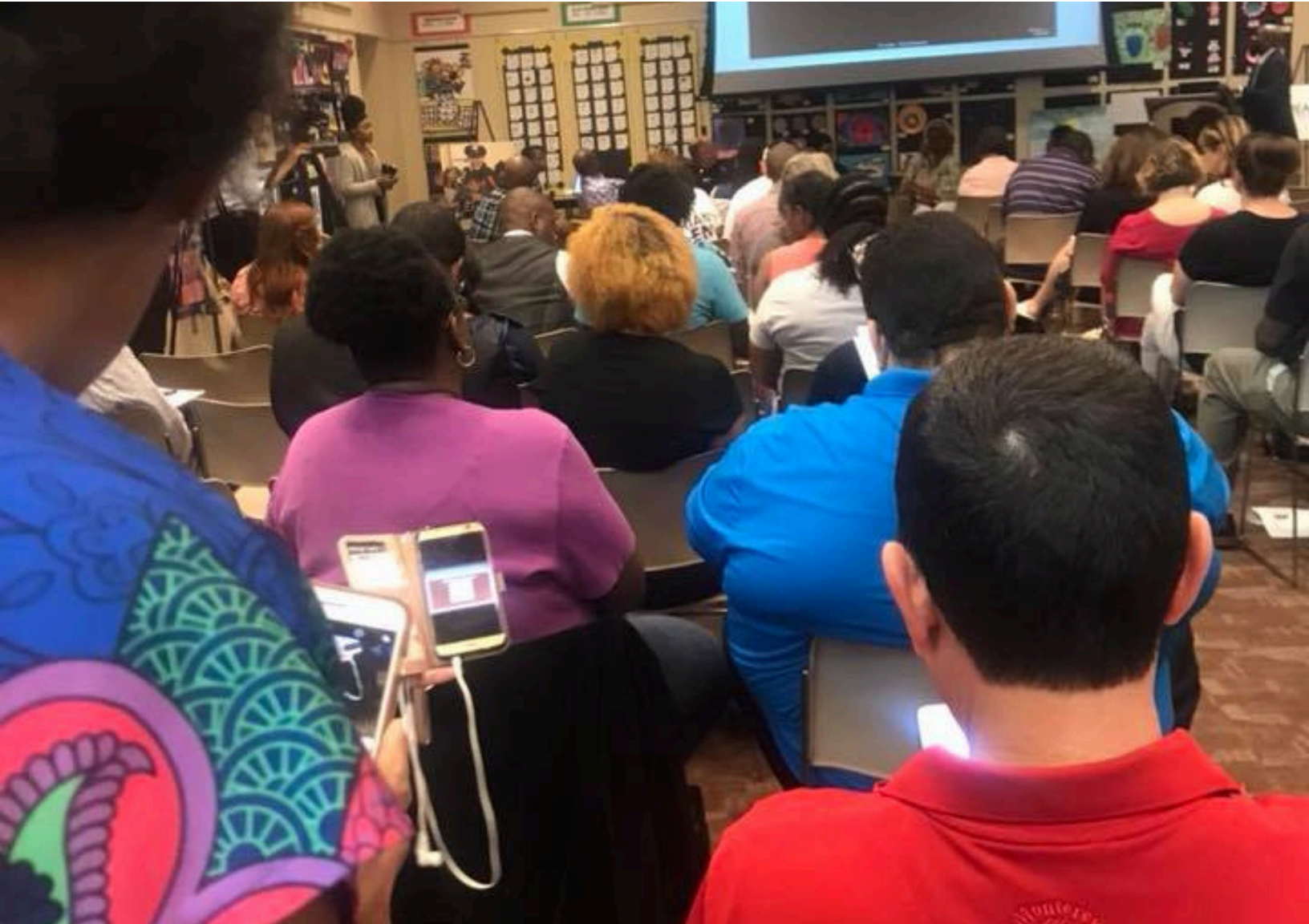


# HIRE + RETAIN BLACK TEACHERS: COMMUNITY-LED RESEARCH TO LOCAL ACTION IN PFLUGERVILLE, TEXAS

| Educators In Solidarity | Meme Styles, MPA | Paulette Blanc, MPH | Amy Brown | Hannah Friedman



**MEASURE**  
Community Led. Data Driven.



NOV 2021

## ABOUT MEASURE

MEASURE, an Austin-based nonprofit, works to empower people impacted by social disparities and the accompanying narrative. MEASURE believes that, when used strategically, data provides a common language upon which community members can meet and increase their knowledge about the causes and work together to create equitable change and increase awareness.

