



<https://www.action4equityws.org>

## **Mission**

To collaborate and influence policy decisions that foster equity in education.

## **Vision**

Action4Equity seeks to advocate for equity for students in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools in academic achievement, access to high quality instruction, and safe and healthy school environments.

Action4Equity focuses on three main issue areas: equity, the achievement gap, and healthy and safe school infrastructure.

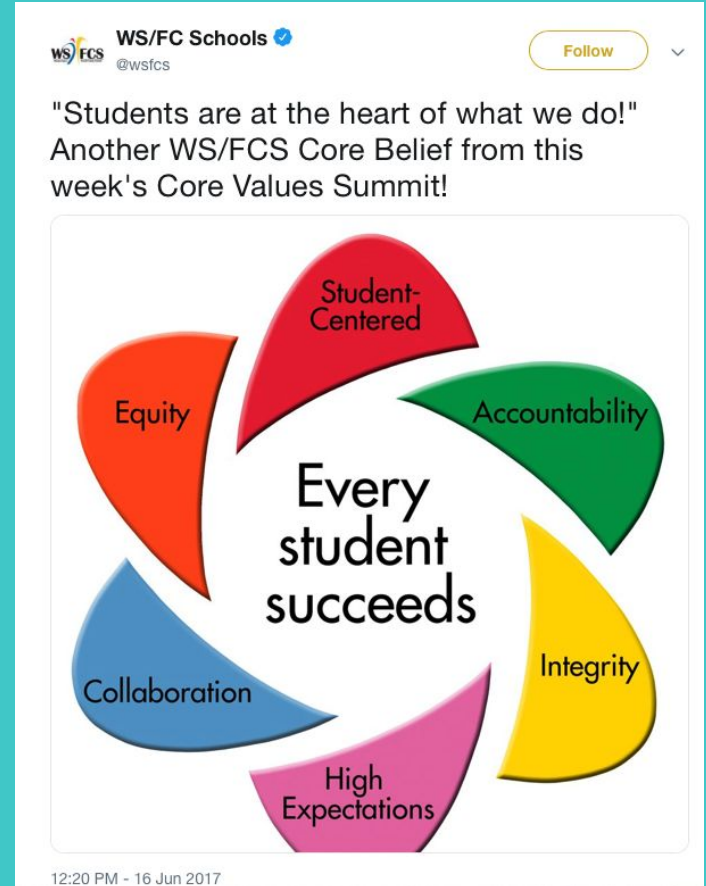
The goals of Action4Equity can be viewed [here](#).

# Our History: Action4Ashley

- Action4Equity grew out of the Action4Ashley movement which formed in response to parent and teacher concerns about the educational & environmental safety of children at Ashley Academy for Cultural & Global Studies. There had been a litany of health complaints from parents and teachers (asthma, upper respiratory distress, etc) for years due to the presence of mold in the school building.
- In December 2018, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights officially opened an investigation into the complaint that the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools discriminated against students at Ashley Academy on the basis of race and national origin. The complaint alleged that the District's failure to adequately address the environmental health concerns at Ashley denied students equal access to a safe and appropriate school facility.

# Our History: Action4Equity

- Action4Equity is a multi-racial coalition of concerned community members came together to address the district wide inequities in WSFCS, especially in three specific areas:
  - Equity
  - Achievement Gap
  - Healthy and Safe School Environments
- We seek to ensure every child has access to an excellent education in order to reach their full potential.
- We seek to hold WSFCS accountable to their stated Core Values and Beliefs.



