

Racial and Socio-Economic Equity Issues in Jefferson County Public Schools

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At the Third Thursday Lunch Series
of the Fellowship of Reconciliation
January 18, 2018

Audience Connections to JCPS

Former JCPS Students?

Parents, grandparents, etc. of current students?

How many of you are in PTA?

Former JCPS teachers or staff?

No direct connection now?

Buckle Up! I'm Hoping To Cover...

- My caveats and assumptions
- JCPS 101-- The district numbers
- Growing Gaps: Academic equity outcomes
- Equity in discipline consequences
- Adequate funding for equity
- Critical actions for you all
- Q&A on specific issues

My Caveats & Starting Assumptions

These are my opinions, not necessarily all shared by organizations to which I belong:

1. Improving our schools is, first, a moral obligation. Our community's children have a right to the help and resources to reach their potential, so our community can do likewise.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” — [James Baldwin](#)

2. There is structural racism and classism (and other “-isms”) built into the community’s institutions, and JCPS is no exception.

3. The district is doing precisely what it has been built and funded to do, and marginalized kids are suffering because of that.

4. We all own some part of that continuing outcome.

5. Answers already exist.

JCPS 101--What Does JCPS Look Like?

- Largest in Kentucky; 28th largest in US
- 172 schools
- 13,000+ employees; 6,600 teachers
- 80 % of Jefferson County kids attend JCPS.
- 66 magnet schools and programs.
- Three JCPS schools are in Kentucky's Top 10, and we have a proportional share of Natl Merit Scholars and teachers with National Board Certification.
- 18 "Priority" schools (NCLB language for lowest performing 5% statewide)

What Do JCPS Students Look Like?

- We are already Global majority—56% nonwhite
 - African American—37%; with ~85% Free/Reduced Lunch” (FRL—low income)
 - LatinX—11%; with ~80% FRL
 - Other-- 8%
- White students—44%; with ~60% FRL

What Do JCPS Students Look Like?

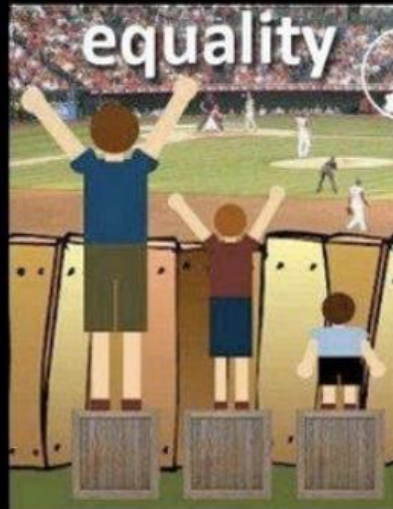
~100,000 students total

- 2/3 are from poor or low-income homes (FRL)
- ~12,000-13,000 students with disabilities (ECE)
- ~7,000 English as a second language
- ~6,000 Homeless (no regular, adequate home)
- 3/4 are in one or more Federal “underserved” categories—African American, Hispanic/LatinX, special needs (ECE), English language learners (ELL/LEP), FRL
- 1/4 are “nongap”—more advantaged-- students, mostly white, middle/ upper income

Growing Gaps: Academic Equity Outcomes

JCPS Vision 2020: Equity is about Outcomes

“ All students receive an education that gives them what they need to thrive through differentiated supports focused on removing social factors as a predictor of success.”



Equality = SAMENESS

Equality is about SAMENESS, it promotes fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing.

BUT it can **only work IF everyone starts from the SAME place**, in this example equality only works if everyone is the same height.



