

Creating a Safe Environment for All

Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment, A Systemic Approach

Tom Heidemann, School Board Chair

Paul Cady, General Counsel

Jinger A. Gustafson, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools

Jennifer Cherry, PhD, Title IX Coordinator



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Welcome

Agenda

- Overview of the Anoka-Hennepin School District
 - School Board Chair Tom Heidemann
- Evidence of impact
 - School Board Chair Tom Heidemann
 - Associate Superintendent Jinger Gustafson
- Department of Justice | Office of Civil Rights complaint
 - General Counsel Paul Cady
- Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment Leadership Team
 - Associate Superintendent Jinger Gustafson
 - Title IX/Equity Coordinator Jennifer Cherry
- Anti-bullying survey and community anti-bullying task force
 - Title IX/Equity Coordinator Jennifer Cherry
- Consent decree
 - School Board Chair Tom Heidemann
- Question and answer panel
 - Anoka-Hennepin School Board



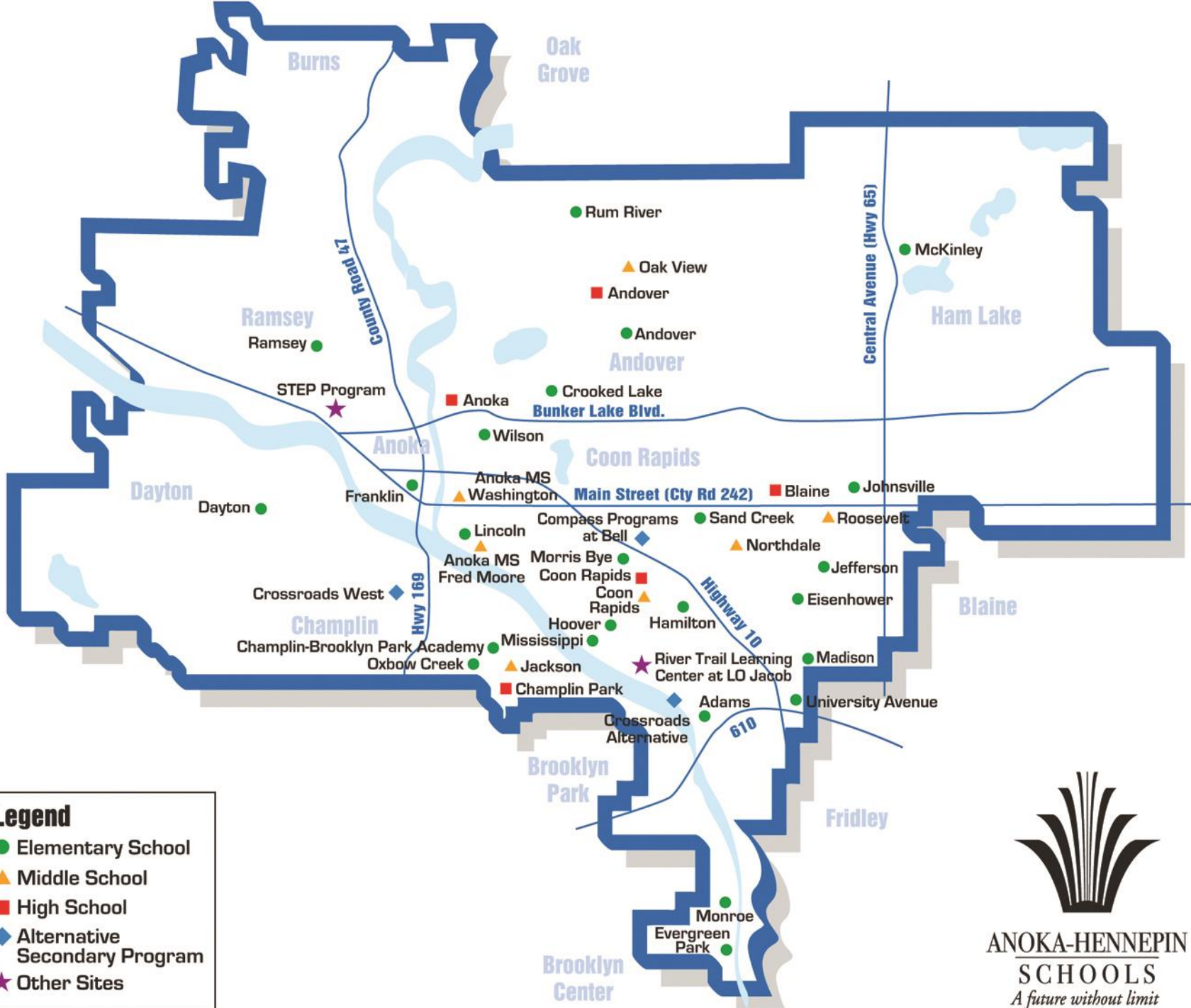
Anoka-Hennepin School District

Who are we?

Tom Heidemann
Chair, Anoka-Hennepin School Board



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Legend

- Elementary School
- ▲ Middle School
- High School
- ◆ Alternative Secondary Program
- ★ Other Sites



Demographic snapshot

- District residents:
 - 78% in Anoka County
 - 22% in Hennepin County
- 245,000 citizens
- 77,000 households
- 26.5% of adults in Anoka County have a four-year degree (lowest in metro area)
- 34% of households have children attending our schools
 - Both parents work in 72% of these households
- Approximately 38,000 students
- 72% of households with students, both parents work
- Average commute is 28 minutes



Changing demographics

- Enrollment continues to decline, at a slower pace and is manageable
 - If we had space for all families who request open enrollment, our enrollment would not be declining
- Poverty grew rapidly over the last decade
- Percent of students of color is growing
- Percent of students receiving special education services is stable
- Percent of students receiving English language acquisition services is stable



School Board

Focusing on building policies, practice and programs
against bullying and harassment embraced and
Supported by a diverse community.