# WSFCS Core Values & Beliefs

## Core Values

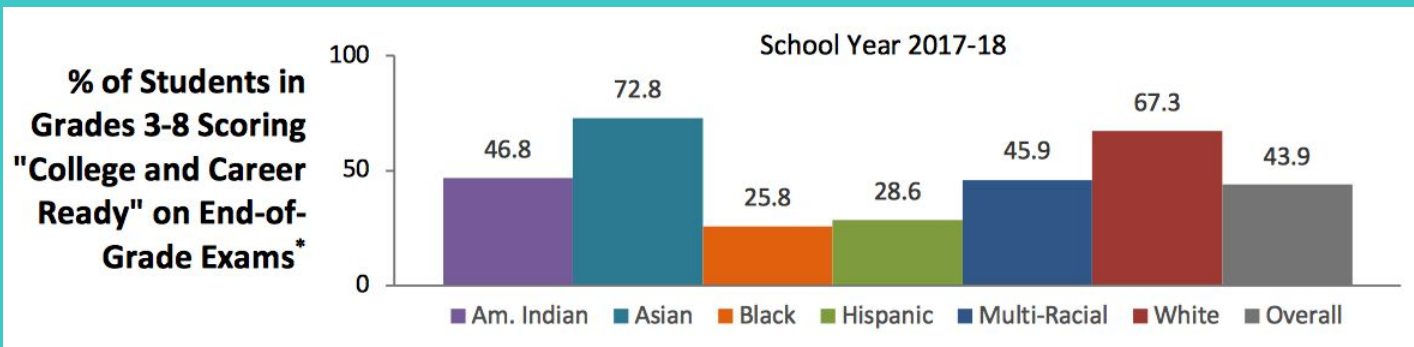
- **Student-Centered:** We focus on the needs of every child.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for and reflect on our impact on student outcomes.
- **Collaboration:** We work together to support each other's efforts to meet every student's needs.
- **Equity:** We honor diversity by addressing barriers to success for every student.
- **High Expectations:** We challenge ourselves to inspire every student's pursuit of greatness.
- **Integrity:** We align our actions, beliefs and values to support every student.

## Core Beliefs

- Adult behavior impacts student outcomes
- Home, school, and community relationships drive student success
- Students remember how we make them feel
- A growth mindset fosters high expectations for all students
- Students are at the heart of what we do

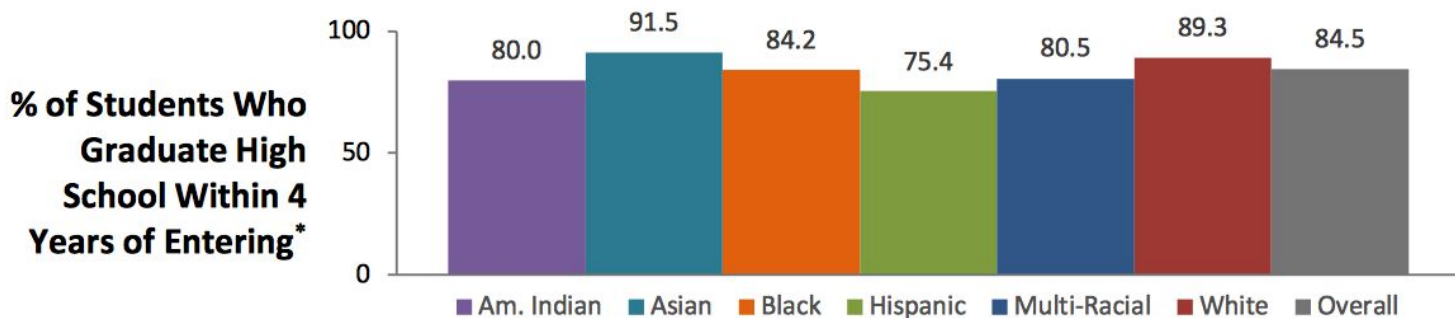
# Reality - Achievement Gap

- The “achievement gap” refers to the disparity in academic performance between subgroups of students.