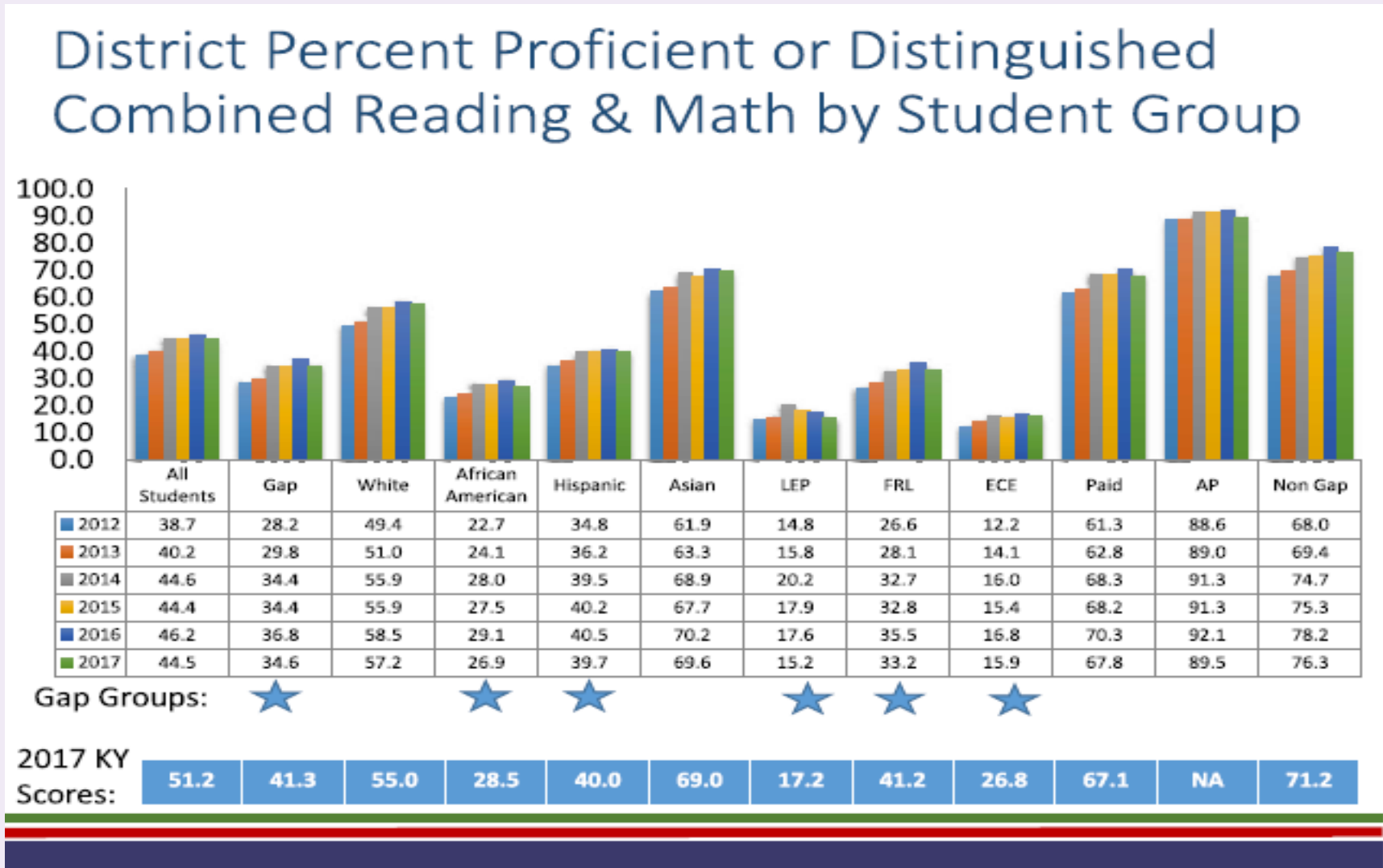
Equity = FAIRNESS

EQUITY is about FAIRNESS, it's about making sure people get access to the same opportunities.

