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### Navigating School Choice with Racial/Economic Privilege

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# NAVIGATING SCHOOL CHOICE WITH RACIAL/ECONOMIC PRIVILEGE



PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

[INTEGRATED SCHOOLS - INTEGRATEDSCHOOLS.ORG](https://www.integratedschools.org)

A GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT OF, BY AND FOR PARENTS WHO ARE INTENTIONALLY, JOYFULLY AND HUMBLY ENROLLING THEIR CHILDREN IN INTEGRATING SCHOOLS.



[KANSAS CITY VOICES FOR INTEGRATION - KCVOICES.ORG](https://www.kcvoices.org)

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL INTEGRATION EFFORTS IN KANSAS CITY THROUGH INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO INFORM AND MOTIVATE PARENTS, EDUCATORS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.

# GOALS FOR TODAY

- To help you understand some of the inequities in our schools and how our current systems create these inequitable outcomes.
- To help you understand that you have power to maintain these systems or to disrupt them.
- Give you tools to disrupt these systems, and empower you to use them in your community and your family.
- Provide you with resources and support as you prepare for the journey.

# GUIDING STATEMENTS

- This is a long process. We will not realize equity during our children's school years.
- School segregation did not 'just happen.' It was created through policy and practice.
- Social change does not require the majority to be actively engaged.
- This is a brave conversation. We value openness, deep-reflection, and risk taking. Everyone should be able to speak their truth and listen to others speak theirs.
- Readiness vs. Preparedness: We cannot wait (for ourselves or others) to be ready to do this work. We must prepare and then do the work - take action, disrupt systems, seek and give support to others along this journey.

# INTRODUCTIONS

- Name, self-identification, ages of children, what brings you here.
- What has been your personal experience with segregation/integration as a child? How has it impacted you?

# CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS



Paulo Freire's educational pedagogy to liberate the masses from systemic inequity maintained and perpetuated by processes, practices and outcomes of interdependent systems and institutions. (Jemel 2017)



If people are not aware of inequity and do not act to constantly resist oppressive norms and ways of being, then the result is residual inequity in perpetuity. (Jemel 2017)



Shift focus from marginalized people and outcomes, and instead look critically at the systems that privilege some groups and marginalize others. (Freire, 2000; Rogoff, 2003; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013)

# CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS



Recognizing that our identities impact how we view and interact within systems



Resisting white supremacy norms



Shifting focus away from marginalized groups and outcomes



Looking instead to the systems in place that privilege some groups and marginalize others.

# CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS



Self-awareness – how does my identity shape my sense of self and my experiences? How does my identity shape how I view and interact with schools?



Self-examination – how does my identity inform my understandings of and my experiences with complex social problems? How does my identity shape my understandings of our schools?



Recognizing our own biases – the attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, that effect our understanding, decisions, actions, in an unconscious manner



Understanding power & privilege – Understanding that the power associated with dominant group identities and institutional power held by those dominant groups enables the biases of some individuals to contribute to reproducing or sustaining systems that oppress marginalized groups and benefit dominant groups.





# LOOKING AT KC SCHOOL DATA

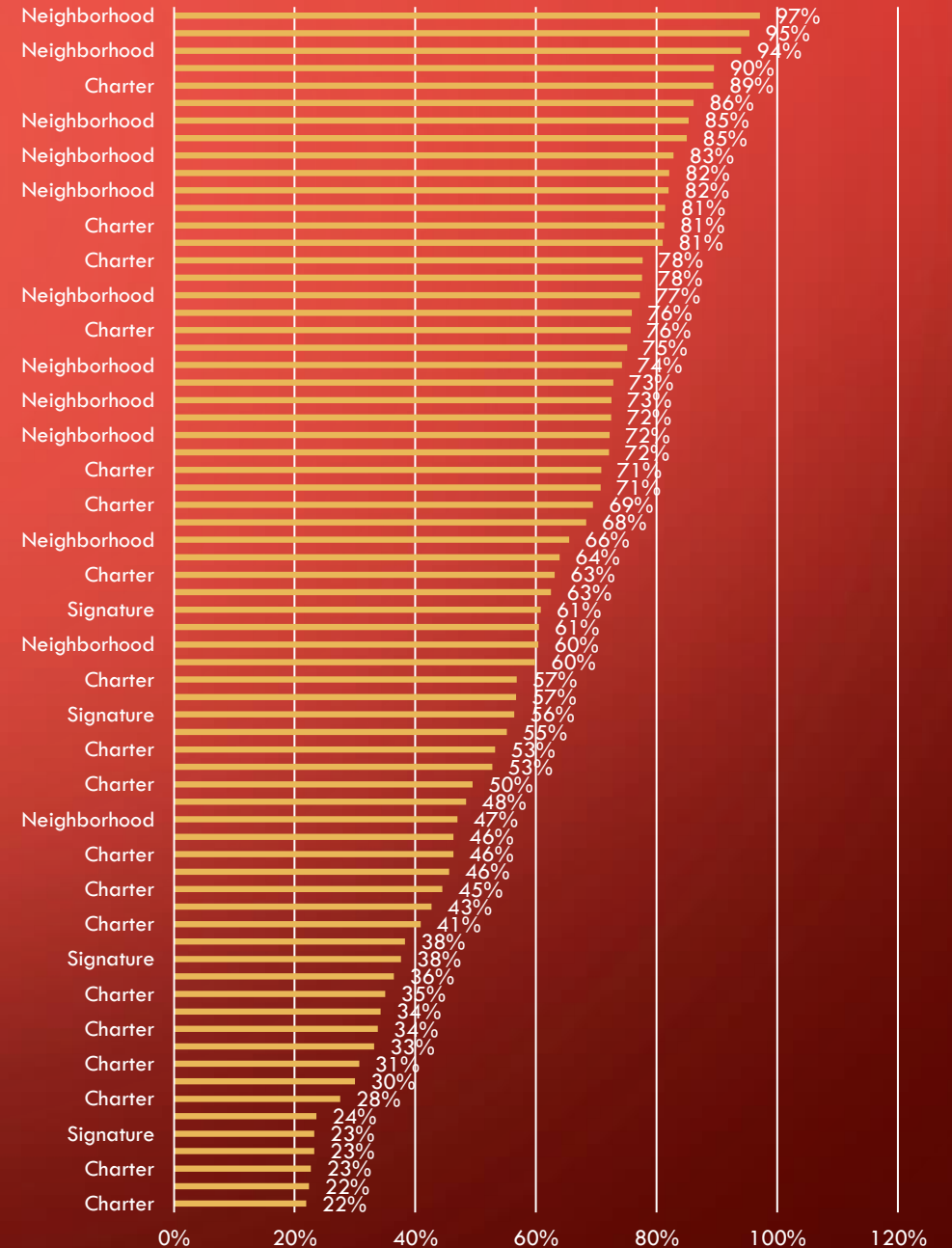
While you look at this data, think about -