Tom Heidemann
Chair, Anoka-Hennepin School Board



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School Board: build the foundation

Practice and policy

- No student should be bullied or harassed
- We must acknowledge the parents' role as the children's primary educator
- We will support student led groups and meet our obligation under federal law of equal access to our facilities
- We will continuously improve using data to drive decision making
- It is our responsibility to change negative behaviors within our schools to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment, not to change beliefs
- We must respect everyone's first amendment right to their belief and point of view



Mission statement

School Board adopted in 2004

- It is the primary mission of the Anoka-Hennepin School District to effectively educate each of our students for success.
 - To fulfill this mission, the school district is accountable for...
 - Providing a caring, highly trained and effective staff who use research-based best practices
 - Providing learning opportunities that meet the individual learning needs of each student
 - Monitoring student achievement to maximize each student's learning
 - Promoting high achievement for all students
 - Acknowledging parents' roles as their children's primary educators and partnering with them to increase student success
 - Improving connections with the community to foster public involvement with and understanding of our educational programs
 - Providing a safe and respectful learning environment
 - Using all resources efficiently and effectively



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Core values

School Board adopted in 1993

- The Anoka-Hennepin core values are the foundation for educating for character.
 - *Respect*: to show consideration for self, others and property
 - *Responsibility*: to carry out obligations in a dependable manner; to acknowledge the consequences and rewards of one's choices; to contribute to society
 - *Appreciation of diversity*: to recognize and honor the dignity of each individual; to celebrate differences among culture, gender, ability; to work cooperatively with others and to resolve conflicts
 - *Integrity*: to display honesty, perseverance, confidence and pride, trustworthiness and the courage of one's convictions
 - *Compassion*: to show empathy, generosity, kindness, patience and sensitivity



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Guiding principles

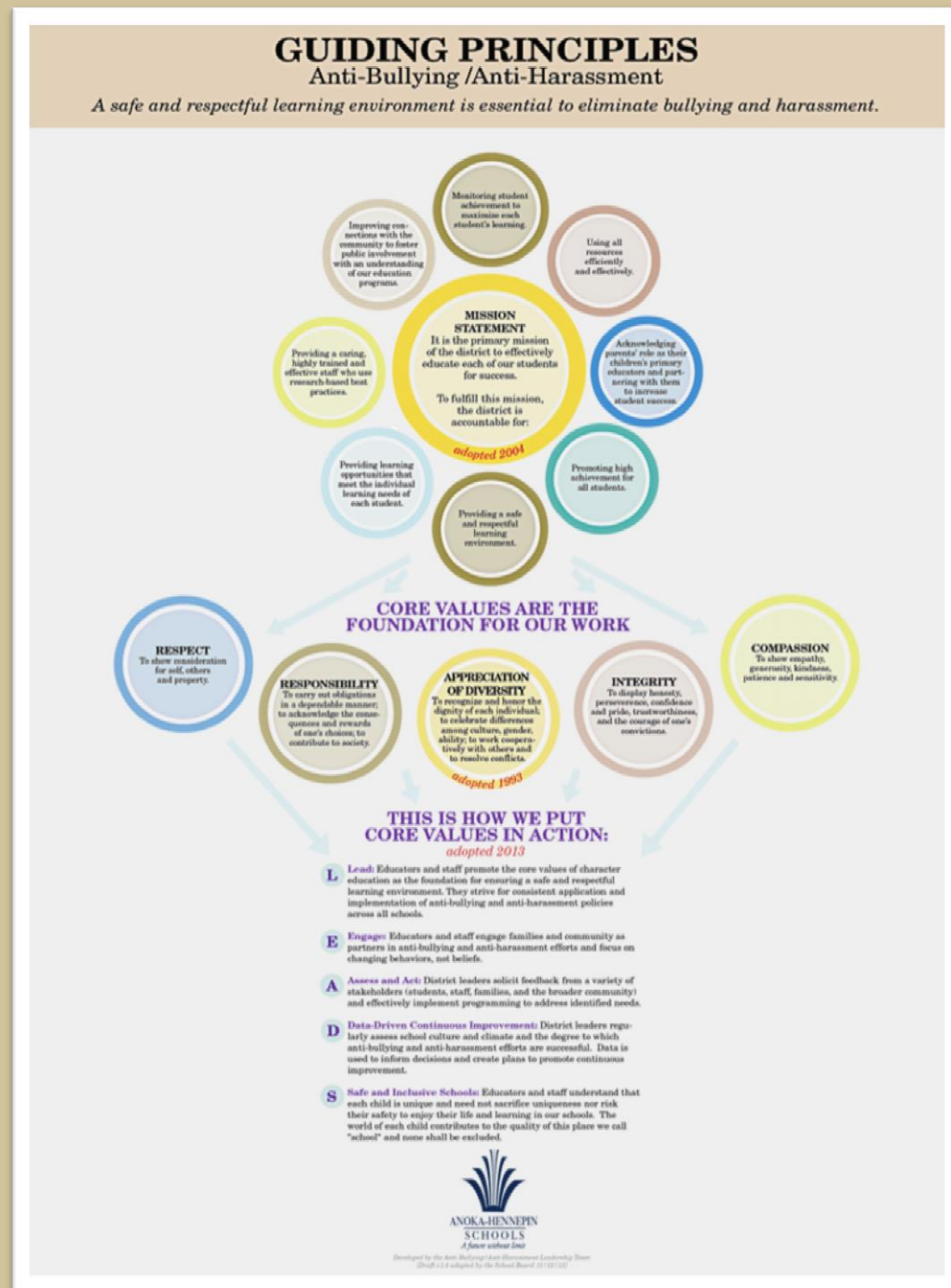
School Board adopted in 2013

- The following drive the programming that is implemented to promote a safe and respectful learning environment.
 - *Lead*: educators and staff promote the core values of character education as the foundation for ensuring a safe and respectful learning environment. They strive for consistent application and implementation of anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies across all schools.
 - *Engage*: educators and staff engage families and community as partners in anti-bullying and anti-harassment efforts and focus on changing behaviors, not beliefs.
 - *Assess and act*: district leaders solicit feedback from a variety of stakeholders (students, staff, families and the broader community) and effectively implement programming to address identified needs.
 - *Data-driven continuous improvement*: district leaders regularly assess school culture and climate and the degree to which anti-bullying and anti-harassment efforts are successful. Data is used to inform decisions and create plans to promote continuous improvement.
 - *Safe and inclusive schools*: educators and staff understand that each child is unique and need not sacrifice uniqueness nor risk their safety to enjoy their life and learning in our schools. The world of each child contributes to the quality of this place we call “school” and none shall be excluded.