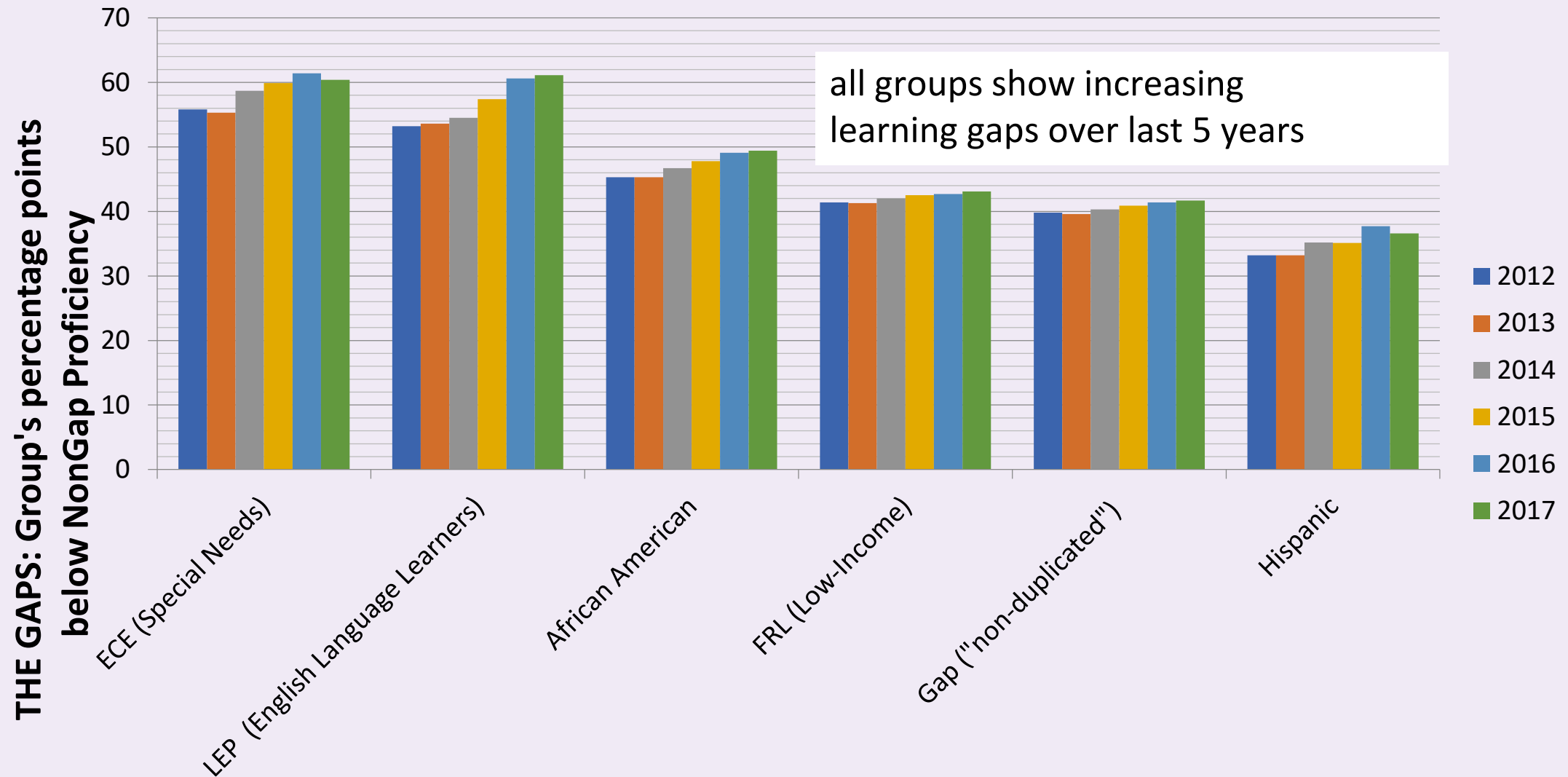
Sometimes our differences and/or history, can create barriers to participation, so we must **FIRST ensure EQUITY** before we can enjoy equality.

