PreK-6 & 7-12 School Design Study

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT REPORT: LISTENING

Green New Deal for **BOSTON** Public Schools

CITY *of* **BOSTON**

Public Facilities

DLRGROUP

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LISTENING PHASE OVERVIEW

Boston Public Schools and the City of Boston began the PreK-6 & 7-12 School Design Study (Study) by listening to students, families, teachers, staff, and residents all across Boston. We wanted to understand your experiences with Boston Public Schools – the challenges, the bright spots, and your ideas for the future.

FRAMING THE PROCESS

Over the years, Boston Public Schools was built upon principles of institutional racism and white supremacy. The District's buildings are a symptom and physical manifestation of these principles and years of deferred decision-making by District and City leadership. This has left the District with a physical footprint that does not support its vision for high-quality education and student experience.

WHAT IS THE GREEN NEW DEAL FOR BPS?

The Green New Deal for BPS is a shared commitment to transform the physical footprint of the District and accelerate the pace of school construction and renovation so that every student in Boston Public Schools can learn in a building that is safe, healthy, resilient, and inspiring.

WHAT IS THE STUDY?

BPS and the City of Boston have launched a citywide Study to guide future construction projects. By developing educational specifications and design standards for PreK-6 and 7-12 schools, we will be able to jumpstart new school building and renovation projects that meet our students' biggest aspiration.

HOW HAVE WE ENGAGED THE COMMUNITY SO FAR?

The Green New Deal for BPS is a massive undertaking, and it must be driven by community-led perspective and planning. We are anchoring this process in community voices to intentionally include the lived experiences and expertise of residents experiencing the effects of historic disinvestment, including Black and Latina/o/x students, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. In Phase 1 of this Study, we began by asking you about your experiences with BPS so that those experiences can serve as the foundation for everything that comes next: how we make District-wide decisions, how we design new or renovated schools, and how we work with the community along the way.

The listening phase included the following engagements:

LISTENING SESSIONS

In January, February, and March of 2023, we held 75 extended, small-group conversations at 21 public listening sessions and community focus groups. We had in-depth conversations with more than 500 students, families, staff, partners, and community members across Boston's neighborhoods. We asked you about your current experiences with BPS: what is not working, what is working well, and your ideas for the future.

SURVEY

In April and May 2023, we issued a survey to students, families, staff, and community members to get feedback on what we heard during the listening sessions. The survey asked community members to indicate which issues reflect their own experiences and then identify the priorities they would like BPS to address through long-term facilities planning and investment. The survey reached more than 9,000 people, including at least 6,600 people who identified as belonging to one or more of the groups included in the OAG Policy.

WHAT'S NEXT?

What we heard through the listening sessions and survey will directly inform the design and investment strategies recommended in this Study. Now, BPS and key partners are working to investigate why the issues identified are occurring and how to address their root causes through facilities planning and investment. Throughout the fall of 2023, BPS will host collaborative sessions to engage students, families, educators, and community members in developing strategies to move forward. For more information, please visit: www.boston.gov/gnd-bps.

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LISTENING SESSIONS SUMMARY

The Study engaged more than 500 participants in 75 extended small-group discussions during public listening sessions and community focus groups. Nearly three-quarters of participants who shared their demographic information identified themselves as belonging to one or more of the historically marginalized groups included in the [BPS Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Policy](#).

Who did we engage?

We planned listening sessions and community focus groups intentionally to center the voices of those experiencing the greatest opportunity gaps within BPS, as identified in the [OAG Policy](#). These groups include Black and African American populations, Latina/o/x populations, Asian populations, multilingual learners, people with disabilities, people of low socioeconomic status, and those experiencing homelessness. In addition to public listening sessions, we partnered with community groups across Boston to reach new and diverse voices, including hosting several sessions in languages other than English. See [Appendix 2.3](#) for data analysis methods used to prioritize engagement efforts, and [Appendix 2.5](#) for details about who was reached.

Race / Ethnicity

White / Caucasian	45%
Black / African American	36%
Latina/o/x	22%
Do not identify with any option listed	12%
Asian	8%
Other	5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	<1%

Relationship to BPS

Family and/or Caregivers	41%
Community Members	24%
BPS Partners	19%
Students	19%
BPS Staff	17%
Other	10%
Alumni	7%

Representing the perspective of:

Multilingual Learners	People with Disabilities
20% Yes	20% Yes
80% No	80% No

Over the course of **21 events**, we reached **more than 500 people**. About half of participants shared their demographic information.

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What did we learn?

Community members shared their experiences with BPS around the following prompts: what is working, what is not working, and their ideas for the future. We categorized these experiences into **8 broad themes.** See Appendix 1: Listening Sessions Analysis for a detailed report including quotations, or click on themes below.

1. **FACILITIES & SITES** – We heard that many BPS buildings are outdated and have chronic maintenance issues. Students, families, staff, and community members shared that the inconsistent or unhealthy condition of many BPS school buildings impacts student and staff well-being; program availability; building accessibility; access to outdoor learning, play, and sports; and equity in the student experience. Many students, families, and staff appreciate the positive impact of recent school improvements, and want consistent access to healthy, accessible facilities that support a well-rounded educational experience.

2. **STUDENT EXPERIENCE** – We heard that students do not always feel supported to thrive at school. Students sometimes experience challenges like limited access to mental health supports; strict safety and discipline practices; bullying and violence; neighborhood safety issues; varying levels of agency and voice; limited school food options; and unreliable or unsafe transportation. Students resoundingly voiced appreciation for supportive staff and positive staff relationships. They want increased mental health support, dedicated student spaces, improved food options, and a better transportation experience.

3. **PROGRAMS** – We heard that high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities are inconsistently offered across schools, contributing to inequitable opportunities. Courses are not always aligned with student interests, technologies, and career paths. Students, families, and staff appreciate many afterschool programs, extracurricular activities, and academic support offered. They want a well-rounded, equitable program baseline that engages the whole child, supports learning beyond the classroom, provides opportunities before and after school, and prepares students for life.

4. **DISTRICT-LEVEL POLICIES & PRACTICES** – We heard that District-level policies and practices do not always lead to equitable or community-driven outcomes. Inequitable investments create disparities in school experiences. Community engagement opportunities are not always equitable or accessible to all, and decisions about schools are sometimes driven by the loudest voices. Past promises have not always been fulfilled, resulting in reduced community trust. School buildings' security infrastructure and protocols vary across schools. Parents and staff shared some positive examples of when their voices were heard. They want transparent, inclusive, and equitable decision-making processes; consistent, equitable education across neighborhoods; and District commitment on short-term actions and long-term vision.

5. **FAMILY & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS** – We heard that schools are not always welcoming and accessible to families and community partners; there are sometimes barriers to community use. Family involvement and communication strategies do not always provide sufficient language support or account for the diverse experiences, cultures, and customs of BPS families. Students and families expressed many positive experiences with existing partnerships and the Welcome Center. They want expanded family and community support resources, expanded partnerships, and dedicated community spaces in schools.

6. **EDUCATOR & STAFF EXPERIENCES** – We heard that BPS educators and staff are not always supported due to District-wide challenges like curriculum changes, staffing and hiring challenges, and turnover. Some school buildings are not set up to support staff in delivering programming and services or maintaining their wellness. We heard many positive experiences with supportive staff. Staff want mental health support, mentorship and professional development, and spaces for collaboration and wellness.

7. **EXPERIENCE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES** – We heard that people with disabilities do not always have access to an inclusive and high-quality education, appropriate supports, or sufficiently trained staff to meet their needs. Students with disabilities and their caregivers may be burdened by inconsistent supports and limited voice in their educational experiences. We heard about positive experiences with inclusive programs, and a desire for inclusive, accessible environments and programs that support students with disabilities in the least-restrictive environment.

8. **MULTILINGUAL & MULTICULTURAL EXPRIENCE** – We heard that multilingual students do not always have access to rigorous academic programs, and that multilingual students and students of color do not always have staff members, mentors, and role models in their schools who can relate to their lived experiences. Students and families shared some positive experiences with language support and staff who understood their cultures. People of all backgrounds shared that they want a multilingual and multicultural educational experience; representative teachers and staff; welcoming, culturally responsive environments; and culturally inclusive family communications and engagement.

SURVEY SUMMARY

After listening to and summarizing your experiences, we wanted to ask: Did we hear you right? We conducted a survey to report back on the themes we heard, confirm with a larger sample that we identified the right issue areas, and ask you to prioritize the issues that we should address through our long-term facilities planning and investment. The survey received 9,107 responses, with 7,183 respondents (about 79%) identifying as belonging to one or more of the historically marginalized groups included in the BPS Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Policy.

Who did we engage?

We shared the survey with students, families, educators, staff, and community partners by: sending emails and robocalls; distributing posters to every BPS school; and posting flyers in Boston Centers for Youth and Families, Boston Public Library's neighborhood branches, community organizations, and Boston Housing Authority communities. We reached a diverse cross-section of Boston that includes the historically marginalized groups included in the OAG Policy. See Appendix 3.4 for detailed respondent demographics.

Neighborhood of Residence

Neighborhood	Count
North End	63
Charlestown	310
Beacon Hill & West End	45
East Boston	517
Back Bay	50
Downtown	45
Allston	113
Fenway/Kenmore	52
Chinatown	62
Brighton	278
Longwood	3
South End	197
South Boston Waterfront	13
Mission Hill	52
South Boston	188
Roxbury	421
Jamaica Plain	573
Dorchester	1341
West Roxbury	476
Roslindale	591
Mattapan	257
Hyde Park	442

Race / Ethnicity

41%	White / Caucasian
24%	Latina/o/x
21%	Black/African American
10%	Asian
7%	Prefer not to answer
<1%	Native American
<1%	American Indian or Alaskan Native
<1%	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
<1%	Prefer to self-describe

Relationship to BPS

49%	Family and/or Caregivers
29%	BPS Staff
9%	Students
5%	Alumni
3%	Other
2%	Community Members
2%	BPS Partners

Representing the perspective of:

Multilingual Learners

20% Yes	80% No

People with Disabilities

20% Yes	80% No

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What was said?

In the survey, respondents selected the top 6 issues that should be prioritized through the Study and long-term facilities planning.

Respondents identified a wide range of priorities. Every issue was chosen by at least one person as a top priority. Even among the top 10 prioritized issues, there was no issue that represented the majority opinion. See Appendix 3.9 and Appendix 3.10 for a breakdown of priorities by group.

There is considerable consistency across race and ethnicity, language, disability status, and relationship to the District regarding the issues that should be prioritized in BPS.

Why is the data disaggregated by group? In accordance with the Racial Equity Planning Tool, this report disaggregates data by the groups included in OAG Policy as experiencing the greatest opportunity gaps. Disaggregating data allows us to center the voices of individual groups in addition to collective priorities.

% of all respondents who selected as within top priorities	These top 10 issue areas emerged as priorities. Items are ordered from most to least responses. The colored columns indicate which demographic groups selected an item as within their top 10 priorities.	Black/African American	Latina/o/x	Asian	Indigenous*	Multilingual	People with disabilities	White	Students	Family/caregiver	BPS staff	Alumni	Community partner	Other community members
		OAG Policy Groups							Relationship to District					
42%	1. Maintenance of school facilities	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
39%	2. Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
34%	3. Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
26%	4. Mental health and social emotional supports	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
25%	5. Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	■	■	■		■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■
25%	6. Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
23%	7. Increased support for teachers and staff	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
22%	8. Bullying and violence	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
21%	9. School assignment process	■	■	■				■	■	■	■		■	■
21%	10. Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■

Note: in this table, Native American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander are combined into "Indigenous" due to the small sample size of respondents.

Some priorities varied across groups. **The issue areas listed below were identified by one or more groups as top priorities**, even though they were not in the overall top 10 priorities.

	OAG Policy Groups							Relationship to District					
	Black/African American	Latina/o/x	Asian	Indigenous*	Multilingual	People with disabilities	White	Students	Family/caregiver	BPS staff	Alumni	Community partner	Other community members
Technical training and career pathways	■	■	■		■			■	■				
Before-and-after school programming	■	■											■
Equitable school investment practices							■			■	■	■	
Safe, reliable transportation				■		■		■					
Inclusive education			■					■					
Student agency and voice								■					
Safe, low stress drop off and pick up								■					
Training and support for teachers and staff to meet the needs of students with disabilities						■							
Teachers & staff that reflect the linguistic & cultural diversity of students and families													■

Note: in this table, Native American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander are combined into "Indigenous" due to the small sample size of respondents.

What do the results tell us about group-specific priorities?

Students uniquely prioritized inclusive education, student agency and voice, and safe, low stress drop off and pick up.

"I started working with Boston Student Advisory Committee in the summer and there was a lot of "adultism," my voice wasn't heard." – BPS Student

People with disabilities prioritized training and support for staff to serve students with disabilities and safe, reliable transportation.

"Transportation is a huge issue for special education students. I have a student who has missed school for months at a time because there was no driver for their bus or there was no monitor." – BPS Staff

Multiple groups identified by OAG policy, **students, and families** prioritized technical training and career pathways and before-and-after school programming.

"The pathways are great, but there is not much diversity. I would love a business pathway." – BPS Student

What did we learn? Integrating data from the survey and listening sessions

This section integrates the top priorities identified in the survey (on the left) with related qualitative data collected during the listening sessions (on the right). Click the title of each box to navigate to the associated problem statement page.

1 Maintenance of school facilities

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

For every single group, this topic was within the top 3 priorities.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
Black/African American	Priority 1	Alumni	Priority 1
Multilingual	Priority 1	BPS staff	Priority 1
People with disabilities	Priority 1	Community partners	Priority 1
Asian	Priority 2	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 1
Indigenous	Priority 2		
Latina/o/x	Priority 3	Student	Priority 2
White	Priority 1	Family/caregiver	Priority 2

42% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"Some elementary schools are very old especially for the kids coming from early childhood. [Schools are] not welcoming: [classrooms are a] dark room in the basement with a lack of kid-friendly, safe, comfortable classrooms." – BPS Teacher

"'You're not valued' is the current message. Teachers and students both feel valued in a nice school, and unvalued in a school that is not nice. They notice when they don't have labs and see peeling paint." – BPS Special Education Teacher

"This school looks exactly like it did when I came here and lived in this neighborhood. And that is a problem." – BPS Family

2 Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

For every single group, this topic was within the top 5 priorities.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
Black/African American	Priority 2	Family/caregivers	Priority 1
Latina/o/x	Priority 2	BPS staff	Priority 2
Multilingual	Priority 2	Alumni	Priority 2
People with disabilities	Priority 2	Community partners	Priority 2
Asian	Priority 3	Students	Priority 4
Indigenous	Priority 3	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 5
White	Priority 2		

39% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"We don't have an open gym or place where students can play. In winter, recess has to be indoors and they're running around the school. That isn't fair to the students. There isn't a space to come together as a community which also feels really unfair. We don't have space to work with students in small groups. We're pulling students into the hall while gym might also be in the hall which is challenging." – BPS Teacher

"What about special space for collaborations, or 1 on 1 teacher and student times, pull out, and also storage? Different types of spaces are needed based on the program. At some schools, all these happen in corridors." – Community Member

3 Outdoor space for learning, play and sports

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

Students and respondents identifying as Asian, Latina/o/x, and Indigenous chose this as priority 1, while for other groups it was in the top 7 priorities.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
Asian	Priority 1	Students	Priority 1
Latina/o/x	Priority 1	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 2
Indigenous	Priority 1		
Multilingual	Priority 3	Family/caregivers	Priority 3
Black/African American	Priority 4	Community partners	Priority 4
People with disabilities	Priority 6	BPS staff	Priority 6
White	Priority 3	Alumni	Priority 7

34% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"We only have a small playground so older students don't have anything to play with. The neighborhood doesn't have a playground, the teachers have to buy basketballs. Our school playground is being used as a community playground and often not taken care of."
– BPS Teacher and Alum

"There should be more green space and more space for the children to do more activities like sports. There should be shelter for poor weather when students cannot go indoors." – BPS Family

4 Mental health and social emotional supports

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

For most groups, this was within the top 7 priorities. For Asian respondents, this was priority 11.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
People with disabilities	Priority 3	Community partners	Priority 3
Latina/o/x	Priority 4	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 4
Multilingual	Priority 4		
Indigenous	Priority 5	BPS staff	Priority 4
Black/African American	Priority 5	Alumni	Priority 5
Asian	Priority 11	Students	Priority 7
White	Priority 5	Family/caregivers	Priority 7

26% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"Our school emphasizes grades... but students aren't given space to prioritize their mental health." – BPS Student

"There is a lot of trauma that goes in in our neighborhoods where we live. You see and hear about all this stuff on the news, but there isn't someone to explain what happens until there is a physical tragedy to explain what happens. They need someone to talk to – there are not enough social workers, guidance counselors." – BPS Family

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5 Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

For people with disabilities, Asian respondents, multilingual respondents, and family/caregivers, this was within the top 5 priorities. For other groups, this was between priorities 6 and 14.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
People with disabilities	Priority 4	Family/caregivers	Priority 4
Asian	Priority 5	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 6
Multilingual	Priority 5	BPS staff	Priority 8
Latina/o/x	Priority 6	Alumni	Priority 8
Black/African American	Priority 7	Community partners	Priority 10
Indigenous	Priority 13	Students	Priority 14
White	Priority 7		

25% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"I tested into advanced learning but my sister was in non-advanced and it was confusing that our curriculum wasn't the standard. The advanced group wasn't diverse." – BPS Student

"My experience is that enrichment opportunities are based on the school. I attended a lot of open houses, one student's experience is not the same school to school which is unfortunate." – BPS Family

"They start languages in elementary and middle school in other places, and we don't have that opportunity in our schools, even high schools. It speaks to equity and cultural competency." – BPS Language Teacher

6 Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

For alumni, staff, and respondents who identify as Asian and/or White this was within the top 5 most prioritized issues. For other groups this was between priorities 6 and 12.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
Asian	Priority 4	Alumni	Priority 4
Multilingual	Priority 6	BPS staff	Priority 5
People with disabilities	Priority 8	Family/caregivers	Priority 6
Indigenous	Priority 9	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 7
Black/African American	Priority 10	Community partners	Priority 9
Latina/o/x	Priority 12	Students	Priority 12
White	Priority 4		

25% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"Kindergarten classes are in the basement, there is mold in the classrooms because of the humidity, so every few months the janitors will have to clean the walls because the mold is growing. [There are] exposed pipes and [the] insulation is growing mold." – BPS Teacher

"In the summer we couldn't learn if it was a hot day. Lights off and watch a movie because there was no way to focus on anything." – BPS Teacher

"I am worried about the ventilation in my son's building. He has asthma." – BPS Family

7 Increased support for teachers and staff

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

For alumni and staff, this was in the top 3 priorities. This was within the top 10 for seven other groups, while for four groups it was as low as priority 19.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
Black/African American	Priority 6	Alumni	Priority 3
Indigenous	Priority 6	BPS staff	Priority 3
Multilingual	Priority 7	Community partners	Priority 7
People with disabilities	Priority 7	Family/caregivers	Priority 13
Latina/o/x	Priority 8	Students	Priority 17
Asian	Priority 18	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 19
White	Priority 9		

23% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"One of the big stresses is the open positions that cannot be filled. People get really thin and sometimes it's very stressful and troublesome." – Retired BPS Teacher, School Leader

"Sometimes you struggle to get the material you need and the basics are missing. The school staff shouldn't be worried about that." – BPS Teacher

"The art teacher doesn't have a room. She can't prepare for the lesson before the students arrive because she has to change classrooms each time. She is carrying a rolling cart of supplies up 3 flights of stairs and washing things in the basement." – BPS Teacher

8 Bullying and violence

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

For students and respondents identifying as Black/African American, this was in the top 3 priorities. For all other groups - except community partners, community members, and White respondents - it was within the top 10.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
Black/African American	Priority 3	Students	Priority 3
Indigenous	Priority 4	Alumni	Priority 6
Latina/o/x	Priority 5	BPS staff	Priority 9
People with disabilities	Priority 5	Family/caregivers	Priority 9
Asian	Priority 6	Community partners	Priority 11
Multilingual	Priority 8	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 12
White	Priority 12		

22% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"[It is] already not feeling safe, how people move in the school. Me personally, I'm used to shootings and stabbings. I don't want to come to school and have to deal with the same thing." – BPS Student

"It's your environment, what you see going around – you don't want to make new friends… at the white schools, there's more spirit, people are having more fun. Here, people are just trying to survive." – BPS Student

"A lot of the youth I interact with are missing that sense of belonging, so ensuring that they are included in their school." – Community Partner

9 School assignment process

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

3 groups prioritized this issue within their top 10 ideas: family/caregivers and respondents identifying as White and/or Asian. For other groups, it was as low as priority 21.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
Asian	Priority 10	Family/caregivers	Priority 5
People with disabilities	Priority 13	Alumni	Priority 11
Indigenous	Priority 17	Community partners	Priority 12
Multilingual	Priority 17	Students	Priority 13
Latina/o/x	Priority 18	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 15
Black/African American	Priority 21		
White	Priority 6	BPS staff	Priority 17

21% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"The lottery system makes it harder to have parental involvement. Not knowing where your child will go makes a huge difference. Note that some kids have to move away from their neighborhood schools, and if no space is available that is acceptable, parents wonder if they have to go to private school. This is also difficult on kids, especially those with IEP and self-regulation issues who can't control themselves with no scaffolding." – BPS Family

"Enrollment is stressful and it shouldn't be." – Former BPS Family

10 Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making

SURVEY: WHO SELECTED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

For all groups except people with disabilities and BPS staff, this was within the top 10 most prioritized issues.

OAG Groups		Relationship to District	
Latina/o/x	Priority 7	Community members w/ no BPS affiliation	Priority 3
Indigenous	Priority 7		
Asian	Priority 8	Students	Priority 6
Black/African American	Priority 9	Community partners	Priority 8
Multilingual	Priority 9	Family/caregivers	Priority 8
People with disabilities	Priority 11	Alumni	Priority 9
White	Priority 10	BPS staff	Priority 11

21% of respondents selected this issue as one of their top 6 priorities.

LISTENING SESSIONS: WHAT WAS SAID?

"One of my concerns is that we are taking all this input now, but will we be a part of the decision-making? There are always trade-offs." – BPS Parent

"[What do we mean by having a seat at the table?] Accountability, being part of the final decision-making. We need folks that come from, that are still active, in this community." – BPS Family and Alum

WHAT'S NEXT?

What we heard throughout Phase 1 of the Study will directly inform the recommended design, planning and investment strategies moving forward.

Listen
What's happening today?

Critical Conversations
Why is it happening?

Re-imagine
What are the solutions?

Critical Conversations: Root Cause Analysis

Following the completion of the Listening Sessions and Survey, BPS and the City of Boston held internal workshops to do root cause analysis on the priority issues identified by the survey. Root cause analysis workshops were conducted with students and community members for a few of the top priority issues. Root cause analysis helps to elevate the causes of each issue that, if addressed, have the potential to significantly reduce the symptoms (parts of the problem we can see). Through this analysis, the Study can focus solutions on not just the symptoms of the issues identified by the community, but the underlying and systemic causes.

APPENDIX 1: LISTENING SESSIONS ANALYSIS

This appendix includes experiences shared during the listening sessions. We analyzed more than 1,600 comments to identify **eight themes**, or broad categories of experiences in BPS, that came up across sessions. Within each theme, comments are organized into **ideas for the future**, **things working well**, and **problems**. Problems are summarized into 35 problem statements reflecting the diverse perspectives of residents across Boston. Each problem statement is included on its own page along with quotations and a short description.

The following pages are organized by theme.

1.1 Facilities & Sites

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

We asked students, staff, families, and community members "*If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?*" The quotes below illustrate patterns we heard.

Accessible and inclusive facilities

- "Inclusion doesn't have any barriers. So meaning open space…wide halls no bright lights…no steps.…feels like it was well thought out to not exclude any particular group…. Space applies differently to different disabilities. E.g. bright lights for vision issues, corner clearance for wheelchairs, space to sign across the room, colors that are too bright. People who cannot negotiate stairs." – Community Partner

- "My son will be able to use the handicap ramp to go into class, without his friends' help." – BPS Parent

Healthy, comfortable, and sustainable environments

- "[My vision is] a clean, open space for them [students] to explore and do the things they need to do. When the environment has well-ventilated air, we see cognitive behavior increase as a result of better ventilation." – BPS Parent

- "I want year-round schools, with air conditioning, heat, that community partners can use." – Community Advocate

- "I think it's important to at least have buildings that are sustainable. We already see the climate problems, the air pollution, what is going to be implemented in these buildings to address this?" – BPS Parent

Facilities that support a well-rounded educational experience

- "We're in an 1895 building and we do offer arts and music programs but we don't have the spaces for it so it's cobbled together to make it work. This is an opportunity to build those spaces. We want to incorporate lots of science and environmental tech." – BPS Teacher

- "I love the building, and I loved the classrooms but that was a different way of thinking…. The pedagogy of how we educate children has changed dramatically and the spaces don't support that anymore. If I were to have the full experience for my child, there's adequate spaces for exploration and discovery that don't involve sitting at a desk in a hard chair – creating the environments that will really push education…." – Parent

Space for outdoor learning, play, and sports

- "A lot of space to have leisure before, during, after school from kindergarten on. There is not a lot of space to run free, there should be more opportunities here. [And] learning from the plants outside. They connect to what you're learning in class. Recess and yard space is huge." – BPS Parent and Community Partner

Consistent access to quality facilities

- "The hope for our schools is to get a better environment and improvement in all the public schools in our area so they can provide high quality spaces and environments for our children and students. It's important to be consistent." – BPS Parent

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Students, families, staff, and community expressed multiple things that are working well about facilities, including appreciation for renovated schools and updated spaces.

- "My son's school was renovated in the past few years. It's beautiful, big, and filled with light. He is in a safe environment…. I wish I could see more renovated high schools where I live in the South End and Lower Roxbury." – BPS Parent

- "I came in 6th grade but school wasn't built. In the start of 7th grade, we came into the new building. Everything was nice, clean, fresh, it was good to have a brand new school." – BPS Student

- "I do like that the school is transitioning to PreK to 6 so that my kid doesn't have to transition out of the school but it does add to the space-availability issues." – BPS teacher and parent

- "I love the playgrounds – we're at the playgrounds 4 times per week." – BPS Parent

- "I like the art room showing off student work – it's amazing." – Unknown

- "Student break rooms (we call it "the suite") for student breaks - with tables, therapist, and the dean, it's a welcoming environment, library close by, noise controlled, and quiet." – BPS Student

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

These statements summarize what we heard from community members about the problems they experience in Boston Public Schools. The quotes included in the following pages illustrate a richer picture of the impact of these problems.

1. **Lack of maintenance and outdated facilities:** Many BPS facilities are outdated and have chronic maintenance issues.

2. **Unhealthy facilities:** Many buildings have poor heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, and exposure to pollutants.

3. **Inadequate spaces to support educational programming:** Many older facilities lack adequate spaces like gyms, cafeterias, libraries, science labs, and other assets to support educational programming and a rich student experience.

4. **Inconsistent facility conditions create inequitable experiences:** Varying quality and condition of facilities create inequitable educational experiences for students, providing some students with less program access.

5. **Inaccessible facilities:** Inaccessible facilities create barriers for students, family members, teachers, staff, and community partners with disabilities.