Mission, core values and guiding principles

Communicated consistently throughout the organization and community



School Board governance role

The School Board is actively engaged with increased funding, updated policies and consistent and regular communication of how important this work is



School Board governance role

Funding, policies and communication

- Policies up-to-date and in compliance with state and federal law
- Annual cost for program enhancements is \$500,000
 - Staff training absorbed into existing professional development budgets
- Classroom curriculum aligned to Minnesota State Standard and not changed as part of this work
- Monitoring progress and implementing many of the suggestions from the community task force
 - Status update at least quarterly at regularly scheduled School Board meeting
- School Board representative assigned to the Anoka-Hennepin Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment Leadership Team



School Board

Today's reality and point of departure

- Completed implementation of consent decree with Department of Justice (DOJ) and Office of Civil Rights (OCR)
 - Voluntary agreement focused on what is good for kids
 - 90% built on program and practice already in place
 - Investing in program and kids rather than litigation
- Great progress in developing a national model
 - One community united in the belief that no one deserves to be bullied or harassed



School Board

Today's reality and point of departure

- Baseline data in place allowing for critical analysis of bullying and harassment incident reports and student, community and employee attitude/perception
 - Used to inform future action on where we can improve
 - Provide our taxpayers, which have invested in these programs, concrete proof that our nationally recognized best practice is working
- The data indicates that the work of Anoka-Hennepin teachers, parents and staff in eliminating bullying and harassment is improving the school environment for all students
- The data is encouraging, we know that there are still areas for improvement



Continuous improvement

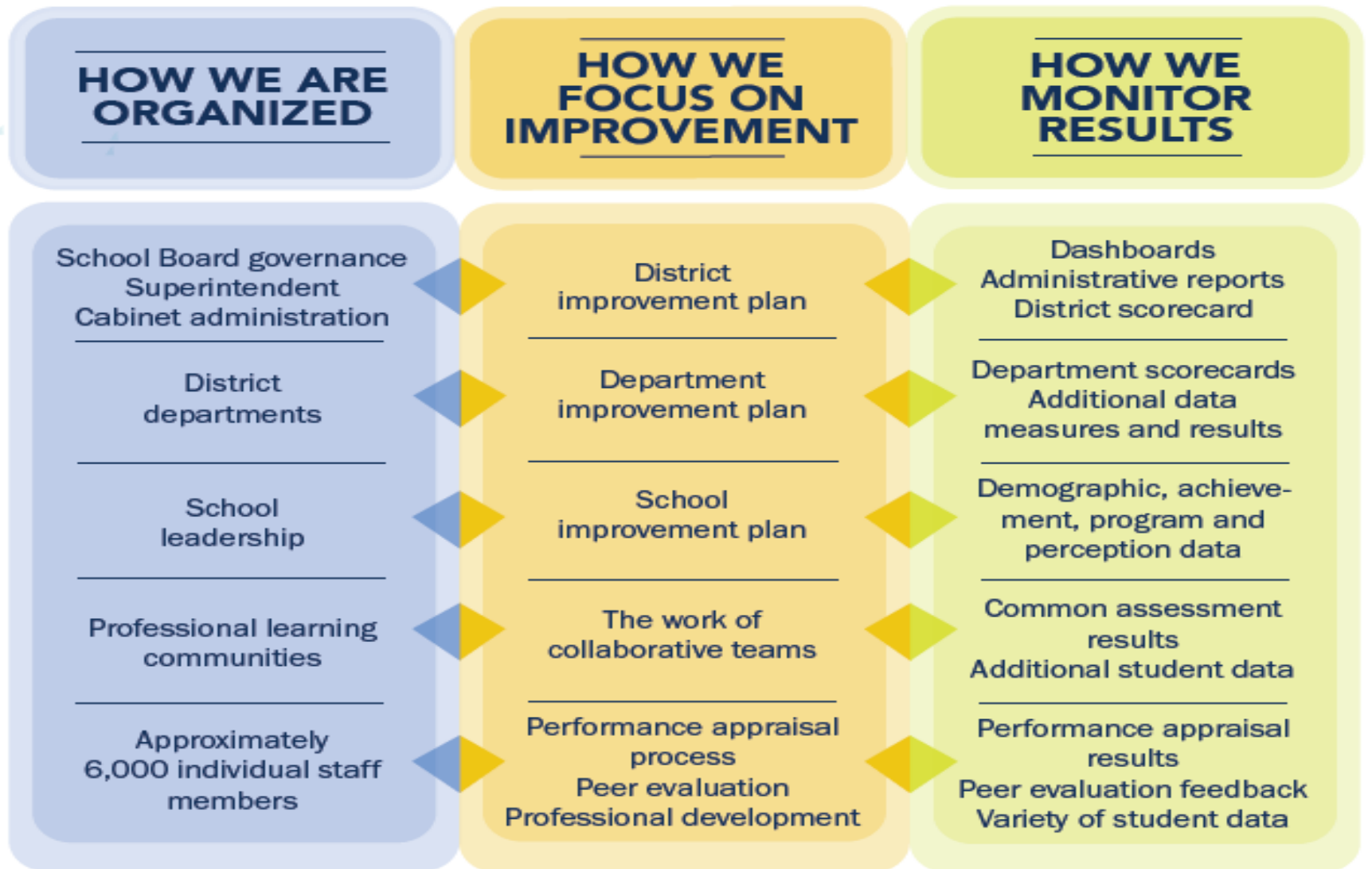
Building it into our culture to improve student achievement
and create safe learning environments