- What inequities do you see?
- How does your identity impact your role in this?
- Who benefits?
- What policies are in place to advantage certain groups?
- What practices have been made to disempower certain groups?

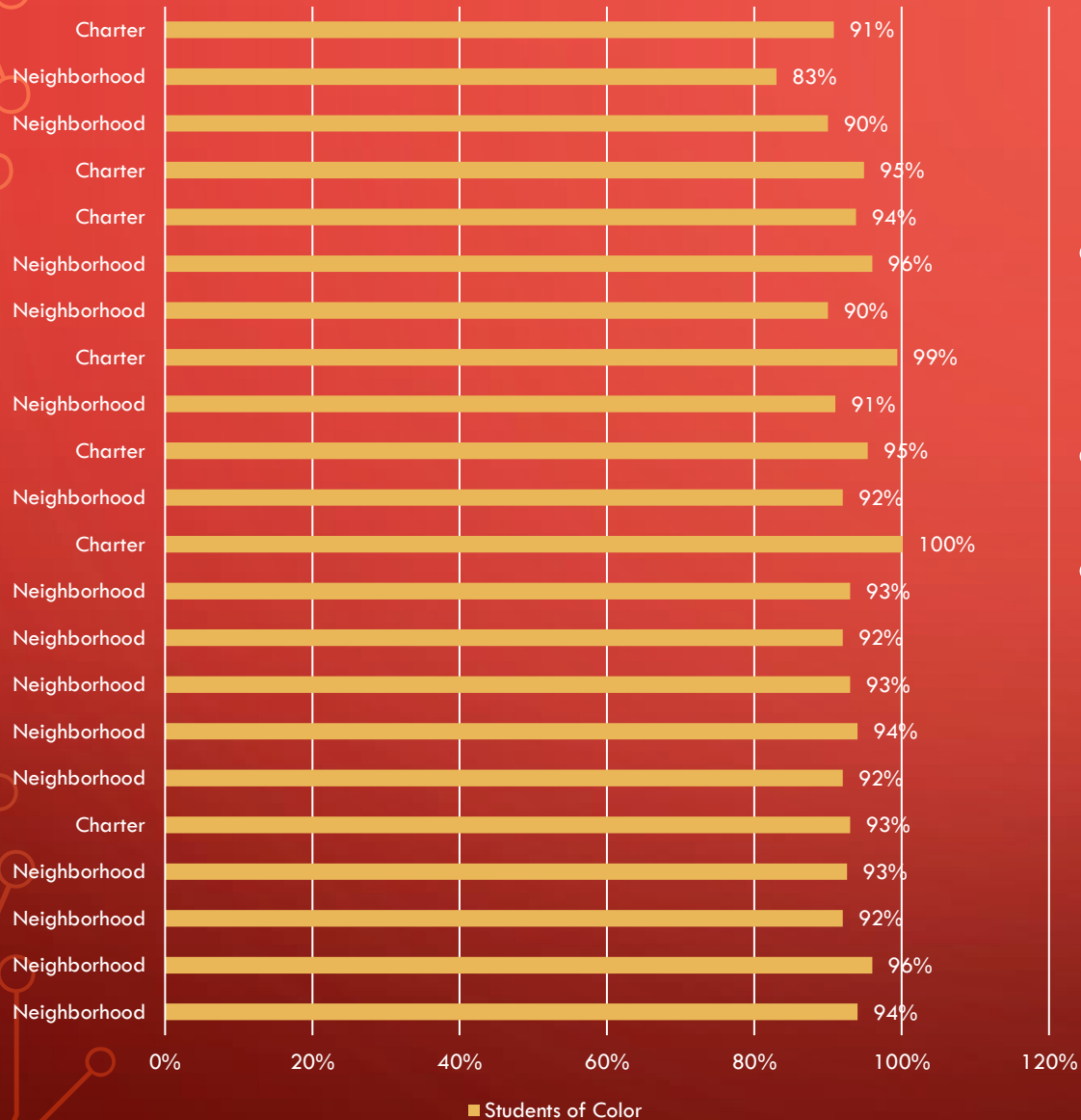
# FREE/REDUCED LUNCH

- Schools enroll between 22% - 97% students eligible for free/reduced lunch
- 60% average across public schools