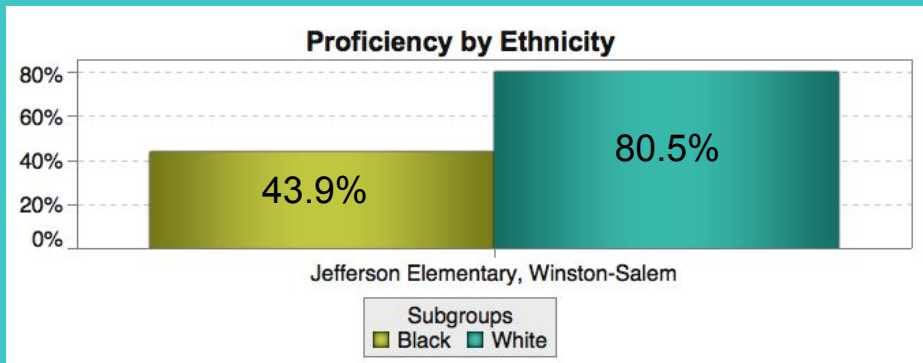


Achievement gap between black and white students of **more than 40%**

Achievement gap between hispanic and white students of **more than 13%**

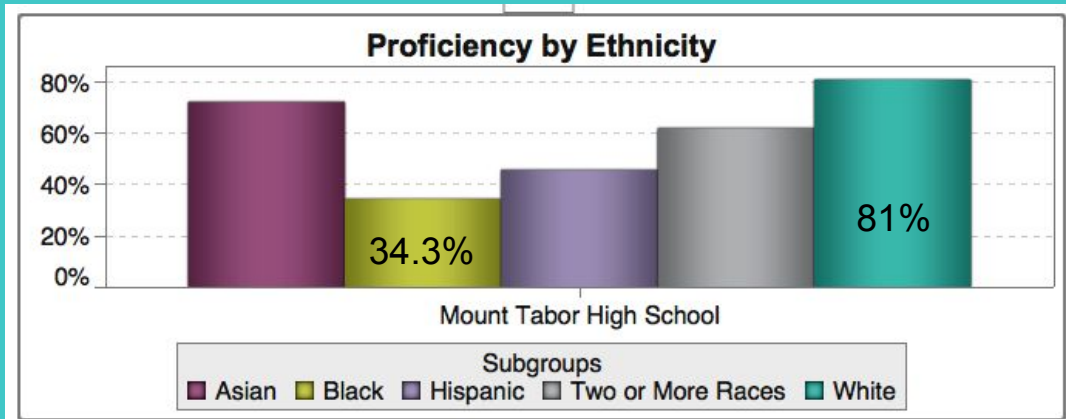


# Reality - Achievement Gap (Example at B-Rated Schools)

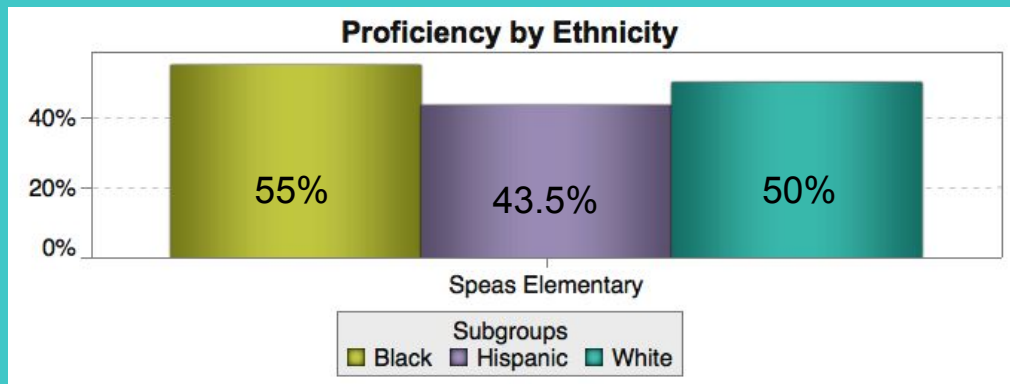


End of 3rd Grade Math achievement gap between black and white students of **more than 36%**

End of Course Grade Level Proficiency achievement gap between hispanic and white students of **more than 46%**