Dr. Jinger Gustafson
Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools



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Committed to continuous improvement



Continuous improvement model

4) Follow the improvement plan

- a) Identify input and feedback loops
- b) Engage stakeholders
- c) Monitor progress

1) Assess program effectiveness

- a) Strengths
- b) Weaknesses
- c) Opportunities
- d) Challenges

3) Create an improvement plan

- a) Collect data
- b) Identify action steps
- c) Plan professional development
- d) Develop budget
- e) Develop an evaluation

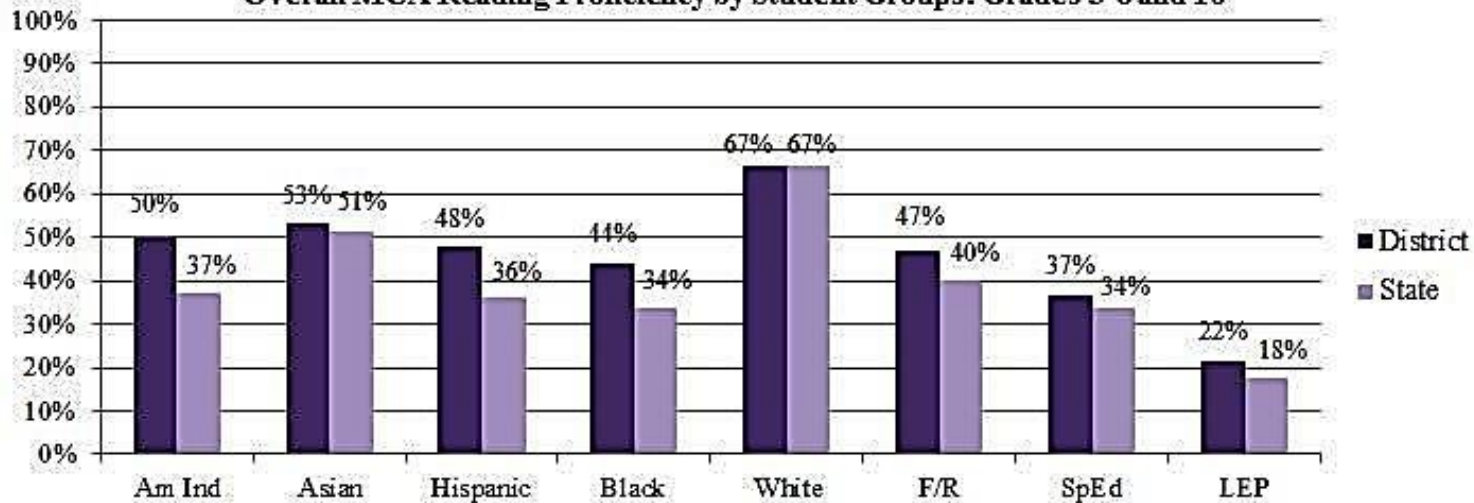
2) Identify need for improvement

- a) Curriculum
- b) Assessment
- c) Professional development
- d) Instruction
- e) Program change