Donna Y. Ford

Learning is Improving in All Groups

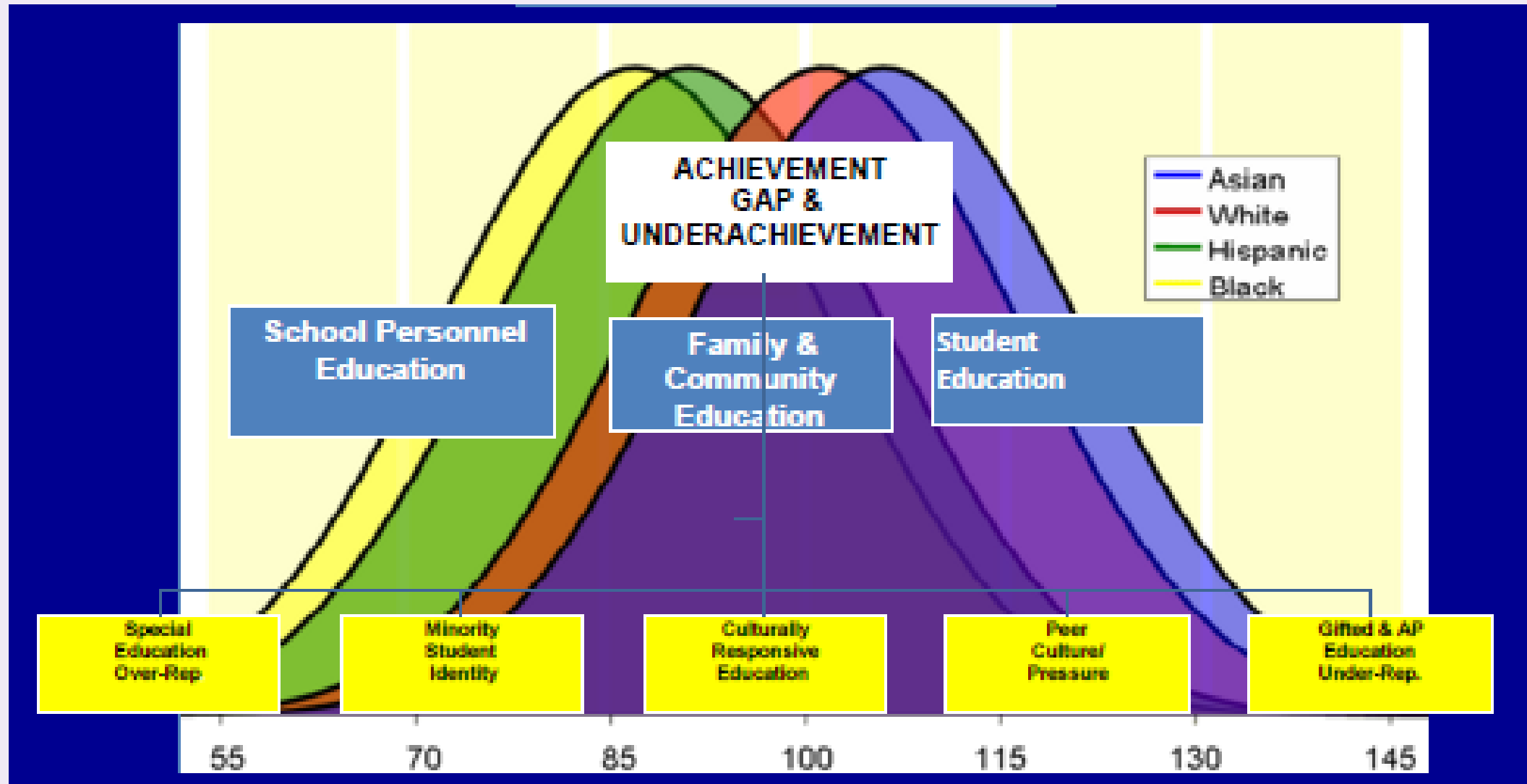


But The Gaps Are Also Growing



From JCPS 2017 proficiency results, by Fellowship of Reconciliation

Learning Gaps Across the Spectrum



The Impact on Lives, By The Averages

- Less competitive in careers, regardless of potential
- Generational poverty: By 2020, 2/3 of all jobs will require some form post-secondary education (Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- School-to-prison pipeline: 85 percent of all juveniles who come into the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate. So are 60 percent of all prison inmates.
- Doing what you have to do to survive. Or not...
- Less access to self-directed lifetime learning throughout life and less ability to impact civic issues as informed citizen