Percent of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch



Enrollment of students of color at schools  
where over 70% students are eligible  
for Free/Reduced Lunch

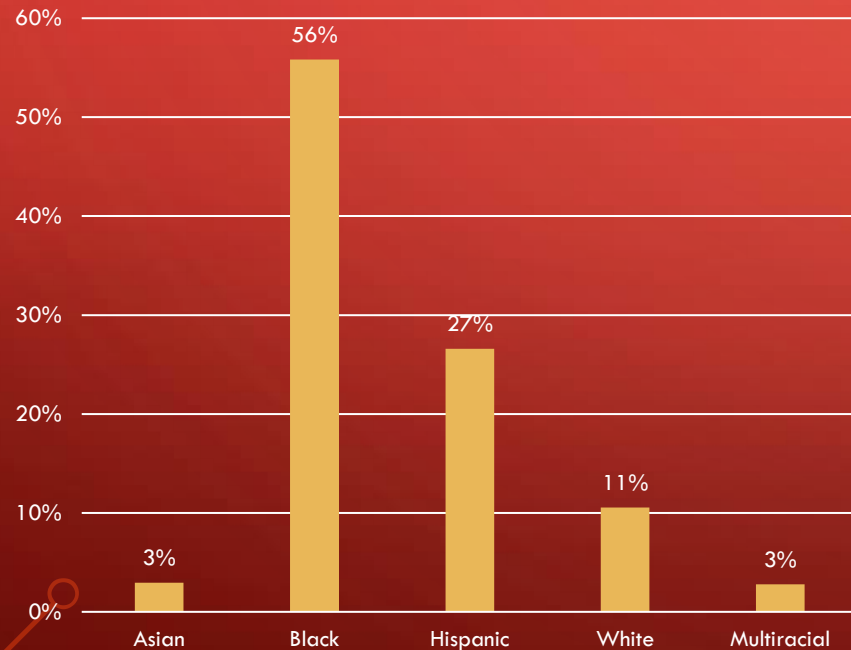


- 28 schools enroll of over 70% students eligible for free/reduced lunch
- 21 of 28 enroll over 90% students of color
- 26 of 28 enroll over 85% students of color

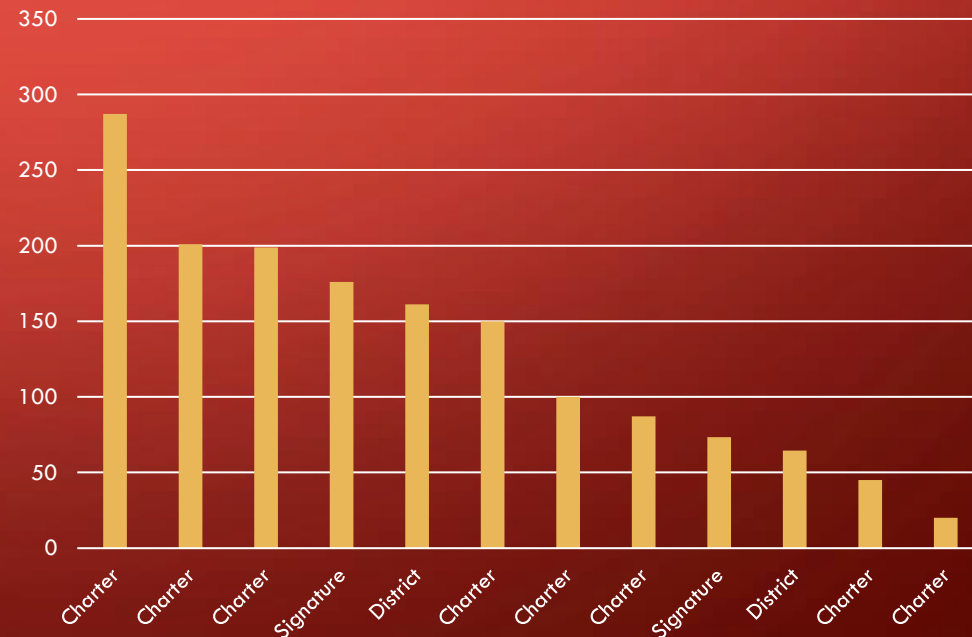
# WHITE STUDENTS

- 11% of public school students are white
- 56% are clustered in the same 12 schools where 20%+ of total enrollment is white
- 65% of white elementary students are enrolled in just 8 schools