## ABOUT EDUCATORS IN SOLIDARITY

Educators in Solidarity is a 501C4 organization formed in 2014 after the murder of Mike Brown in Ferguson, MO. Surrounding his murder, there was a national call out for teachers to build curriculum and to talk about police brutality in schools. As time went on, EIS has evolved with a growing understanding of the specific needs of the Austin community as well as in partnering with other organizations. Educators in Solidarity is a group working to build our capacity as anti-racist educators through activism, advocacy, and outreach. As an organization, we support the work of Black and Brown led organizations in their education initiatives or in any other way that we can.

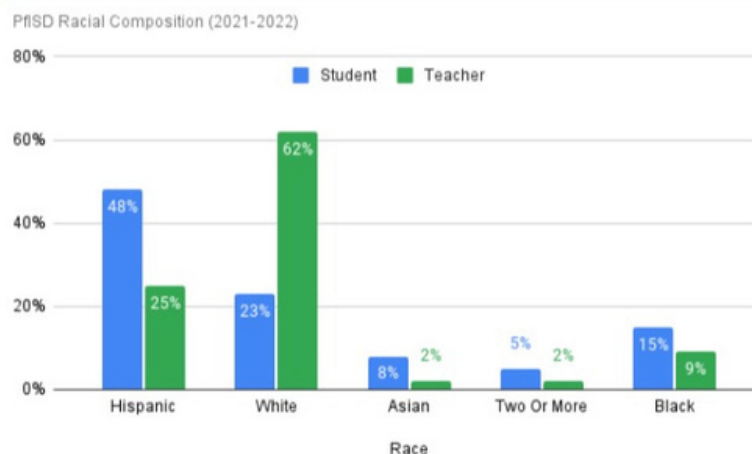


## BACKGROUND

The city of Pflugerville has experienced a period of rapid growth and diversification in the last two decades. Between the 2010 and 2020 Census, the population of Pflugerville grew by roughly 40% (1). As a result of continued gentrification in Austin proper, the surrounding suburbs have experienced demographic shifts as Black and Brown residents relocate to more affordable communities. Pflugerville has the highest percentage of Black residents compared to other communities in the Austin metro (2), with approximately 16% of the population identifying as Black (3).

The Pflugerville Independent School District (PflISD) provides public education to the community, serving over 25,000 students (4). The student population mirrors the racial diversity in the community, with 15% of students in the district identifying as Black (4). As of the 2021-2022 academic year, there are **only 161 Black teachers employed in PflISD, representing 9% of all teachers** (4). Until recently, **there was one elementary school that had not employed Black teachers for at least a decade** (5). Although there has been an increase in Black students in Pflugerville ISD in the past decade, there has not been an increase in Black teachers to reflect the current student demographics.

Especially for Black elementary students, the experience of having a Black educator is associated with reductions in the probability of dropping out of school and increases the likelihood of attending college (6). Studies show that Black students who had two Black teachers were 32% more likely to go to college compared to peers who had no Black teachers (7). In a district where “diversity is our strength”, ensuring Black students are represented in their schools is paramount for the safety, education, and futures of Black youth (8).