6. **Limited outdoor space:** Many schools, particularly those on smaller sites, lack outdoor space for learning, play, and sports.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 1:
Lack of maintenance and outdated facilities

BPS facilities are outdated and have chronic maintenance issues.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "Some elementary schools are very old, especially for the kids coming from early childhood. [The schools] are not welcoming: [it's a] dark room in [the] basement, [with a] lack of kid-friendly, safe, comfortable classrooms for kids. One child did not feel safe to go to the bathroom and he was holding himself all day, sometimes having accidents because he was afraid of darkness." – BPS Teacher

- "The bathroom is rundown. Schools don't care about the way the facilities look. There are 3 stalls with broken toilets, and plastic bags on top of them." – BPS Student

- "It's a sad building and conveys the sense that we're poor, not that we're a world-class city that invests in our students." – BPS Parent

- "'You're not valued' is the current message. Teachers and students both feel valued in a nice school, and unvalued in a school that is not nice. They notice when they don't have labs and see peeling paint." – BPS Special Education Teacher

- "This school looks exactly like it did when I came here and lived in this neighborhood. And that is a problem." – BPS Parent

- "Today there was a huge challenge with the rain – there were multiple leaks throughout the building where students were dodging buckets." – BPS Staff

- "The maintenance is very poor and sometimes you need to call 14-15 times for something to get done and suddenly you become a facility manager instead of a school manager." – BPS Staff Member

We heard that many BPS facilities are old, outdated, and experiencing maintenance issues that impact students and staff. Some examples include: classrooms have been relocated into basements due to lack of space; available spaces are not always age-appropriate; some classrooms do not have walls; many bathrooms are not functional or clean; some equipment and furniture within schools is outdated or broken; some schools experience leaking pipes or weather-related leaks. Some maintenance requests take a long time to be fulfilled, so often school staff advocate for repairs or work extra to provide needed conditions for students.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 2:
Unhealthy facilities

Many buildings have poor heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, and exposure to pollutants.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "Kindergarten classes are in the basement, there is mold in the classrooms because of the humidity, so every few months the janitors will have to clean the walls because the mold is growing." – BPS Teacher

- "[Our school is] really good socially and academically. But the heating system is a problem. Schools should have control over their heating and cooling." – BPS Student

- "In the summer, we couldn't learn if it was a hot day. Lights off and watch a movie because there was no way to focus on anything." – BPS Teacher

- "Air quality in East Boston is my biggest concern. The teachers open the windows and then get jet fuel coming in. We want HVAC systems with MERV 16 (a type of filter) and above because of exposure to ultrafine particles and pollution." – BPS Parent

- "As a person with a disability, I went to public school, so I always expected my children to do the same. We did the lottery and we received placement at BPS and a charter school. As much as I wanted to send him to BPS, the noise pollution… was such that I could not send him in good faith to that school…. I couldn't hear other parents in the auditorium, so how was my son going to hear in a classroom?" – Community Advocate

- "Our building is over 125 years old. Teaching about energy conservation is hard when the HVAC is ancient. On a surface level, the classroom is functional but trying to teach students about the future is hard when they're living in a building that has nothing to do with what they're teaching." – BPS Teacher

- "All classrooms, especially early childhood, need to have a sink, working toilets, and sink water for K1, K0, K2. The pipes have lead so they [students] can't drink." – BPS Staff and Alum

We heard that some buildings may not have functional heating, cooling, or ventilation; operable windows; natural light; or acoustically controlled spaces. Students, families, and staff shared that poor indoor environmental quality can lead to discomfort, distract from learning, or pose a threat to student and staff health and safety.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 3:
Inadequate spaces to support educational programming

Many older facilities lack adequate spaces like gyms, cafeterias, libraries, science labs, and other assets to support educational programming and a rich student experience.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "We don't have an open gym or place where students can play. In winter, recess has to be indoors and they're running around the school. That isn't fair to the students…. We don't have space to work with students in small groups. We're pulling students into the hall while gym might also be in the hall, which is challenging." – BPS Teacher

- "No teachers' lounge – so teachers eat in classrooms, but students want to be there also, so breaks are with students. No gym – no sports, no way to engage in arts programs that help students thrive and feel connected – they're not available for students." — BPS Staff Member

- "What about special space for collaborations, or 1 on 1 teacher and student times, pull out, and also storage? Different types of spaces are needed based on the program. At some schools, all these happen in corridors." – Community Member

- "I don't have a sink in my classroom. I have a portable sink, this is not functional with 5 classes of 28 students. I have water coolers with water in them, I use the portable sink if it doesn't run out. It's difficult to do my job when I don't have access to water." – BPS Teacher

- "I was a coach in the District, and teaching PE. A building where you are trying to teach PE with no gym in a tiny cafeteria is not adequate for the educational programs for our students. We are resilient and can adapt, but we are doing our students a disservice to not have access to a gym and wellness space for both students and faculty to engage in." – BPS Staff

- "Our students don't have art space and spaces to explore. As high schoolers, students are discovering themselves but the building does not allow that." – BPS Teacher

We heard that students, families, staff, and communities need adequate spaces to support programs and resources they desire. Programs mentioned as lacking adequate spaces include: athletics and physical education, before- and after-school programming, science and STEM, language programs, music and arts, as well as flexible spaces and spaces for teacher collaboration, storage, and student wellness.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 4:

Inconsistent facility conditions create inequitable experiences

Varying quality and condition of facility spaces create inequitable educational experiences for students, providing some students with less program access.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "My schools didn't seem to have the same things: I attended 10 schools in BPS and not all of them had the same things to offer students (library, gym). My hope would be each school in Boston offered all of the same for every student's enrichments and supports." – BPS Alum and Parent

- "Build us a building that's as good as the suburbs and METCO." – BPS Student

- "BPS schools that are very small get less attention – it limits sports activity, and you can't represent your school." – BPS Student

- "Having a gym at [School Name 1], not [School Name 2], and we didn't have a playground. The disparities have an implicit message to others." – BPS Alum and Community Partner

- "Some schools are built to look similar to prisons with things like metal detectors, locked doors, bars on windows, lack of windows while other campuses are open, spacious, beautifully designed and designed to empower the people to feel like this is their spaces, as opposed to 'this is a space I go where I might get in trouble, where I'm being watched.'" – Community Advocate

- "My son had an experience going to an old facility and then new, and there was a big difference. The old building has character but the new one makes a difference in the school experience. The light and the intentional design of the spaces is making the big difference and is very obvious." – BPS Parent and City of Boston Staff Member

- "Exam schools are usually considered big fancy schools, but to hear that it isn't that great… I wonder what [School Name 1] looks like inside, compared to [School Name 2]." – BPS Student

- "I want to touch on the rage and despair I feel sometimes. I refereed the basketball youth league, and I want to cry sometimes. The [School Name] gym didn't have a functioning scorecard. High school sports are such a beautiful and pure thing. Then you have to go to [Private School], that's state of the art, it's probably where the Celtics work out. The disparities are really discouraging." – BPS Staff

We heard that there are inconsistencies across facilities within BPS – some schools are new and well-designed, while others are outdated and in disrepair. Students and community members expressed a sense of disparity and inequity surrounding facilities, frequently comparing their school buildings to schools in better condition (both within and outside of BPS). They recognize the connections between quality school facilities and a quality education.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 5:
Inaccessible facilities

Inaccessible facilities create barriers for students, family members, teachers, staff, and community partners with disabilities.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "Students with disabilities can mark that in the lottery, but parents cannot mark that they have a disability to be able to go into their child's schools." – Community Partner

- "When I went to look for jobs as an educator, I could not even access the buildings to interview. This is really important when we think about diversity of who is teaching children in BPS." – Community Partner

- "Making it obvious how to get in, where to go for partners (wayfinding, accessible route, knowing where to go to ask questions). I have heard from several parents with disabilities that they have a hard time navigating schools. – City of Boston Staff Member

- "More ADA compliance. My son has been upset when he sees his friends with mobility challenges not being able to take part in activities because of physical challenges in the building." – BPS Parent

- "The kids I work with are blind, have a physical disability, may be a wheelchair user. They are marginalized in PE classes, most of them are not in adaptive PE classes, because they don't fit that profile of students.... Facilities and equipment are not provided to make it a successful experience." – Community Partner

- "It's challenging to find accessible entrances. Some wheelchair lifts are up 3 stairs. BPS says 'if a student breaks their leg, we send them to another school.'" – Educator with a disability

We heard that many facilities lack accessible entrances, clear wayfinding, and elevators, or have separate entrances and other physical barriers that exclude people with disabilities. These barriers impact not only students, but also parents and family members, educators, staff, and community partners. Inaccessible facilities create inequities in school attendance by preventing students with disabilities, or students whose families have disabilities, from engaging in certain spaces within schools or attending certain schools altogether.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 6:
Limited outdoor space

Many schools, particularly those on smaller sites, lack outdoor space for learning, play, and sports.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "The play structure is only for the smaller kids. There isn't a space for the older kids, just the blacktop, because in Jamaica Plain, there's not a lot of parking. Staff cars are jammed together in the lot in the front section of the building." – BPS Parent

- "It has been a dark experience. The [school] entrance is in the middle and there are streets around the school without a parking lot. When it's snowing, teachers have to park their cars in the playground. Teachers have received tickets and slashed tires from parking in the neighborhoods' parking spaces." – BPS Teacher and Alum

- "We only have a small playground so older students don't have anything to play with. The neighborhood doesn't have a playground, teachers have to buy basketballs. The school playground is being used as a community playground and often not taken care of. There is vandalism – spray paint on buildings, things thrown around." – BPS Teacher and Alum

- "At [School Name], they don't have any sort of green space, concrete play area, much less a possibility for soccer. The running around on a hard surface is rough. The lack of greenery is rough." – BPS Parent

- "Outdoor space is a lot of black top and beat-up basketball hoops but that's it. It should have a lot more." - BPS Parent and former teacher

We heard that in some neighborhoods or some school properties, opportunities for outdoor spaces – such as playgrounds, outdoor learning areas, and parking – are minimal. In addition, some schools' outdoor spaces lack quality and variety for all students to play safely.

1.2 Student Experience

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE
We asked students, staff, families, and community members "If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?" The quotes below illustrate patterns we heard.

Support for student mental health and social emotional learning

- "Mental health resources could be better. We have partnership with Franciscan but there could be more steps to help students who are struggling with mental health. Have a safe space and know that they are going to be okay. A lot of people are dealing with anxiety. If we adjusted some activities, it may better support mental health and reduce anxiety." – BPS Student

- "They [students] don't understand how to navigate [conflict], so if teachers know how to navigate that, that could be huge. Moving forward that should be a part of the classroom, how do you communicate with someone?" – BPS Parent

Fostering a sense of belonging and social connection

- "A lot of the youth I interact with are missing that sense of belonging, so ensuring that they are included in their school." – Community Partner

- "Creating structured and unstructured social opportunities.... Looking for those more natural opportunities like seeing someone sitting at the lunch table by themselves. Whether they have a disability or not, go sit and chat with them, they are human first. Fostering community so there is not that stigma or pressure." – Community Partner

Spaces for students to collaborate and socialize

- "Designated hangout spaces are important. Different ways kids can sit, and teacher/student designated spaces are important." – BPS Parent

Improved food options

- "Schools should get better [meal options,] and to buy better ingredients. I do not want any frozen food at all. I want the food to be made in the school, season the food more, like [add] salt – hot sauce is not seasoning." – BPS Student

- "I would like to see more Haitian Creole staff speaking the language or making Haitian food. I would like inclusive options that relate to our culture, it is very important, [along with an] improved quality of food." – BPS Parent

- "The ability to have a full kitchen so children are not just getting packaged food and milk, but have the opportunity to learn about their food sources. A garden so they have those opportunities. We had one at our school that we are trying to revive. A health and wellness component that brings in those elements." – BPS Parent

Improved transportation experience

- "Approach to school should have wider sidewalks for safer arrival and dismissal; active modes of transportation like bikes and make access to school safer." – BPS Parent and Community Partner

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Students, families, staff, and community expressed multiple things that are working well for students including supportive staff, strong school communities and positive relationships.

- "I appreciate the sense of family at school." – BPS Student

- "Teachers are trying to get students more involved. There is an acceleration program over winter break for students who need extra support. Some teachers will stay until 5 so that students can do their work while teachers are still there." – BPS Student

- "I like the sense of inclusivity. I like that I can connect with teachers outside of the student-teacher dynamics. Not everyone has family to talk to so teachers and guidance counselors are great resources." – BPS Student

- "Coming to [School Name], the principal was on board to try, and wanted kids to try really hard things, to make friends in recess, and have trained adults to help out when they need it. What drew me here as a parent and teacher was this mission of 'learning to fail and recover'" – BPS Teacher and Parent

- "More support. It was hard in 6th grade to find a good support system. When I came here there were staff to provide more support. Checking in from staff – how are classes going? Is there trouble in school? Do you have anything on your mind? It made me feel more comfortable at school. Felt like it was better coming here." – BPS Student

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

These statements summarize what we heard from community members about the problems they experience in Boston Public Schools. The quotes included in the following pages illustrate a richer picture of the impact of these problems.

7. **Student agency and voice:** Students have varying levels of voice and agency in their educational experience.

8. **Mental health and social emotional support:** Students have varying access to mental health and social emotional support as some schools do not have the programs and spaces to consistently provide services.

9. **Bullying and violence:** Some students are exposed to acts of violence and/or experience bullying in BPS schools.

10. **Safety and discipline:** Safety and discipline measures are not always conducive to a school environment that promotes belongingness and readiness to learn.

11. **Neighborhood safety and violence:** Violence in neighborhoods impacts communities and schools.

12. **School food:** The food options offered in schools do not always appeal to or meet the cultural and dietary needs of all students.

13. **Unreliable and unsafe transportation:** Transportation to and from school, including school buses and public transit, can be unsafe or unreliable. This especially impacts students who require specialized transportation and families without cars.

14. **Walking and biking experience:** Some students and families experience challenges getting to school because of things like vehicle traffic, lack of bike lanes, crosswalks, or bike racks.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 7:
Student agency and voice

Students have varying levels of voice and agency in their educational experience.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "Students don't get a lot of say and therefore we aren't heard. Student government is pushed back this year and last year nothing got done." – BPS Student

- "Students should be able to customize their school schedule. Some students may not want to have lunch at 10 am or taking a history course in the morning." – BPS Student

- "My experience hasn't been that good; I started working with BSAC in the summer and there was a lot of "adultism," my voice wasn't heard. I was speaking to [BPS Leader]… about my group project about adultism and she said to my face that students can't have a say in everything because adults make the decisions." – BPS Student

- "Students at [School Name] created a strategic plan for the arts and gained more arts teachers this year. We realized how much of a hindrance the school schedule is. We tested a pilot schedule, which addressed more additional wellness time, but faculty didn't approve and we went back to the old schedule. It's a challenge to try new ideas." – BPS Teacher

- "We don't have a space for students, if they are wandering, they get sent back to class." – BPS Student

- "[There is] a lack of freedom at school in terms of what students are allowed to do and not allowed to do." – BPS Student

- "We have to invest in these children, we are trying to think about what we need included in these conversations. The worst thing is to feel invisible, like you are just there. You are in school for 7 hours a day and you should know what is going on, some spend most of that time not knowing what's happening." – Community Partner with a Disability

We heard that while the District and schools have avenues for students to share their input, students have varying levels of agency and voice in their educational experiences and school decisions and do not always see decisions being made that reflect their input.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 8:
Mental health and social emotional supports

Students have varying access to mental health and social emotional support as some schools do not have the programs, services, and spaces to consistently provide services.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "Our school emphasizes grades… but students aren't given space to prioritize their mental health." – BPS Student

- "Personally it's hard for me to come here; I'm dealing with a lot of stuff out of school, and I have to come here [and get no support]. I feel like no counselor can help me; they can talk to me for an hour or two, but I'm still going through everything I'm going through." – BPS Student

- "They don't have resources for emotional and social support. There is a lot of trauma that goes on in our neighborhoods where we live. You see and hear about all this stuff on the news, but there isn't someone to explain what happens until there is a physical tragedy to explain what happens. Someone to talk to – not enough social workers, guidance, counselors." – BPS Parent

- "Sabemos que cuando ayudamos a los niños con traumas emocionales ayudamos a la familia. Ahora mismo hay una crisis con los niños por la pandemia, traen muchas situaciones de disciplina porque no saben cómo expresarse, les damos la oportunidad a los niños de hablar y diferentes maneras de expresarse.
  We know when we help the kids with emotional traumas, we are helping the family. Right now there is a crisis with the kids because of the pandemic, they have a lot of discipline issues because they don't know how to express themselves. We [Partner Organization] give the kids an opportunity to talk and [show them] different ways to express themselves." – Community Partner

- "Sometimes we are assigned a lot of work and teachers don't realize that we're dealing with stuff at home and might not have time. I wish we could talk more about life." – BPS Student

- "We ran into having enough space for kids to run around, especially if they are under emotional distress they would end up under staircases. Having a room for quiet so they can refocus." – Community Partner

- "No one has their own office including the front office and nurse. Social workers and therapists, they all have shared spaces." – BPS Teacher

- "I was doing bad, and the teacher noticed it, and they forced me to speak to a counselor. She was really cool, it felt like she was committed to me, she said we'll talk tomorrow, and that was 3 weeks ago and we haven't heard from her since." – BPS Student

We heard that while schools do provide mental health resources and supports, these supports do not always address students' needs. Issues raised include limited mental health resources, lack of spaces to provide mental health services, and limited conversations about life outside the classroom. Students shared that they want support for their lives both in and out of school.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 9:
Bullying and violence

Some students are exposed to acts of violence and/or experience bullying in BPS schools.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "There are a lot of fights and people are very angry. They always give us town halls, but it affects our education, it's a waste of time." – BPS Student

- "[It is] already not feeling safe, how people move in the school. Me personally, I'm used to shootings and stabbings. I don't want to come to school and have to deal with the same thing." – BPS Student

- "A stabbing and shooting don't determine who we are as a school, but kids do whatever they want." – BPS Student

- "It's your environment, what you see going around – you don't want to make new friends… at the white schools, there's more spirit, people are having more fun. Here, people are just trying to survive." – BPS Student

- "My daughter is 15 she struggles going to school due to anxiety and depression and tormenting and bullying." – BPS Parent

- "We have so much violence, they should have each classroom sit down and talk about what is going on in the world, even before they do homework, math or science. It's affecting them, so they should talk with them so that they can let their feelings be known. There is so much agitation; so much the teacher and students have to do." – BPS Parent

- "One thing I'd want them to fix, not just in my kid's school but in all schools, is that they put metal detectors in all our schools so that if there's someone who's bullying them, they can't bring a weapon. Sometimes people bring in weapons and they're not even investigated. Everyone needs the same level of security." – BPS Parent

- "BPS is bad at addressing bullying – there is a pressure to 'stop complaining' because it happens in every school. There was a good code of conduct policy, with the vice principal having parents and kids come together and talk, really talk, with good results. At another school it's likely the kid who was bullying would be suspended and the kids would just stay apart instead of becoming friends. I was told 'a certain level of violence is to be expected in the BPS system.' This is totally unacceptable." – BPS Parent

We heard that students sometimes experience bullying and violence while at school. Students shared that they want school to be a space where they are safe, and acts of violence and bullying are properly addressed and prevented.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 10:
Safety and discipline

Safety and discipline measures are not always conducive with a school environment that promotes belongingness and readiness to learn.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "I am in an alternative school for behavior and IEPs, and it's primarily low income and students of color and we are criminalized as special needs students. We have metal detectors, our possessions are taken. I carry a comb in my bag and it's considered too "sharp." It doesn't feel like it caters to special needs students even though it's supposed to." – BPS Student

- "Removing metal detectors - I feel like I'm about to get arrested, I don't want to feel like I'm going to go to jail when in school." – BPS Student

- "My daughter... had a white bandana – they told her you can't do that, you're a gang member.... You treat our kids like criminals and gang members because they're coming in from wherever. Let's support our educators who are from there." – BPS Parent, Alum, and Community Partner

- "Parents don't agree with [police in schools]. There's more confrontation between students and police for students of color than for white students. Police defend us, but police don't give therapy." - BPS Parent

- "Teachers respond to issues in the school...there is not a lot of thought put into the consequences... For example: they locked all bathrooms for everyone, when there was a small group of students not behaving in the bathroom." – BPS Student

- "I am particularly concerned about school discipline and the school to prison pipeline, and how students in special education are at a greater risk of incarceration than students in the general population. Some schools are built to look similar to prisons with things like metal detectors, locked doors, bars on windows, lack of windows while other campuses are open, spacious, beautifully designed and designed to empower the people to feel like this is their space, as opposed to 'this is a space I go where I might get in trouble, where I'm being watched'. Also, [there's] a lot of research showing that Black students are disproportionately targeted for discipline and are identified with disabilities." – Educator with a Disability

- "The way teachers control the situation isn't good too. Some of the kids that go to this school are really kids, you really need to break it down for them. When you do speak, you're being defiant, you're being disrespectful. All the teachers, they're not from here... they don't take stuff the way we take stuff." – BPS Student

We heard that while schools do provide measures to promote safety in schools, the means chosen do not always address students' needs. Students shared that they want school to be a space where they are safe, feel valued, and are seen and treated as students full of potential and promise.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 11:

Neighborhood safety and violence

Violence in neighborhoods impacts communities and schools.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "We have a playground with stairs open on the public sidewalk level. I am thinking about unwanted guests and drug paraphernalia that we have. [We need] monitoring, signs in multiple languages about smoking and loitering, and being a reflective space for all cultures and languages." – BPS School Leader

- "There have been many shootings, drive-bys, stabbings, and car chases and parents express concern. The police's concern about safeguarding the park [near the school] is scarce." - BPS Parent and Community Partner

- "Our neighborhood doesn't have a playground, the teachers have to buy basketballs. The school playground is being used as a community playground and often not taken care of. There is vandalism – spray paint on buildings and things thrown around." – BPS Staff Member

- "I'm giving up on BPS. It's a struggle every day to get my daughter to go to school. Just yesterday we received another email that a gun was found in a park next to her school, and now she's like, 'I don't want to go, something's going to happen.'" – BPS Parent and Representative of Unhoused Community

- "Me personally, I'm used to shootings and stabbings. I don't want to come to school and have to deal with the same thing." – BPS Student

- "Security is really important, one does not feel safe taking their children to school." – BPS Parent

- "Some of our schools are not as safe as should be and that's why parents don't want to get involved." – BPS Parent

- "They don't all have school police; you have to call them now…. [School Name] has metal detectors, but I don't think there are enough precautions." – BPS Parent

We heard that neighborhood safety and violence impact students, school communities, and their sense of well-being. Families, students, and staff members shared that violence around schools is not being sufficiently addressed.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 12:
School food

The food options offered in schools do not always appeal to or meet the cultural and dietary needs of all students.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "I have many friends at my school that do not eat the school lunches, and when they eat the school lunches, they have gotten food poisoning. They are buying expensive chips and other items that are unhealthy at my school so they can eat. It impacts me most of the time – I am able to focus at school, like all I'm thinking about is how I'm hungry in class, I'm not able to pay attention, I don't have a lot of energy to just do activities." – BPS Student

- "So many of my peer leaders here come in to work at 4:30 hungry, and not having eaten anything because either the school lunch doesn't taste good, or it's with low quality ingredients or whatever it might be, and then they come and they get McDonald's, Burger King, and they survive on chips and snacks all day, or candy. I think that students really deserve food that is also diverse, right? Coming from different parts of the world, food that is substantial, that tastes good, that has fresh produce – we shouldn't be skimping on the literal energy source that powers learning." – Former BPS Student

- "Food insecurity is huge, and if there wasn't an option – like yes, we have breakfast and lunch, but some kids are still hungry throughout the day. At [School Name], we received tons of letters from kids, saying thank you for these snacks, they would say they 'keep them going'. Given that we know these vulnerabilities exist, they should be part of the budget." - BPS Parent

- "Some kids have it and some kids don't, spending money every day. Kids should know they're having a good lunch regardless, not if they're spending hundreds of dollars a week." – BPS Student

- "I've had food poisoning more than once, but they're doing a better job of offering more options from different cultures, but not a lot of options for dietary restrictions." – BPS Student

- "I send traditional food with my kids, and it's very important for me that my son shares his culture and gets the culture from other schools from other cultural backgrounds." – BPS Parent and Staff Member

We heard that some students think school food options are undesirable, unhealthy, or unsafe. Students shared that hunger in class, because of undesirable options or not enough food provided, can distract from their learning. Some people acknowledge that there have been improvements to school food, and many want options that are representative of the diverse cultures, dietary needs, and preferences of BPS students and families.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 13:
Unreliable and unsafe transportation

Bus transportation to and from school, including school buses and public transit, can be unreliable and unsafe. This especially impacts students who require specialized transportation and families without cars.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "The school bus system has to be fixed, it's really hard for some children. Sometimes it doesn't come, and parents have to be late for work." – BPS Parent

- "I have a grandkid with special needs. Sometimes my daughter calls me yelling to get a taxi because the bus hasn't come. But I'm in the street waiting with the other kid, so I have to call a taxi for the kid with special needs. Transportation is failing us. Sometimes the bus goes on another route, or it skips our house." – BPS Grandparent

- "Bussing is not working for my child, he requires 1-to-1 chaperone as an ASD student. When there is not one, then the bus does not come. What is not working is lack of communication to let me know this instead of waiting and trying to track a bus that is never going to come." – BPS Parent

- "Transportation is a huge issue for special education students. I have a student who has missed school for months at a time because there was no driver for their bus or there was no monitor. I have had a student in a wheelchair stuck at school because there was a broken bus lift. There is an issue with both buses and staff." – BPS Teacher

- "One thing we hear a lot about is transportation for SPED students like lifts being broken, drivers not being trained, difficulties with schedules. Parents can't handle this if kids need special help, so this trickles down onto the family." – Community Partner

- "He [my son] is doing better but he did have an incident with a bus monitor. On Monday he was kicked in the face by another student and lost a tooth. The bus driver was shaken up but there were protocols that should have been followed. There should have been a monitor there as part of his IEP." – BPS Parent

We heard that sometimes, students and families are left waiting for school buses that do not arrive. Some families do not receive communication when buses cannot come. This especially burdens families without vehicles and families of students with disabilities who require specialized transportation. Students taking public transportation face similar issues with unpredictable and time-consuming transportation experience.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 14:
Walking and biking experience

Some students and families experience challenges getting to school because of things like vehicle traffic, lack of bike lanes, crosswalks, or bike racks.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "It's often asked 'what can we do to accommodate cars?' but not always 'how can we support kids?' That's why we say it's not drop off and pickup, like you'd have with cars, but it's arrival and dismissal. We are supportive of programs for kids that tell people to slow down and let kids walk to school. There hasn't been a conversation about vehicles causing congestion yet in the Green New Deal." – Community Partner

- "We have had issues with our school where there wasn't a proper crossing guard. Transit safety would be a wish." – BPS Parent

- "Instead of driving, some kids bike, but there are not enough [bike] racks around." – BPS Principal

- "There is not bike storage here at [School Name]. Could we have blue bikes, cages, and racks for students, staff visitors? How is transportation? A lot of kids that attend school do not live within walking distance." – Community Partner

- "If the bike rack isn't in the front of the school, that says it's not welcoming to me. It was hard to find the entrance and the bike racks today [at this engagement], so I brought my bike inside." – Community Partner

- "I see a misalignment with the departments of this city, the transportation is doing things that make it easier for people to walk and bus but the school department is not doing that. There's no mention of walking and biking from BPS. BPS needs to align with what the wider city is planning. It doesn't have to be walking to the school, maybe raising awareness about trails that exist in the city. There needs to be some education to offer kids taking the blue bike. The community needs to be aware of it too." – Community Member

We heard that families and community partners value sustainable transportation options including walking, biking, and public transit, however there is limited infrastructure to support these options on and around some school campuses.

1.3 Programs

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE
We asked students, staff, families, and community members "*If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?*" The quotes below illustrate patterns we heard.

Well-rounded, equitable programs

- "[I would like] special classes like art, active participation that you could do outside of school. I would stay after school for music programs." – BPS Student

- "I would like to see state of the art classrooms for our students, also more after school programs, tutoring, student governments, music, and even sports in our middle school. Diversify the sports and instruments they are playing." – BPS Parent

City as a classroom

- "You have to bring the kids out into the world. The Harbor Islands are right there, we should be going out to Thompson Island, doing ropes courses. Middle school kids are so traumatized. Bringing weapons. Nature could be healing – they could have quiet, peace, physical activity. But I don't see any of that available to us. We tried to go see Shrek at Boston Arts Academy, stuff like that." – BPS Teacher

- "Having more access to things in Boston that kids can go see. It's challenging to get kids out … make it more accessible and easier for teachers…. it wasn't very user friendly to plan the field trip [to a museum]." – BPS Teacher

- "Trip experiences, for kids to see beyond Boston as part of their curriculum, like kids go to the farm to experience different spaces." – BPS Parent

Programs that prepare students for life

- "BPS should have a program about budgeting, credit cards, financial literacy. This is a life skill our kids need." – BPS Parent

- "Life classes like taxes, reapplying for scholarships, building credit, tools to make and save money, financial literacy. Go to college. Feeling self-sufficient. Have a car. Get a job. Finding a path for adult life, not necessarily college." - BPS Student

Engaging the whole child

- "Focus on what kids can do well, what are their talents? It really helps them." – BPS Parent

- "I want my kids to come home tired, be physically, emotionally, psychologically engaged during the day." – BPS Parent and City of Boston Staff Member

Expanded, affordable before-and-after school care

- "We need affordable aftercare for three and four year olds. Not having aftercare puts parents in a difficult situation. Navigating the current process is slow and causes stress. It messes up our work and daily life. Find a way to support after school programs in our buildings. Make buildings work so they serve the population regardless of age." - Community Partner

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Students, families, staff, and community expressed multiple things that are working well about programs, including extracurriculars, field trips, and after school programs.

