading Across Cultural Differences PD seminar series (**recommended for administrators**)
- Diversity Conference at ELHS (student-driven)