Source: Pflugerville ISD, Records Request #135-2021

- Buchanan, T.J. (2020, May 21). *DATA: Pflugerville's population up nearly 40% since 2010*. Community Impact Newspaper. Retrieved September 23, 2021, from <https://communityimpact.com/austin/round-rock-pflugerville-hutto/data-reference/2020/05/21/data-pflugervilles-population-up-nearly-40-since-2010/>.
- Thompson, K. (2019, August 18). *Pflugerville boasts highest percentage black population in Austin metro*. Community Impact Newspaper. Retrieved September 23, 2021, from <https://communityimpact.com/data-reference/2019/08/18/pflugerville-boasts-highest-percentage-black-population-austin-metro/>.
- United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). *QuickFacts Pflugerville city, Texas*. Retrieved September 26, 2021, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/pflugervillecitytexas/PST045219>.
- Pflugerville ISD Records Requests. (2021, September 24). Request #135-2021.
- Thompson, K. (2021, April 5). *DATA: Lack of black teachers At RIOJAS elementary SCHOOL extends back a decade*. Community Impact Newspaper. Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <https://communityimpact.com/austin/pflugerville-hutto/education/2021/04/05/data-lack-of-black-teachers-at-riojas-elementary-school-extends-back-a-decade/?fbclid=IwAR25o-0RZ8YMM3GVW2ft3o2i9sZF-Nz3nVaeyCQb7-r2CpnrK1apDy5YahU>.
- Gershenson, S., Hart, C. M. D., Lindsay, C. A., & Papageorge, N. W. (2017, March). *The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers*. Retrieved 2021, from <https://ftp.iza.org/dp10630.pdf>.
- Rosen, J. (2018, November 12). *Black students who have one black teacher are more likely to go to college*. The Hub. Retrieved September 27, 2021, from <https://hub.jhu.edu/2018/11/12/black-students-black-teachers-college-gap/>.
- PflISD Pflugerville Independent School District. (2018, November 15). *About the District / goals and mission*. Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <https://www.pflisd.net/Page/843>.

## UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

MEASURE works to educate our community on how data can be used to create community power. As such, we call out the misinterpretations of data that may lead to **deficit thinking**. In general, deficit thinking places blame on people from historically oppressed populations for the challenges and inequalities that they face and, in doing so, fails to place accountability with oppressive structures, policies, and practices within educational settings (9). Such can result in the perpetuation of racial stereotypes that hijack the narrative of Black people and their experiences. As we share data about the inequities in our communities, we both share our stories and place blame on systems and not people.

The data shared in this report is intended to inform our community about the authentic experience and expression of Black and Brown people **and** point to how **structural racism** has impacted their livelihood. "Structural racism is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal – that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color" (10).

The school-to-prison pipeline is yet another *consequence* of structural and systemic inequities that has resulted in Black and Brown students being treated unfairly at school. The term "identifies the pipeline as a conceptual framework used to understand how policies and practices-primarily from, but not limited to, the education and criminal justice systems- intersect in a manner which cumulatively results in students of color being disproportionately pushed out of school and into prison" (11).



9. Klein, A., Olivares, R., & Ulloa, O., Travis County Poverty Brief from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates1–32 (2021). Austin, TX; Travis County Health and Human Services, Research & Planning Division. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6bb1e1d2b8a34acc8ed5f5fa79ab41b4>.

10. Glossary: Power. Racial Equity Tools. (2020). <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>.

11. Smith, C. D. (2009). Deconstructing the pipeline ... - fordham university. Fordham Urban Law Journal. Retrieved October 7, 2021, from <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2632&context=ulj>.

## DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

All quantitative data are derived from publicly available sources, including the Texas Education Association (TEA) and via Public Records Requests from Pflugerville ISD. These records were originally accessed in January 2020 and cover earlier periods: in many instances, due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on regulatory reporting, these data are only updated through 2018-2019. Public record requests fulfilled by PfISD contain data that was requested and fulfilled in September 2021 and is current through the 2020-2021 (disciplinary data) and the 2021-2022 (racial composition) school years. Although the figures presented here represent a single point in time, these snapshots portray enduring sociodemographic patterns.

In Spring 2021, there were multiple organized actions on the part of Pflugerville community members and EIS to bring attention to the lack of Black educators specifically at Riojas Elementary in PfISD. Between March and May of 2021, a total of 13 public comments were provided. Additionally, EIS composed and submitted a letter to the Trustees and Superintendent highlighting the lack of Black educators and the inequitable service to Black students.