Demographics of KC Students in public schools

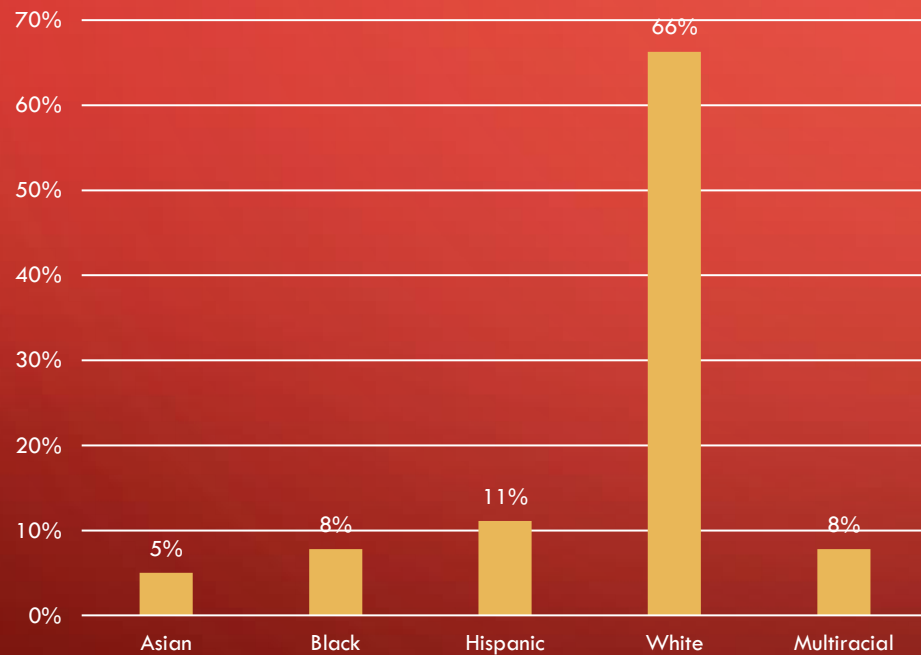


56% of white students were enrolled in public schools where over 20% of enrollment is white

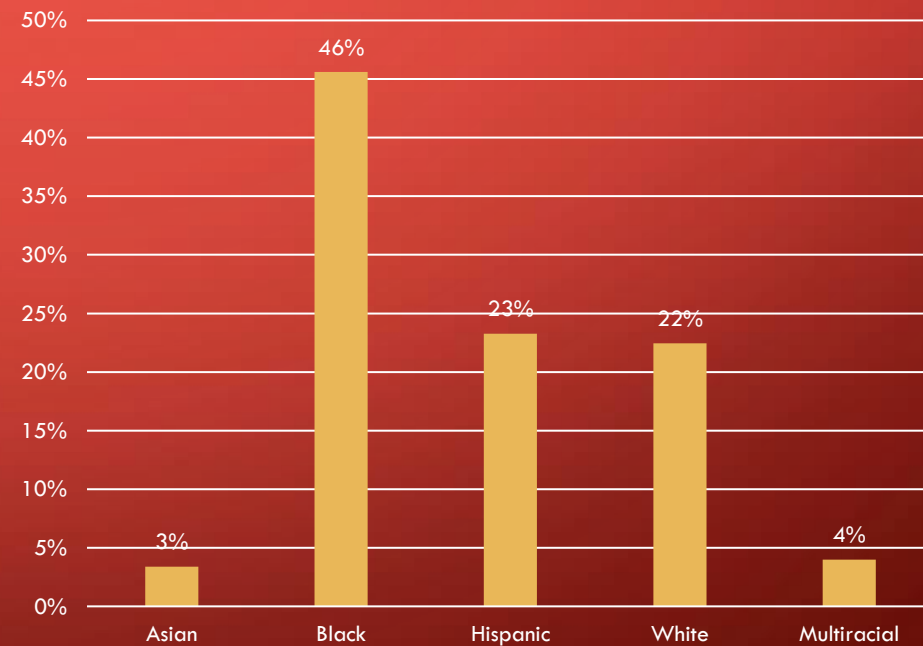


- Private schools enroll 63% of white students in KC
- 66% of private school students are white