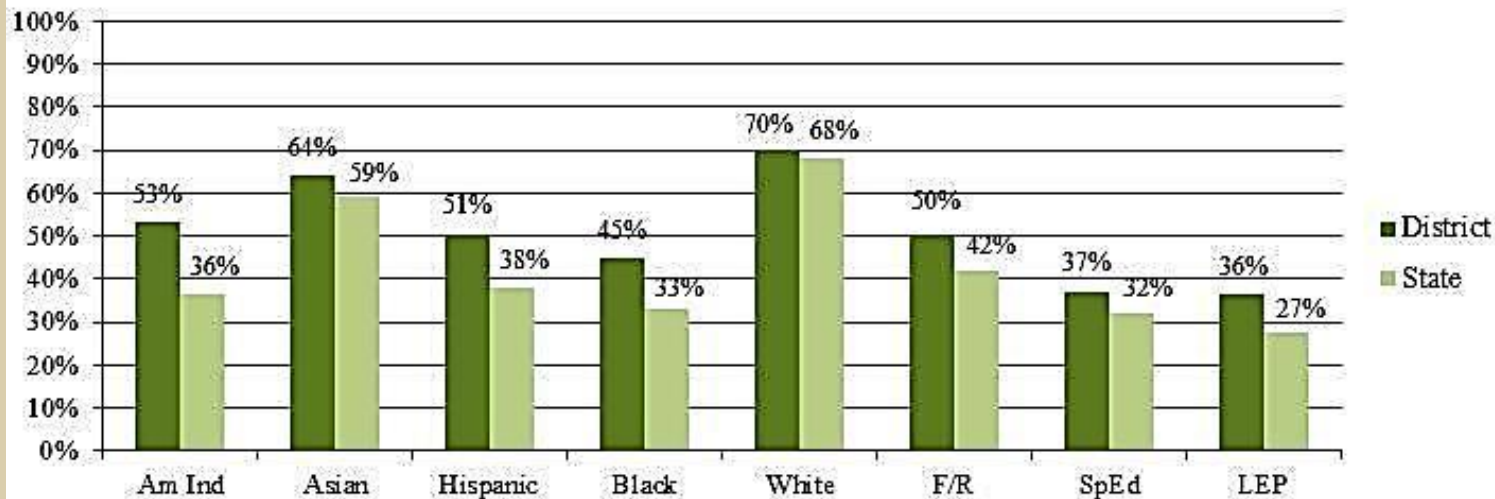


Reading and math proficiency

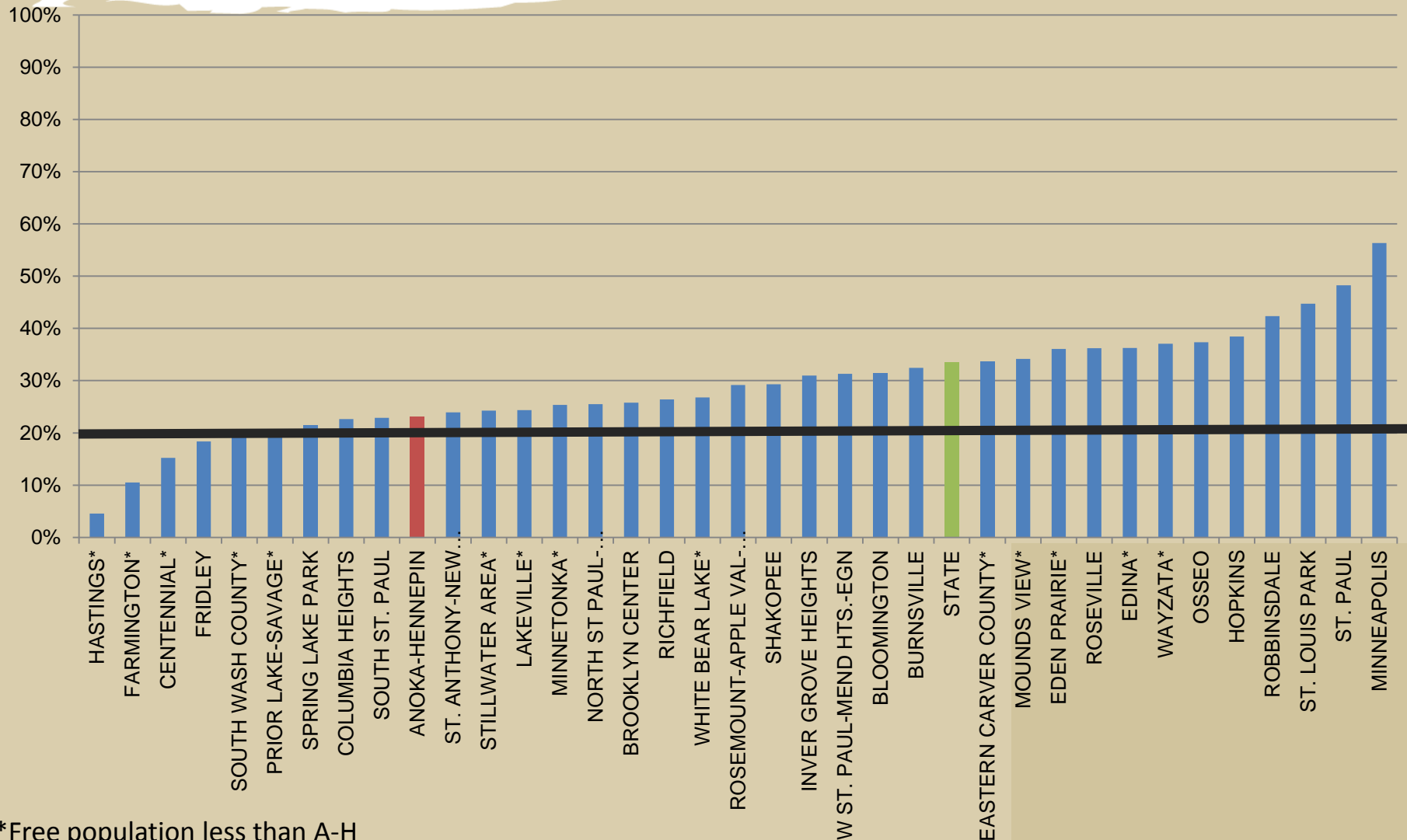
Overall MCA Reading Proficiency by Student Groups: Grades 3-8 and 10



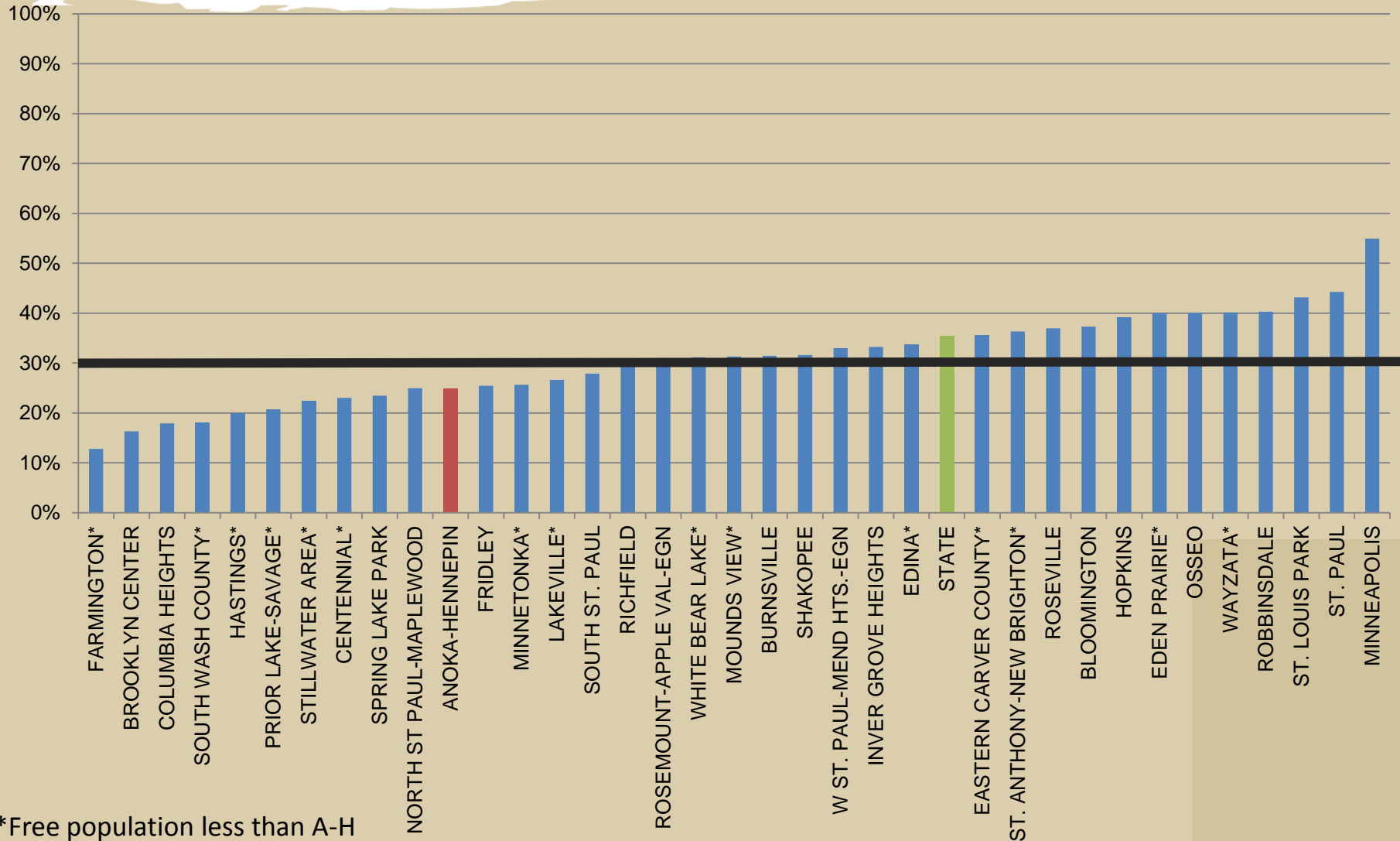
Overall MCA Math Proficiency by Student Groups: Grades 3-8 and 11