We Know What's Working Here

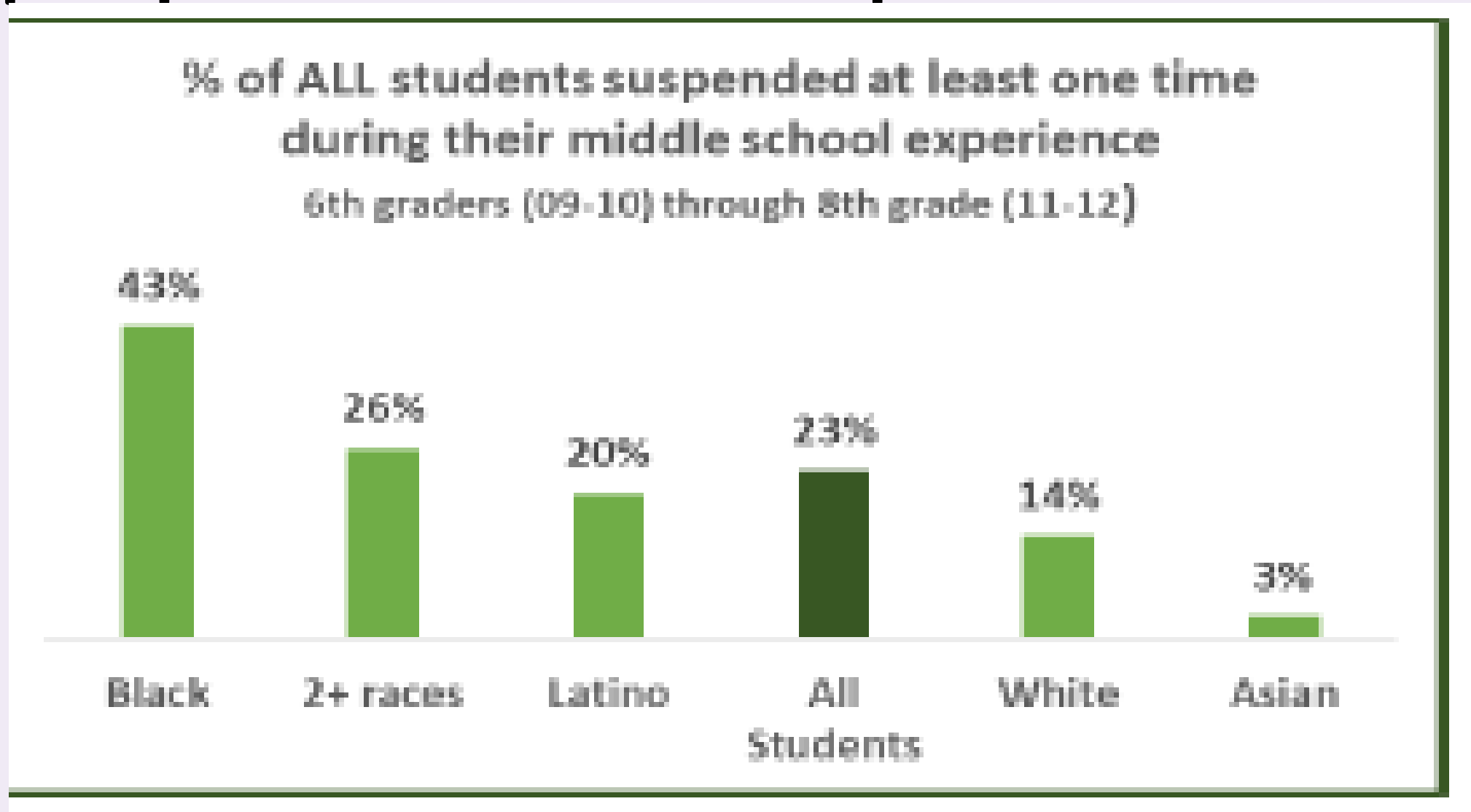
- Pre-K Childhood Education with Certified Teachers
- Targeted K-3 Learning interventions
- Continuing professional development for teachers and time for teachers to spend extra time with struggling students
- Wrap-around social services and trauma –informed care
- Building classroom environments that start with higher expectations and foster a sense of belonging and of engagement
- And yes, students from low-income households not being concentrated in school (i.e., extreme high-poverty schools >81% FRL)
- Language support for students and parents