- "[Neighborhood] – it was wonderful to have my students there, I would take my students across the street to US history sites in walking distance." – BPS Teacher

- "I liked the enrichment activities and field trips, and things like going to places with real life experiences or simulated about real life. I know there's Thompson Island and there are other immersive partnerships, those are the things I would like to see BPS do or continue to do." – Community Partner

- "[School Name] has a wonderful after school program. But they need more funding." – Community Member

- "I enjoy band and other extracurriculars. BSAC is cool. Teachers are trying to get students more involved: they are having an acceleration program over winter break for students who need extra support." – BPS Student

- "We have a wonderful STEAM program and creation space. Kids and families come together and get to create. It is a great experience. Great partnership with [Organization]. Having partnerships with after school programs are great." – BPS Student

- "Last year, my son needed help with math, so he got extra support after school. He got some support from the school. Not sure what he liked specifically, but good that there's more support because math is hard, and it was good over the summer." – BPS Parent

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

These statements summarize what we heard from community members about the problems they experience in Boston Public Schools. The quotes included in the following pages illustrate a richer picture of the impact of these problems.

15. **Inconsistent program access:** High-quality academic programs and learning opportunities are inconsistently offered across BPS schools, contributing to inequitable opportunities.
16. **CTE and vocational education:** Courses are not always aligned with evolving student interests, technologies, and career paths.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 15:
Inconsistent program access

High-quality academic programs and learning opportunities are inconsistently offered across BPS schools, contributing to inequitable opportunities.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "I tested into advanced learning but my sister was in non-advanced and it was confusing that our curriculum wasn't the standard…. The advanced group wasn't diverse." – BPS Student

- "My experience is that enrichment opportunities are based on the school. I attended a lot of open houses, one student's experience is not the same school to school which is unfortunate." – Community Partner

- "I was on high school boards, it was interesting to see arts, music, and language across schools. All three are essential to academics, but implementation and access needs consistency across all schools. All schools, not just exam schools, need some or all arts for continuity. On the English learner level, or special education level, especially with elementary school, it needs consistency." – BPS Parent

- "My son attended [School Name] and he loved it. But he plays the cello and he wanted to play music in school and play basketball. He didn't have the opportunity to do either [at school]…. I would have to leave work and bring him to music practice or to the community center to play basketball." – BPS Parent

- "There are a lot of students who are really good at arts but also sports. In my new school there are less opportunities for sports. No basketball court and no teams. Graphic arts is my favorite class." – BPS Student

- "Our school doesn't have our own sports teams. If we want to play, we have to go to [School Name] and try out on their grounds with students we don't know." – BPS Student

- "Our school has resources for football, basketball, etc. but for girls tennis we couldn't even get a bus to bring us to games; coaches had to drive us. I think the school picks and chooses what teams to invest in." – BPS Student

- "BPS schools that are very small get less attention – this limits sports activity and you can't represent your school." – BPS Student

- "Science is a concern; especially for the higher grades, science needs more support. My daughter is interested in robotics but only the librarian teaches them coding. She needs more support." – BPS Parent

- "Our school is arts, theater, dance class, music, painting…. Those programs are good, but we don't really have a club or after school program." – BPS Parent

We heard that program access varies from school to school. Students, families, and staff shared that there is a lack of consistency in programs offered, including the quality and content, which creates inequities in students' educational opportunities. We repeatedly heard that students and families desire universal access to programs like music, art, sports, science and technology, and before-and-after-school programming.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 16:
CTE and vocational education

Courses are not always aligned with evolving student interests, technologies, and career paths.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "We gotta take that [art] class out and put graphic design or something in. Everything new! The art room is old... take that out and do photography. Everybody wants to start a YouTube channel or something." – BPS Students (answering together)

- "The school is like... meant to build workers, accountants and factory workers. [You need to] change the school to what society is now. School and [technical education] is built for carpenters." – BPS Students (multiple in conversation)

- "Key word would be new. Gotta make it new: new generation, new culture, new everything. Everything about Boston is old." – BPS Student

- "The pathways are great, but there is not much diversity. I would love a business pathway. I want to be out there managing money and doing my own business. I want entrepreneurship, culinary. Lots of kids don't want to be in a career where it's only STEM-based. If they added more pathways, it would be a greater experience for students and I would be more prepared out of High School. I would have a sense of direction where to start, where to go, what's next. – BPS Student

- "I'm interested in the sorry state of vocational training in Boston. Particularly BPS dumping any student it wants to get rid of into the vocational school. It needs to do more to get kids interested in vocational careers and green careers, especially with all the labor needed to do something about climate change." – BPS Parent and Community Advocate

- "If you go to visit other vocational schools in the state you come back in tears because the gap is so great. There is so much going on [in BPS] and some of it is terrific, every junior or senior should be out on co-op working. The City has committed to rebuilding the school and programs, but the timeline is long and these other schools have a decade more on us. Their students are getting the jobs that our students need desperately because we have been understaffed and underinvested." – BPS Teacher, Parent

We heard that the CTE and career pathways do not always align with student interests and changing technologies; students want programs that better meet their needs. Some teachers and community members shared concerns about the quality of CTE programs in BPS compared to other areas.

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1.4 District-Level Policies & Practices

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

We asked students, staff, families, and community members "*If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?*" The quotes below illustrate patterns we heard.

Transparent, inclusive, and equitable decision-making process

- "When you develop plans, be transparent. I would like it if everything was documented, put it on the website. Who did you meet with? What did you talk about? That way you can be accountable to what the people said. Something always happens and as Hispanics or African Americans we are left with nothing. I would like if everything that is shared in English, is also in Spanish and Creole so that everyone has access to the same information at the same time." – BPS Parent

- "[What do we mean by having a seat at the table?] Accountability, being part of the final decision-making. We need folks that come from, that are still active, in this community." – BPS Parent, Alum, and Community Advocate

- "Keep it simple and to the point, less words, the most important facts that we actually need to know. Instead of us saying 'what does this really mean?' or 'is there something else behind it?'" – BPS Staff Member

- "Be honest: if the building is not great, don't lie and tell half-truths." – Community Member

District commitment on short-term actions and long-term vision

- "I am excited about the 'What does a great school need?' part about this master plan. This piece will really speed things up." – BPS Parent

- "A clear vision for what the future is going to be – we want commitment from the District." – BPS Teacher and Parent

Consistent, equitable education across neighborhoods

- "I would love for every neighborhood to have a decent school, not racially segregated, so that everyone could go to their neighborhood school." - BPS Staff Member

Merger processes that truly involve impacted communities

- "Present a clear plan to families about the mergers and how students will be placed in the schools that will be merged. Promote one-on-one meetings with the families that will be impacted and provide social-emotional support for these families." – Community Partners

- "This could be an opportunity to close schools that don't work, especially if parents are not choosing them. A good way to rebrand and listen. But this needs to be based on listening to parents." – BPS Parent

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Students, families, staff, and community expressed multiple things that are working well about District policies and practices, including effective engagement and fewer transitions.

- "Involve the kids in the school upgrades. For example, a playground designer was brought in and talked to the kids, brought them into the process, and got them excited." – BPS Staff Member

- "One of the schools who added a 6th grade was exciting, it was one less transition. Lessening those transitions at a really vulnerable time." – BPS Parent

- "We had a meeting in October with the Superintendent to come listen to us. We spoke about safety, about buildings, about special education, and here we are again sharing information - that's positive. I see lots of positives." – BPS Parent

- "I do like that the school is transitioning to PreK to 6 so that my kid doesn't have to transition out of the school but it does add to the space-availability issues." – BPS Parent and Staff Member

- "I felt like my son was winning when we got our first choice in the lottery process. I heard from other parents that the process and system was complicated. I felt so lucky to be able to get a spot." – BPS Parent

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

These statements summarize what we heard from community members about the problems they experience in Boston Public Schools. The quotes included in the following pages illustrate a richer picture of the impact of these problems.

17. **Inequitable school investment practices:** Inequitable investments create disparities in school experiences, and do not always reflect the needs and priorities of students, staff, families, and communities.

18. **Trust:** Past promises have not always been fulfilled, resulting in reduced community trust.

19. **Engagement practices:** Community engagement opportunities are not always equitable or accessible to all and decisions about schools are sometimes driven by the loudest voices.

20. **Communication and community involvement around mergers:** A historical lack of clear communication and community involvement around mergers has left some students, families, and community members concerned that while mergers pose an opportunity for improved facilities and student experience, they also risk upending school communities and culture.

21. **School transitions and assignment process:** The school assignment system and frequent school transitions cause some students and families to experience stress and uncertainty about their needs being met in BPS schools.

22. **Burden on staff, partners, and community:** The District sometimes places undue burden on teachers, staff, and community partners to provide the resources and programs that meet student needs.

23. **Inconsistent security protocols and infrastructure:** School buildings' security protocols and infrastructure vary across schools.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 17:
Inequitable school investment practices

Inequitable investments create disparities in school experiences, and do not always reflect the needs and priorities of students, staff, families, and communities.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "The District disproportionately distributes funds across schools." – BPS Student

- "We have a new renovation plan. I am a sophomore and the building will be complete my senior year. We want to start extracurriculars but they kept getting pushed back because of finances. As we are pushed into a larger space, will we suddenly have money to finance extracurriculars, more teachers?" – BPS Student

- "There is a smaller Montessori school- [School Name 1] - that has been slated to be closed several times because of space. [BPS Leader] spoke to them and said we are keeping you open by taking funding from the [School Name 2] and to this day they are open. Their students get overnight field trips and great field trips; we don't get that at [School Name 2]." – BPS Parent

- "The disinvestment happening in Boston Public Schools having to do with structural racism has been horrendous. And the result is what our kids are dealing with now." – Community Advocate

- "My two children are working now, and sometimes I drive in the suburbs and see the beautiful high schools in the suburbs, and I just wonder, 'Why can't Boston have that?' Kids have space, they have facilities for all sports, and they have the opportunity and the safety. All kids should have the same access to that. We need to invest in our children, they are the most important investment." – Former BPS Parent

- "My school is investing in Apple computers and products but there are mushrooms growing in the school, parts of the roof falling through the ceiling, teachers saying we can't breathe in the air, but they're buying Apple products." – BPS Student

- "Don't prioritize the exam schools at the expense of everything else. You need to go all in on all schools. Parents should be able to send their kids to neighborhood schools knowing they'll get a safe and rigorous education that is loving and supportive and welcoming. People should be moving to Boston for the school system, not the other way around." - Community Member

- "There is disinvestment in our school and it leads to disempowerment. I want [students] to feel like they're prepared for the real world, and we haven't done it." – BPS Parent

- "These kids are the future and have nothing. The city has the resources, but we are not getting them." – BPS Parent

We heard a perception of underfunding in Boston Public Schools. Students, staff, and families often compared the condition of BPS schools to schools outside of the City. Community members shared that when public school investment happens, it does not always reflect the needs of students, families, staff, and communities, creating disparities in school experiences.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 18:

Trust

Past promises have not always been fulfilled, resulting in reduced community trust.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "I am not sure people have faith that Green New Deal is going to address issues and not just remove schools. We take pride in our community and our children going to schools within the city." – BPS Parent

- "[School Name] was supposed to merge, and I was supposed to graduate in the new building but that still hasn't happened. This has been going on since my freshman year. Now that the Green New Deal is here, I'm skeptical because I was promised a new school. How can I be sure that it will happen?" – BPS Student

- "In addition to transparency, show evidence for why you think you can successfully implement the plan. We all know the talk that BPS isn't great. We want [you] to show evidence that BPS can be successful. [The community's] anxiety is not just about 'something will happen,' but that we are forced into blind trust." – BPS Parent

- "This is why you're receiving so much resistance. They're [the community] just not gonna show up, because they're tired of processes without outcomes." – BPS Parent, Alum

- "There is a great distrust in what government is saying to me, and what is going on behind closed doors, and that never amounts to what is said. Who is at the table? What is the transparency you're working with? What does this look like altogether?" – BPS Alum

- "There is lots of finger pointing, but no responsibility or accountability. I've sat through so many plans, [change is] not going to happen overnight. The structure has to be there. Faith in BPS is lacking." – BPS Parent

- "This is my 4th or 5th process. We have a meeting, ask parents what they want, get individual stories, and behind closed doors people make decisions. I am assuming that a master plan will talk about mergers, consolidations, closing, constructions…. Bring that [analysis] to the community! That is where people really want to have input! What is the proposal, and then let's talk about it. Feeds on the cynicism and mistrust." – Community Member

We heard that some decisions about school investments, mergers, and improvements have not been implemented. Students, families, staff, and community members shared that after these experiences, many are skeptical to trust that new processes, like the Green New Deal for BPS, will produce outcomes.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 19:
Engagement practices

Community engagement opportunities are not always equitable or accessible to all and decisions about schools are sometimes driven by the loudest voices.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "The problem still becomes... that you are the ones advocating on our behalf – no one from the community themselves is ensuring the process comes back." – BPS Parent

- "There is a misconception of what parents want. BPS aligns with those who are the loudest, but they are really just the 1-2%." – BPS Parent

- "I am [a former ESL teacher and] part of the school community and I wish there were more people here today. Part of my concern is that we don't see parents attending these community events, even though Asian parents are seen to be very involved and concerned for their children. I am here to listen and bring it back to the community. Most of the concerns that are raised are lingering issues. I have heard a lot of the same things over the past 40 years. Since Mayor Walsh, deadlines for initiatives have been set, and I'm hopeful to see those deadlines met." – Former BPS Teacher

- "I wanted to voice the frustration. You haven't explained the process in a way that I understand, and I am experienced in this." – BPS Parent and Community Partner

- "As a BPS parent, I get the emails but I don't read them. There are so many words and so many things. How can we make it more concise? You are trying to battle the day and you have to keep scrolling and scrolling to get the info. Sometimes it takes more thoughtfulness and intentionality to communicate the message." – BPS Parent

- "It was great that you brought in a lot of interpreters. But there are no people [here] who need their services, because people are not well informed. You need to do more work to engage communities more effectively." – Community Partner

- "In my old school... they're finally going to add on a new section of the building. There was a lot of talking, people coming in and out of the building. But we didn't know who they were. We did find out that they were adding on in the summer and it was going to affect us. We want to be aware of how it will affect us." – BPS Staff Member

- "One of my concerns is that we are taking all this input now, but will we be a part of the decision-making? There are always trade-offs." – BPS Parent

We heard that the District's engagement and communication methods sometimes limit meaningful community input. Community members shared that current methods do not always engage effectively, use accessible language, or foster collaborative decision-making, and at times reward the loudest voices rather than uplifting those most impacted.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 20:
Communication and community involvement around mergers

A historical lack of clear communication and community involvement around mergers has left some students, families, and community members concerned that while mergers pose an opportunity for improved facilities and student experience, they also risk upending school communities and culture.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "Families have not had enough information about this change [mergers], which will impact their lives and the lives of their children. When they have held meetings, they don't give enough promotion, so parents sometimes don't know about it. They have not presented an adequate plan for these families, they are confused and have fear and uncertainty." – Community Partner

- "Worry is that in creating new buildings that work well, you lose the community and culture. [School Name] for example, beautiful school but families had to pull kids out for bullying, for bad test scores, etc. Mergers don't work if the schools are not the same and if the cultures/ideas are not aligned. If having a beautiful building sacrifices the culture, then I don't think it should happen." – BPS Parent

- "I have concerns over the process - BPS families are getting closed schools but not new schools." – Community Partner

- "I have a 3rd grader in the [School Name]. There is a great small community, stability and consistency matters. The brand new building is good but the merger is not very good. There are several disruptions due to the merger, and parents want to know how this benefits the kids. Classes and teachers are good. The facility is questionable but the community is good." – BPS Parent

- "I was a graduate of [School Name 1] to watch how the District empowers certain populations and not the others. What I see happen is disappointing. We have 6 schools that were up for a merger, and all have fallen out except for [School Name 2]. They took a lot of programs from the [School Name 1]. We're hypocritical about equity." – Community Partner

- "We all talk equity. We all have the racial equity planning tool…. BPS never follows the actual instructions on those plans. What is the lessons from the data on marginalized groups… and what is going to be the impact on each of those groups…? People have asked for [this analysis] in the proposals on the mergers of the small schools, and they have never happened." – Community Partner

We heard that some merger decisions have been made in the past without the involvement of impacted school communities. Families and community partners shared that while they recognize the necessity of mergers, some have led to disruption and uncertainty about the impact and benefit.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 21:
School transitions and assignment process

The school assignment system and frequent school transitions cause some students and families to experience stress and uncertainty about their needs being met in BPS schools.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "The transitions have been challenging, transitions from [School Name] to another lottery are stressful. We didn't get our choice for K1 and for K2 felt that all good schools were going to be filled. I remember panicking and wanted to change rank 6 and 7 and a person at the Welcome Center helped me." – BPS Parent

- "I live in Dorchester. To the right of my home is the [School Name 1] and the left is [School Name 2]. We got a school WAY on the other side of town where she [my daughter] would be bussed and there was no support system. If she got sick in the day and I couldn't leave work, my aunt couldn't get her. As a result, we were unable to send her to BPS... If I could make you understand the angst – I still want to cry when I think about it. We are city people, love the neighborhood, love the schools in our neighborhood, we go to all the school events but did not have an opportunity to attend. I couldn't get my child into her neighborhood schools." – BPS Parent

- "My son… was at the [School Name] and then he didn't know what school he was going to [next]. He didn't get accepted where I wanted him to, then he could only go to one location for one year and then had to change again. A lot of parents don't know how to get their children into the schools they want them to attend; it is confusing." – BPS Parent

- "I toured two schools within 2 miles of our house, and our favorite schools were K-4 or K-2. They had less grades in the school, they can't offer specialties. If you have more strands you can offer extra classes because you have more teachers." – BPS Parent

- "The lottery system makes it harder to have parental involvement. Not knowing where your child will go makes a huge difference. Note that some kids have to move away from their neighborhood schools…." – BPS Parent

- "Students with disabilities can mark that in the lottery, but parents cannot mark that they themselves have a disability to be able to go into their child's schools." – Community Partner

- "Enrollment is stressful and it shouldn't be." – BPS Parent

We heard that many students and families find the school assignment process stressful. Families shared that inconsistency in programming, school sizes, grade configurations create confusion when trying to determine their child's path through BPS. We heard a desire for fewer school transitions and greater access to schools near where families live.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 22:
Burden on staff, partners, and community

The District sometimes places undue burden on teachers, staff, and community partners to provide the resources and programs that meet student needs.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "BPS is all in who you know and your connections. Who I know should not factor into how well I can serve my students. Everyone should have the same access to serve children - remove the politics. If we want equitable schools we need to remove the bones and structures." – BPS Staff Member

- "What's going well is because of the teachers and staff members. Certain teachers are good at writing grants. Boston Public Schools talks about equity and anti-racism but it's not always implemented well; it's all up to the individual schools to get it done. – BPS Staff Member

- "Equity becomes important because it's so inconsistent from school to school. At [School Name 1], parents fundraised several years back to get a play area. The garden is beautiful, but [School Name 2] is concrete with paint. It would be nice to have consistent outdoor facilities for all schools instead of placing the initiative on communities." – BPS Parent

- "As a program manager working in the school system, there is a lack of communication between leadership and staff and parents…. A lot of the schools don't have resources to support students…. Teachers… feel that there is a lack of curriculum or lack of training, a barrier and they are not learning what they should be learning, the pay is not adequate, inflation has increased dramatically." – Community Partner

We heard that there is inconsistent District support across schools for programs, services, staff learning and development, and partnerships. In the absence of support, staff and community partners must spend their own resources to meet student needs.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 23:
Inconsistent security protocols and infrastructure

School buildings' security protocols and infrastructure vary across schools.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "One thing I'd want them to fix, not just in my kids' school but in all schools, is that they put metal detectors in all our schools so that if there's someone who's bullying them, they can't bring a weapon. Sometimes people bring in weapons and they're not even investigated. Everyone needs the same level of security. – BPS Parent

- "That's good that people can't get in, especially with all that's going on in the world. But I'm not sure that all schools are like that. People can't just be allowed to walk in." – BPS Parent

- "Security [is a concern]. When someone comes to the school, they need to hit the buzzer. But when they get buzzed in, it's from the third floor and that person can come in and go wherever they want because the main office is on the second or third floor. And once you're in you can go anywhere and there is no one to keep an eye on you." – BPS Parent

- "My office doesn't have a lock…. We only have one buzz in so there isn't an adequate level of security…. I don't have a phone in my room. If there is a school shooter, there is not a speaker.'" – BPS Staff Member

- "The fire safety plan was to have the kids wait on the third floor until the fire department got there. At the time our daughter was using a walker – smoke inhalation will kill her before the fire department gets there." – BPS Parent

- "Safety of getting in and out of the building. A lot of the buildings have universal keys to get into different classrooms." – BPS Staff Member

We heard that there are inconsistent security protocols in schools across the District. Community members shared that the inconsistency can sometimes create confusion, and a lack of security or emergency response infrastructure can pose safety risks to students and staff.

1.5 Family & Community Connections

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

We asked students, staff, families, and community members "*If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?*" The quotes below illustrate patterns we heard.

Expanded family and community support resources

- "People don't know that there is a central location where you register your kid for school. There should be a better parent orientation. A parent liaison would be very helpful through this process. Host English classes for parents in the schools. Other community classes. Skills training. What if we had a shared community library with books in other languages? I wish we had financial literacy classes, language and social emotional [learning]." – Community Member

- "We need to teach English to parents, and financial literacy. There is a shortage of workers, but many don't have the English and skills to get the jobs." – BPS Parent and Interpreter

- "Keep the food pantry and the parent council coffee hour once a month. The food pantry helps parents get access to afford things they could not on their own. The parent council coffee hour helps us greet parents, and help them stay informed." – BPS Parent

Expanded community partnerships

- "There are so many resources and entrepreneurship in the communities, and it would be helpful to bring them to schools. More interaction between the communities and schools is very helpful." – BPS Teacher and Alum

- "A large expansion of Children's Hospital is being planned with innovative programs that should partner with BPS." – Community Partner

- "We need to cultivate public/private partnership resources like Harvard, Resilience, St. Elizabeth's, New Balance, etc." – Community Partner

Dedicated community spaces

- "One asset that Boston has is the incredibly rich tapestry of partners that work with schools. But schools are not set up correctly. People are in broom closets. That is one opportunity that exists as we look to design buildings, have space for the resources that we have in the city to provide." – BPS Parent and Community Partner

- "Schools should be the center of the community, like literally, they should have the space for the community to come together. Each school should have a dedicated space for community meetings. The community liaison at my school is in a closet! We need to transform this, to keep the community and the families in the school by design." – BPS Parent

- "In Boston, schools get used by community centers, centers for youth and families. Want to make sure that as we think about building space, we need to think about gyms, pools, tracks, theaters, art space that can get used at times other than during school." – Community Partner

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Students, families, staff, and community expressed multiple things that are working well about family and community connections, including welcome centers and partnerships.

- "BPS community partnerships are working very well, connections to [Partner Organization] to learn about what is happening. It also helps with different enrichment and education for the child and parents through collaboration." – BPS Parent

- "Welcome centers in the early 2000s were very helpful for my mother. I am not sure how it was structured then, but my parents thought it was a smooth location. If welcome centers functioned more like a community - working with places that already exist like a library. We should lean on existing community anchors." - Community Member

- "Every school needs a welcome center. The [neighborhood-based] welcome center was there when I needed help. They came out there for me, providing things I hadn't received before. I appreciated the notifications, phone calls, and texts. If I missed one, I would receive a second one." – BPS Parent and Community Partner

- "I'm able to use JVS [Jewish Vocational Services] through the schools. It's for a high school diploma, through the school. [School Name] recommended me, so now I'm into that program, and I'm working on myself." – BPS Parent and Staff Member

- "Partnerships, for example my daughter is with [Partnership], and now she's part of a program that is part of her school hours and art." – BPS Parent

- "We're really fortunate to have so many dedicated staff, educators, and community partners for student enrichment." – BPS Parent

- "One thing going well is the partnerships – we don't have a gym, but there is a community garden nearby that kids can go to instead of – look at community spaces that could make up for lack of facilities." – BPS Parent

- "It's nice to see community members talking about what's going well. One of the things I like about the [School Name] is that it's built as a community space – for BCYF, for a healthcare center, for use of the auditorium – it's been an added benefit of this building." – Community Partner

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

These statements summarize what we heard from community members about the problems they experience in Boston Public Schools. The quotes included in the following pages illustrate a richer picture of the impact of these problems.

24. **Barriers to community use:** School environments are not always set up to encourage community use and involvement due to things like unwelcoming facilities, limited community spaces, and District policies.

25. **Barriers to family involvement:** Family involvement and communication strategies do not always account for the diverse experiences, cultures, and customs of BPS families.