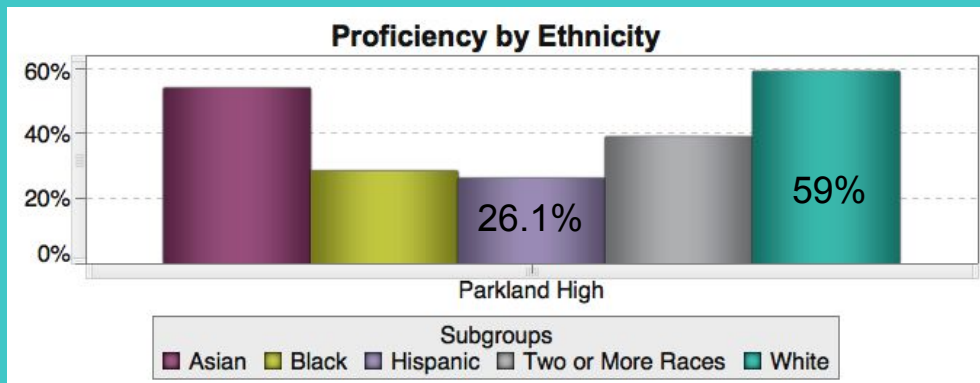


# Reality - Achievement Gap (Example at C/D-Rated Schools)



End of 3rd Grade

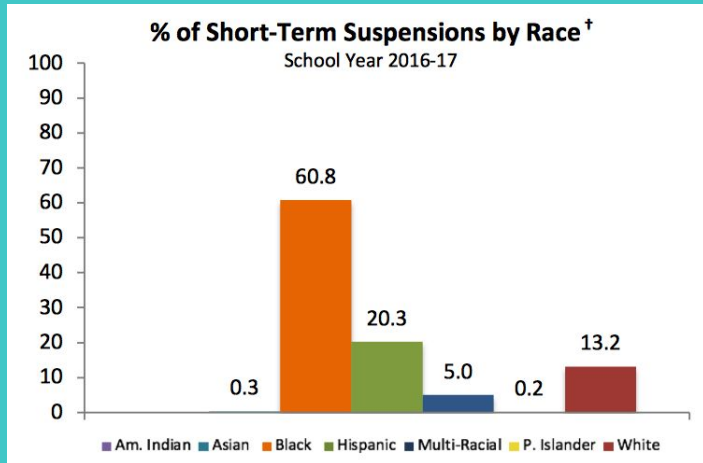
End of Course Grade Level  
Proficiency achievement gap  
between hispanic and white  
students of **more than 32%**



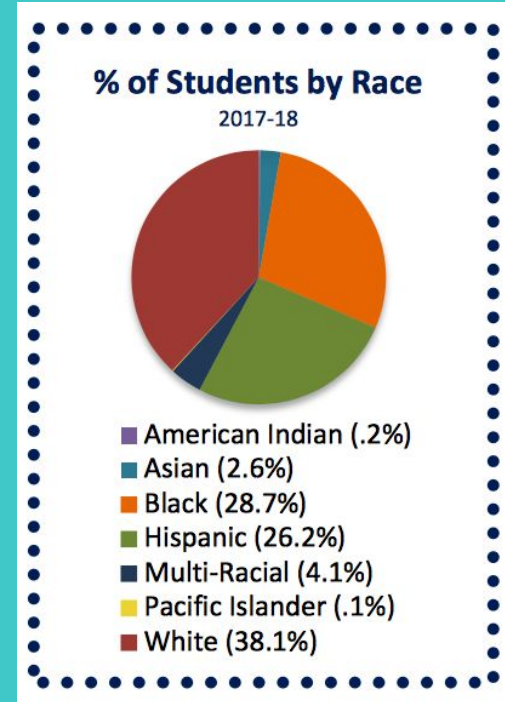


# Reality - Discipline

- Research shows that out-of-school suspension is ineffective at correcting student misbehavior, increasing school safety, and, in fact, increases a student's chances of experiencing negative academic outcomes and future court involvement.
- Studies show Black and White students misbehave at similar rates.

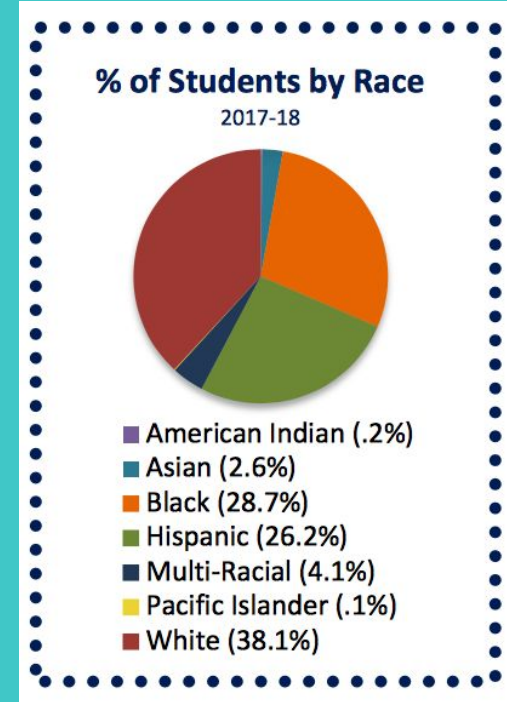
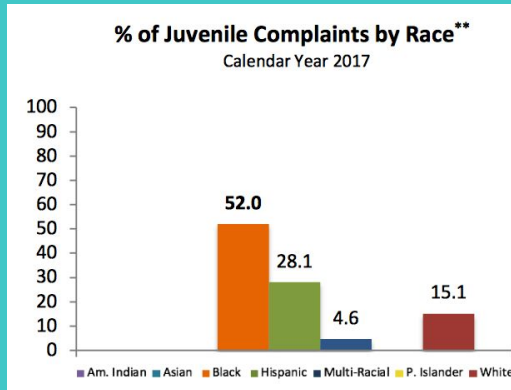


Black students received **60.8 %** of all short-term suspensions, even though they made up only **28.7%** of the student population.



# Reality - School to Prison Pipeline

- Studies show youth who are court involved are more likely to reoffend and experience lifelong entanglement in the criminal system. Furthermore, court involvement can impact a youth's access to education, employment, housing, public benefits, voting rights, and other sources of opportunity and support. In WSFCS, 44% of juvenile court referrals came from schools in 2017-18.
- Studies show Black and White students misbehave at similar rates.