And More Evidence-Based Approaches in Pilots

- Restorative Practice
- Socio-Emotional Learning
- Deeper Learning—project-, and often, team-based work blending disciplines on real-world problems measured by products of presentations, not tests.
- Academies of Louisville, the new vocational approach with promise
- Males of Color Academy
- *But they must be expanded beyond pilots to impact all the students, which takes staff hours, more training, careful implementation—and money!*

Equity in Discipline Consequences

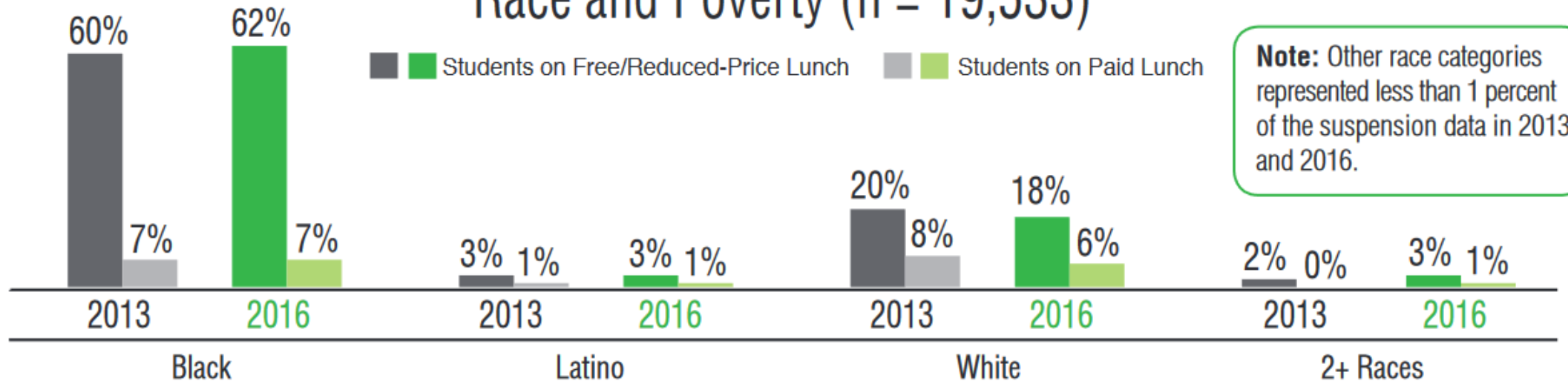
Disproportionate Discipline Outcomes



Interaction of Race and Socio-Economic Outcomes

Black students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch account, by far, for the largest share of suspended students. (In 2016, 62 percent of suspensions were black students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.) This is an issue that should be explored in more depth to gain a better understanding of the root causes. Lunch status appears to be a stronger predictor for suspension than ethnicity.

% of Suspensions Represented by Student Groups:
Race and Poverty (n = 19,533)



Race and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

	White Students	Black Students
School resource Officer (SRO) involvement	83	268
Arrests	18	156