26. **Limited language support for families:** Inconsistent interpretation and communication in families' native languages creates barriers to family involvement and engagement.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 24:
Barriers to community use

School environments do not consistently encourage community use and involvement due policies, limited community spaces, and facilities that feel unwelcoming.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "There are not any rooms for community programs. We need to teach English to parents, and financial literacy. There is a shortage of workers, but many don't have the English and skills to get the jobs. We need a dedicated room for families. We mostly don't have the space." – BPS Parent and Staff Member

- "There should be a physical sign that says 'Visitors.' Without this, it makes communities seem like an afterthought or an oversight. Then when you get in, you're interrogated about why you're in the space, even if you're using the community-designated spaces." — Community Partner

- "We want to be involved but what does that look like? Partnerships become harder when buildings don't have the resources needed to teach." – Community Partner

- "Some organizations have been asked to pay custodians for using the spaces after hours, but they have no money to pay them. There are organizations that don't have a place to meet because there are so many rules like this. Schools should be open to their communities." – Community Partner

- "I think some of the extras are from outside partners, and that's helpful to have their expertise, but sometimes they come in for a year and then they leave." – BPS Parent and Community Partner

- "We are trying to have BPS be a unified District intentionally so schools can engage more easily. Barriers are that schools don't know this exists, it's challenging finding staff liaisons and having it be supported on an admin level. [The District] need[s] a team to make it happen so the program doesn't fall apart when one staff member/champion leaves." – Community Partner

- "Places also need to be less lenient about signing in. There are processes that must be followed to ensure students' security. I get that. But entrances need to be welcoming!" – Community Partner

- "There's no signage for the community entry; the canopy is the architectural sign that it's the entry, which is common among school architects, and there's also a designated door for the gym and auditorium spaces. I get how it makes community members seem like second class citizens compared to students using the main entrance." – Community Partner

We heard that some community partners experience barriers to school involvement. Community partners shared that they sometimes experience hard-to-find entrances, lack of wayfinding, missing community spaces, and policies that make it difficult to use available community spaces.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 25:
Barriers to family involvement

Family involvement and communication strategies do not always take into account the diversity of experiences, cultures, and customs of BPS families.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "At my daughter's school, they invited me as a Black person to attend the Equity Round Table. The meetings were at 8:30 AM. I emailed them and told them if the meeting is really for me, it can't happen at 8:30 AM because I am getting my kids ready for school and myself for work. They changed the time to evening and once they did, I participated. I think we, parents, need to tell our schools what is working for us if they need us to engage." – BPS Parent

- "We also need to understand that leisure time is a luxury. Some parents work multiple jobs. Whoever can show should stand in the gap for those who can't be there. We welcome grandparents, uncles, aunts; it takes a village." – BPS Parent

- "As parents, we have advocated for navigation and support when someone doesn't know where to go in navigating BPS or when they have a problem. I get a lot of calls in regard to what should we do when something happens, like bullying… it's just as important to let people know what they can and can't do in these situations." – BPS Parent and Staff Member

- "I came here in 2018, I went to school in Ethiopia, so I wasn't familiar with how the climate is. My son is a second grader, so [the school process] was very new to myself too. I wasn't aware of what's going on; I help with his homework, but I wasn't aware of how the curriculum works." – BPS Parent

- "It is extremely important that there are liaisons who can speak in both languages and understand issues and cultural factors. We have a lot of immigrants coming up [to Boston] with different cultures. It requires more expertise. Teachers are responsible for everything in some cultures. Education to parents needs to happen within the system." – Community Partner

- "In China, parents are more involved in kindergarten, with less involvement over time. Parents often join together for festivals. Education is not only the teacher's responsibility, it's also the parents' responsibility." – BPS Interpreter

- "I never liked school as a kid. Coming from an immigrant family, the things I was doing at school were different from my experience at home. I used to translate for my parents at home and what I learned in school did not help with what I used to deal with at home." – Community Partner

We heard that District communication approaches do not always align with families' expectations, customs, and perspectives surrounding education. Family members, partners, and staff shared that there is sometimes insufficient support for helping families understand how to navigate the school system and become involved in their children's educations.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 26:
Limited language support for families

Inconsistent interpretation and communication in families' native languages creates barriers to family involvement and engagement.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "At parent council meetings, many of our schools do not provide interpretation in the language families need, resulting in our families not participating in the meetings." – Community Partner

- "I want to echo that there is a language barrier for parents. Students only understand what is spoken at home, and they struggle to understand their teachers. Parents cannot advocate for themselves, and not only are parents burnt out, but teachers are as well." – Former BPS Teacher

- "I [a BPS interpreter] have to go [to parent teacher conferences] on behalf of a parent. The parent needs to know what is happening with their kids, but parents couldn't help because they couldn't read English. Having translation with the letters and communication with the parents can help a lot." – BPS Interpreter

- "I remember having a [multilingual] parent, who was not able to help their kids with the homework. If the student doesn't understand the homework, the parent cannot help. I used to call parents myself, but they don't come to parents' meetings because they don't understand. There are other barriers - parents don't have time to attend because they are working hard to make money and support their families." – BPS Interpreter

- "In teacher and parent conferences, they [parents] don't speak English, and there is not an interpreter present. The call-in interpretation is not working. When parents ask how they can support kids if they don't know and cannot connect to the teachers without knowing English, it's a huge issue." – BPS Interpreter

- "Some families, their kids know English or parents don't understand English. Interpreters are not enough, so parents don't want to go. In our culture, if the school invites you in, that means that their kid did not do something good." – BPS Interpreter

We heard that BPS offers inconsistent language support for families who speak a primary language other than English. Interpreters, teachers, and partners shared that inconsistent translation and communication create barriers to parent council meetings, parent teacher conferences, and other communications that allow families to stay informed and engaged in their children's education. There is a desire to expand the language support offered.

1.6 Educator & Staff Experience

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

We asked students, staff, families, and community members "*If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?*" The quotes below illustrate patterns we heard.

Teaching support in the classroom

- "As a teacher, smaller is better, even if only by a few kids. At the earlier stages, we want to hear from children more." – BPS Teacher

- "More staffing and more space, we need more adults especially if we are moving to inclusion, we need more space for HEPA, resources, for adults to share resources and ideas." – BPS Teacher

Spaces for staff collaboration and wellness

- "It would be ideal for there to be a space for teachers and professional spaces. Collaborate on lesson plans, throw out ideals and have an opportunity to share while you do your work. Fully funded curriculum materials, get teachers what they need and want to teach!" – BPS Teacher

Staff mental health support

- "We need mental health support for our teachers and staff. Loving, social emotional support is the way it needs to be. Right now there is a wait list to get help. Everyone is backed up. We must increase our support not only for students, but for teachers and staff too." – Community Partner

- "With more babies, more children needing to be in school, we need more teachers…. And we need to take care of them." – Community Partner

Staff mentorship and professional development

- "More professional development for the teachers around disability and around educating the teachers. They are the ones educating the students. That way they are not only educating as part of the lesson but how they act." – Community Partner with a disability

- "There should be programs to better support teaching staff to ensure there is no burn out." - BPS Parent

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WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Students, families, staff, and community expressed multiple things that are working well about the educator and staff experience, alumni returning as staff, staff engagement, and supportive teachers.

- "I wanted to give staff a shoutout at [School Name], I was looking at the scorecard for the school today, and most teachers are experienced and licensed. We have a really great retention rate with teachers, many of whom were [School Name] alumni – including Principal [Name]. Everyone wants to come back and have some association with the school." – Community Member

- "In the [Organization], they would give us a budget at the beginning of the year for buying supplies and submitting the receipt. I think it was very helpful and maybe BPS should implement that." – BPS Teacher

- "I am excited about my new building and interested to see what that looks like. I am currently in the PE building, and we were doing an impromptu "this is what we need" discussion." – BPS Staff Member

- "My experience with teachers is very good, they help you understand the homework, it's nice to be here." – BPS Student

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

These statements summarize what we heard from community members about the problems they experience in Boston Public Schools. The quotes included in the following pages illustrate a richer picture of the impact of these problems.

27. **Limited educator and staff support:** District dynamics like curriculum changes, staffing and hiring challenges, and turnover contribute to a lack of consistent staff support.

28. **Facility impact on staff:** Inadequate space in some schools creates challenges for educators and staff in providing programming and services.

29. **Lack of staff spaces:** Some schools do not have adequate staff support spaces like break rooms, collaboration spaces, and wellness spaces.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 27:
Limited educator and staff support

District dynamics like curriculum changes, staffing and hiring challenges, and turnover contribute to a lack of consistent staff support.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "I wish there was more teacher stability. Teachers are leaving in droves because they feel inadequate." – BPS Teacher

- "There was a shortage of ABA students [compared to teachers] and then the PE teacher should go. Then there was a PE teacher shortage and I had to go teach PE. It shouldn't be like that. The norms of the schools are not well understood. Kids do not follow them and it's because we are losing many teachers." – Retired BPS Teacher

- "There is a teacher shortage, we need more teachers and psychologists. There are not enough special education teachers." – BPS Staff Member

- "One of the big stresses is the open positions that cannot be filled." –BPS Teacher

- "Sometimes you struggle to get the material you need and the basics are missing. The school staff shouldn't be worried about that." – BPS Teacher

- "[There was a] constant changing of [course] materials inside the building. We went to the workshops, were trained to know what to do in a classroom. We did that for 5 years, it took 2 years for teachers to get a handle on the new material, then all of a sudden they yanked it out and we have new material to learn because they refused to order workbooks that cost money. You are not saving money if we have to download and copy…. We learn something, we change it. It would be better if all the elementary schools had the same material, we could have real data about which schools are working, doing okay, or needing help. Not just for kids, but for teachers too. It takes us a while to learn new material." – BPS Teacher

- "Stabilize school leadership, there should not be a revolving door. We need stability. We can't turn things over every two or three years." – Community Partner

- "We had a meeting with a lady from BPS, we [School Name] are below standard again. What I asked her was – 'are you going to stay or are you going to wait until we get a little bit higher [in our scores] and then run away?' If you're going to come into the school and help us build up just to snatch yourself away it will set people up to fail." – BPS Staff Member

- "Leadership at BPS schools must be stable and long-term to grow successful school communities. This is often not the case. For example, [School Name] has had 7 or 8 principals in 10 years. The last principal closed JROTC, the health program connected with the hospitals nearby, and other valuable programs for no apparent reason." – Community Partner

We heard that challenges like leadership changes, lack of resources, and changing curriculum impact educator and staff well-being and retention. Some educators shared that their schools are experiencing staff shortages and lack adequate support in the classroom, limiting supports for students who may benefit from extra support and smaller class sizes, such as students with disabilities and Pre-K students.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 28:
Facility impact on staff

Inadequate space in some schools creates challenges for educators and staff in providing programming and services.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "I have spent thousands of dollars on furniture and décor for the classroom to make it feel like an inviting environment. It shouldn't have to be that way. Because I went to BPS, I see the inequities that happen in the buildings, and it makes me feel really sad. The kids deserve way better and I am not going to sit and wait for somebody to provide." – BPS Teacher and Alum

- "I worked in sheltered English immersion. Finding a space was really hard, I found myself in copy spaces and students are distracted by noises or people. We have privacy issues. There is no assigned space or office, it limits our ability to serve students and build relationships. There are not a lot of office spaces, and I might have to take kids to the stairs." – BPS Teacher

- "The art teacher doesn't have a room. She can't prepare for the lesson before the students arrive because she has to change classrooms each time. She is carrying a rolling cart of supplies up 3 flights of stairs and washing things in the basement." – BPS Teacher

- "The science building is separate from the main building and it does not have any windows, it was a prep room changed to a classroom…. Teaching science is challenging and I have to set up and bring materials. I have to spend time running between different buildings and sometimes I use other teachers' rooms for my materials to save time." – BPS Teacher

- "No one has their own office including the front office and nurse. Anyone that walks through the office is exposed to sick children. Social workers and therapists, they all have shared spaces." – BPS Teacher

- "You might be able to turn the closet into a space, but the teacher might be already burned out and the space is not functioning and does affect the teacher." – BPS Parent

- "For the teacher, if 10 out of 40 minutes is spent moving furniture because the classrooms have to be shared, that time is spent not teaching." – BPS Parent

- "My office is in a closet. There was nothing in there when I arrived, I had to buy all of the things in my office. I had to make it a space where kids would feel comfortable." – BPS Staff Member

We heard that when spaces are lacking or insufficient, the job of educating students becomes more difficult. Educators and staff shared that in some schools, needed spaces are missing or inadequate, resulting in the use of hallways, stairwells, prep rooms, and carts, and at times limiting the services and programs provided.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 29:
Lack of staff spaces

Some schools do not have adequate access to staff support spaces like break rooms, collaboration spaces, and wellness spaces.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "The break room should not be in the copy room, or the bathroom. I don't want to inhale bathroom smells while eating. We need a wellness room and a break room for teachers, so you're not sharing the same space as other people making copies." – BPS Teacher

- "We [teachers] don't eat lunch in the lunch room – I choose to sit in the car, it doesn't feel like a home space. We don't connect with colleagues in ways that could if we had the space - we don't have a full break because of all of the traveling and this impacts how you perform." – BPS Teacher

- "The staff bathrooms have been locked and people can't get into them. As the building rep, my coworkers are asking me for assistance. We are the largest school and need to make sure staff have a place to decompress or have lunch." – BPS Staff Member

- "There is not enough staff space. There is not a space for lunch, to have a phone call, take a break. The office I do have does not have cell service and WIFI barely works." – BPS Staff Member

We heard that a lack of staff support spaces impacts staff well-being and relationship-building. Staff shared that some schools have missing or inadequate staff learning spaces, collaboration spaces, break rooms, and bathrooms. Staff want places where they can decompress, recharge, learn, and collaborate with one another.

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1.7 Experience of People With Disabilities

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

We asked students, staff, families, and community members "*If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?*" The quotes below illustrate patterns we heard.

Inclusive and accessible environments

- "Students like myself [deaf students] need to be special, see each other sign and communicate without all those hallways and/barriers." – Community Partner

- "The most interesting thing about BPS area is where the interpreters should sit. I get asked that all the time, it depends on the space, the classroom, and where student sits as opposed to instructors. With new classrooms we need to make sure that the architecture is equitable for accommodations any student may need." – Community Partner

- "Adjustable lighting is fantastic. It would be even better if you could control the lighting over your desk. Glare is also a huge issue, so being able to pull the shades to make whiteboards more accessible." – Community Partner

Accessible furniture, equipment, and technology

- "I know they give out Chromebooks to level out the playing field. I know they are old, but if we are looking at access to the educational curriculum, choosing technology that already has built in accessibility features like Apple products. Stuff that's compatible with screen readers or other types of technology." – Community Partner

- "When you are looking at neuro-divergent populations, flexible seating options for everyone. Like if you want to sit on a ball chair you could. Personally in my classroom, there are a couple kids that sit on the windowsill, looking at diversity in seating and doing it so it's open to everyone so no one is singled out." – BPS Teacher

Inclusive programs

- "If I look back to my own high school years, one thing I felt was not part of inclusion is that high school didn't have American sign language classes. I really encourage ASL to be offered as a foreign language. It would make a difference for those who are deaf and hard of hearing." – Community Partner

Inclusive and supportive school communities

- "I think just building upon the community aspect in a school. Everyone helps each other regardless of disability or whatever circumstance you have. Foster the idea of disability being a part of the human experience within children without disabilities, so they can foster their friendship." - Community Partner

Building life skills

- "[School Name] had a gardening club for kids getting ready to transition into certificate programs or out of high school. It created a good connection within the school, getting hands-on learning experience but also social experience. Focusing on that transition process is critical to make sure kids are ready when they graduate. Things like having a washer/dryer would help as they transition out of school." – Community Partner

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Students, families, staff, and community expressed multiple things that are working well for people with disabilities, including inclusive programs and partnerships.

- "I love going to [School Name]. It's a special place because it's as close to a model of inclusion as we get. 40% of the students have disabilities, when you're walking around the hallways can see people of all abilities engaging with their peers. Thinking about hallways during passing periods when all the kids flood into the hall, watching them all interact with each other. It seems like genuine, real connections across disability in ways we don't often get until we're adults to experience that kind of community. Feels good to be in a place where there are lots of kids of visible and invisible disabilities. Comforting to be in a place where disabled folks are almost half of the population as opposed to a really small group." – Community Partner

- "In Special Olympics we call unified a 50/50 ratio between students with and without intellectual disabilities. This is what's needed to build those relationships. Once they are in that setting, it's an equal playing field, [they are] being students together as equals without labeling it. That's our definition of unified. – Community Partner

- "We have an example of one student who is a wheelchair user who has been welcomed by the athletic department in [School Name]. The coach is engaged and has training to be more inclusive. The athletic department has been very supportive of this one boy racing his wheelchair in the marathons. It's working fantastic. There are challenges that remain, but the reason it works is because leadership at school level and District level are both behind the student to make it work." – Community Partner

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

These statements summarize what we heard from community members about the problems they experience in Boston Public Schools. The quotes included in the following pages illustrate a richer picture of the impact of these problems.

30. **Inconsistent access to inclusive programs and supports:** Students with disabilities do not always have access to an inclusive and high-quality education with appropriate supports.

31. **Lack of training and staff to support students with disabilities:** Teachers and other school-based staff do not always have sufficient training or support to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families.

32. **Inconsistent systems of support:** Existing IEP, transportation, and other systems do not consistently meet the needs of students with disabilities, placing the burden on students and families to advocate for their needs.

33. **Lack of agency:** Students with disabilities are not always given a voice in decisions about their own educational experience.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 30:
Inconsistent access to inclusive programs and supports

Students with disabilities do not always have access to inclusive and high-quality education and appropriate supports in the least restrictive environment.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "The older kid is on an IEP which creates complexity and you have to be advocating.... It has been a hard experience trusting the systems. They don't have services at exam school for students with his [learning] disability, and we don't have a lot of teachers that are dual certified. His sister finally came to the same school after years of being at different schools, they had to be separated as they had to go to different schools." – BPS Parent

- "The kids I work with are blind, have a physical disability, and may be wheelchair users. They are marginalized in PE classes. Most of them are not in adaptive PE classes because they don't fit that profile of students, so they are in typical PE classes and the instruction during those classes is not inclusive. They have to sit on the sidelines or get dismissed or go to study hall instead of playing the sports. The same is true for co-curricular or extracurricular sports programs. In most cases, kids with these types of disabilities are not able to participate because coaches are not trained in that area. Facilities and equipment are not provided to make it a successful experience." – Community Partner

- "I grew up in South Boston, I was in high school when I became disabled. At the time, there was only one school that was wheelchair accessible. It was not in my neighborhood, and I didn't know anyone, so it was very isolating." – Community Partner

- "My son is on IEP, he is truly supported sometimes but going toward older years that's not the case. I don't know what the challenges are, [maybe a] lack of support staff. Since last year, I have been advocating with countless meetings with leadership at [School Name] and some years are great, some not." – BPS Parent

We heard that students with disabilities are not always provided with an inclusive, high-quality educational experience that meets their needs. Some courses and programs are not designed to provide access to students with disabilities, and parents and caregivers must advocate to ensure that students' needs are met at school.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 31:
Lack of training and staff to support students with disabilities

Teachers and other school-based staff do not always have sufficient training or support to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "As a staff person with a disability working at school, people don't always know what isn't part of their lived experience…. Accessibility is intuitive to me because I live with a disability, but even in the education field there are things teachers don't think about. I think a lot of it needs to come from staff professional development and diversity in hiring." – Teacher & Community Advocate

- "The [School Name] needs more staff, both in cleaning [maintenance] and in teaching, nurses, therapists [psychologists]. My son is fed through a gastric tube, he needs a nurse for this. So sometimes I send his food to the school and he doesn't get to eat it all because they say the time is too short and they need to take care of more students. I think that it's necessary to have more qualified people so they can work on this. [The students] cry trying to express themselves because they are non-verbal. There has to be someone that understands." – BPS Parent

- "Teachers have a lot of students and are not reading the IEPs or 504 plans. They don't know who is in their classrooms. [They are] not knowingly violating but not reading beforehand…. If they don't read the 504 plan, it can cause some problems in addition to distrust between student and teacher." – BPS Parent

- "My child, who's autistic. She needs help and [the staff] can't see this because [my child is] of color. At the Kilmer, there was trust, the staff saw [children with autism], but my child at the Channing, she's not getting [the support she needs]." – BPS Parent

We heard that limited training, classroom support, and specialized staff can at times impact the ability to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families. We also heard staff do not always receive the support needed to be successful.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 32:

Inconsistent systems of support

Existing IEP, transportation, and other systems do not consistently meet the needs of students with disabilities, placing the burden on students and families to advocate for their needs.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "[When they have meetings about kids on IEPs,] they're eliminating ABA therapists from these meetings. It costs BPS more money, and parents don't know what is owed to their kids. Educators who care are pushed out to other districts. I have not had one BCBA consult this year, and it's a part of her IEP. It's part of her IEP to have this and they aren't providing it. I have to hire someone on my own for $180 an hour, and lots of parents can't do that." – BPS Parent

- "I know all kids' parents don't have the time to fight [for their kids' education], day in and day out." – BPS Parent

- "One thing we hear a lot about is transportation for [Special Education] students like lifts being broken, drivers not being trained, difficulties with schedules. Parents can't handle this if kids need special help, so this trickles down onto the family." – Community Partner

- "As a BPS grad and parent of a child with autism, I had to be in their face to get him what he needed, in the most positive way. I held them accountable. They saw me as that advocate parent and things went better as he got older." – BPS Parent and Alum

- "My daughter is autistic, and I can't put her at a private school because of her diagnosis, and the District didn't help her. She was picking her hair and going bald, and they gave her a hat. A hat! Now she's at [School Name], but she doesn't have everything she needs because of the lack of ABAs and the lack of speech therapists.... They have to give me compensatory hours because I have to spend so much time fighting for her." – BPS Parent

We heard that there are inconsistent resources for students with disabilities, including transportation and IEP evaluation challenges and lack of specialized staff. Families shared that they must sometimes spend their time and resources advocating for their children because they cannot always trust that their needs or the required services and supports will be provided.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 33:

Lack of agency

Students with disabilities are not always given a voice in decisions about their own educational experience.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "Right now I am working with a group of seniors [for a Teach Disability History campaign]. Their first question was 'what is a disability?' Students who have been labeled as disabled for the majority of their entire schooling have never had a conversation about what that actually means. They had a lot of other questions... [such as] 'who are the other adults that sit with us in our classrooms (meaning paraprofessionals)?'" – Community Advocate

- "Often people with disabilities aren't involved in the IEP meetings just the parents, teachers and by the time they are 18, they finally have a voice to say something. They tend to forget to ask the person, the main character! We need to think about the child, the student, and what is appropriate for them to be involved in." – Community Partner with a Disability

We heard that students with disabilities are not consistently empowered to weigh in on or be informed about their educational experience and the supports provided.

1.8 Multilingual & Multicultural Experience

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

We asked students, staff, families, and community members "*If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?*" The quotes below illustrate patterns we heard.

Multilingual and multicultural educational experience for all students

- "A city that represents so many different people across the globe and prides ourselves in being an international City should support language learning. It helps with cultural competency and literacy." – BPS Language Teacher

- "More cultural classes. It's [about] what can be gained from learning about different cultures." – BPS Parent

- "In school most reading is only in English, but there should be options in other languages. There should be after school programs for other languages." – BPS Staff

Welcoming, culturally responsive spaces and environments

- "Other schools have student work on the walls and we have old dead white guys who gave money. I would like to have standards so that culture and warmth are expressed." – BPS Student

- "I'd like to see more multicultural space. Maybe we could hang things for each culture represented in the school. Like the Chinese Zodiac, for example, and could show each animal, to make a small introduction for community and for peer education. After a few months, these could change. Maybe this could be in a waiting room for people to learn as they wait." – BPS Interpreter

Representative, culturally responsive teachers and staff

- "We need more role models to be in school, like [being able to say] I was in the same situation that you were in. You gotta make the kids feel better to be able to express themselves." – BPS Student

- "High quality professional development staff. Especially multilingual teachers. Every classroom has at least one English language learner. We need our teachers to have more training to support them." – BPS Staff Member

- "When kids have the opportunity to be bilingual, trilingual, that's amazing - it helps them advance in life. Having more diverse teachers would be amazing. A Hispanic or Latina teacher — my kid has never seen that. With a principal who looks like them. That's something that we should improve. We should increase diversity in the schools." – BPS Parent

Culturally inclusive family communications and engagement

- "We should really emphasize that not all families fit into the mold. How do we take time to learn about other families' cultures to help navigate the system? If you know their values, you are able to support them and connect with them. When a student is falling behind, find out what their values are. Instead of just asking why the student is late for school, try to look deeper into why. Freedom to learn from different cultures, learning that other countries value education." – BPS Parent

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WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Students, families, staff, and community expressed multiple things that are working well about facilities, including appreciation for renovated schools and updated spaces.

- "As a second language speaker, I'm very happy, because the school helps my daughter to improve her English. As a second language speaker, it's hard for me to help my daughter." – BPS Parent

- "Since we're so heavily Latino around here it is great to see the great things we are making available for those families. I wish there were more and more often being done in home languages. I attended a meeting in Spanish and entered the English waiting room and it was amazing to see parents were more confident asking questions and learning because it was made accessible in their language." – BPS Parent

- "I love BPS, we had the opportunity to put him [my son] in a 95% paid private institution. He didn't want to go because he wants to be around people and teachers who look like me…. He wanted to be part of this community." – BPS Parent and Alum

- "I came to America when I was 8. [Teacher Name] walked us through the process. She spoke Haitian-creole, helped us in certain classes, and would pull us out. She did English lessons and supported parents." – BPS Alum

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

These statements summarize what we heard from community members about the problems they experience in Boston Public Schools. The quotes included in the following pages illustrate a richer picture of the impact of these problems.

34. **Inadequate support for multilingual students:** Multilingual students often do not have access to rigorous academic programs that meet their diverse needs.

35. **Lack of representative, diverse, and culturally competent staff:** The demographic makeup of teachers and staff does not fully reflect the diversity of students in BPS.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 34:
Inadequate support for multilingual students

Multilingual students often do not have access to rigorous academic programs that meet their diverse needs.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "Very few of our schools have language programs. They start languages in elementary and middle school [outside BPS], and we don't have that opportunity in our schools, even high schools. It speaks to equity and cultural competency." - BPS Teacher

- "I don't see my culture represented [in language courses]. We only have Spanish and I'm ok with Spanish, but since I left Haiti, my Haitian has gotten worse." – BPS Student

- "School and teachers put a lot of focus on communicating to non-English speakers like me in their native language causing me to not learn English, which has been my goal. My school would rather communicate to me always in Spanish as opposed to teaching me English." – BPS Student

- "We work with a lot of new arrivals who are new English learners. That's the biggest issue for the children of our clients: learning English and being able to participate in their classes. If you're a new arrival and you're 13, that's not an option to go to [School Name] for dual language. For parents, that's a big concern – if their kids are actually learning and understanding what's being said." – Community Partner

- "Our students love our vocational classes, but at the same time they need to be supported. Language support – a lot of our students speak many other languages besides English. It is difficult for them to try to acquire a language while trying to acquire a vocational skill. It can be frustrating and overwhelming for many of our students for most of the time." – BPS Teacher, Parent, and Alum

- "At our last quarterly meeting with the Superintendent, I asked about why exam schools don't accept submitting native language testing scores. [The response was that] at exam schools they wouldn't be able to keep up…." – BPS Parent

- "I speak Arabic with [my son at home], so I seek support for more English in his school. More English, with other kids. They [the students he's currently with] have English, but he [needs more exposure to immersion English throughout the day]. They're [native English speakers] a different level. [My son is in a program with] mostly Spanish speakers in his classes. The language is just different." – BPS Parent

- "My grandson was failed because he was put in an ESL classroom from the 1st grade to the 11th grade when we actually got him switched out. They assumed from his last name that he did not speak English…. They were making assumptions about children based on personal bias. My grandson knew how to read before he was in school. He believed something was wrong with him because he didn't speak Spanish and they assumed he did." – BPS Grandparent

We heard that multilingual students do not always have access to rigorous academic courses. Some students shared that they are not receiving sufficient language support at their level of fluency. We heard a desire to have access to learning in native languages as well as developing English fluency. We also heard multiple examples of multilingual students and students of color being placed in classes misaligned to their ability and needs.

PROBLEM STATEMENT 35:
Lack of representative, diverse, and culturally competent staff

The demographic makeup of teachers and staff does not fully reflect the diversity of students in BPS.

WHAT WAS SAID:

- "More languages. We need more teachers that are diverse, we have 60 teachers [at our school] and only three are Black." – BPS Student

- "I don't think [staff] can help the kids in this school, since they don't understand where you're coming from… you can't speak to me about anything I experience." – BPS Student

- "We need more Black women to talk to, or Black men to talk to." – BPS Student

- "My child who's autistic, she needs help, and [the staff] can't see this because [my child is] of color." – BPS Parent

- "My oldest son faced a lot of hard situations with some racist and discriminatory teachers. Very difficult situations that he faced from a very young age and fell silent due to reprisals from mediocre teachers. We need more teachers in BPS whose vocation/calling is teaching, that behave like humans, with empathy and love for the students and their families." – BPS Parent

- "[We need more] mentoring for young African boys, they don't have enough resources and programs for them. Sometimes they want to pop to an older brother or uncle. This needs to happen outside of school and inside school." – Community Member

- "We started talking [in class] about Ed Rogers, founder of the independent living movement. Students made very personal connections with him depending on their interests…. I can already see peoples' ideas about the future and what's possible for them shifting. Growing a sense of pride. That's very exciting, and also upsetting that this is the first time they're having these conversations, when they're 18." – Special Education Teacher & Advocate

- "They always say they don't have a Spanish-speaking psychologist or social worker who can work with our kids in their social emotional dilemmas. It is troubling that for almost 2 decades they keep saying the same thing. It is hard for me to believe they can't find a few Hispanic therapists who can help our students. Our kids have all kinds of trauma, they are experiencing, especially with COVID, their mental health issues are increasing. For them not having the services they need it impacts their learning." – BPS Staff Member

We heard that students do not always have access to staff members who reflect their lived experience, culture, or native language. Participants shared a lack of diverse and culturally competent staff may result in biases in the classroom and makes it harder for students to seek support and find trusted adults with whom they can relate. Community members noted the need to hire representative staff in addition to providing professional development to support the development of culturally competent and inclusive practices.

APPENDIX 2: LISTENING SESSIONS

2.1 Listening Sessions Description

WHAT ARE LISTENING SESSIONS?