- Why would the School Board and the Forsyth county community accept these educational outcomes?
- What are the long-term consequences of these educational outcomes for this community?
- What do you think it will take to effectively implement ESSA in WS/FCS?

# Advocacy - Equity

We seek to hold the WS/FC School System to its core value as stated below:

*Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Core Value for Every Student to Succeed: “Equity: Did we honor diversity by addressing barriers to success for every student?”*

## **We ask the following of the school board:**

- All school board members to complete a comprehensive racial equity training (e.g. Racial Equity Institute) within the first year of election or re-election.
- Guide and support the Superintendent to expand personnel and funding for the Office of Equity which will serve students, teachers, and staff district-wide.
- Complete an organizational equity analysis among Superintendent and Executive Cabinet Members.
- Form a Racial Equity Task Force that includes community members, school staff, parents, students, and other stakeholders as equal partners. Some of the initial responsibilities of this Task Force should be to:
  - Clarify and define the “barriers” referenced in the School District’s Core Value of Equity.
  - Create a more specific, clear, and measurable definition of equity.
  - Create an annual report of successes and failures towards removing said barriers.

# Advocacy - Achievement Gap

We seek to hold the WS/FC School System to its following goals below:

*By 2020, 90 percent of third-graders will read on or above grade level.*

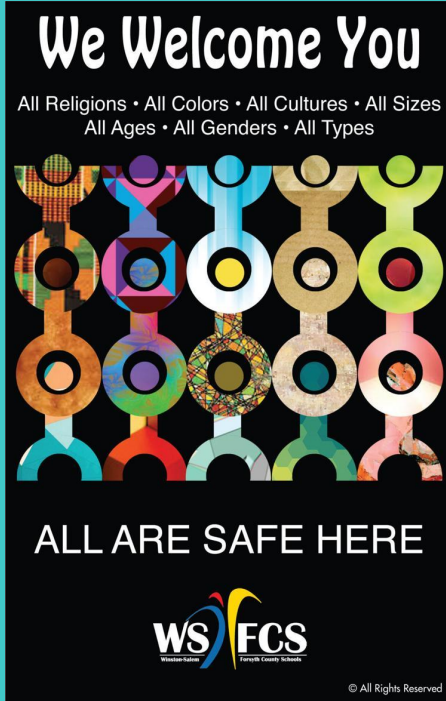
*By 2018, our graduation rate will be 90 percent.*

*By 2018, we will close the achievement gap between subgroups by 10 percentage points while increasing the performance of all subgroups.*

## **We ask the following of the school board:**

- Communicate publicly the progress and status on the three goals.
- The Superintendents' State of the District should focus on the progress of these three goals and strategies executed to ensure success.
- The School Board must create a multi-year plan that is a result of collaboration with community organizations, parents and stakeholders that specifically focuses on closing the achievement gap achieving established district goals by 2020.
  - Community involvement will require listening sessions with the planning of local leaders in community-designated spaces.
  - Equity can only be achieved by collaboration with community leaders and stakeholders who act as a voice for parents who are engaged in the day to day realities of survival and may not be prepared to actively engage the system of public education
  - Abandon the strategy of constantly requiring the voices/input of parents only

# Advocacy - Healthy and Safe School Infrastructure



## We ask the following of the school board:

- Measurable resolution of the complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights regarding Ashley Academy that includes a plan to build a new school and addresses all interim infrastructure issues causing student/staff health problems.
- Develop a matrix and infrastructure plan that focuses equity. This matrix will identify the resources and infrastructure needs of each school. A draft will be publicly available no later than May 2019.
- The implementation of an assessment system of school climate in all Title I schools, the use of that assessment data in school improvement plans, and the discussion of that assessment data with community stakeholders.
- An analysis of suspensions and expulsions for WS/FCS by school, school level, gender, and ethnicity for the past five years shared with community stakeholders.
- An analysis of school-based referrals to the criminal justice system by school school level, gender, and ethnicity for the past five years shared with community stakeholders.

# How to Get Involved

- **Learn more about Action4Equity by attending Action4Equity events.**
  - Visit our [Events Page](#) on our website.
  - Video of presentations are posted here, as well.
- **Join us at WSFCS School Board Meetings, as we advocate for all children.**
  - Schedule of meetings, agendas, and more are [available here](#).
- **Donate to support our advocacy, community education, and parent organizing work.**