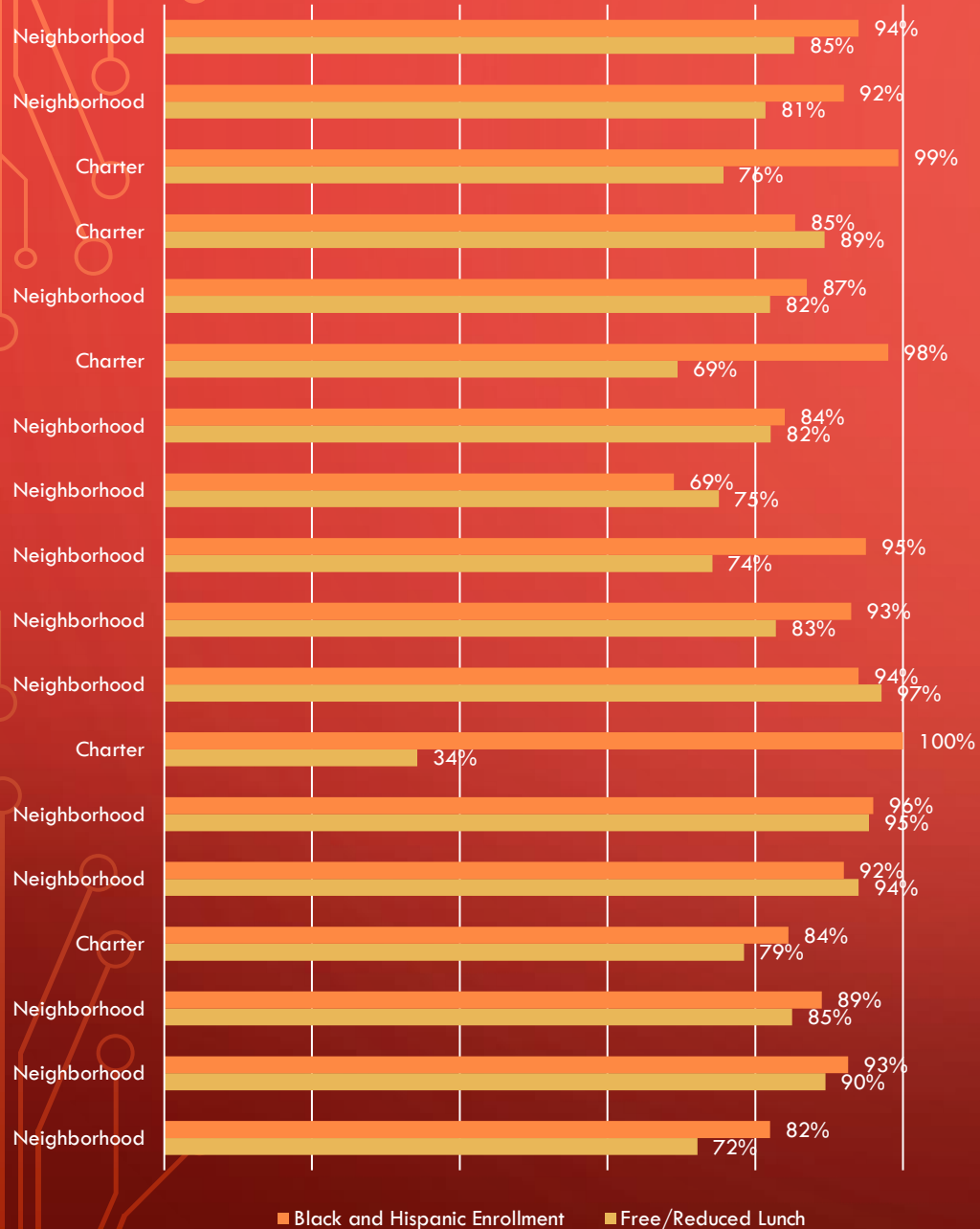
Demographics of KC Students  
in private schools



Demographics of KC Students  
in all schools



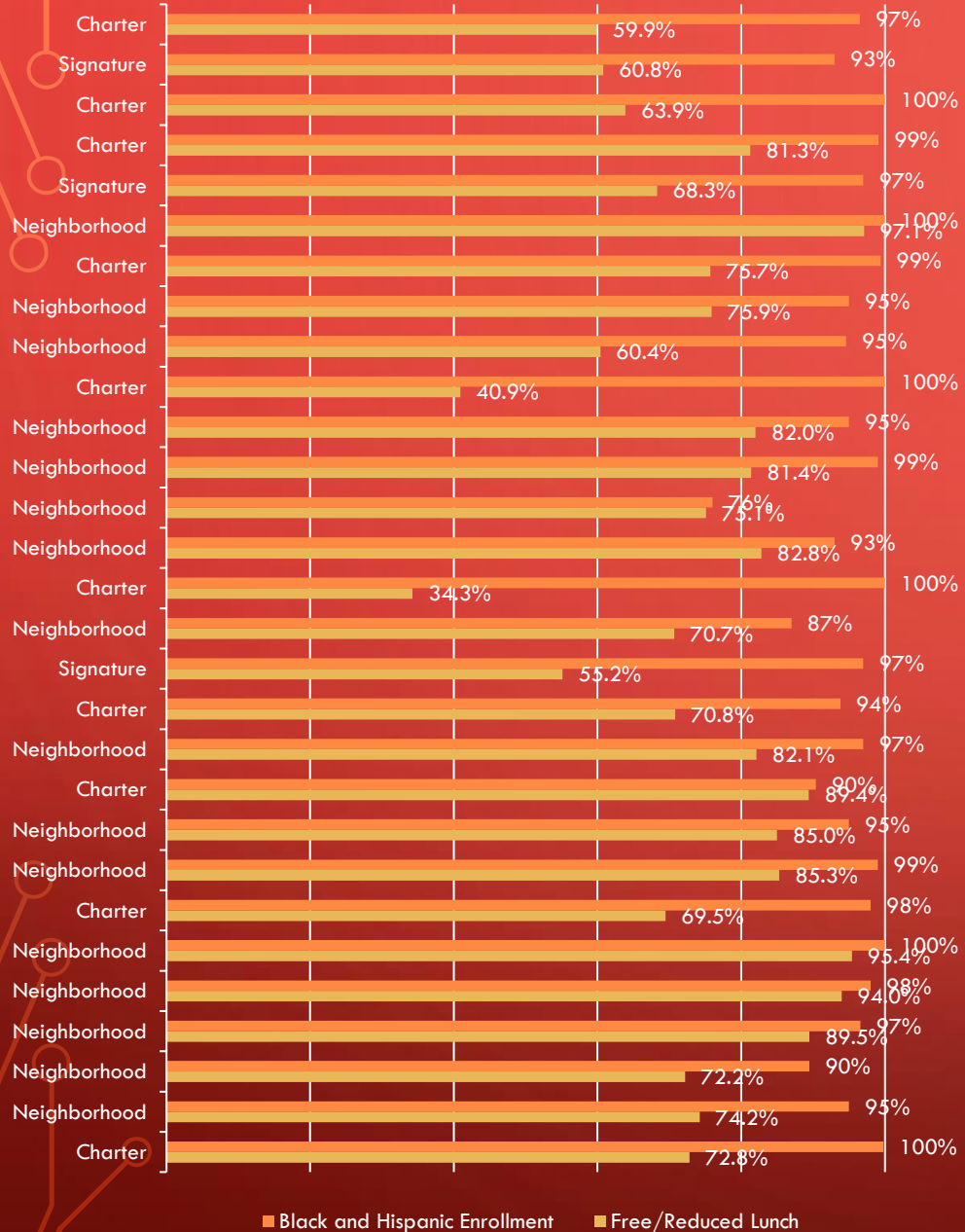
Demographics of Schools with Floor Level  
ELA Sub-Group Achievement