Listening sessions are engagements centering deep listening to understand community members' lived experience and expertise related to Boston Public Schools. Through small-group conversations, community members shared what was working, what was not working, and their ideas for the future.

WHY DID WE CONDUCT LISTENING SESSIONS?

Community members, students, families, and staff are experts when it comes to their own experiences. The design, planning, and investment strategies recommended by the Study must be driven by community expertise.

WHO ORGANIZED THE LISTENING SESSIONS?

Listening sessions were organized and facilitated by a collaborative group of City of Boston and BPS staff with support from DLR Group and St. Fleur Communications, the consultant team supporting the Study.

WHAT DID THE SESSIONS LOOK LIKE?

The events were both in-person and virtual. They included 7 public sessions (two of which were conducted in Spanish), and 14 community focus groups. The focus groups were organized in partnership with community organizations and were designed to reach specific groups highlighted in the OAG Policy. Other than the language-specific sessions, all public sessions offered interpretation services in the top BPS languages. All in-person public sessions also offered free childcare services.

The format and content of the sessions were informed by what we heard during two engagement workshops held in December 2022 with community partners. During those workshops, we heard that many community members did not trust the District to produce tangible results, and that past planning processes had not delivered meaningful change. We also heard the desire to meet community members where they are and focus on the voices of those who had not been centered in past planning efforts.

These insights informed our engagement approach during the listening sessions. In response, we focused on reaching people highlighted in the OAG Policy, provided support like childcare, and interpretation services to make the opportunity to participate more inclusive, and accessible, and held sessions in locations close to the community members we were trying to reach. For more details, see Appendix 2.3: Data Methodology for Listening Sessions.

2.2 Listening Sessions Agenda

We used the following agenda to facilitate all listening sessions with slight modifications to language based on participant groups.

1. **Welcome/participant: entry survey and share demographic information** (pre-workshop)

2. **Opening: presentation and warm-up activity** (15 min)

   a. Interpretation service set-up
   b. Introductions
   c. What is the process? Why are you here?
   d. Check-in and warm-up: turn and talk

3. **Activity: understanding student conditions of success** (40 min)
   a. Facilitator sets up activity and guiding questions
   b. Reflect on current school experience: small group discussion
      i. How has [your/their] experience been in school?
      ii. What do you feel is NOT working for your child(ren)? What is challenging or frustrating about [your/their] experience in school?
      iii. What is going well about your [child's] experience in school? What are [you/they] excited about?
      iv. What programs or resources does your school NOT currently have but you wish your school did? What programs or resources DOES your school have that you appreciate and would like to keep?

4. **Brainstorming activity: future mindset** (15 min)
   a. Brainstorm activities for future school experience: whole group
   b. Reflect on future school experience: small group discussion
      i. If your child(ren)'s school experience gave them everything they needed to be successful, what would that look like?

5. **Closing presentation** (15 min)
   a. Acknowledge: Pausing for a moment of gratitude.
   b. What's next? Detailed project timeline
   c. Provide QR code for Exit Survey/Closing Reflections:
      i. What worked today? What could be improved?
      ii. Who is missing from the conversation that we should reach out to? Who else should we engage?

2.3 Data Methodology for Listening Sessions

HOW DID WE IDENTIFY FOCUSED GROUPS FOR ENGAGEMENT?

In addition to hosting public listening sessions, we prioritized outreach efforts towards the groups identified in the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Policy to center voices that had been underrepresented in past planning processes. DLR Group used data analysis to identify areas within the City with the highest concentration of these groups and confirm locations that could best reach these groups. The data analysis centered on two key areas: **students and neighborhoods.**

STARTING WITH STUDENTS

First, we looked at data about where students live across the District, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, language status, economic status, and disability status, to identify areas with the highest concentrations of these student groups.

We mapped each student's address enrolled in the 2021-2022 school year. Then, we grouped students based on the key student groups identified in OAG Policy:

- Black/African American
- Latina/o/x
- Asian
- Multiracial/Other

- English Learners
- Students of low socio-economic status (SES)
- Students with an IEP

AGGREGATING STUDENT DATA BY NEIGHBORHOOD

We summarized the student data by census tracts within neighborhoods to protect student identities and align with our neighborhood-based engagement strategies. Census tracts are created by the Census Bureau to tabulate and share census and other population survey data. Census tracts are often used as proxies for small neighborhoods, as they cover areas home to between 1,200 and 8,000 people.

For each student group listed above, we calculated the number of students living within each census tract. Census tracts with less than 30 total students were excluded; we wanted to identify tracts with the highest concentrations of students across the District to be able to reach the most students and families in each listening session.

We identified census tracts with the highest quintile (top 20th percentile) of students by race/ethnicity group citywide, as well as those with the highest quintiles of intersecting identity groups included in OAG Policy. Quintiles were used so that we could compare the relative concentration across groups even when the count or percentage of each group differed; groups with a higher enrollment in BPS overall would not eclipse groups with a smaller enrollment. Census tracts with less than 10 students in these highest quintile groups were excluded according to state laws and BPS policy to safeguard student identities.

We produced maps showing the highest quintiles of each racial/ethnic group and identity group for each neighborhood. While some of these groups were correlated to one another, the maps show the co-location of all intersecting student identity groups included in OAG Policy to highlight the overlaps within each neighborhood more expansively. Since state laws and BPS policy prohibit sharing student location data with fewer than 10 students, and no census tracts were home to more than 10 Indigenous students, this report does not include maps showing Indigenous students. However, Indigenous students, families, and communities were included in the engagement outreach process.

Figure 2.3.1: Highest Quintiles of Asian Students and Intersecting OAG Policy Groups

Asian Students
& Identity Groups

///// Highest Quintile of The Percentage of Asian Student Residents Overall

Highest Quintile of The Percentage of Student Residents Who Are Asian and:

On An Individualized Education Plan x English Language Learners x Low Socio-Economic Status

On An Individualized Education Plan x English Language Learners

On An Individualized Education Plan x Low Socio-Economic Status

English Language Learners x Low Socio-Economic Status

On An Individualized Education Plan

English Language Learners

Low Socio-Economic Status

Boston Public Schools, City of Boston

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Figure 2.3.2: Highest Quintiles of Black/African American Students and Intersecting OAG Policy Groups
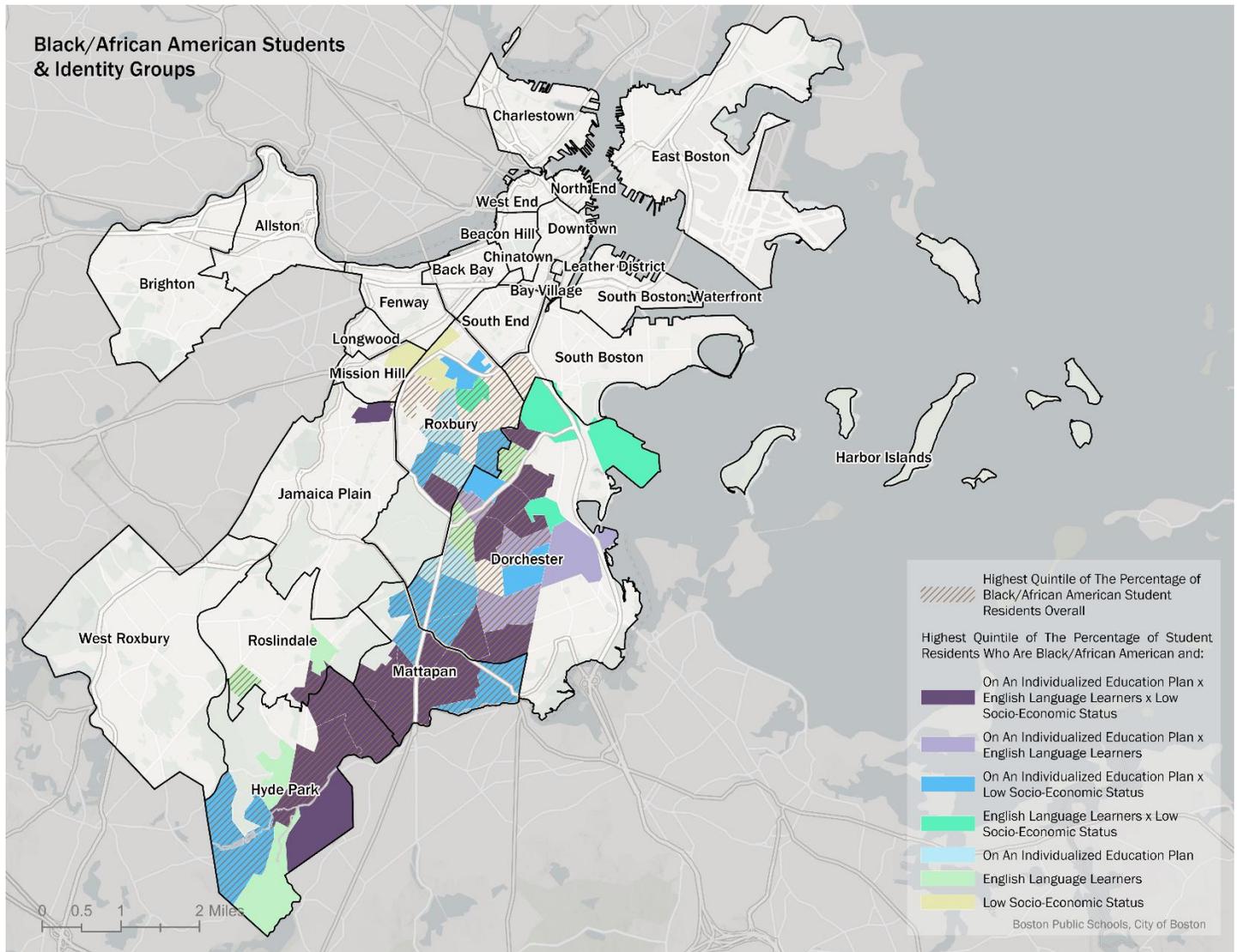
Figure 2.3.3: Highest Quintiles of Latina/o/x Students and Intersecting OAG Policy Groups

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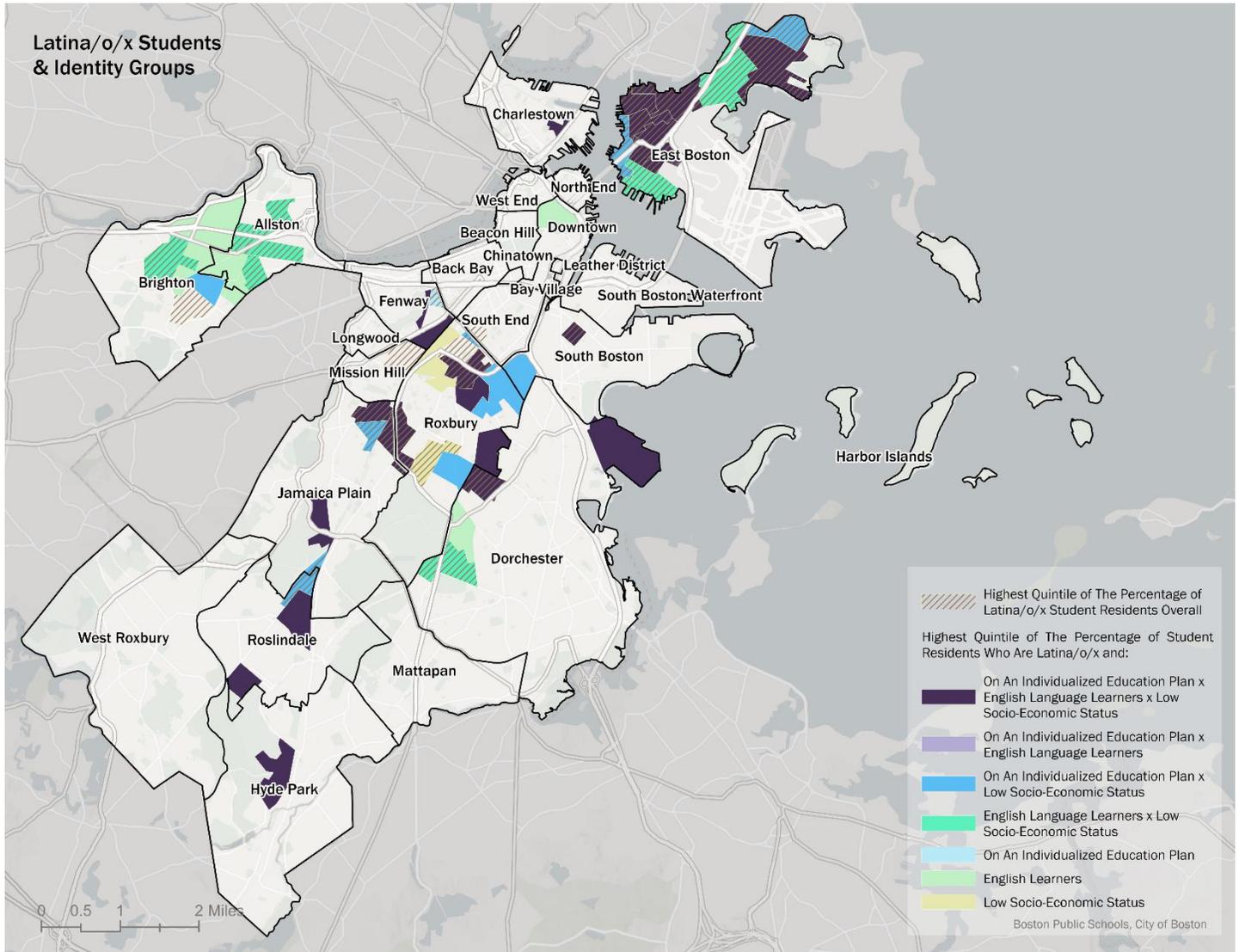
Figure 2.3.4: Highest Quintiles of Multiracial/Other Students and Intersecting OAG Policy Groups
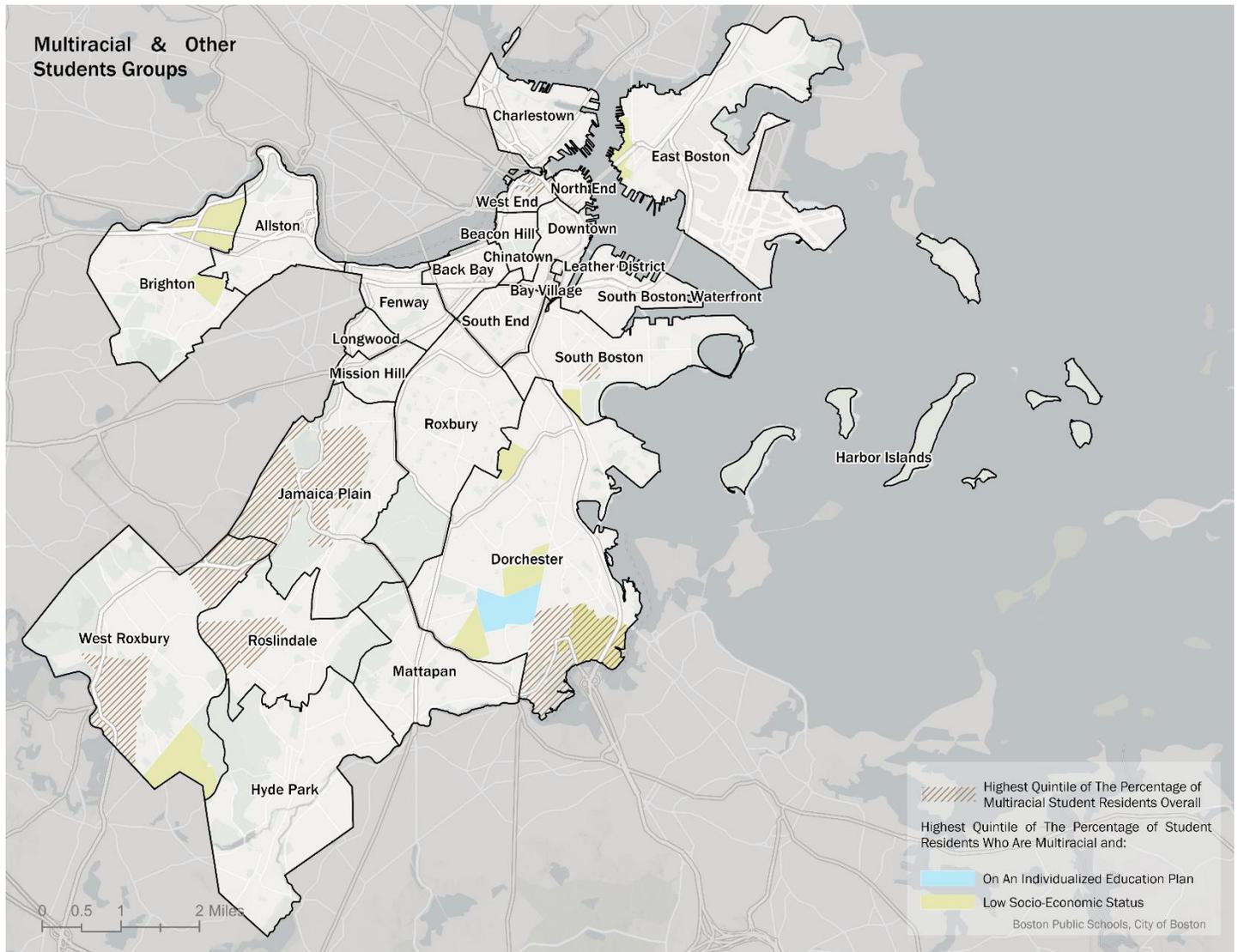
REACHING OUT TO PARTNERS

We used the above maps to schedule listening sessions and focus groups in strategic locations. Each in-person session was located near a high concentration of at least one identified group in the OAG Policy. We then reached out to nearby BPS schools, libraries, community centers, housing developments, community organizations, and relevant neighborhood liaisons through the Office of Neighborhood Services to invite residents and BPS stakeholders to attend the listening session.

Figure 2.3.6: In-Person Listening Session Locations and Highest Quintiles of Asian Student Groups
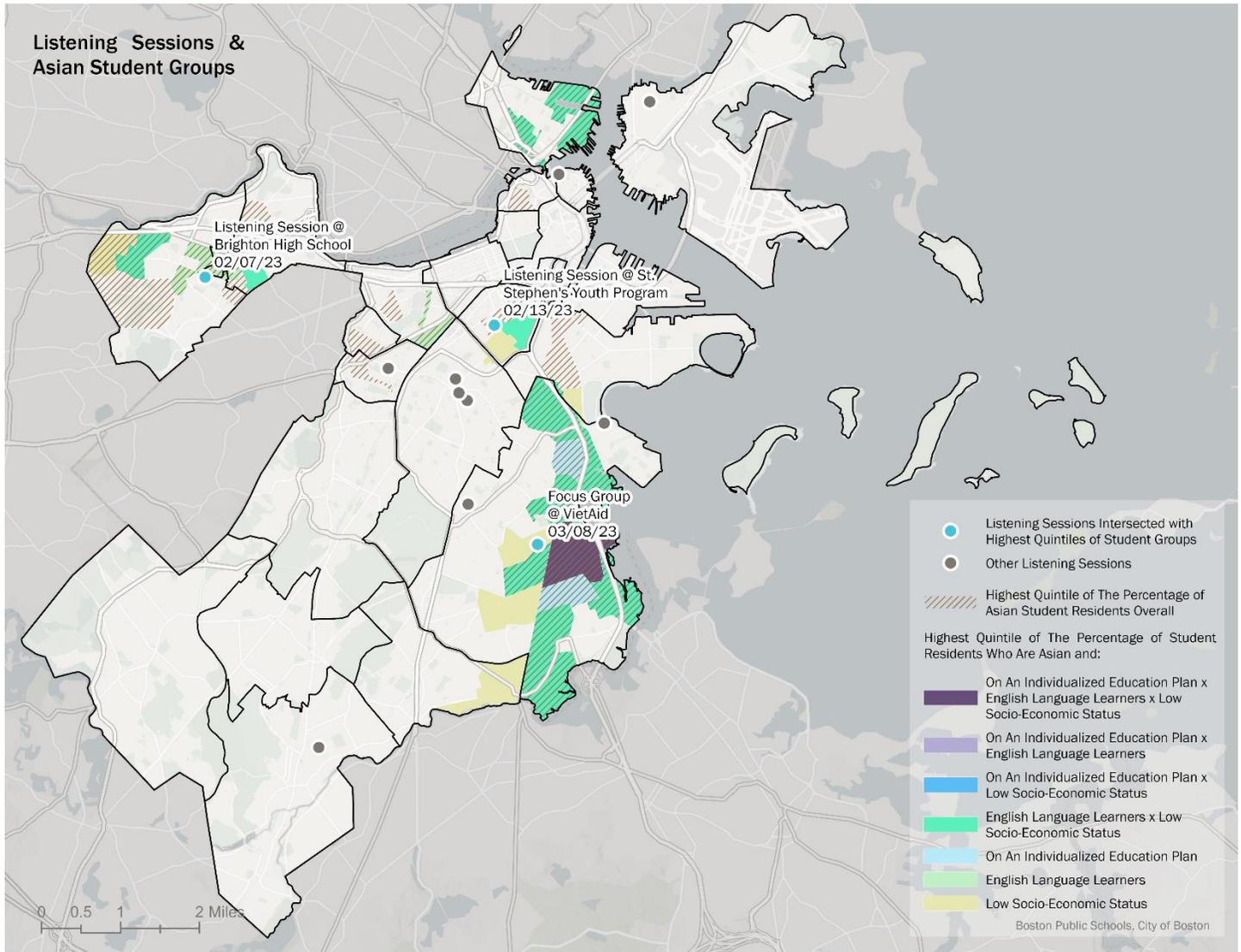
Figure 2.3.7: In-Person Listening Session Locations and Highest Quintiles of Black/African American Student Groups
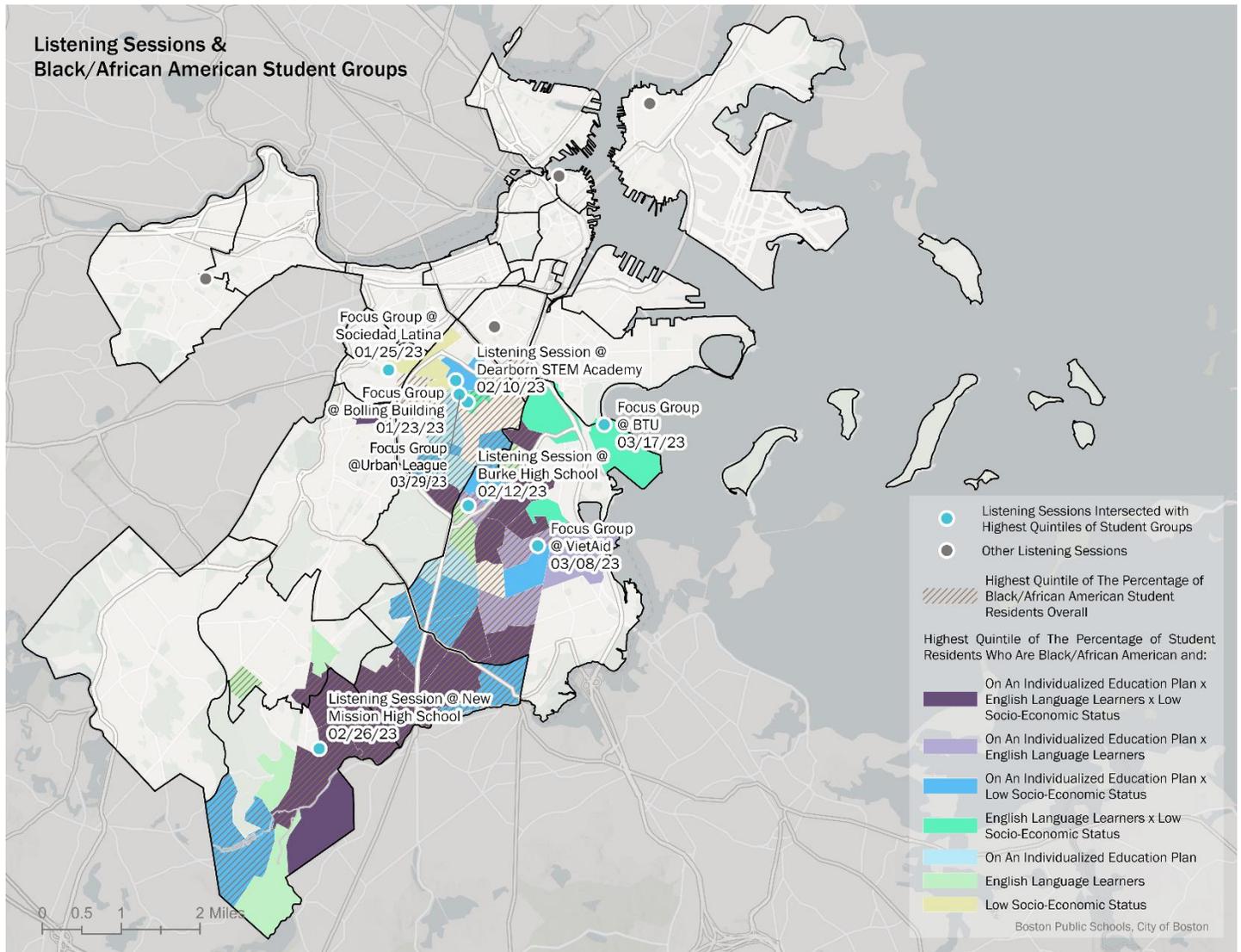
Figure 2.3.8: In-Person Listening Session Locations and Highest Quintiles of Latina/o/x Student Groups
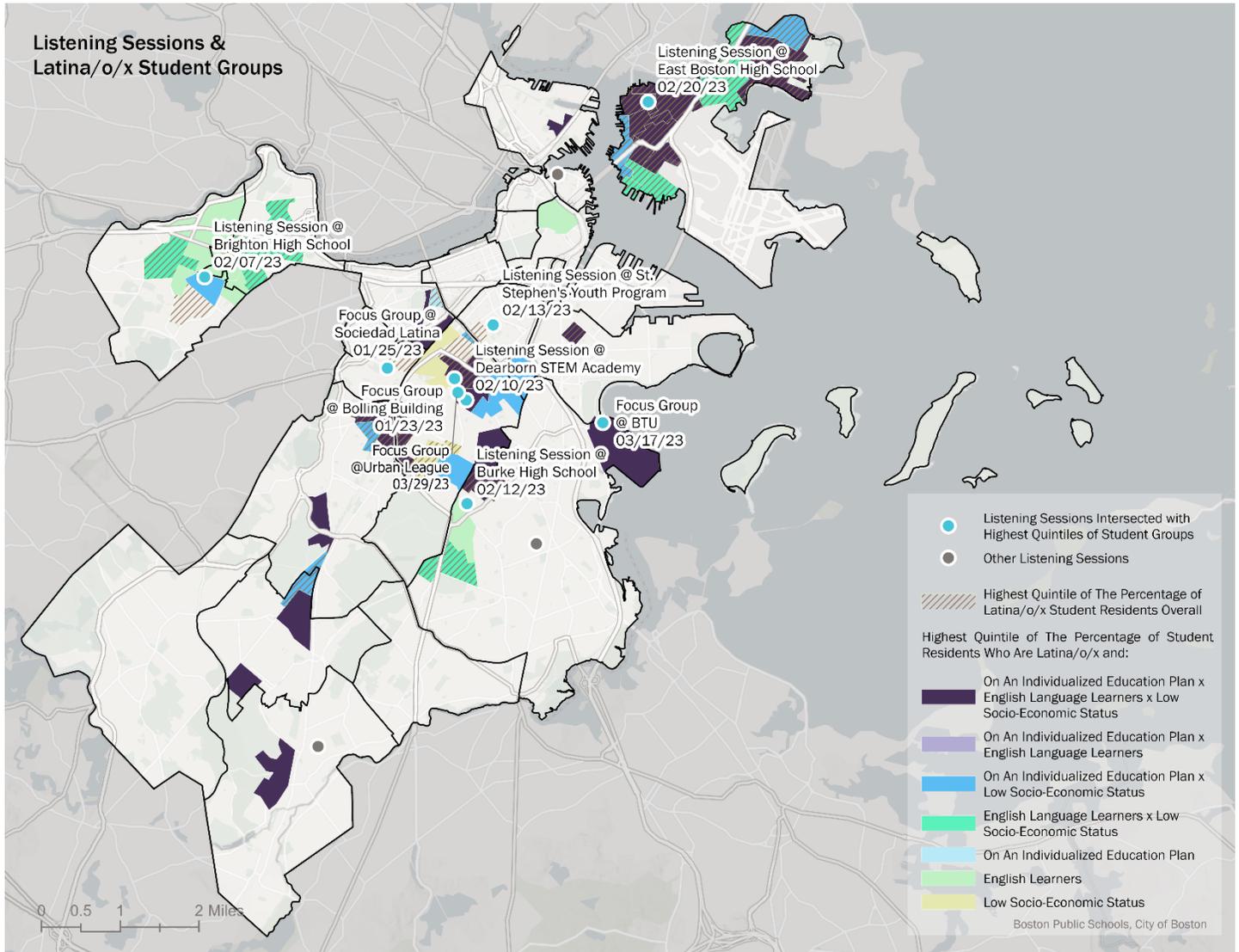
Figure 2.3.9: In-Person Listening Session Locations and Highest Quintiles of Multiracial & Other Student Groups
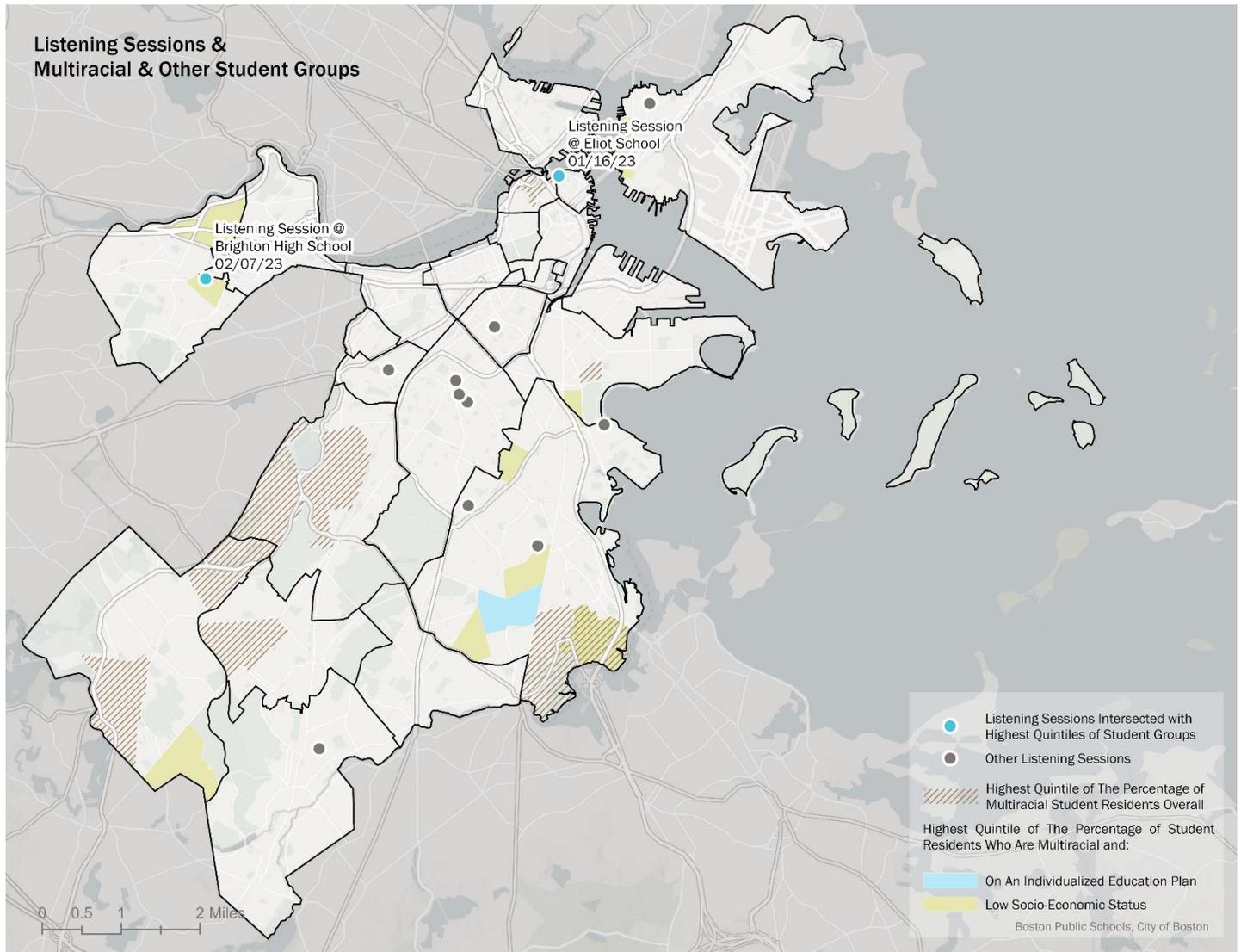
TRACKING LISTENING SESSION ATTENDANCE AND FILLING THE GAPS