SY 17 data from KDE District Report Card

Some Contributing Factors in Disproportionate Consequences

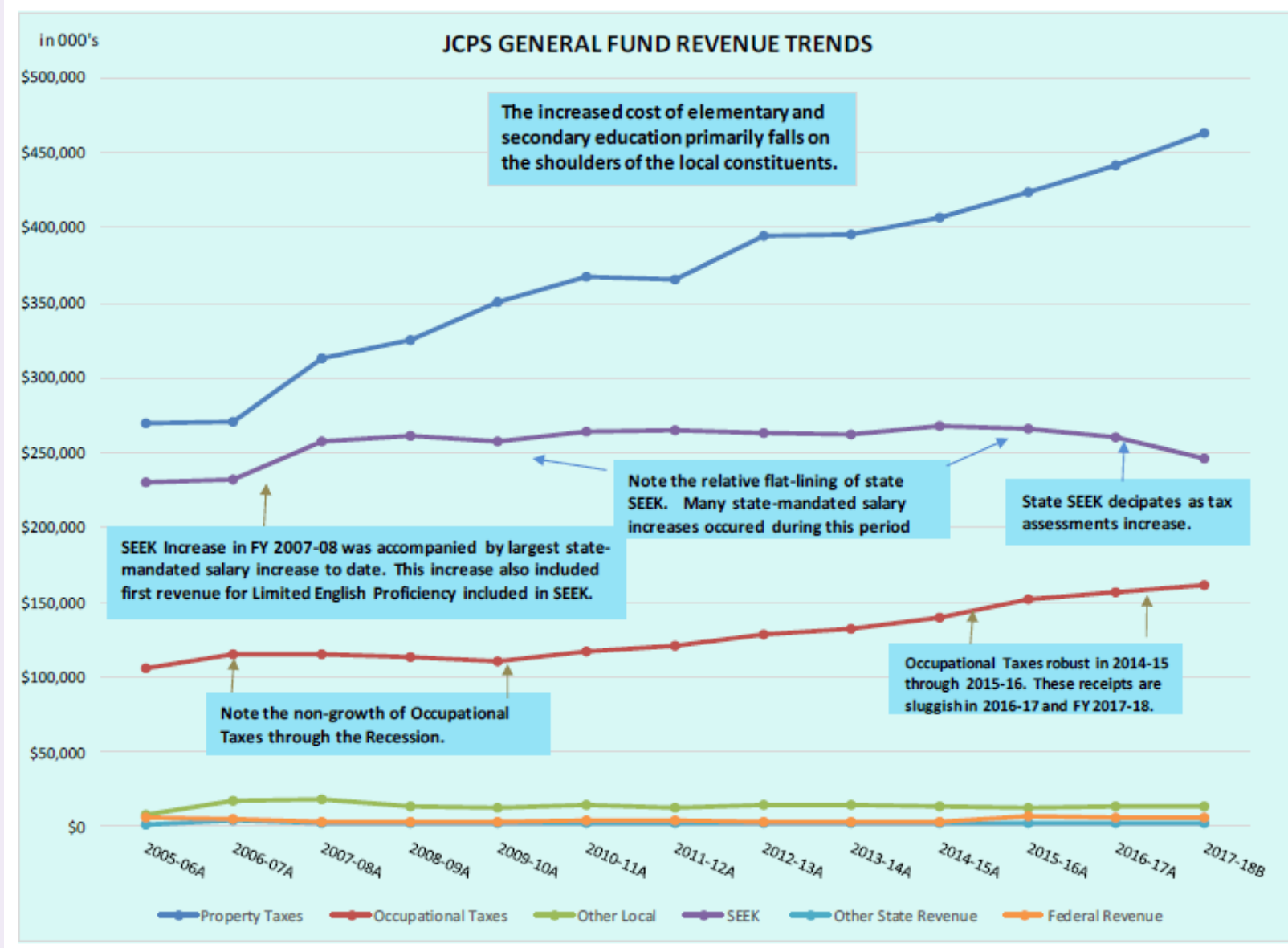
- Lack of staff awareness of trauma of poverty and its family impacts
- Lack of student focus from poor nutrition, neighborhood incidents
- Acting out from being behind academically and not catching up.
- Staff's overt or unknowing bias around expectations academically and behaviorally, combined with student "critical consciousness"
- Poor teacher preparation in college for urban classroom climate
- Teachers and students who do not look like each other
- Cultural competence/appreciation
- Curriculum relevance

What Works (Suspension and Current Alternative Schools Don't)

- Relationships—and that takes time and cultural competency
- Academic support and engagement
- Trauma-informed care and socio-emotional learning
- Wrap-around community/social services, including mental health services
- All staff trained to de-escalate incidents and manage their own biases
- Staff trained and aware of disability manifestations for ECE
- **Properly-implemented Restorative Practice**--Suspensions have dropped over 80 percent since L.A. Unified SD began moving away from punitive school discipline policies to more restorative practices.