# SUB-GROUP ACHIEVEMENT — ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- 18 schools ELA sub-group achievement 100-254.4 (floor level)
- 11 of 18 enrolled 90%+ black and Hispanic students
- 16 of 18 enrolled 70%+ students eligible for free/reduced lunch

Demographics of Schools with Floor Level Math Sub-Group Achievement



# SUB-GROUP ACHIEVEMENT — MATH

- 29 schools math sub-group achievement 100-235.8 (floor level)
- 27 of 29 schools enrolled 90%+ black and Hispanic students
- 20 of 29 schools 70%+ students eligible for free/reduced lunch

# DISCUSSION

- What inequities do you see?
- How does your identity impact your role in this?
- Who benefits?
- What policies are in place to advantage certain groups?
- What practices have been made to disempower certain groups?





# PRIORITIZING EQUITY THROUGH SCHOOL CHOICE

What tools can we use to disrupt systems that produce inequitable schools?

How can we position ourselves to disrupt these systems?

What are the benefits of integrated schools?

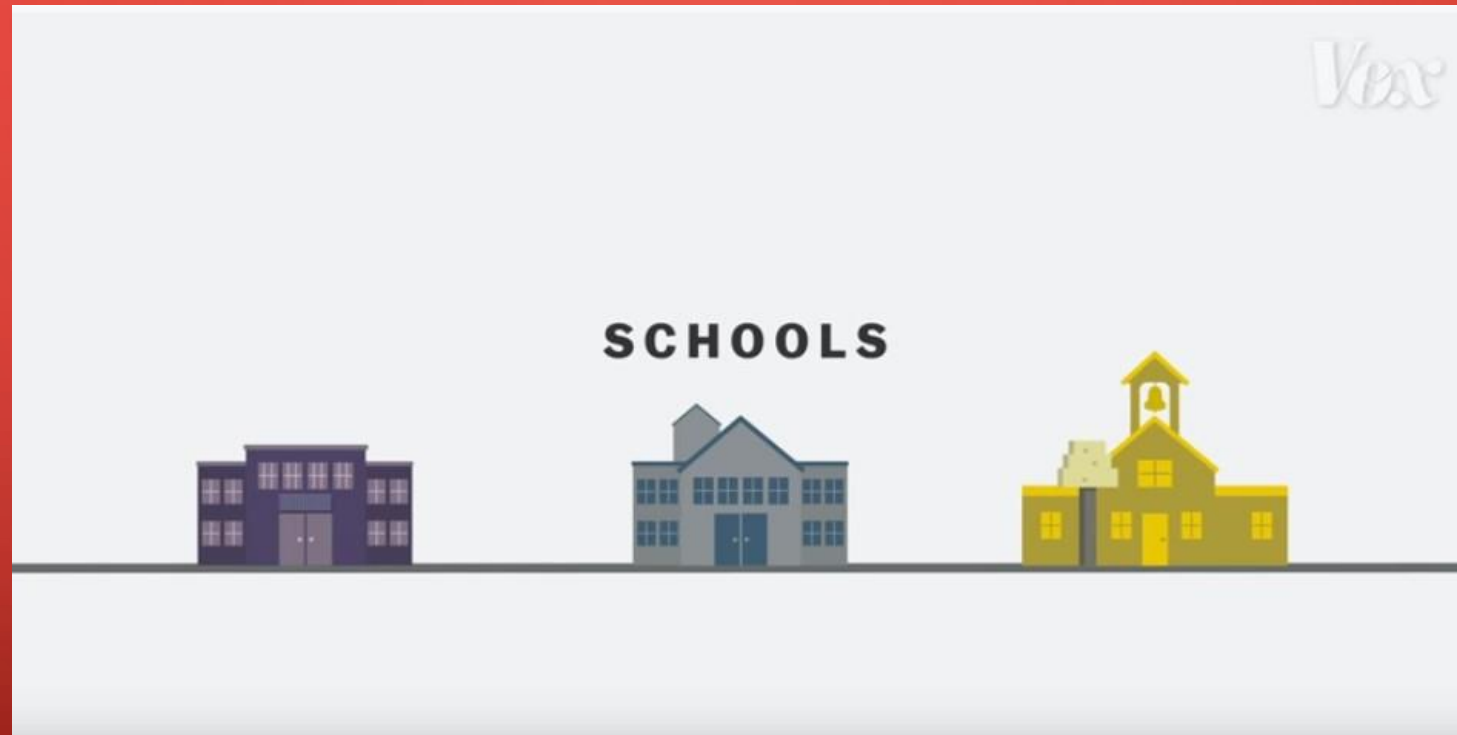
What are better ways to evaluate schools?