At the listening sessions, attendees were asked to fill out an anonymous survey to share their neighborhood of residence, race/ethnicity, disability status, language status, relationship to BPS, and country of origin. The survey was completed by 49.9% of participants. See Appendix 2.5 Participant Demographics for a breakdown of who attended the listening sessions.

With the demographic data, we tracked which groups were represented at each listening session. We then identified intersections of student groups identified in OAG Policy and under-engaged neighborhoods. We mapped areas with a high percentile of student groups who we did not reach with our initial engagement strategies. Using these maps, we identified opportunities to further engage these groups, both through intentional outreach related to upcoming public listening sessions, and scheduling of additional community focus groups.

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2.4 Listening Session Types and Event List

The listening phase included both **public listening sessions** and **community focus groups**. Both session types followed the same agenda.

PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS

This approach consisted of public sessions open to anyone in the community. These sessions were held both in-person and online.

	Session Location and Name	Date	Format
1	Eliot School	1/17/2023	In-person
2	Brighton High School	2/8/2023	In-person
3	Dearborn STEM Academy and Faith-based Leaders	2/11/2023	In-person
4	East Boston High School (en español)	2/21/2023	In-person
5	New Mission High School	2/27/2023	In-person
6	Citywide Virtual Session	3/2/2023	Virtual
7	Citywide Virtual Session (en español)	3/6/2023	Virtual

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP

This approach consisted of community focus groups hosted in partnership with community organizations and City of Boston departments, all designed to reach the voices of those who have been historically underserved. These partners have existing connections to OAG Policy groups we sought to reach in our early engagement processes.

	Session Name	Date	Format
1	Families of Young Children hosted by the Office of Early Childhood	1/11/2023	Virtual
2	Boston Student Advisory Council	1/24/2023	In-person
3	Sociedad Latina Youth Leaders	1/26/2023	In-person
4	Disability Community, hosted by the Disabilities Commission	1/31/2023	Virtual
5	Burke High School	2/13/2023	In-person
6	St. Stephen's Youth Programs	2/14/2023	In-person
7	Haitian English Learner Advisory Committee*	2/16/2023	Virtual
8	Virtual session hosted by SchoolFacts Boston, Union Capital Boston, The Teachers' Lounge, and the Office of Black Male Advancement	2/27/2023	Virtual
9	Chinatown community, hosted by the Office of Neighborhood Services and the Josiah Quincy Elementary School	2/28/2023	Virtual
10	Vietnamese community, hosted by VietAID and the Office of Neighborhood Services	3/9/2023	In-person
11	BTU Session 1	3/16/2023	Virtual
12	BTU Session 2: AFT/BTU Education Policy Program	3/18/2023	In-person + Virtual
13	BTU Session 3	3/21/2023	Virtual
14	Unhoused community, hosted by Boston's Higher Ground and Union Capital Boston	3/29/2023	Virtual
15	Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts	3/30/2023	In-person

Note: the Haitian English Learner Advisory Committee meeting was a presentation without comments captured, so is not included in the total count of listening sessions across this document.

2.5 Participant Demographics

As referenced in Appendix 2.3, we created an entry survey to track the demographics of listening session participants.* 266 of the 520 total participants recorded in the transcripts provided demographic information through the entry survey. Therefore, this section does not reflect everyone who participated in listening sessions, only those who self-reported their demographic information. Not all OAG Policy groups were tracked in the survey; the survey did not ask about socioeconomic status.

HOW WELL DID WE REACH INTENDED GROUPS?

Through the listening sessions, we did reach our goal for many of the groups identified: speaking to at least 6 people representing an OAG Policy Group within a given neighborhood. Note that the survey data used to track participants reflects only about half of the total participants, so we may have met or exceeded some of the goals marked as not met. The table below illustrates whether goals were met for each group.

Based on our analysis in Appendix 2.3, we intended to hear from at least 6 people[1] representing an OAG Policy group within a given neighborhood if there was a high concentration of BPS students from that group residing in that neighborhood. Note that only about half of participants provided their demographic information, so we may have met or exceeded some of the goals marked as not met.

The groups for which we DID reach our goals (based on data from those who signed in) include:

- Black/African American people in Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan
- Latina/o/x people in Roxbury and East Boston
- Asian people in Dorchester
- People with disabilities in Dorchester
- Multilingual people in East Boston and Brighton

The groups for which we DID NOT reach our goals include:

- Latina/o/x people in Jamaica Plain
- Asian people in Allston and Brighton
- Multiracial people in Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Brighton
- People with disabilities in Roxbury, Mattapan, and South Boston
- Multilingual people in Allston

Groups and neighborhoods met in our initial goals will continue to be engaged throughout the Study process. We are also reviewing and revising our past outreach strategies to better reach groups for whom we did not reach our goals in future engagement phases.

The following maps, graphs, and tables show the demographics of participants who completed the entry survey sheet.

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[1] The following sources recommend reaching at least 6 members of a given group for qualitative research efforts:
Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How Many Interviews Are Enough?: An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability. Field Methods, 18(1), 59-82.
Guest, G., & Macqueen, K. (2008). Handbook for Team-Based Qualitative Research.
Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1999). Designing qualitative research (4th ed.).

Figure 2.5.1: Map of Participants by Neighborhood of Residence
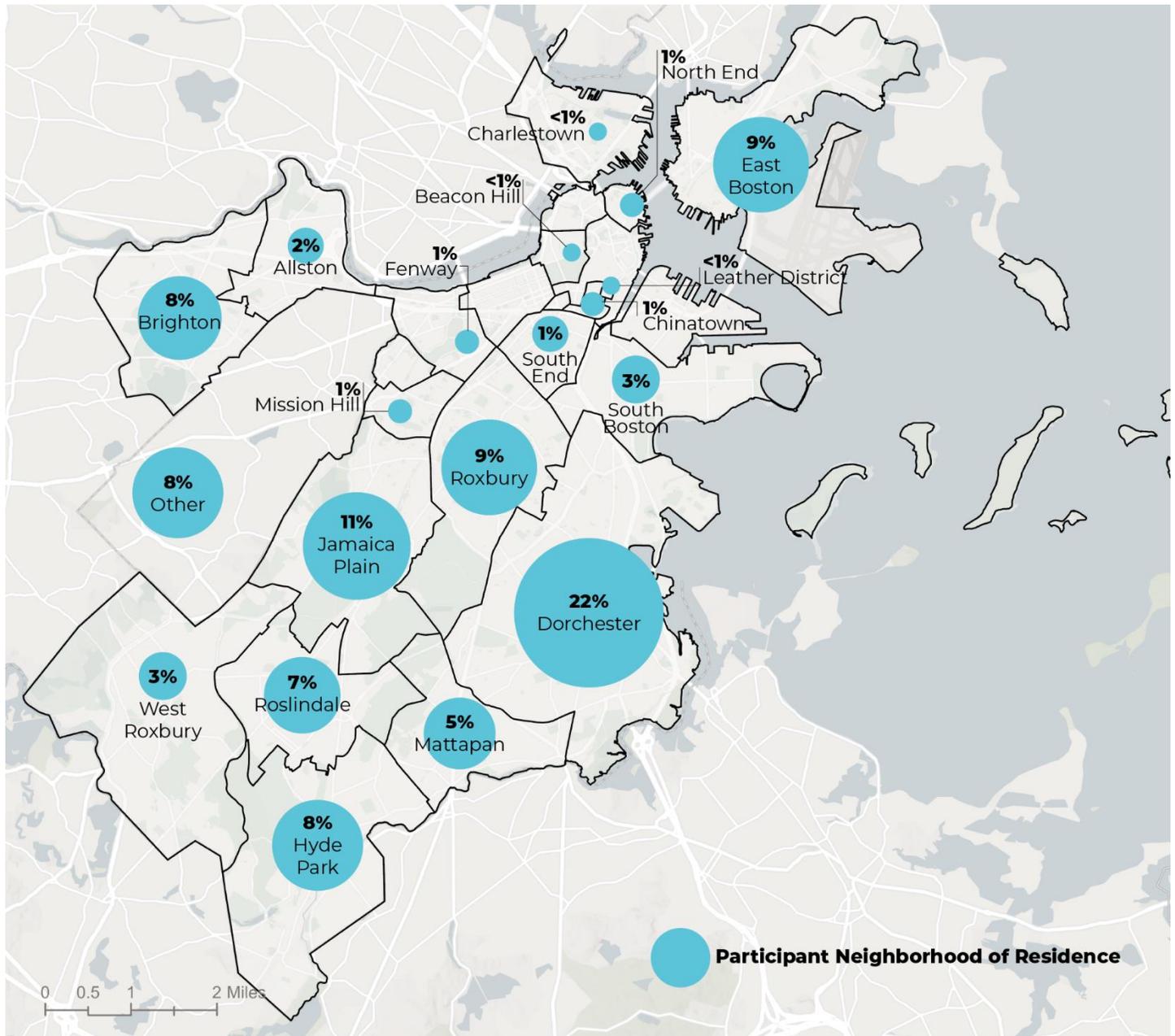
Figure 2.5.2: Race/Ethnicity of Participants (n=266)
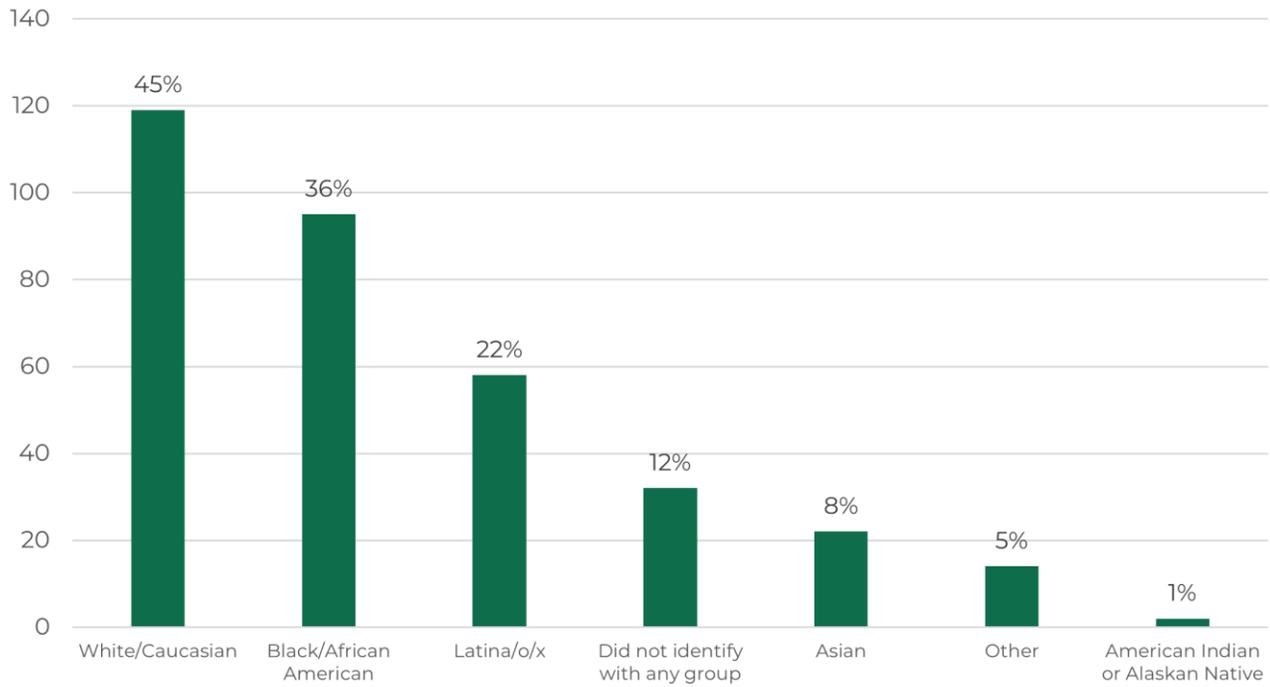
Figure 2.5.3: Disability Status of Participants (n=266)

Figure 2.5.4: Language Status of Participants (n=266)
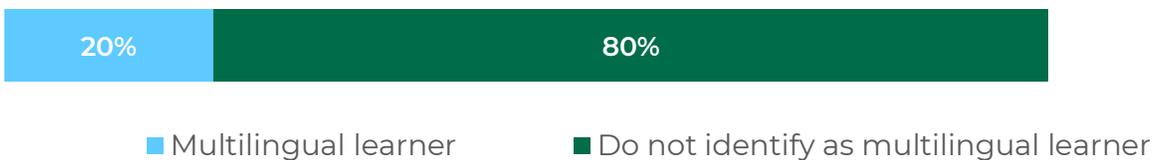
Note: in this survey question, Multilingual Learner defines as students with a primary or home language other than English who are in the process of acquiring English.

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Figure 2.5.5: Relationship to District (n=266)

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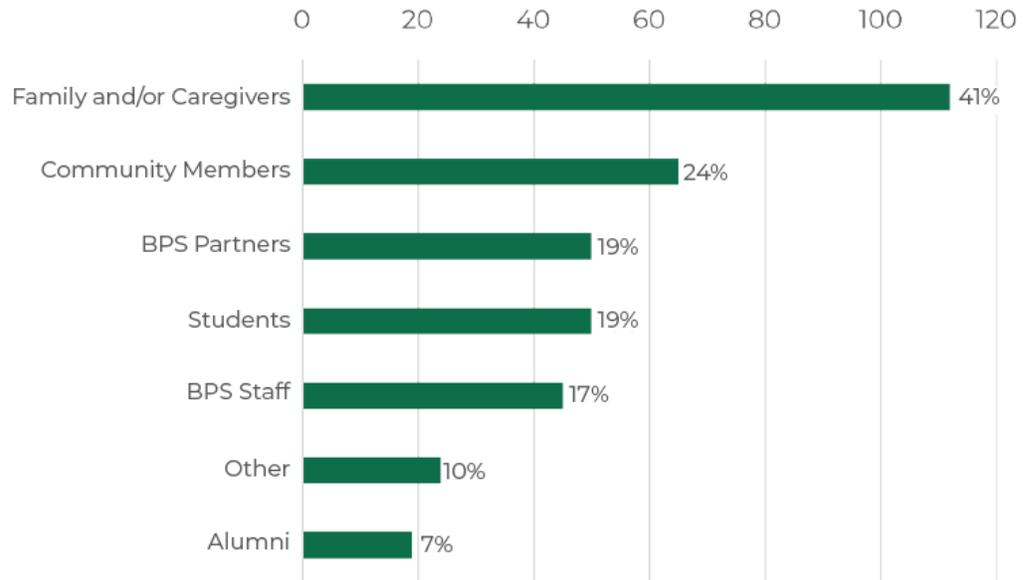
Figure 2.5.6: Total Participants by Event* (n=266)

Session Date	Session Name	Total Participants Who Provided Demographic Information	Total Participants Recorded by Scribes*
11-Jan	Families of Young Children hosted by the Office of Early Childhood Zoom Session	14	23
17-Jan	Eliot School	<5	18
23-Jan	Boston Student Advisory Council	23	30
26-Jan	Sociedad Latina Youth Leaders	11	16
31-Jan	Disability community, hosted by the Disabilities Commission	9	15
8-Feb	Brighton High School	42	47
11-Feb	Dearborn STEM Academy and Faith-based Leaders	14	24
13-Feb	Burke High School	5	29
14-Feb	St Stephen's Youth Programs	<5	27
16-Feb	ELAC Haitian Creole Monthly Meeting**	<5	n/a
21-Feb	East Boston High School (en español)	9	24
27-Feb	SchoolFacts Boston, Union Capital Boston, The Teachers' Lounge, and the Office of Black Male Advancement Virtual Session	21	27
27-Feb	New Mission High School	16	17
28-Feb	Chinatown community, hosted by the Office of Neighborhood Services and the Josiah Quincy Elementary School	0	20
2-Mar	Citywide Virtual Session	38	73
6-Mar	Citywide Virtual Session (en español)	<5	8
9-Mar	Vietnamese community, hosted by VietAID and the Office of Neighborhood Services	5	6
16-Mar	BTU Session 1	11	12
18-Mar	BTU Session 2: AFT/BTU Education Policy Program	<5	5
21-Mar	BTU Session 3	10	17
29-Mar	Unhoused community, hosted by Boston's Higher Ground and Union Capital Boston	24	89
30-Mar	Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts	0	18
	Other (event listed did not match any event held)	<5	

*Note: scribes only recorded participants who either introduced themselves or shared an idea during the session. While all participants were asked to introduce themselves, some may not have depending on arrival time or preference. Therefore, this number may not fully represent the total number of people who attended each session.

**Note: the Haitian English Learner Advisory Committee meeting was a presentation without comments captured, so is not included in the total count of listening sessions across this document.

2.5 Disaggregated Participant Demographics

Figure 2.6.1: Intersections of Race/Ethnicity and Neighborhood* (n=266)

Neighborhood	Asian	Black	I do not identify with any options listed	Latina/o/x	White	American Indian or Alaska Native	Other	Total
Dorchester	6	34	5	11	15	<5	<5	**73**
Jamaica Plain	<5	<5	<5	<5	22	0	0	**35**
East Boston	<5	<5	5	9	13	<5	<5	**37**
Roxbury	0	14	5	10	5	<5	<5	**37**
Hyde Park	<5	13	0	<5	8	<5	<5	**25**
Brighton	<5	<5	<5	<5	15	<5	<5	**23**
Roslindale	<5	<5	<5	5	11	<5	<5	**24**
Another Community	0	<5	<5	<5	10	<5	<5	**21**
Mattapan	0	12	<5	<5	<5	0	0	**19**
South Boston	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	0	**10**
Allston	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	**10**
West Roxbury	<5	<5	0	0	5	0	0	**7**
South End	0	<5	0	0	<5	0	0	**<5**
Chinatown	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	**<5**
Fenway / Kenmore	0	0	<5	0	<5	0	0	**<5**
Mission Hill	<5	0	0	0	<5	0	0	**<5**
North End	0	0	0	0	<5	0	0	**<5**
Leather District	0	0	<5	0	0	<5	<5	**<5**
Beacon Hill	0	0	0	0	<5	0	0	**<5**
Charlestown	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	**<5**
Total	**22**	**95**	**30**	**56**	**118**	**2**	**13**	

*Note: participants were allowed to select one neighborhood and multiple racial/ethnic identities. Individuals identifying as multiracial are included across multiple racial and ethnic categories, therefore the grand total (336) exceeds the number of respondents (n=266).

When the total fell below 5 respondents, the number was generalized to protect respondent identities.

Figure 2.6.2: Intersections of Race/Ethnicity and Disability Status (n = 266)
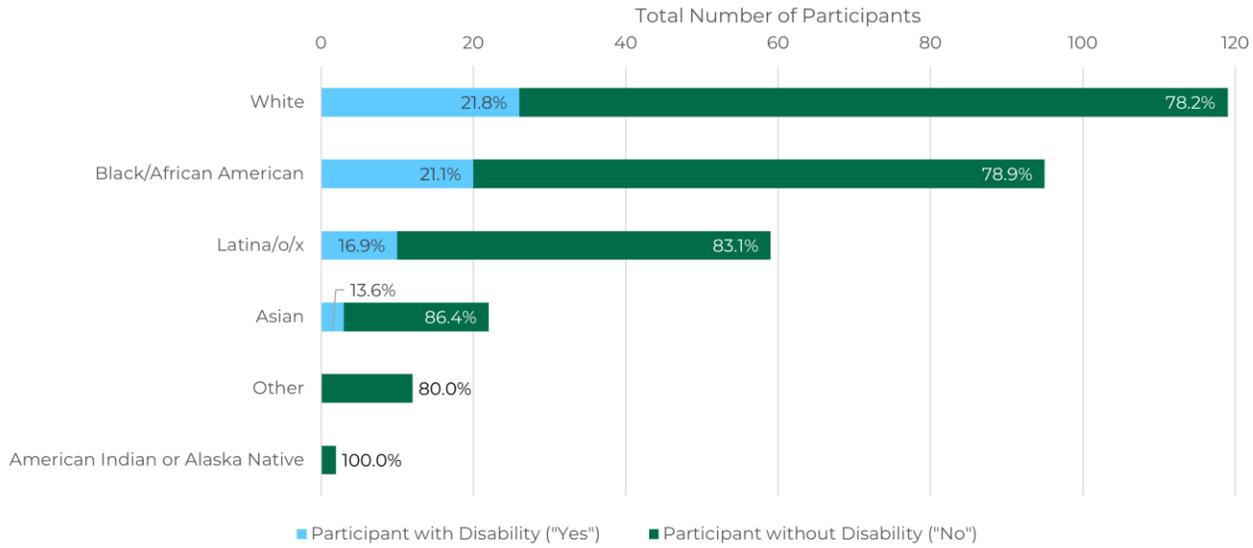
Figure 2.6.3: Intersections of Race/Ethnicity and Language Status (n = 266)
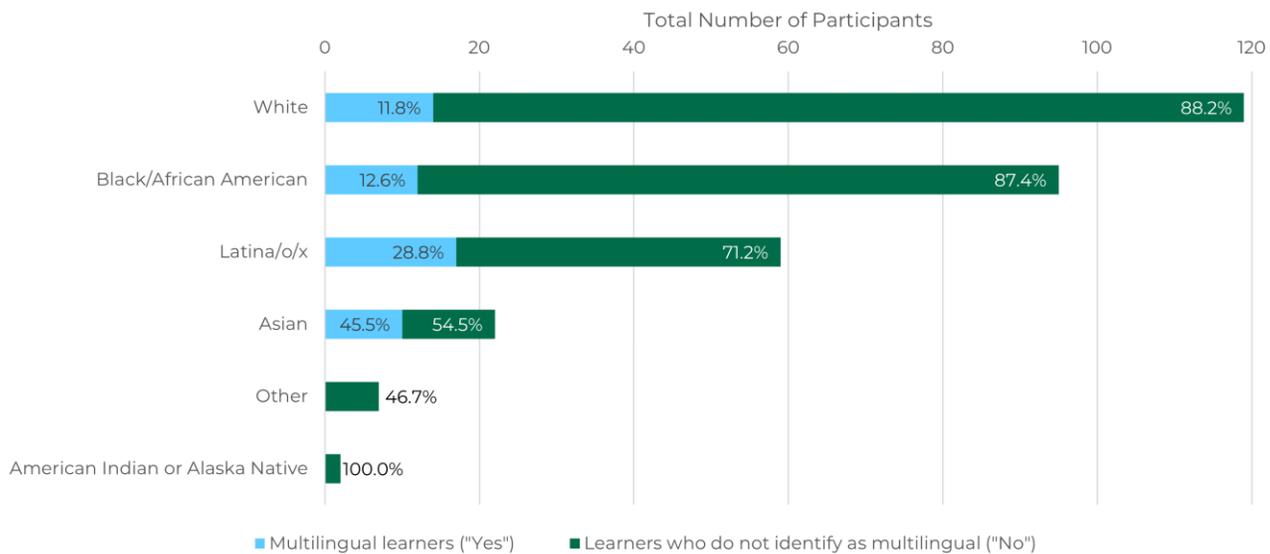
Note: participants were able to select multiple relationships to the District and multiple racial/ethnic identities, therefore the grand total (418) exceeds the number of respondents (n=266).