Thematic analysis was derived from a town hall, "Redeeming the Pipeline of Educational Success in PfISD", organized and hosted by EIS in June 2021. The panel consisted of parent, teacher, and advocate leaders from the community who spoke candidly about the district's shortcomings with respect to diversity and inclusion efforts, particularly in regards to the Black student, parent, and teacher experience.

Lived experience quotes were pulled from responses to a question posed on the Black Pflugerville Facebook page about the importance of Black teachers.



RACISM

## HIRE + RETAIN BLACK TEACHERS

The data shared in this report is intended to inform our community about the crucial need for Pflugerville ISD to hire and retain Black educators. The lack of Black educators (12) has a tremendous impact on Black students' academic outcomes and self-worth (13). When Black students never have teachers that look like them, academic and discipline disparities continue to exist. Currently, in Pflugerville ISD, where 63% of teachers are white compared to 23% of the student population (14), Black students are the most overrepresented in disciplinary actions across the district (15) This directly connects to the broader issue of the school-to-prison pipeline. (16) The lack of Black teachers and over-representation of White teachers perpetuates disproportionate disciplinary practices in the district. According to the National Education Association, “Black students do not “act out” in class more frequently than their white peers. However, Black students are more likely to be sent to the principal’s office for subjective offenses, like “disrupting class,” and they’re more likely to be sent there by White teachers.” (16)

According to The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and ethnicity, cultural deficit thinking plays a huge role in perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline (17). This “leads educators to harbor negative assumptions about the ability, aspirations, and work ethic of these students—especially poor students of color—based on the assumption that they and their families do not value education. These racist perceptions create a stereotype that students of color are disrespectful and disruptive, which zero-tolerance policies exploit.” (16)



12. Pflugerville ISD Records Requests. (2021, September 24). Request #135-2021.

13. Rosen, J. (2018, November 12). *Black students who have one black teacher are more likely to go to college*. The Hub. Retrieved September 27, 2021, from <https://hub.jhu.edu/2018/11/12/black-students-black-teachers-college-gap/>.

14. Murphy, R., Daniel, A., & Cai, M. (2019, April 5). *Pflugerville ISD*. Texas Public Schools Explorer. Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <https://schools.texastribune.org/districts/pflugerville-isd/#campuses>.

15. Texas Education Agency. (2020, September 21). *District Discipline Action Group Summary for a Selected District*. Retrieved September 25, 2021, from

[https://rptsrv1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary\\_Data\\_Products/DAG\\_Summaries/Download\\_DAG\\_District\\_Summaries.html](https://rptsrv1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/DAG_Summaries/Download_DAG_District_Summaries.html)

16. Flannery, M. E. (2015, January 5). *The school-to-prison pipeline: Time to shut it down*. NEA News. Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/school-prison-pipeline-time-shut-it-down>.

17. Rudd, T. (2014). (issue brief). *Racial Disproportionality in School Discipline Implicit Bias is Heavily Implicated*. Kirwan Institute Brief. Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/article/racial-disproportionality-school-discipline-implicit-bias-heavily-implicated>.

# TIMELINE OF CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS WITH PFLUGERVILLE ISD

2017



Educators in Solidarity, Black Pflugerville and MEASURE partner with Pflugerville ISD to address the disproportionate numbers of Black children identified for the Gifted and talented program.

2018



Community townhall to discuss data collected that found Black kids were 3.5x more likely to be charged with assault than their peers at Pflugerville schools during the 2017 school year.

2019



The MEASURE Innocence initiative launches to disrupt adultification bias and to call attention to the disproportionate numbers of discipline outcomes for Black girls in region 13 schools.

2021



Pflugerville parents and residents organize to speak at PfISD Board meetings to bring attention to the lack of Black educators at Riojas Elementary

2021



Redeeming the Pipeline of Educational Success in PfISD panel discussion, organized by Educators in Solidarity, focuses on the importance of hiring and retaining Black educators in Pflugerville ISD. Panelists also discussed implementing sustainable systemic equity practices across the district.