2014 Black-White MCA reading achievement gap



2014 Black-White MCA math achievement gap



*Free population less than A-H

Student perception data

Survey	Sample of Respondents	Administration Year	Findings related to level of agreement that <u>school is safe</u>
Parent Attitude and Satisfaction Survey	All Parents – web In 2013, HS parents – phone In 2014, MS and Alternative sites parents - phone	2013	Elem (web): 94% MS (web): 95% HS (web): 88% HS (phone): 96%
		2014	Elem (web): 97% MS (web): 95% HS (web): 92% MS (phone): 99% Alt. sites (phone): 99%
Community Survey	Parents selected as part of the community survey (phone)	2012	94%
		2013	87%
		2014	95%
Employee Engagement Survey	All Anoka-Hennepin Staff Members	2012-13	92.3%
		2013-14	94.2%

Department of Justice and Office of Civil Rights complaint

History and background

Paul Cady
General Counsel, Anoka-Hennepin School District



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DOJ/OCR

Complaint and investigation

- November 2010: Department of Justice complaint- investigation
 - “We have received a complaint concerning allegations of harassment and discrimination in the Anoka-Hennepin School District based on sex, including peer-on-peer harassment based on not conforming to gender stereotypes. In addition, it has come to our attention through various media outlets that students in the district [who had recently committed suicide]. . . may have been the victims of incidents of bullying and harassment.”
- June 2011: DOJ/OCR raised concerns of harassment, but issued no written findings, conclusions, or results



Plaintiff's complaints

- July and August 2011: lawsuit filed
 - Alleges Sexual Orientation Curriculum Policy violates the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution
 - Alleges that six former or current students were bullied, harassed or discriminated against on the basis of sex, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; and that the district has not appropriately responded to the bullying causing a hostile educational environment



District investigation and findings

- A thorough investigation conducted by outside attorneys revealed that when bullying was reported:
 - Staff did respond
 - Staff took appropriate action
- “Our staff did their jobs. We support our staff and believe they were professional and caring in their duties.”
–*Board Chair Tom Heidemann*



Mediated settlement reached

- August 2011: parties agreed to mediate their disputes in federal court
- District reached a mediated settlement with:
 - Department of Justice
 - Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights
 - Six students who alleged that staff did not appropriately intervene to stop bullying and harassment
- March 5, 2012: the School Board approved a consent decree that outlines conditions of the settlement



The consent decree details

A voluntary agreement built on work already in place within the Anoka-Hennepin School District



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District embraces continuous improvement

- Anoka-Hennepin is a leader in anti-bullying efforts since first anti-bullying prevention campaign in 2003
- Improvements can always be made
- Five-year partnership with the Department of Justice “will significantly strengthen our anti-bullying and anti-harassment programs, policies and procedures.”
–Former Superintendent Dennis Carlson



Summary of consent decree requirements for the district

- Retain an equity consultant
- Review and revise policies
- Retain a Title IX/equity coordinator
- Designate Title IX persons at each middle and high school
- Retain a mental health consultant



Summary of consent decree requirements for the district

- Review and improve the effectiveness of the anti-bullying survey
- Expand anti-bullying/anti-harassment task force
- Identify harassment hot spots
- Training program for staff
- Training program for students



Summary of consent decree requirements for the district

- Develop peer leadership program
- Continue superintendent meetings with students
- Prepare and submit reports to the United States to monitor and assess effectiveness of Anoka-Hennepin's efforts



Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment Leadership Team

Background and current work

Dr. Jinger A. Gustafson, Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools
Dr. Jennifer Cherry, Title IX/Equity Coordinator



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Knowing our efforts since 2003

Programming, training and supports

- Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment
 - Board policies:
 - Equal Educational Opportunity
 - Harassment, Violence and Discrimination
 - Bullying Prohibition including cyber bullying
 - Student Discipline including Language of Harassment
 - Bullying survey: 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th grade
 - Discipline videos: middle and high school
 - Peer mediation and peer leadership
 - Prevention programming
 - Bully poster contest: K-12
 - Employee training



Prompted the question

Systemic thinking

- We have several individual school initiatives and a few district-wide efforts surrounding programs, trainings and supports; however, what are we doing systemically throughout our organization supporting Superintendent Carlson's Fall 2010 message to all staff:
 - “Bullying and harassment of our gay students, our students of color, our poor students, our fragile students with special needs will not be tolerated.”
 - Former Superintendent Dennis Carlson



Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment Leadership Team: diverse representation

School Board

- Chair of the School Board

Building Administration

- Principal of Compass Programs

Employee Services

- Director of Employee Services
- Manager of Employee Services

Legal

- General Counsel

Communication/Public Relations

- Director of Communications

Research, Evaluation and Testing

- Director of Research, Evaluation and Testing

Parent Involvement

- Coordinator of Parent Involvement

Student Services

- Director of Student Services
- Prevention Coordinator (Teacher on Special Assignment)

Student Support Resources

- Title IX Coordinator
- K -12 Lead School Social Worker

Team Leader

- Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools



Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment

Employee professional development

Required training for all employees

Designated person training

Supplemental training for targeted groups

District policies and procedures, state and federal laws, diversity, equity, and inclusion.