Figure 2.6.4: Intersections of Disability Status and Language Status (n = 266)
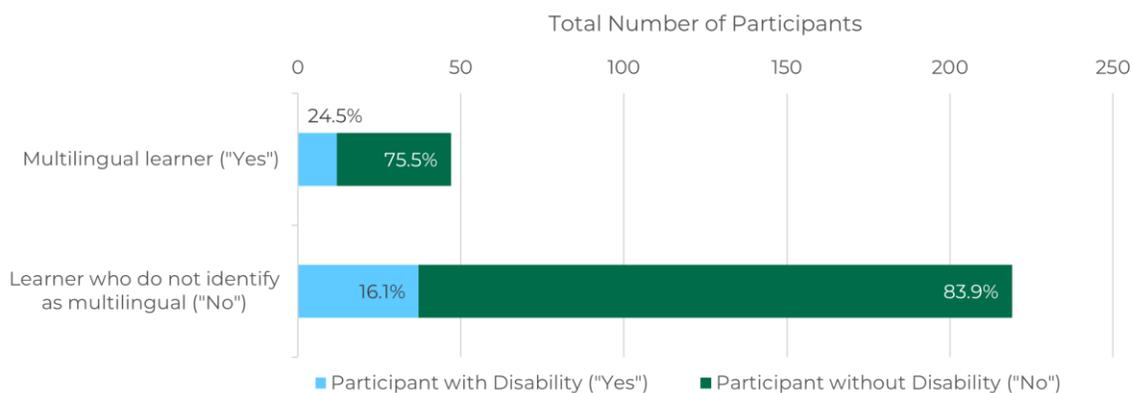
Figure 2.6.5: Intersections of Race/Ethnicity and Relationship to District (n=266)

Relationship to District	White	Black/ African American	Latina/ o/x	I do not identify with any options listed	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Total
Family and/or Caregiver	57	21	12	6	11	<5	**110**
Student	7	24	25	15	<5	6	**80**
Community Member	25	21	11	9	<5	<5	**71**
BPS Staff	23	15	5	5	<5	<5	**54**
Community Partner	29	10	6	<5	<5	0	**52**
Other	19	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	**31**
Alumni	<5	9	<5	<5	<5	0	**20**
Total	**163**	**104**	**66**	**42**	**28**	**15**	

Note: participants were able to select multiple relationships to the District and multiple racial/ethnic identities, therefore the grand total (418) exceeds the number of respondents (n=266).

Figure 2.6.6: Intersections of Disability Status and Relationship to District (n = 329)
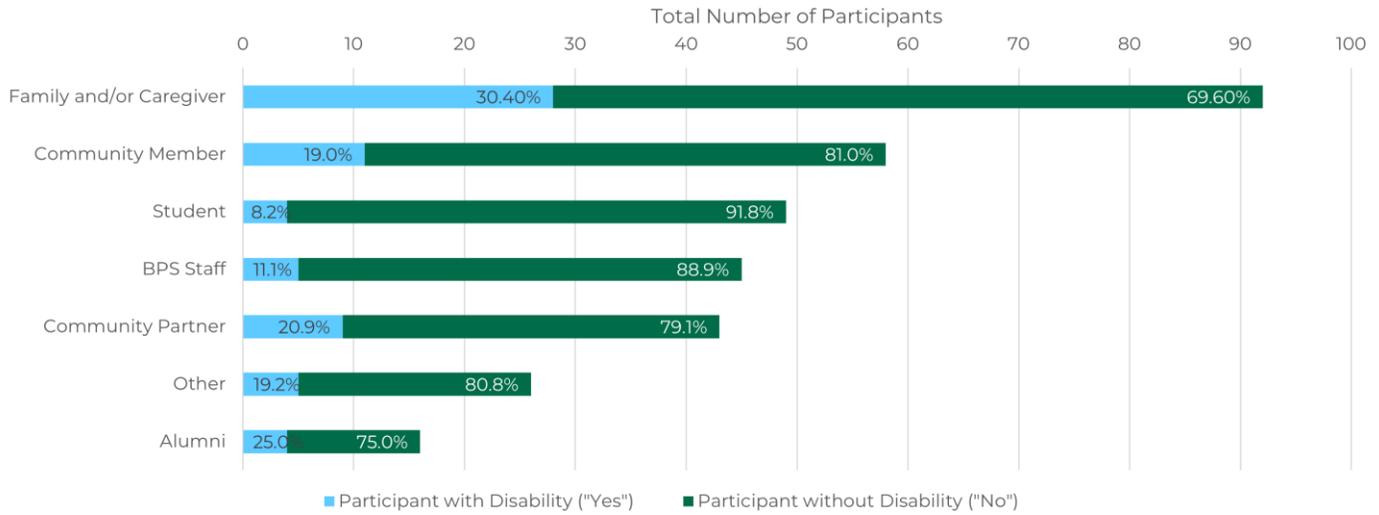
Note: The survey question aims to identify whether the participant or their family members have a disability. For example, the 30% of family members mentioned in the data comprise both family members with disabilities and family members of students with disabilities.

Figure 2.6.7: Intersections of Language Status and Relationship to District (n = 329)
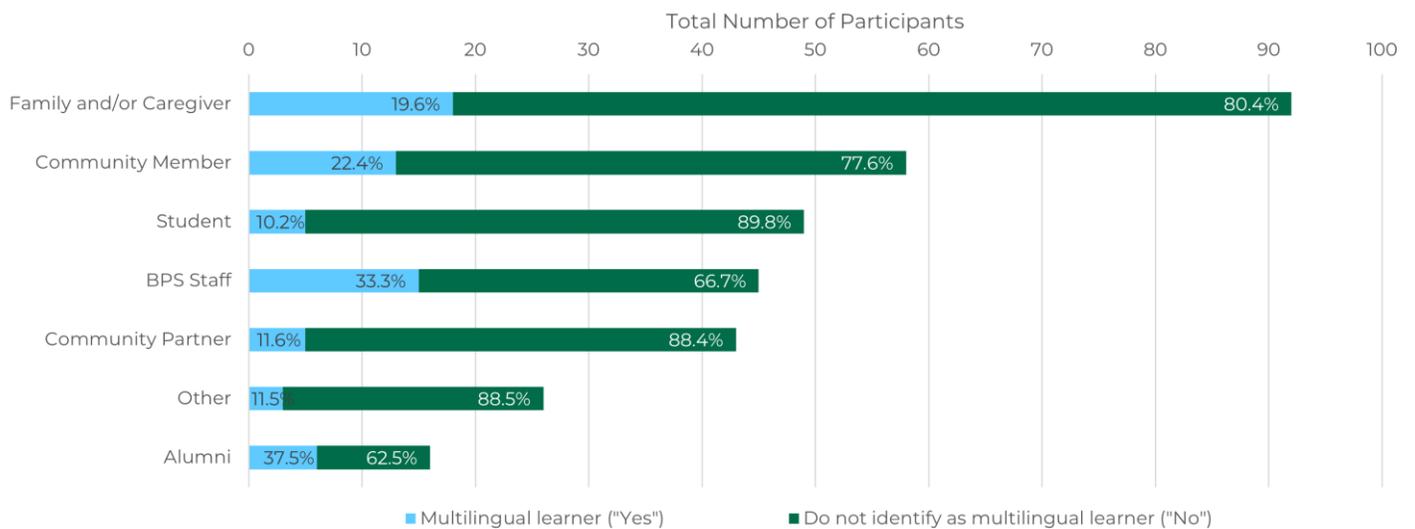
Note: The survey question aims to determine whether the participant or any of their family members identify as multilingual learners. For example, the 19.6% of participants or their family members speaks language(s) other than English.

2.6 Qualitative Processing Approach

HOW WAS INFORMATION CAPTURED DURING THE SESSIONS?

Each small group discussion within a session was assigned a scribe. Scribes transcribed each person's statements as close to verbatim as possible, asking clarifying questions to ensure that they correctly captured what was shared. Statements were attributed to participants so we could trace statements to participant backgrounds (e.g. teacher, student, community partner).

The listening sessions resulted in 75 detailed transcripts from the 75 small group discussions.

HOW WERE TRANSCRIPTS PROCESSED?

DLR Group processed all transcripts through a qualitative research approach to identify common codes and themes. The processing approach fell into three phases:

1. **Organize data:** Statements from all transcripts were organized in an Excel database. Each event, transcript, and participant was assigned a unique ID to track participant perspectives across sessions, Each individual comment or statement was separated into its own row in Excel and tied to participant and transcript IDs.

2. **Code common topics:** Starting with the first five listening sessions, the DLR Group team read through all comments, assigning initial codes to each comment to best describe what was said. A code is a short phrase that describes the intent of what was said by a participant. For example, one of the parents shared "My son's school was renovated in the past few years. It's beautiful, big, and filled with light. He is in a safe environment. However, I am worried about his safety after school, on his trip home. I wish I could see more renovated high schools where I live." The researcher assigned initial codes to describe the content: Impact of renovation, student safety, and investment priorities.

   Once the initial set of codes was generated by each researcher, the team met to compare codes, converge similar ideas, and arrive at shared codes that best described all topics within the first sample of data. Final codes were applied to the first five sessions. From the example, the above quote was reassigned the codes "Facility condition, equity/inequity, getting to school."

3. **Generate themes:** After creating sets of codes, the team looked at the intersection across codes to determine broader categories of ideas or themes that emerged from the data. Researchers looked for the most prominent patterns across comments and across codes, and created groups of codes that are incorporated in each respective theme. Themes were then assigned to all comments.

4. **Refine codes and themes:** Once the first set of codes and themes was established, the team began processing the remaining 20 sessions. First, we assigned existing codes to insights when possible. Next, they identified any comments that did not fit into existing codes and assigned new codes using the process in Step 2 to code common topics. Finally, the team met to converge ideas, identify overlap in new ideas, and finalize new and existing codes to reflect the dataset overall. Then, they revisited the themes to ensure that all codes were accurately reflected in themes. Finally, codes and themes were assigned to all comments.

TRACKING PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES:
HOW ARE WE CONNECTING PERSPECTIVES OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE COMMENTS SHARED?

DLR Group used a combination of data from the entry survey sheet and data shared in participant introductions to understand participant perspectives. Tracking participant perspectives ensured that we could trace specific experiences to specific groups of people (e.g. teachers, students with disabilities). Any identifying data about who made statements heard in the listening sessions, such as the name of participants, will never be shared with the public.

Each participant was assigned a unique ID as part of the data organization process. Each ID number was associated with the information shared in introductions and any comment made by a participant. All participants were then assigned a "relationship to the District" that could be traced back to their comments (e.g. student, family of BPS student, community partner, BPS teacher, BPS staff member, BPS alum). These relationships are not mutually exclusive; some participants had multiple relationships with BPS (e.g. Family, BPS teacher, and BPS alum).

Any mentions of groups identified in the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Policy were tagged through the coding process to ensure those groups' experiences were centered. For example, at one session a participant shared: "Especially at the [XXX school], they're looking for ways to engage English learner students. We need to encourage kids to continue to know their languages other than English." The comment was tagged with the code "Multilingual students & families."

General attendance information from the entry survey was associated with session comments to approximate comment perspectives. It is not possible to link individual comments or participants to the entry survey sheet because it was anonymous. For example, at the Sociedad Latina focus group, 10 out of 11 participants recorded in the sign-in sheet identified as Hispanic/Latinx. 15 participants were recorded by scribes as students. We can assume this session's comments reflect the perspective of Latina/o/x students.

Scribes did not assume or record participant race/ethnicity unless this information was stated by participants. If there was no record of a group in the entry survey or comments, no group was assigned to the comment.

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY

3.1 Survey Development Process

WHY WERE DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY?

Data about participant race/ethnicity, relationship to District, language status, and disability status allowed us to disaggregate the survey results by each demographic group to understand their stated priorities. The Green New Deal for Boston Public Schools is committed to using the Racial Equity Planning Tool, which requires that all decisions be evaluated using disaggregated data that centers the groups identified by the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Policy.

HOW WERE LISTENING SESSION FINDINGS TRANSLATED INTO SURVEY QUESTIONS?

The survey content was based directly on the issues shared during the listening sessions. Each issue defined through the listening sessions analysis was included in the survey. See Appendix 1 for the original problem statements and themes that were adapted to the survey. The survey focused only on the issues shared by the community to confirm the key priorities that should be addressed through the Green New Deal for the Boston Public Schools Study.

The 38 problem statements developed through listening sessions analysis were rewritten, or combined when overlapping, to create 35 "problem statements" that were included in the survey. While all statements in the survey reflected problems heard, some were phrased as positive to acknowledge both the positive and negative sentiments we heard around different topics. These statements were shown under the question: "Select all the statements that reflect your experience with BPS. Leave any statements that do not reflect your experience unselected."

This question was included 5 consecutive times, with the 35 statements divided across the 5 questions. Each question contained statements about a variety of themes, instead of grouping statements of one theme together. Within each question, the order of statements was randomly shuffled to prevent response bias.

Each "problem statement" was assigned a corresponding topic that would be carried forward if a participant identified a particular issue as part of their experience. Topics were intended to summarize the resource or condition at the heart of each issue. For example, the problem statement "BPS facilities have unhealthy indoor environmental conditions" corresponded to the topic "Indoor environmental conditions."

We developed survey logic – the set of rules that determine which responses are displayed or not displayed to a respondent – to move forward all topics associated with the experiences a participant selected. These topics were then listed under the question: "The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan."

Topics were randomly shuffled within the question to reduce the possibility of bias towards the first-displayed options.

3.2 Survey Questions

The following section includes all survey questions, including the logic used to display answers to participants.

Start of Block: Themes

Q1 **BPS Study Survey**

Why this survey?

Over the last few months, we have listened to more than 500 students, families, educators, staff, and community partners across Boston Public Schools (BPS) talk about their school experiences. The statements you're about to review come from what we heard.

We want to know: Did we hear you? What are we missing? Your feedback will help shape our long-term facilities plan for BPS, including the design of new and renovated school buildings.

Page Break ————————————————————————————————

Start of Block: Key Demographic Information

Q2 **First, we'd like to know a little more about you.** Collecting demographic information will help us understand who we have reached. This information will remain anonymous and will not be shared.

Q3 Which best fits your racial/ethnic background? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Latina/o/x
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe _____

Q4 Please select the neighborhood in which you live.

○ Allston
○ Back Bay
○ Bay Village
○ Beacon Hill
○ Brighton
○ Charlestown
○ Chinatown
○ Dorchester
○ Downtown

○ East Boston
○ Fenway / Kenmore
○ Hyde Park
○ Jamaica Plain
○ Leather District
○ Longwood
○ Mattapan
○ Mission Hill
○ North End

○ Roslindale
○ Roxbury
○ South Boston
○ Seaport
○ South End
○ West End
○ West Roxbury
○ Another Community

Q5 Do you or does someone in your family identify as a multilingual learner?

○ Yes (*please describe*) _____
○ No

Q6 Do you or does someone in your family identify as a student with disabilities?

○ Yes (*please describe*) _____
○ No

End of Block: Key Demographic Information

Q7 **Select all the statements that reflect your experience with BPS.**

Leave any statements that do not reflect your experience unselected. (*options randomly shuffled*)

☐ BPS facilities are outdated and under-maintained.
☐ Schools have enough outdoor space for learning, play, and sports.
☐ Schools offer high-quality technical training and career pathways that align with student interests and the local job market.
☐ Bullying and violence are common in BPS schools.
☐ Teachers and other school-based staff do not have sufficient training or support to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families.
☐ Students have access to a wide range of language programming, including dual language instruction and native language instruction.
☐ Students have to change schools too many times, causing stress.
☐ School-community partnerships vary from school to school and rely on staff and community members' own connections and networking.
☐ BPS schools offer families and community members adequate resources and services, such as health care, continuing education, and food pantries.
☐ Community engagement opportunities are not accessible to all.

Q8 **Select all the statements that reflect your experience with BPS.**
Leave any statements that do not reflect your experience unselected. (*options randomly shuffled*)

☐ BPS facilities have unhealthy indoor environmental conditions.

☐ Schools have adequate space and procedures for safe, low-stress student drop off and pick up.

☐ Schools offer high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students.

☐ Students have agency and a voice in their own educational experience.

☐ Transportation to and from school is unsafe or unreliable.

☐ Multilingual students have access to rigorous academic programs.

☐ BPS teachers and staff reflect the linguistic, cultural, and racial diversity of students and families.

☐ Teachers and staff do not feel supported in BPS.

☐ Schools are not sufficiently addressing neighborhood violence.

- -

Q9 **Select all the statements that reflect your experience with BPS.**
Leave any statements that do not reflect your experience unselected.

☐ Schools generally do not have high-quality gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, or other types of spaces to support a well-rounded school experience.

☐ Schools do not offer consistent or affordable before- and after-school programming at locations that are convenient.

☐ Students do not have sufficient access to mental health or social emotional support in schools.

☐ Transportation to and from school is unsafe or unreliable.

☐ Students with disabilities have access to inclusive and high-quality education in the least restrictive environment.

☐ Students, families, and staff want to be a part of BPS decision-making.

☐ A historical lack of communication and community involvement around mergers has created uncertainty about the future of school communities.

☐ School buildings' security protocols vary across schools, creating confusion for visitors and stress for students.

☐ Inequitable investments create disparities in school experiences.

- -

Q10 **Select all the statements that reflect your experience with BPS.**
Leave any statements that do not reflect your experience unselected. (*options randomly shuffled*)

- ☐ Facilities are welcoming for students, families, staff, and community members with disabilities.
- ☐ Black and brown students and students with disabilities experience disproportionate disciplinary practices.
- ☐ It's difficult to walk or bike to school because of things like vehicle traffic or lack of bike lanes, crosswalks, or bike racks.
- ☐ BPS respects and celebrates the linguistic, cultural, and racial identities of students and families, including by providing translation and interpretation services.
- ☐ The school assignment process causes families and students to be stressed that they won't be able to attend a quality school.
- ☐ School buildings are not set up to welcome and encourage family and community use and involvement.
- ☐ District decisions are often based on the loudest voices in the community.
- ☐ Students with disabilities and their families are welcomed as active participants in discussions about their educational experience.

Q11 **What are we missing?** Is there anything else about your experience with BPS that you'd like to share? (*If nothing, please leave blank*)

End of Block: All Problem Statements

Start of Block: Selected Problems

Q12 The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section.
Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Display this choice...	if this statement	is...
Maintenance of school facilities	BPS facilities are outdated and under-maintained.	Selected
Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	BPS facilities have unhealthy indoor environmental conditions.	Selected
Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	Schools generally do not have high-quality gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, or other types of spaces to support a well-rounded school experience.	Selected
Accessible and welcoming facilities for people with disabilities	Facilities are welcoming for students, families, staff, and community members with disabilities.	NOT selected
Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	Schools have enough outdoor space for learning, play, and sports.	NOT selected
Safe, low-stress student drop off and pick up	Schools have adequate space and procedures for safe, low-stress student drop off and pick up."	NOT selected
Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	Schools offer high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students.	NOT selected.
Before- and after-school programming	Schools do not offer consistent or affordable before- and after-school programming at locations that are convenient.	Selected
Technical training and career pathways	Schools offer high-quality technical training and career pathways that align with student interests and the local job market.	NOT selected
Student agency and voice.	Students have agency and a voice in their own educational experience.	NOT selected
Mental health and social emotional supports	Students do not have sufficient access to mental health or social emotional support in schools.	Selected
Disciplinary practices	Black and brown students and students with disabilities experience disproportionate disciplinary practices.	Selected
Bullying and violence	Bullying and violence are common in BPS schools.	Selected
Safe, reliable transportation	Transportation to and from school is unsafe or unreliable.	Selected

Walking and biking experience to and from school	It's difficult to walk or bike to school because of things like vehicle traffic or lack of bike lanes, crosswalks, or bike racks.	Selected
Inclusive education	Students with disabilities have access to inclusive and high-quality education in the least restrictive environment.	NOT selected
Training and support for teachers and staff to meet the needs of students with disabilities	Teachers and other school-based staff do not have sufficient training or support to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families.	Selected
Students with disabilities and their families' ability to participate in discussions about their educational experience	Students with disabilities and their families are welcomed as active participants in discussions about their educational experience.	NOT selected
Respect for and celebration of the linguistic, cultural, and racial identities of students and families	BPS respects and celebrates the linguistic, cultural, and racial identities of students and families, including by providing translation and interpretation services.	NOT selected
Rigorous academic programs for multilingual students	Multilingual students have access to rigorous academic programs.	NOT selected
Dual language instruction, native language instruction, and other language programs	Students have access to a wide range of language programming, including dual language instruction and native language instruction.	NOT selected
Teachers and staff that reflect the linguistic, cultural, and racial diversity of students and families	BPS teachers and staff reflect the linguistic, cultural, and racial diversity of students and families.	NOT selected
Increased support for teachers and staff	Teachers and staff do not feel supported in BPS.	Selected
Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	Students, families, and staff want to be a part of BPS decision-making.	Selected
School transitions	Students have to change schools too many times, causing stress.	Selected
School assignment process	The school assignment process causes families and students to be stressed that they won't be able to attend a quality school.	Selected
Communication and community involvement around mergers	A historical lack of communication and community involvement around mergers has created uncertainty about the future of school communities.	Selected
Inclusive District decision-making	District decisions are often based on the loudest voices in the community.	Selected
Equitable school investment practices	Inequitable investments create disparities in school experiences.	Selected
Inclusive and accessible engagement opportunities	Community engagement opportunities are not accessible to all.	Selected

Welcoming and accessible school facilities that allow for community use	School buildings are not set up to welcome and encourage family and community use and involvement.	Selected
Community partnerships	School-community partnerships vary from school to school and rely on staff and community members' own connections and networking.	Selected
Family and community resources and services	BPS schools offer families and community members adequate resources and services, such as health care, continuing education, and food pantries.	NOT selected
Security protocols	School buildings' security protocols vary across schools, creating confusion for visitors and stress for students.	Selected
Neighborhood violence	Schools are not sufficiently addressing neighborhood violence.	Selected

End of Block: Selected Problems

Start of Block: Community Workshops

Q13 Later this school year, we will host community workshops to dive deeper into these priorities. Which of the following topics are you most likely to attend a workshop on?
Select all that interest you.

- ☐ Facilities and sites
- ☐ Academic and Enrichment Programs
- ☐ Student experience
- ☐ Experience of people with disabilities
- ☐ Multilingual and multicultural experience
- ☐ Educator and staff experiences
- ☐ District-level policies
- ☐ Family and community connections
- ☐ Safety and wellness

Q14 Would you like to stay in contact? Enter your email below.
 NOTE: All responses in this survey are anonymous and will not be associated with your email.

End of Block: Community Workshops

Start of Block: Demographics

Q15 **Finally, we'd like to know a little more about you.** Collecting demographic information will help us understand who we have reached. This information will remain anonymous and will not be shared.

Q16 What is your relationship to BPS? Please check all that apply.

☐ Family and/or Caregiver of BPS student(s)

☐ Student

☐ Community Member, with no current affiliation to BPS

☐ BPS Staff

☐ Alumni

☐ Community Partner with BPS

☐ Other _____

Display This Question:

If What is your relationship to BPS? Please check all that apply. = Family and/or Caregiver of BPS student(s)

Or What is your relationship to BPS? Please check all that apply. = Student

Or What is your relationship to BPS? Please check all that apply. = BPS Staff

Or What is your relationship to BPS? Please check all that apply. = Alumni

Or What is your relationship to BPS? Please check all that apply. = Community Partner

Q17 What is your school or organization affiliation? Please indicate all that may apply.

Q18 What is your country of origin?

Q19 Is there anything else you'd like to share about your identity?

End of Block: Demographics

3.3 Survey Outreach Process

We used a variety of outreach methods to distribute the survey to BPS students, families, educators and staff, partners, and other stakeholders:

- Emails to all BPS students, families, and staff, as well as all City of Boston staff. For BPS students and families, emails were sent in the preferred language selected in Aspen.

- Robocalls to all BPS families in the preferred language selected in Aspen.

- Study posters were distributed to every BPS school, as well as Boston Centers for Youth and Families, Boston Public Library neighborhood branches, Boston Housing Authority communities, and community organizations. Posters included a QR code that linked to the survey.

- Phone calls, emails, and other one-on-one outreach to community leaders, neighborhood organizations, and other partners who participated in the listening sessions and focus groups.

- Inclusion in newsletters, such as the Boston Teachers Union newsletter.

- Posted via social media by partners and other elected officials.

- Flyer forwarded to the City of Boston Employee Resource Groups.

- Shared with City Councilors.

- Shared with the City of Boston Equity Office to send to partners/advisors.

3.4 Respondent Demographics

Participants were able to take the survey in any of the following languages. This graph shows that respondents took the survey in 9 total languages, with English and Spanish being the most common.

Figure 3.4.1: Language of Survey Responses (n = 9,107)

Q1: *Which best fits your racial/ethnic background? Please check all that apply.*

The survey received the most responses from people identifying as White/Caucasian, Latina/o/x, and Black/African American.

Figure 3.4.2: Race/Ethnicity Identity of Respondents (n = 6,827)

Figure 3.4.3: Write-in Options of Respondents for "Prefer to Self-Describe"

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Q2: *Please select the neighborhood in which you live.*

Respondents most commonly resided in Dorchester, Another Community, Roslindale, Jamaica Plain, East Boston. Most respondents who selected "Another Community" were BPS staff who live outside the District.