# LIVED- EXPERIENCE DATA & STORYTELLING

---



My daughter would be delighted to see someone who looks like her (to help) her excel academically. Her emotional state would benefit. Having a role model played a HUGE factor in my success. I know it would change her future to see a black teacher represented in the hallways.

- **Mother of Mott Elementary School Student**

---



How are young **Black (boys)** supposed to be engaged in class if every teacher is Caucasian or Hispanic? I'm sure if there were more **Black male** teachers I'm sure the impact for our youth would greatly be meaningful.

-**Father of Weiss High School Student**



---

our experience makes us  
**EXPERTS**

## THE DATA

The review of publicly available data from the TEA and PfISD reveals racialized patterns in academic and disciplinary outcomes for students in PfISD with respect to STAAR testing, in-school and out-of-school suspensions (ISS/OSS) and participation in Gifted and Talented (GT) programs. These findings demonstrate that Black students are not being served equitably by the district.

## HAVING AT LEAST ONE BLACK TEACHER IN GRADES 3-5 IS ASSOCIATED WITH:

DECREASE in the probability that a Black male student will drop out of high school, especially for low-income students (19)

INCREASE in the probability that low-income Black students will aspire to attend a four-year college (19)

## TO INTERRUPT THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE:

INCREASE Black teacher representation: 63% of teachers are white compared to 23% of the student population (18)

INCREASE the proportion of Black students in Gifted and Talented programs to more closely match the composition of the student population: 8% vs 15% (18)

DECREASE the proportion of Black students subject to suspension (20)



18. Pflugerville ISD Records Requests. (2021, September 24). Request #135-2021.

19. Gershenson, S., Hart, C. M. D., Lindsay, C. A., & Papageorge, N. W. (2017, March). The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers. Retrieved 2021, from <https://ftp.iza.org/dp10630.pdf>.

20. District Discipline Action Group Summary for a Selected District (2020). Retrieved June 2021, from [https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary\\_Data\\_Products/DAG\\_Summaries/Download\\_DAG\\_District\\_Summaries.html](https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/DAG_Summaries/Download_DAG_District_Summaries.html)

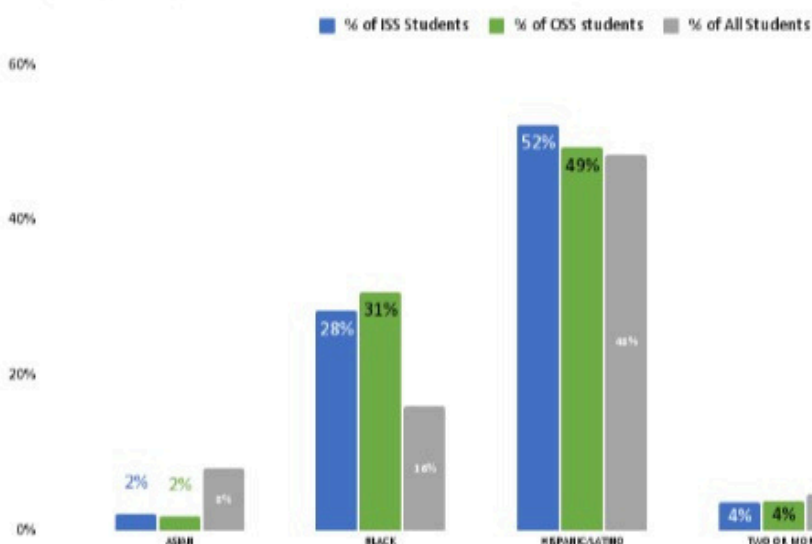
## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- 62% of white students in the district received “Meets Grade Level or Above” on the 3rd grade reading test compared to 31% of Black students (21)
- Less than half of Black students (47%) passed the 7th grade math test compared to 60% of Latino students and 72% of White students (21)