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Required training

Staff working directly with students

- Eliminating bullying and harassment
 - Annual anti-bullying/anti-harassment training for all employees, delivered online
- Culturally responsive teaching (CRT)
 - Presentation facilitated by district CRT Support Team members in each secondary school
- Policy review
 - Employees receive policies upon hire, and then acknowledge reading each year
 - Harassment, Violence and Discrimination Policy
 - Bullying (including Cyberbullying) Prohibition Policy



Eliminating bullying and harassment

Employee training demo



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Additional training

Specific groups of staff

- Ensuring safe and supportive schools*
 - Title IX/equity coordinator
- School-based mental health*
 - Mental health consultant
- Culturally responsive teaching*
 - Equity teaching and learning specialist
- Bridges, Barriers, and Boundaries: Ensuring Culturally Competent Care for LGBT Youth**
 - Robin McHaelen, Our True Colors, Inc.
- Navigating Difficult Conversations (implementing Respectful Learning Environment Curriculum Policy)**
 - Johanna Eager, Tracy Flynn, Cheryl Greene, Welcoming Schools

*Sessions delivered during new teacher workshop

**Sessions delivered on professional development days



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Additional training

Specific groups of staff

- Cultural competency and courageous practice
 - Garry Howard, consultant
 - Train-the-trainer cohort-based model. District CRT Support Team developed to assist in supporting the work. School leaders have been identified to carry on the work with staff within schools.
- Practical application of culturally responsive teaching
 - District CRT Support Team
 - Support for school-based teams
- Educational Non-Verbal Yardsticks (ENVoY)
 - Jackie Brickman, consultant
 - School-based cohorts (primarily elementary staff)
- Restitution
 - Diane Gossen and Judy Anderson, consultants; Anoka-Hennepin administration
 - Individual classrooms to building-wide efforts



How we operate

Internal leadership team

Anoka-Hennepin Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment Leadership Team:

- Uses a systemic focus while providing individual opportunities for sites to address unique needs;
- Considers the phases of the work as fluid; and
- Will continue to seek input and feedback throughout phases of this work, based on measurable outcomes, which will then drive the next phase of the work.



Guiding Principles

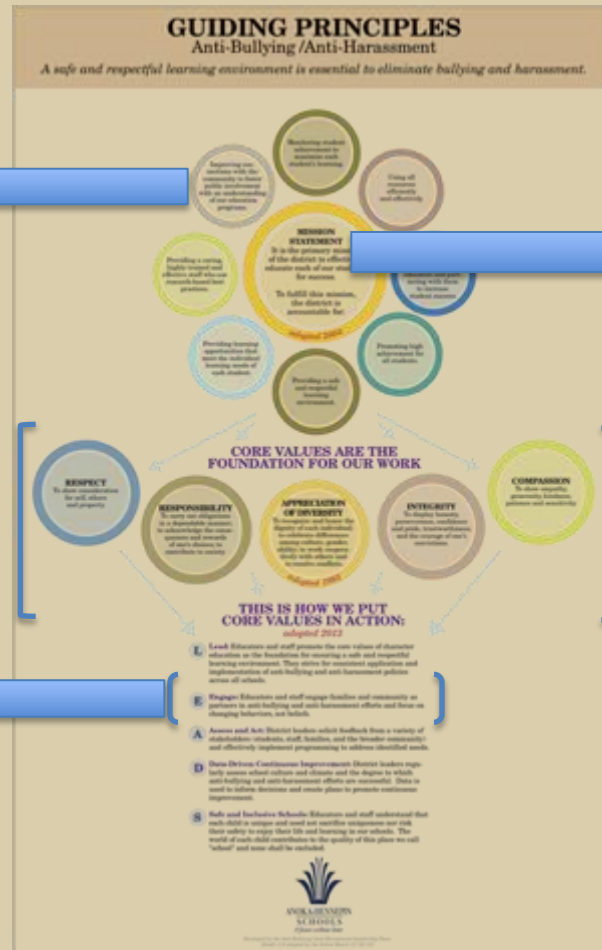
Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment Leadership Team

Vision:

Inspires and motivates.

L-E-A-D-S:

How we put our core values into action



Mission statement:
Clarifies what we excel at in Anoka-Hennepin.

Core values:
Foundation of our work.