# RESIST THESE COMMON PRACTICES WHEN LEARNING ABOUT SCHOOLS AND DISCUSSING ENROLLMENT

- Social/community networks
  - Relying too much on networks can perpetuate school segregation and inequities
- Good vs. bad school comparisons
  - It depends on what you value. Are these apples to apples comparisons?
- Individualism/exceptionalism
  - My child needs more/less \_\_\_\_\_ (creativity, academics, structure, free play, recess, individual attention, freedom of expression, science, math, language, athletics, clubs, etc., etc. , etc.)
- Defensiveness around enrollment policies/practices that seem to limit opportunities for your child
  - Consider how these policies benefit parents with generational knowledge of the systems, strong social networks, flexible time or income to gain access to special programs and spaces in schools

# HOW TEST SCORES AND ONLINE RATINGS MAKE GOOD SCHOOLS LOOK BAD



<https://youtu.be/WC3ZPgg0nds>

# RESIST RELYING ON TEST SCORES OR RANKINGS

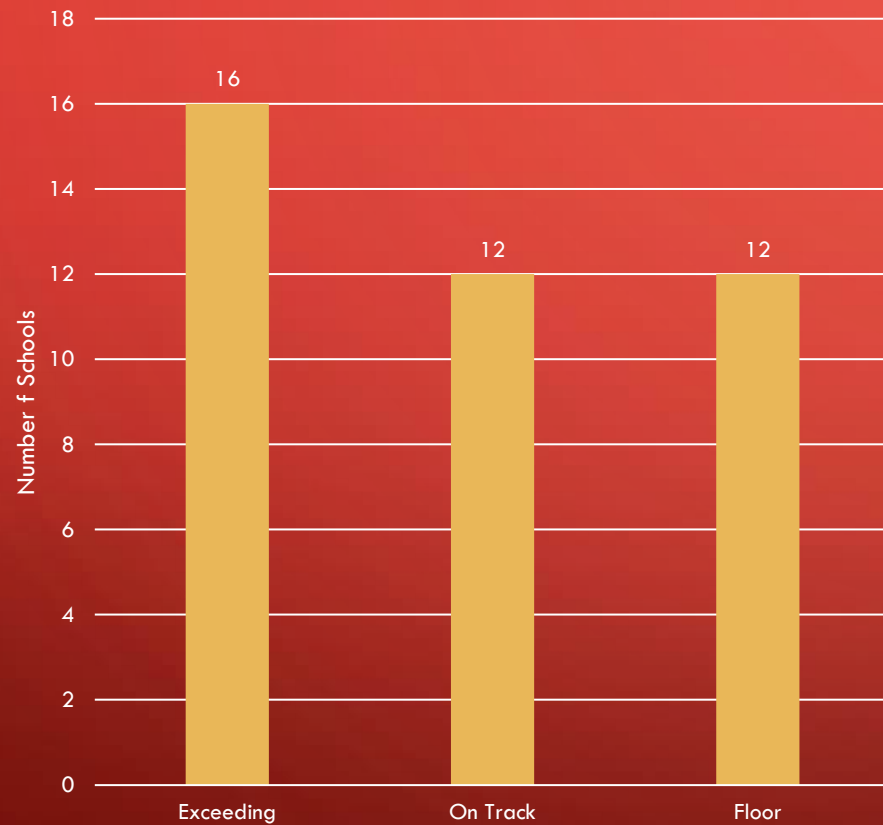
- Standardized test scores have racist roots
- Test scores correlate strongly with the economic background of students
- Test scores correlate strongly with educational attainment of the parents