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- Data from the 2018-2019 school year shows a disproportionate share of Black students are subject to suspension when compared to their peers.
- While Black students make up only 15% of the student population in PfISD, they comprise almost a third of all students subject to ISS and OSS (22)

Disciplinary Action by Student Race Compared to Total Student Composition, 2018-2019



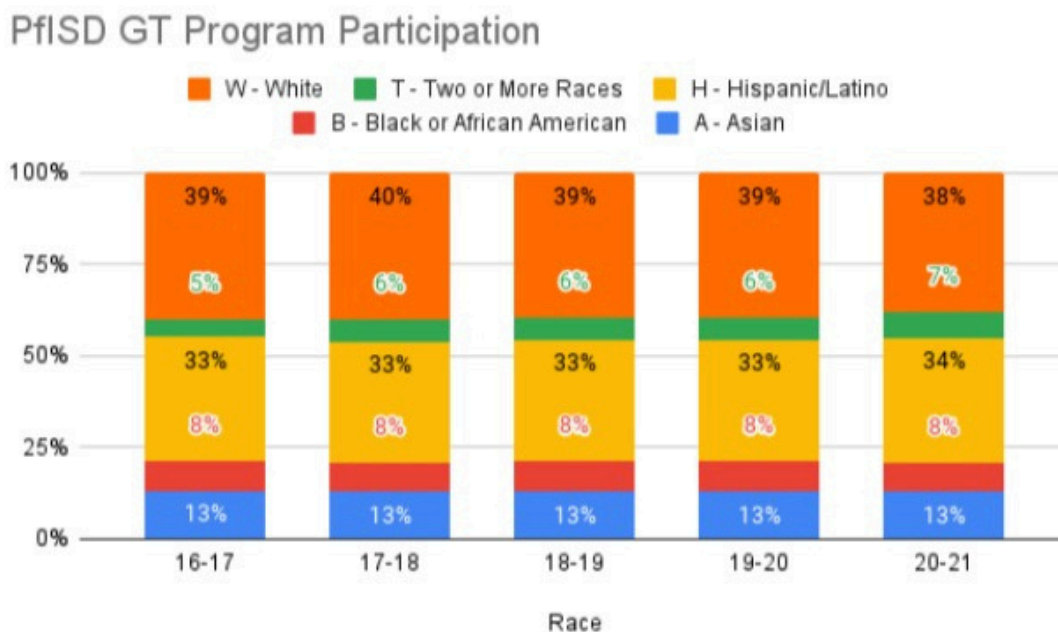
Source: District Discipline Action Group Summary for a Selected District (2020). Retrieved June 2021, from [https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary\\_Data\\_Products/DAG\\_Summaries/Download\\_DAG\\_District\\_Summaries.html](https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/DAG_Summaries/Download_DAG_District_Summaries.html).

21. Governance and Accountability, Texas Academic Performance Report (2020). 2019-20 District STAAR Performance for Pflugerville ISD. Retrieved January 2021, from [https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/cgi/sas/broker?\\_service=marykay&\\_program=perf rept.perfmast.sas&\\_debug=0&ccyy=2020&lev=D&id=227904&prgopt=reports%2Ftapr%2Fperformance.sas](https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/cgi/sas/broker?_service=marykay&_program=perf rept.perfmast.sas&_debug=0&ccyy=2020&lev=D&id=227904&prgopt=reports%2Ftapr%2Fperformance.sas).

22. District Discipline Action Group Summary for a Selected District (2020). Retrieved June 2021, from [https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary\\_Data\\_Products/DAG\\_Summaries/Download\\_DAG\\_District\\_Summaries.html](https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/DAG_Summaries/Download_DAG_District_Summaries.html).

## GT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

As of the 2020-2021 school year, **only 8% of Gifted and Talented (GT) students** in PflISD are Black (23). This is an enduring trend as evidenced by the last **five years** of data which shows only marginal changes in the composition of the GT program across the district, in spite of calls by local advocates to reassess how those students are identified for participation (24).



## COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

In March 2021 Pflugerville ISD parents organized to speak at the Pflugerville ISD board meeting to address the lack of Black educators in the district (24). The following month, the human resources department in Pflugerville ISD announced they would restructure “its recruitment efforts to help bring in educators from under-represented backgrounds, as well as increasing the department’s presence and engagement online. Hiring recruitment efforts include recruiting from institutions such as the Texas Association for Bilingual Education, the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators and historically Black colleges and universities.” (25)

23. Pflugerville ISD Records Requests. (2021, September 24). Request #135-2021.

24. Thompson, K. (2021, March 5). Pflugerville ISD parents call for more diverse representation at Elementary Campus. Pflugerville Education. Retrieved September 2021, from <https://communityimpact.com/austin/pflugerville-hutto/education/2021/03/05/pflugerville-isd-parents-call-for-more-diverse-representation-at-elementary-campus/>.

25. Thompson, K. (2021, April 1). Pflugerville ISD outlines efforts for increased diversity, equity hiring initiatives among staff. Pflugerville Education. Retrieved September 2021, from <https://communityimpact.com/austin/pflugerville-hutto/education/2021/04/01/pflugerville-isd-outlines-efforts-for-increased-diversity-equity-hiring-initiatives-among-staff/>.

**THEMES FROM THE REDEEMING THE PIPELINE OF EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS IN PFISD PANEL (JUNE 29, 2021):**

**REPRESENTATION MATTERS.**  
**LEADERS NEED TO PRIORITIZE EQUITY, NO MATTER WHAT.**  
**EQUITY IN EDUCATION MEANS HAVING THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN.**

A diverse teaching staff improves student outcomes and enhances school climate. The lived experience of teachers of color is essential for empowering students and for supporting antiracist work among school staff. As Pflugerville ISD teacher and panelist Mari Glaza said, “The more we set ourselves up for success with diverse staff, the less the burden falls on the handful that are teachers of color or dedicated to disrupting racial disparities.”



School communities need a channel for communicating their concerns to leadership and to be listened to and believed. Likewise, school leaders need to communicate a clear equity-focused vision to their communities that supports community and family engagement in school decision-making. Leadership also needs to be self-reflective. As Pflugerville ISD resident and panelist Marc Garcia said, leaders need to ask themselves: “How am I doing my job in a way that is lifting up our entire community?”



District-wide racial disparities in academic and disciplinary data demonstrate the structural nature of the problem—working towards equity means considering students’ cultures and identities, every day, and dismantling obstacles to their success

---

## OUR EXPERIENCE MUST INFORM CHANGE

In order to retain Black educators, it is imperative PfISD create an inclusive environment for students, parents, and teachers of all racial backgrounds. This takes intentional and ongoing efforts by Superintendent Killian, the board of trustees, cabinet leadership team, central office staff, campus administrators, and educators.

Educators in Solidarity supports the following efforts to accomplish the goal of creating an inclusive environment and retaining/recruiting Black educators:

- Diversify recruitment efforts such as, but not limited to, partnering with Austin's Historically Black University HT, Prairie View, and other HBCUs across the nation
- Annual equity audits completed by external racial equity organizations (such as Pacific Educational Group, or the Institute of Urban Policy and Development at the University of Texas) that are made public
- Campus equity audits provided to each campus before each CIP review
- Establishing district and/or vertical team affinity groups for teachers of color to connect, collaborate and support one another in a safe environment
- Review of the grievance process to create safe systems of reporting racial inequity and/or discrimination
- Establish and hire a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officer for the district who reports directly to the superintendent
- Work with campus leaders to establish Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committees on campuses to review instructional practices, disciplinary actions, student surveys, gifted and talented representation, and academic outcomes on a monthly basis
- Provide systemic, required, ongoing cultural proficiency training from the top level including the Board of Trustees and cabinet leadership team, central office, teachers, and staff positions including bus drivers and cafeteria workers. We firmly believe that all positions that interact with students need to be trained in racial and educational equity
- Promote racially conscious Black educators into leadership positions, such as, but not limited to, principals and assistant principals