Figure 3.4.4: Map of Neighborhood of Residence of Respondents (n = 6,852)

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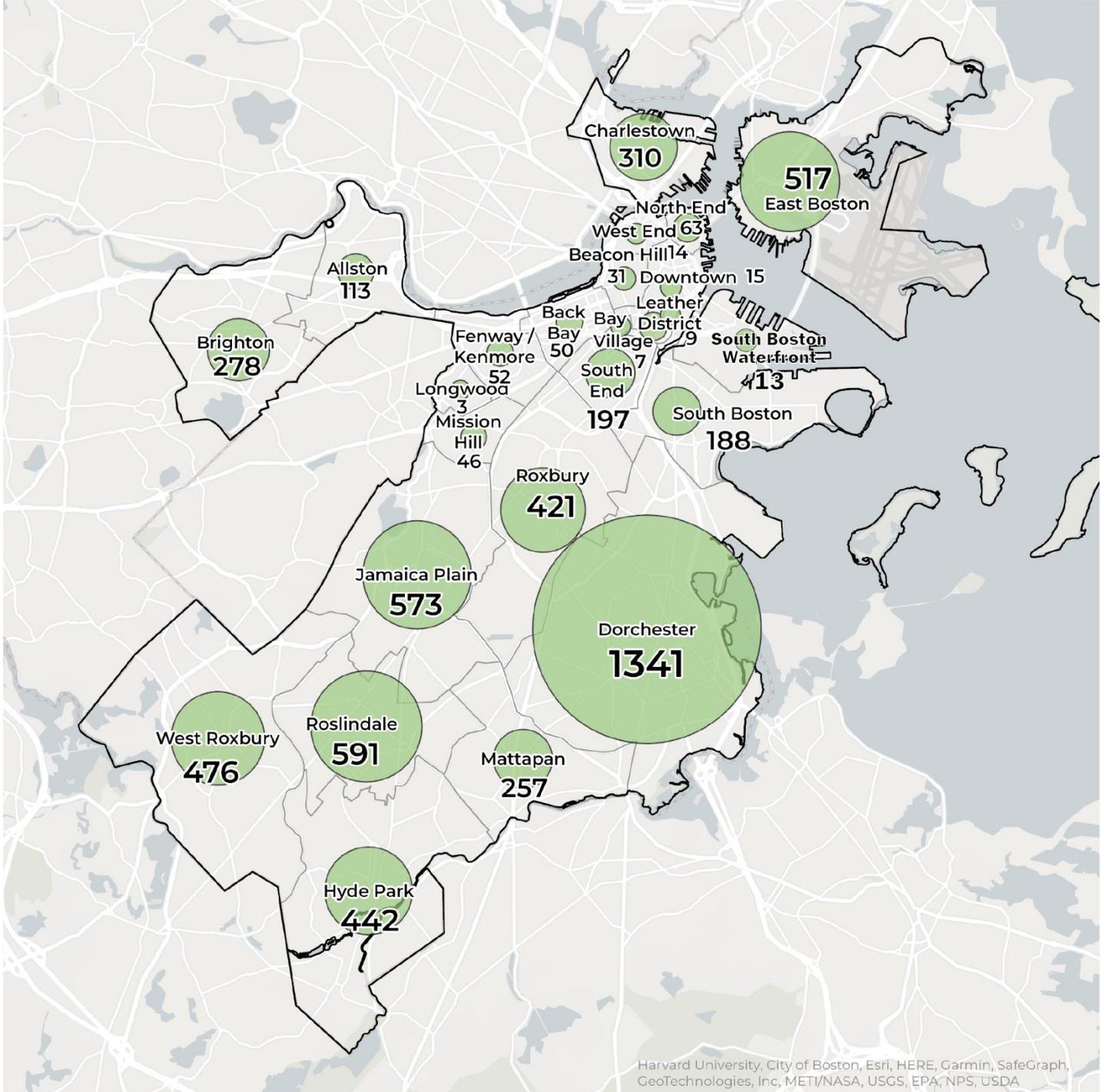
Q3: *Do you or does someone in your family identify as a multilingual learner?*

Figure 3.4.5: Multilingual Learner Identity of Respondents (n = 7,040)

Q4: *Do you or does someone in your family identify as a student with disabilities?*

Figure 3.4.7: Learner with Disability Identity of Respondents (n = 7,070)
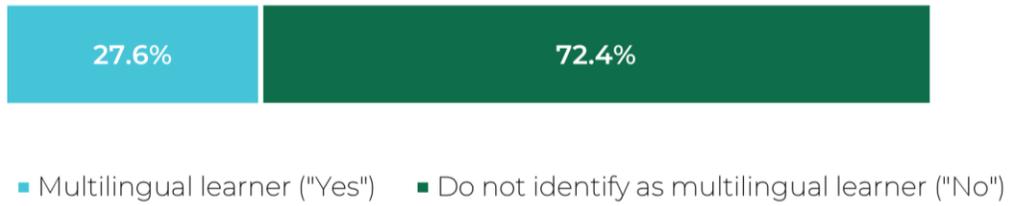
Figure 3.4.6: Write-in Options of Respondents for "Yes (please describe)"
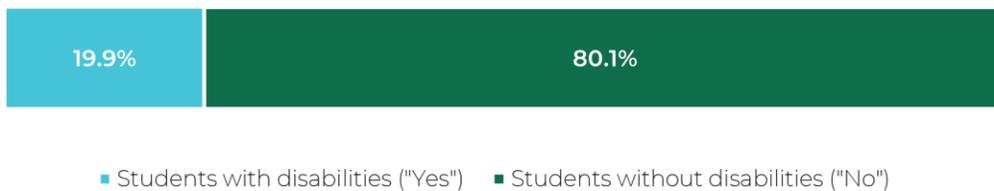
Figure 3.4.8 Write-in Responses of Respondents for "Yes (please describe)"

Q5: *What is your relationship to BPS? Please check all that apply.*

Figure 3.4.9: Relationship to District of Respondents (n = 4,885)
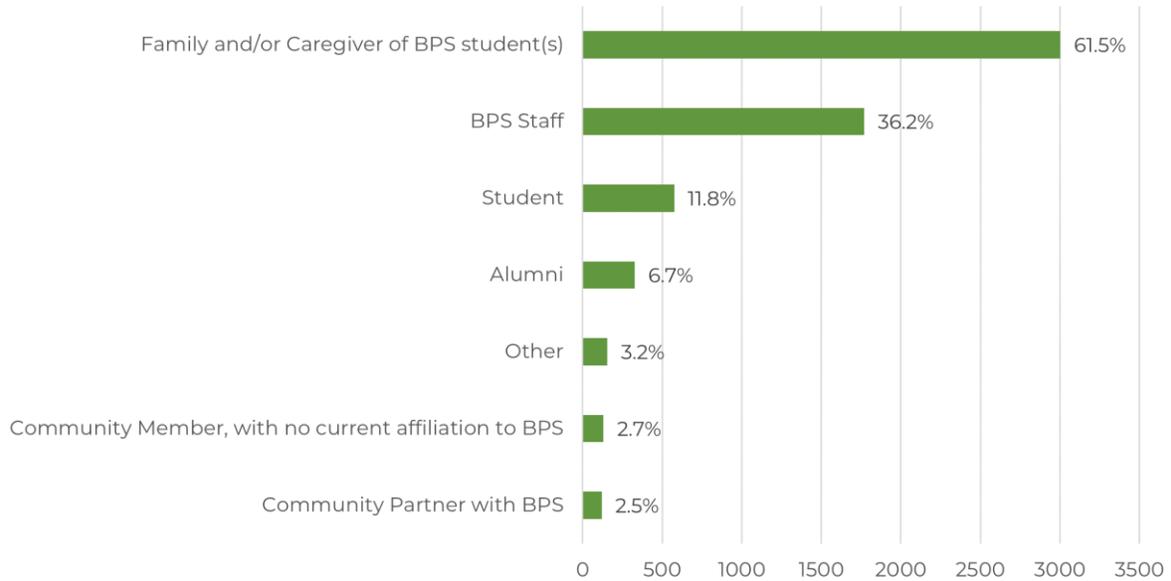
Figure 3.4.10: Write-in Responses of Respondents for "Other"

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Q7: *What is your country of origin?*

Figure 3.4.11: Write-in Responses of Respondents for Country of Origin

Q8: *Is there anything else you'd like to share about your identity?*

Figure 3.4.12: Write-in Responses of Respondents for Other Details about their Identity

3.5 Disaggregated Respondent Demographics

Figure 3.5.1: Race/Ethnicity of Respondents Disaggregated by Relationship to District (n=6,676)
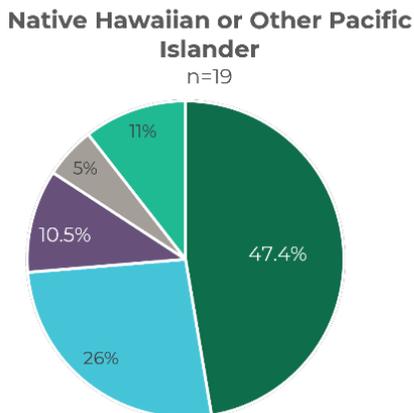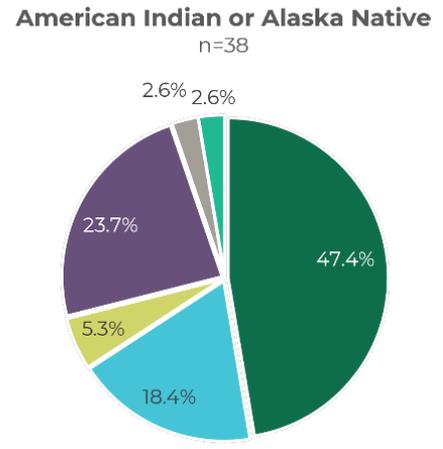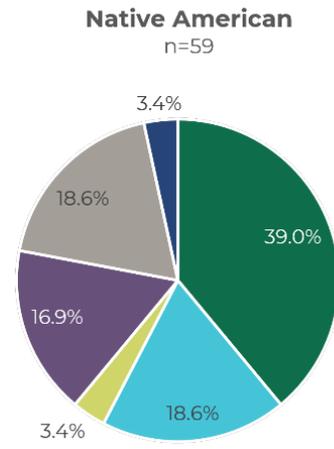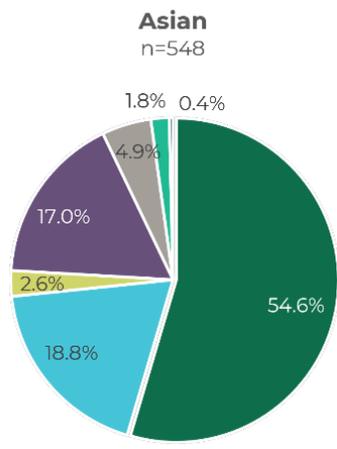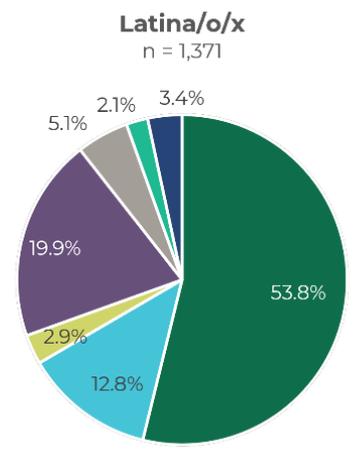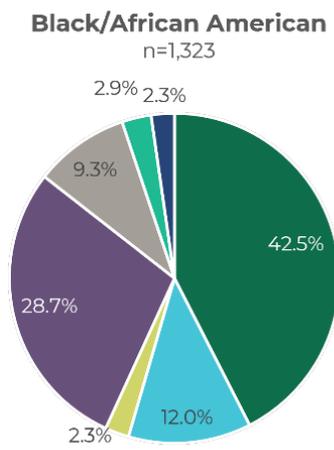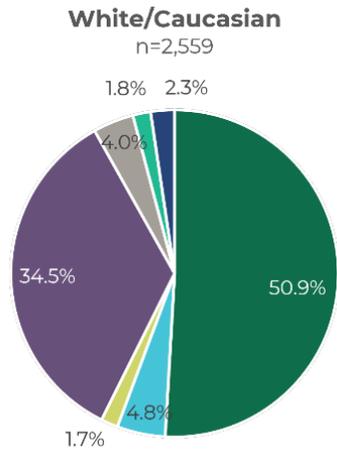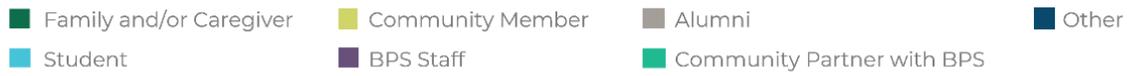
Figure 3.5.2: Relationship to District Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity (n=6,676)

Family and/or Caregiver
n=3,281

- White/Caucasian: 44%
- Black/African American: 19%
- Latina/o/x: 25%
- Asian: 10%
- Native American: 1%
- (1%)

Student
n=677

- White/Caucasian: 21.0%
- Black/African American: 27.3%
- Latina/o/x: 30.1%
- Asian: 17.7%
- 1.9%, 0.9%, 1.2%

Community Member
n=148

- White/Caucasian: 32.6%
- Black/African American: 23.5%
- Latina/o/x: 30.3%
- Asian: 10.6%
- 1.5%, 1.5%

BPS Staff
n=1,898

- White/Caucasian: 53.5%
- Black/African American: 23.0%
- Latina/o/x: 16.5%
- Asian: 5.6%
- 0.6%, 0.1%, 0.5%

Alumni
n=380

- White/Caucasian: 30.7%
- Black/African American: 36.6%
- Latina/o/x: 20.8%
- Asian: 8.0%
- 3.3%, 0.3%, 0.3%

Community Partner with BPS
n=136

- White/Caucasian: 36.0%
- Black/African American: 30.4%
- Latina/o/x: 23.2%
- Asian: 8.0%
- 1.6%, 0.8%

Other
n=156

- White/Caucasian: 42.9%
- Black/African American: 21.4%
- Latina/o/x: 32.9%
- 1.4%, 1.4%

Legend:
- White/Caucasian
- Black/African American
- Latina/o/x
- Asian
- Native American
- American Indian or Alaska
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Figure 3.5.3: Intersection of Multilingual and Disability Identity by Race and Ethnicity Identity of Respondents
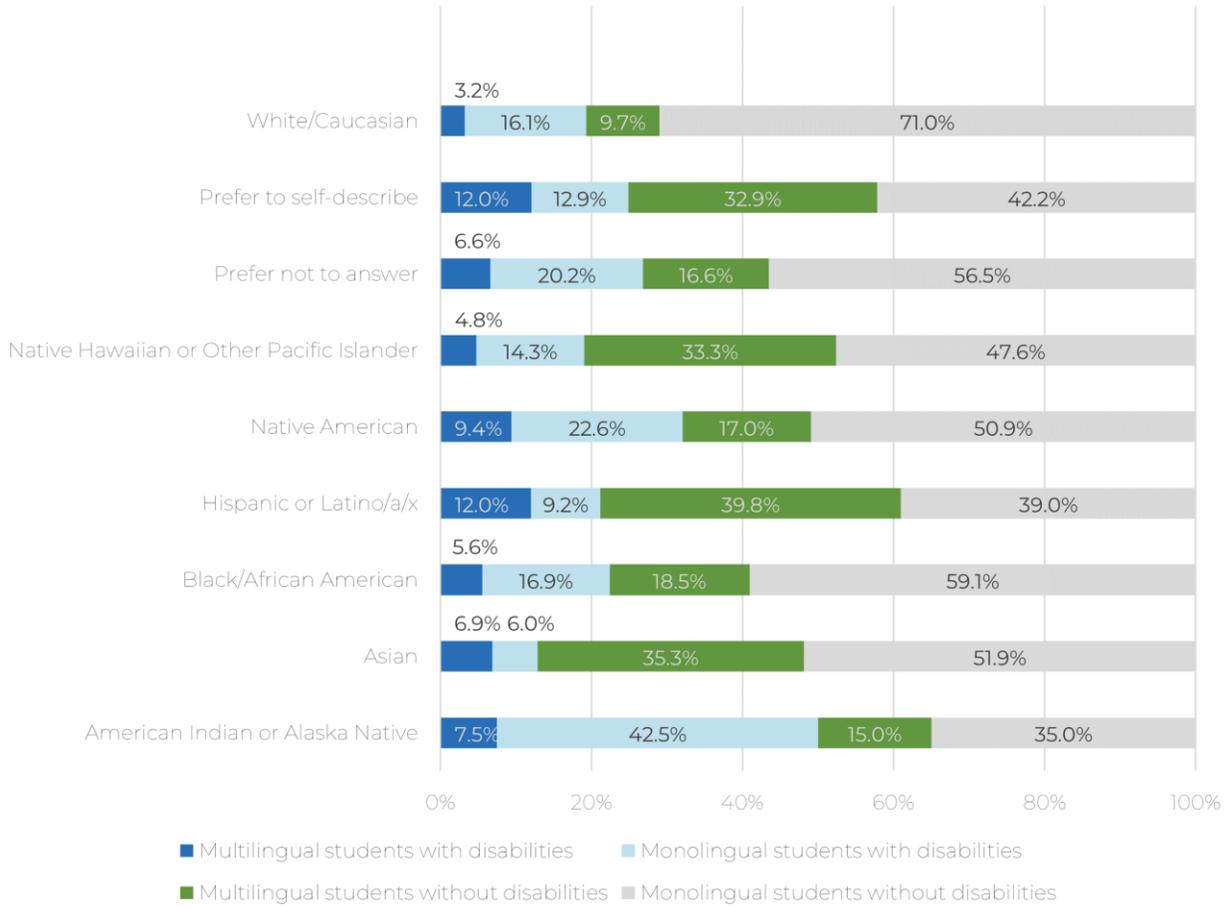
Note: *Participants were asked if they or a family member identified as multilingual learner and/or a learner with a disability. When "student" is used on the graph, it represents both those learners and their family members.*

3.6 Problem Statements

SURVEY QUESTION: Select all the statements that reflect your experience with BPS. Leave any statements that do not reflect your experience unselected.

Figure 3.6.1: Complete List of Problem Statements

#	Statement ([1]n = 5,792 | [2]n = 5,262 | [3]n = 4,942 | [4]n = 4,741) (ordered from greatest to least percentage of question respondents who selected)	Percentage of question respondents who selected statement as reflecting their experience
1	Students, families, and staff want to be a part of BPS decision-making.[3]	69%
2	BPS facilities are outdated and under-maintained. [1]	68%
3	Schools generally do not have high-quality gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, or other types of spaces to support a well-rounded school experience.[3]	67%
4	The school assignment process causes families and students to be stressed that they won't be able to attend a quality school.[4]	61%
5	School-community partnerships vary from school to school and rely on staff and community members' own connections and networking.[1]	56%
6	BPS respects and celebrates the linguistic, cultural, and racial identities of students and families, including by providing translation and interpretation services.[4]	53%
7	Inequitable investments create disparities in school experiences. [2]	51%
8	District decisions are often based on the loudest voices in the community.[4]	49%
9	BPS facilities have unhealthy indoor environmental conditions. [2]	48%
10	Students do not have sufficient access to mental health or social emotional support in schools.[3]	44%
11	BPS teachers and staff reflect the linguistic, cultural, and racial diversity of students and families.[2]	43%
12	School buildings' security protocols vary across schools, creating confusion for visitors and stress for students.[3]	43%
13	Teachers and staff do not feel supported in BPS.[2]	42%
14	A historical lack of communication and community involvement around mergers has created uncertainty about the future of school communities.[3]	42%
15	Transportation to and from school is unsafe or unreliable.[2]	41%
16	Transportation to and from school is unsafe or unreliable.[3]	41%
17	Bullying and violence are common in BPS schools.[1]	40%
18	School buildings are not set up to welcome and encourage family and community use and involvement.[4]	39%
19	Schools do not offer consistent or affordable before- and after-school programming at locations that are convenient.[3]	38%
20	BPS schools offer families and community members adequate resources and services, such as health care, continuing education, and food pantries.[1]	36%
21	It's difficult to walk or bike to school because of things like vehicle traffic or lack of bike lanes, crosswalks, or bike racks.[4]	36%
22	Schools offer high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students.[2]	32%
23	Teachers and other school-based staff do not have sufficient training or support to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families.[1]	32%
24	Students with disabilities and their families are welcomed as active participants in discussions about their educational experience.[4]	31%
25	Schools have adequate space and procedures for safe, low-stress student drop off and pick up.[2]	30%
26	Schools are not sufficiently addressing neighborhood violence.[2]	29%
27	Black and brown students and students with disabilities experience disproportionate disciplinary practices.[4]	28%

28	Facilities are welcoming for students, families, staff, and community members with disabilities.[4]	27%
29	Community engagement opportunities are not accessible to all.[1]	27%
30	Students have access to a wide range of language programming, including dual language instruction and native language instruction.[1]	26%
31	Schools have enough outdoor space for learning, play, and sports.[1]	25%
32	Students have to change schools too many times, causing stress.[1]	25%
33	Students have agency and a voice in their own educational experience.[2]	23%
34	Students with disabilities have access to inclusive and high-quality education in the least restrictive environment.[3]	22%
35	Multilingual students have access to rigorous academic programs.[2]	18%
36	Schools offer high-quality technical training and career pathways that align with student interests and the local job market.[1]	16%

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3.7 Complete List of Priorities

SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.7.1: Complete List of Priorities

#	Priorities (4,862 responses)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	2,064	42%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	1,900	39%
3	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	1,665	34%
4	Mental health and social emotional supports	1,275	26%
5	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	1,209	25%
6	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	1,193	25%
7	Increased support for teachers and staff	1,094	23%
8	Bullying and violence	1,057	22%
9	School assignment process	1,015	21%
10	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	1,012	21%
11	Equitable school investment practices	936	19%
12	Technical training and career pathways	849	17%
13	Safe, reliable transportation	815	17%
14	Before- and after-school programming	750	15%
15	Inclusive education	690	14%
16	Security protocols	602	12%
17	Training and support for teachers and staff to meet the needs of students with disabilities	570	12%
18	Dual language instruction, native language instruction, and other language programs	560	12%
19	Teachers and staff that reflect the linguistic, cultural, and racial diversity of students and families	548	11%
20	Safe, low-stress student drop off and pick up	497	10%
21	Family and community resources and services	478	10%
22	Accessible and welcoming facilities for people with disabilities	473	10%
23	Rigorous academic programs for multilingual students	470	10%
24	Student agency and voice	462	10%
25	Community partnerships	408	8%
26	Students with disabilities and their families' ability to participate in discussions about their educational experience	375	8%
27	Respect for and celebration of the linguistic, cultural, and racial identities of students and families	351	7%
28	Neighborhood violence	336	7%
29	Inclusive District decision-making	318	7%
30	Walking and biking experience to and from school	303	6%
31	Welcoming and accessible school facilities that allow for community use	264	5%
32	Disciplinary practices	260	5%
33	Communication and community involvement around mergers	244	5%
34	School transitions	195	4%
35	Inclusive and accessible engagement opportunities	149	3%

3.8 Top Priorities by Theme

The topics included in the survey for prioritization were based on what we heard during the listening sessions. Key issues shared in the listening sessions were categorized into the following themes. The graph shows the top priorities selected in the survey grouped by their associated theme.

SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.8.1: Top Priorities by Theme

#	Top Themes (4,862 responses)	Respondents Who Selected Priorities Within Category	
		Count	Percent
1	Facilities & sites	3,891	80%
2	Student experience	2,936	60%
3	District-level policies	2,516	52%
4	Academic & enrichment programs	2,375	49%
5	Multilingual & multi-cultural experience	1,544	32%
6	Family & community connections	1,435	30%
7	Experience of people with disabilities	1,383	28%
8	Educator & staff experiences	1,094	22%
9	Safety & security	1,055	22%

3.9 Top Priorities by Language and Disability Status

SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.9.1: Top 10 Priorities for Multilingual Learners

#	Top 10 Priorities for Multilingual Learners (1,295 responses)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	466	36%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	466	36%
3	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	422	33%
4	Mental health and social emotional supports	326	25%
5	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities + multilingual students	309	24%
6	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	281	22%
7	Increased support for teachers and staff	278	21%
8	Bullying and violence	267	21%
9	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	266	21%
10	Technical training and career pathways	240	19%

Figure 3.9.2: Top 10 Priorities for People with Disabilities

#	Top Priorities for People with Disabilities (1,042 responses)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	416	40%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	362	35%
3	Mental health and social emotional supports	343	33%
4	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	315	30%
5	Bullying and violence	300	29%
6	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	295	28%
7	Increased support for teachers and staff	274	26%
8	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	258	25%
9	Safe, reliable transportation	239	23%
10	Training and support for teachers and staff to meet the needs of students with disabilities	230	22%

3.10 Top Priorities by Race/Ethnicity of Respondents

Note: participants were able to select multiple racial/ethnic identities.

SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.10.1: Top 10 Priorities for Asian Respondents

#	Top Priorities for Asian Respondents (443 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	170	38%
2	Maintenance of school facilities	168	38%
3	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	159	36%
4	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	114	26%
5	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	112	25%
6	Bullying and violence	96	22%
7	Inclusive education	87	20%
8	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	84	19%
9	Technical training and career pathways	77	17%
10	School assignment process	76	17%

Figure 3.10.2: Top 10 Priorities for Black/African American Respondents

#	Top Priorities for Black/African American Respondents (969 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	333	34%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	313	32%
3	Bullying and violence	275	28%
4	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	252	26%
5	Mental health and social emotional supports	250	26%
6	Increased support for teachers and staff	234	24%
7	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	213	22%
8	Technical training and career pathways	212	22%
9	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	205	21%
10	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	191	20%

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SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.10.3: Top 10 Priorities for Latina/o/x Respondents

#	Top Priorities for Latina/o/x Respondents (1,062 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	323	30%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	319	30%
3	Maintenance of school facilities	297	28%
4	Mental health and social emotional supports	271	26%
5	Bullying and violence	263	25%
6	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	236	22%
7	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	207	19%
8	Increased support for teachers and staff	201	19%
9	Before- and after-school programming	198	19%
10	Technical training and career pathways	193	18%

Figure 3.10.4: Top 10 Priorities for Indigenous Respondents (Native American, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Alaskan Native)

#	Top Priorities for Indigenous Respondents (74 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	26	35%
2	Maintenance of school facilities	24	32%
3	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	23	31%
4	Bullying and violence	20	27%
5	Mental health and social emotional supports	18	24%
6	Increased support for teachers and staff	18	24%
7	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	17	23%
8	Safe, reliable transportation	15	20%
9	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	15	20%
10	Before- and after-school programming	13	18%

SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.10.5: Top 10 Priorities for White Respondents

#	Top Priorities for White Respondents (2,156 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	1,160	54%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	1,053	49%
3	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	856	40%
4	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	657	30%
5	Mental health and social emotional supports	621	29%
6	School assignment process	619	29%
7	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	606	28%
8	Equitable school investment practices	546	25%
9	Increased support for teachers and staff	530	25%
10	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	483	22%

Figure 3.10.6: Top 10 Priorities for Respondents Who Prefer to Self-Describe

#	Top Priorities for Respondents who Prefer to Self-Describe (176 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	64	36%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	57	32%
3	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	55	31%
4	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	45	26%
5	Bullying and violence	44	25%
6	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	43	24%
7	Mental health and social emotional supports	42	24%
8	Dual language instruction, native language instruction, and other language programs	40	23%
9	Equitable school investment practices	35	20%
10	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	33	19%

3.11 Top Priorities by Relationship to District

Note: *participants were able to select multiple relationships to District.*

SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.11.1: Top 10 Priorities for Students

#	Top Priorities for Students (557 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	176	32%
2	Maintenance of school facilities	162	29%
3	Bullying and violence	144	26%
4	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	142	25%
5	Student agency and voice	130	23%
6	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	126	23%
7	Mental health and social emotional supports	118	21%
8	Technical training and career pathways	117	21%
9	Safe, low-stress student drop off and pick up	99	18%
10	Inclusive education	98	18%

Figure 3.11.2: Top 10 Priorities for Family/Caregivers

#	Top Priorities for Families/Caregivers (2,919 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	1,209	41%
2	Maintenance of school facilities	1,141	39%
3	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	1,108	38%
4	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	789	27%
5	School assignment process	768	26%
6	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	660	23%
7	Mental health and social emotional supports	656	22%
8	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	636	22%
9	Bullying and violence	626	21%
10	Technical training and career pathways	536	18%

SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.11.3: Top 10 Priorities for BPS Staff

#	Top Priorities for BPS Staff (1,752 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	939	54%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	750	43%
3	Increased support for teachers and staff	660	38%
4	Mental health and social emotional supports	631	36%
5	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	560	32%
6	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	505	29%
7	Equitable school investment practices	444	25%
8	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	418	24%
9	Bullying and violence	365	21%
10	Safe, reliable transportation	343	20%

Figure 3.11.4: Top 10 Priorities for Alumni

#	Top Priorities for Alumni (325 respondents)	Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities	
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	164	50%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	127	39%
3	Increased support for teachers and staff	113	35%
4	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	102	31%
5	Mental health and social emotional supports	101	31%
6	Bullying and violence	92	28%
7	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	89	27%
8	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	83	26%
9	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	77	24%
10	Equitable school investment practices	74	23%

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SURVEY QUESTION: The topics listed below are related to your selections in the previous section. Please select up to six issues that you would like BPS to prioritize addressing through its long-term facilities plan.

Figure 3.11.5: Top 10 Priorities for Community Partners with BPS

| # | Top Priorities for Community Partners (120 respondents) | Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities | |
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	44	37%
2	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	41	34%
3	Mental health and social emotional supports	38	32%
4	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	33	28%
5	Equitable school investment practices	31	26%
6	Before- and after-school programming	29	24%
7	Increased support for teachers and staff	28	23%
8	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	27	23%
9	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	26	22%
10	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	25	21%

Figure 3.11.6: Top 10 Priorities for Community Members with No Current Affiliation to BPS

| # | Top Priorities for Community Members with No Current Affiliation to BPS (128 respondents) | Respondents Who Selected as Within Top 6 Priorities | |
		Count	Percent
1	Maintenance of school facilities	41	32%
2	Outdoor space for learning, play, and sports	34	27%
3	Involvement of students, families, and staff in BPS decision-making	33	26%
4	Mental health and social emotional supports	32	25%
5	Access to gyms, cafeterias, libraries, auditoriums, and other types of spaces that support a well-rounded educational experience	28	22%
6	Consistent, high-quality academic programs and learning opportunities, including for students with disabilities and multilingual students	27	21%
7	Indoor environmental conditions (heating, cooling, air quality, lighting)	26	20%
8	Equitable school investment practices	25	20%
9	Before- and after-school programming	25	20%
10	Teachers and staff that reflect the linguistic, cultural, and racial diversity of students and families	24	19%

3.12 Interest in Public Sessions

SURVEY QUESTION: Later this school year, we will host community workshops to dive deeper into these priorities. Which of the following topics are you most likely to attend a workshop on?

Select all that interest you.

Figure 3.12. 1 Interest in Public Sessions

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