## WHAT THEY CAN'T TELL YOU

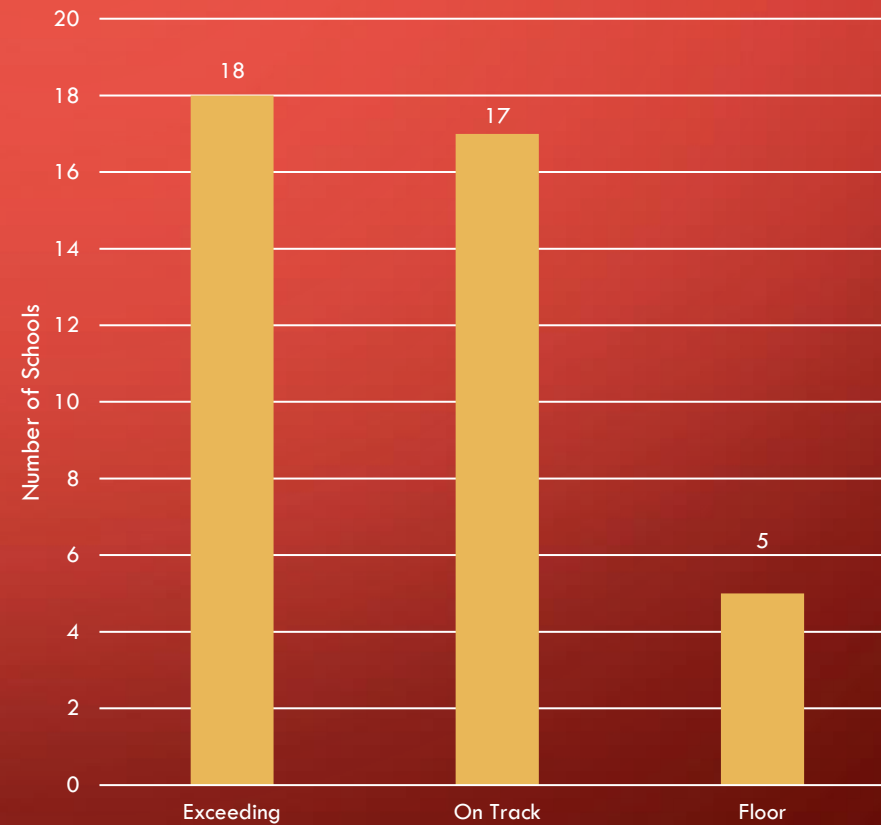
- Quality of the teaching
- School culture and climate
- School resources

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GROWTH DATA

ELA Student Growth - All Students



Math Student Growth - All Students



# RESIST WHITE SUPREMACY NORMS

FROM DISMANTLING RACISM: A WORKBOOK FOR SOCIAL CHANGE GROUPS  
BY TEMA OKUN AND KENNETH JONES

- perfectionism
- sense of urgency
- defensiveness
- quantity over quality
- worship of the written word
- only one right way
- paternalism
- either/or thinking
- power hoarding
- fear of open conflict
- individualism
- i'm the only one
- progress is bigger/more
- objectivity
- right to comfort

# DISCUSSION

- What do you hear about why people won't send their kids to schools serving predominantly black and/or brown students or students growing up in poverty?
- What fears/concerns do you have?
- Do you recognize white norms/supremacy characteristics in concerns/decisions you hear about when talking about schools in your community or your social circles?
- Do you recognize white norms/supremacy characteristics from parent leaders, teachers, staff, admin at your schools?

# BENEFITS OF INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

- Increased academic achievement for students of color
- Increased social capital for students of color
- Increased empathy
- Reduced prejudice & stereotyping (implicit & explicit bias)
- Greater ability for meaningful cross-cultural collaboration
- Development of critical thinking and effective communication skills
- White/privileged kids show little to no achievement loss compared to those in privilege segregated schools.



# BETTER THINGS TO LOOK FOR

How long have the teachers been there?  
Are they happy?

Are students engaged?  
What does that look like?

Do students feel safe,  
like they belong,  
are they valued?  
happy?

Student growth

Do parents feel welcome?  
valued?

Is there one dominant way of learning?  
Is the teaching culturally relevant?

What is the student attrition rate?  
Why do families leave?

How are families engaged? Are there family events?  
Opportunities for engagement/feedback?

Do they have a diverse teaching staff?

What is the school doing to improve discipline disparities?

How is discipline handled?

Are students tracked into gifted classes?  
Are these classes representative of the school enrollment?

# INTEGRATING MINDFULLY



How we interact with schools matters



Strategies for joining school communities without taking over



Resisting the urge to 'fix' schools



Resisting advocacy for services/programs that benefit only our own children

# STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING MINDFULLY



# PREPARATION

Pushing back against the status quo is difficult and uncomfortable. You can expect:

- To struggle with the idea of having to sacrifice for equity - in reality all choices come with sacrifice
- Pushback from friends/family/teachers
- White supremacy norms/culture used to undermine equity work
- Scare tactics from those who may not have current/first-hand knowledge of the school
- Relationships to change in your social circles as your choices challenge accepted norms
- That you need to get out of your comfort zone to build new relationships
- To have to remind yourself that you are not there to fix anything, you are not doing charity work
- That you may have to resist the instinct to give up when it becomes hard

# JOINING A NEW COMMUNITY AND BUILDING YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

- Attend school events to meet families in your new community
- Listen to others' ideas/concerns at school
- Offer your assistance with school initiatives if assistance is needed, resist offering to lead
- Be humble in your new community
- Be patient
- Educate yourself – read articles, books, follow journalists and activists on twitter
- Join the online Integrated Schools community – fb group, podcasts, mentoring



# WRAPPING UP

Have our discussions today changed how you think about school choice and enrollment?

- How will your school choice support or reflect your goals or values?
- What are long term goals for your child?
- What are long term goals for our community?
- What are your values?
- How will you measure their success?

# NEXT STEPS

- Attend a future meeting
- Take the Two Tour Pledge
- Share info about school equity/disparaties with friends and in your parent community spaces
- Listen to Integrated Schools Podcasts
- Become a member of the Integrated Schools FB Community Group
- Participate in an Integrated Schools Online Book Club event
- Educate yourself – follow Integrated Schools on fb ow twiiter, read articles, watch videos, read books from Integrated Schools reading lists

TIME FOR NETWORKING & REVIEWING RESOURCES  
THANK YOU FOR COMING!