Adequate Funding for Equity

State and Federal Support has Dropped



Prichard Blog Analysis-- Proposed KY Budget

SEEK GENERAL FUND DETAIL					
EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS					
	2018 Revised	2019 Recom- mended	2020 Recom- mended	2018 to 2019 Change	Added 2019 to 2020 Change
Base Funding	\$2,070.1	\$2,065.5	\$2,054.1	-\$4.6	-\$11.3
Pupil Transportation	\$225.5	\$86.9	\$86.9	-\$138.6	\$0.0
Equalized Facilities	\$124.3	\$143.2	\$139.8	\$18.9	-\$3.4
Tier I Equalization	\$170.1	\$179.2	\$176.0	\$9.1	-\$3.2
National Board Certification	\$2.8	\$2.8	\$2.8	\$0.0	\$0.0
State-Run Vocational Schools	\$22.9	\$22.9	\$22.9	\$0.0	\$0.0
Vocational Transportation	\$2.4	\$2.4	\$2.4	\$0.0	\$0.0
Teachers' Retirement	\$397.5	\$396.7	\$414.4	-\$0.8	\$17.7
SEEK Total	\$3,015.6	\$2,899.6	\$2,899.4	-\$116.0	-\$0.2

JCPS' Budget is A Moral Document

- “We do the best with the funding we have” tells us about the system’s priorities, what matters.
- It’s extension-- “Robbing Peter to pay Paul” --also has failed, largely because the biggest single expense are salaries. With so much riding on the performance of teachers, cuts there are penny wise and pound foolish
- The state makes its own decisions about funding pK-12 education. We cannot control that directly.
- We need a community conversation on whether a permanent underclass is acceptable. As it is, JCPS has reinforced that outcome

School Taxes—

Which is Least Unpopular? Least Regressive?

- Restricted Facilities “nickel” tax
- “Permissible”, Recallable Statutory options (in increasingly progressive order)
 - Utilities 3% max
 - **Occupational 0.75% max**
 - **Property (Recallable at > 4% tax revenue increase)**
 - KY Income tax excise 20% max

Wrap-Up and Calling You to Act

“Excellence with Equity” Has It Backwards

- Only 24% of Nongap/advantaged students have not yet reached proficiency.
- For the marginalized groups, it is almost reversed– only 33% of FRL students, for example, are proficient in reading and math
- Both can advance. It need not be a zero-sum game. The goal: Significant improvements in every group, with the underperforming groups moving forward faster than more advantaged groups. Only four schools (out of 155 regular schools) did that in SY16. It wasn't the focus. Yet....

Talk to your Neighbors: What is the Community Getting for our Tax Money?

- Many schools besides Manual turning out high-achieving students through AP and dual-credit coursework
- 66 magnet schools and programs
- 11 Academies (applied academics with career training)
- **Educational bargain:** Example: Cost for family of four (e.g., two students) earning \$100k/yr, living in a \$200k house and \$30k car is **$\$750 + \$1408 + 175 = \$2,333/\text{yr}$ total for two kids....**
- 70% of households don't have school-age children. They get a community with educated citizenry, a better economy and quality of life for their community.

Q&A !!

- We're recording this for WFMP-LP community FM radio 106.5. Please give your name, if you would. Stick to brief questions, not long comments. And keep it civil—*no ad hominem* attacks on people.

Some possible upcoming issues here, but your call: KDE takeover, student assignment, legislation, SROs and police, SY19 budget/taxes, alternative schools and ECE, union initiatives/needs, bias management, Gifted/Talented (and novice), facilities needs/costs

Data and Analysis Resources

- JCPS Board Meeting/Work Session materials
- Prichard Blog
- KY Center for Economic Policy
- KY Dept of Education “District Report Cards”

Groups Showing Up in Broader JCPS Advocacy

- Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools Louisville
- DearJCPS
- Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Ky Alliance against Racist and Political Repression
- League of Women Voters
- Louisville Showing Up for Racial Justice
- And groups with more focused education issues