Anti-Bullying/Anti-Harassment Task Force

Community engagement

Dr. Jennifer Cherry
Title IX/Equity Coordinator

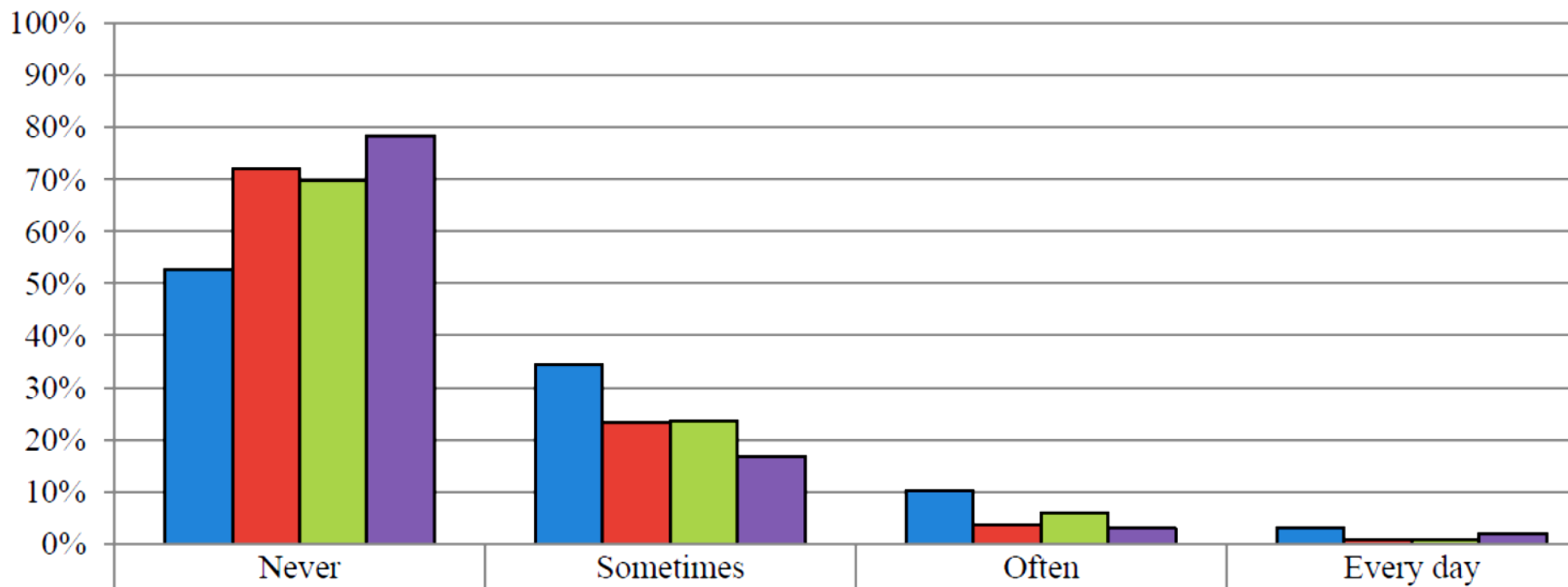


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Students say...

Anti-bullying Survey (2014)

Percentage of students who reported that they have been bullied in the past month

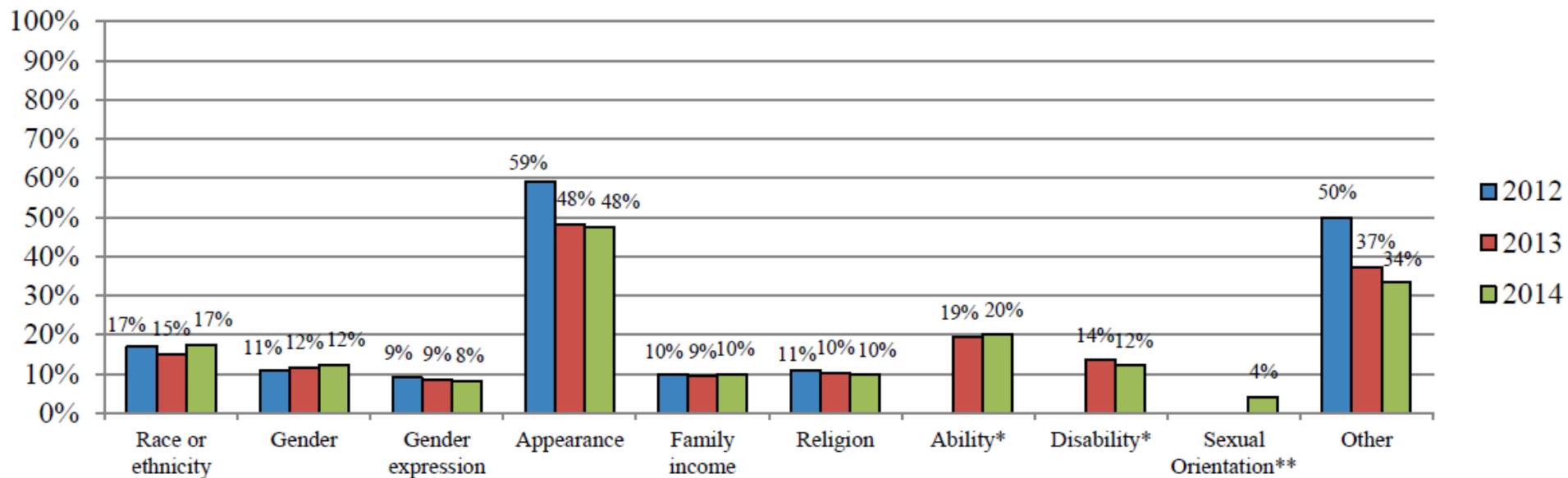


	Never	Sometimes	Often	Every day
4th grade	53%	34%	10%	3%
6th grade	72%	23%	4%	1%
8th grade	70%	24%	6%	1%
10th grade	79%	17%	3%	2%

Students say...

Anti-bullying Survey (2014)

I have been bullied because of:
 (Percent out of students reporting on this item that they have been bullied)



- Indicates this was not a response option in 2012. In 2012, these choices appeared as the option 'ability/disability,' with 18% of students selecting this option.*
- Sexual orientation was a new response option for secondary students only in 2014.**
- Note: Top three open-ended responses to "other" included: (1) height or weight, (2) personality or how they act, and (3) who they hang out with.

Community engagement

Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment Task Force

- Convened October 2012 to advise the district regarding how best to foster a positive educational climate free of bullying and harassment.
 - Student, staff, parent and other community members
- Charge of the task force:
 - Bring forth concerns of students and parents related to harassment incidents and the district's overall climate
 - Recommend strategies to prevent harassment and improve the educational climate
 - Outreach strategies to parents and families to build awareness around, address concerns related to, and gain feedback regarding the district's anti-harassment efforts



Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment Task Force

- First annual report included nine recommendations
 - School Board directed an internal leadership team to develop a plan for addressing the task force recommendations (July 2013)
 - Internal leadership team identified actionable items and updated School Board (October 2013)
- Second annual report included five recommendations
 - School Board directed internal leadership team to develop into actionable items while considering community input (June 2014)
 - Internal leadership team has brought four of the five recommendations back to School Board for action and/or updates



Questions and answers



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