

Themes: Holistic Experiences of Students of Color

- 1 Student Goals & Aspirations.** Most students and their families expressed a desire for academic success and demonstrated an understanding of the value of school for their future aspirations. However, Black and Latinx students are overrepresented in ACPs' career and technical education programs, and underrepresented in college-aligned pathways, specifically middle school Algebra 1, which raises questions about whether students of color are getting equal access to the coursework that will help them reach the goals they have for themselves.
- 2 School Climate.** Most students, especially in elementary school, have positive relationships with adults and peers; however, evidence suggests these positive relationships are not translating into a culture of high expectations. Students of color, and Black students in particular, describe feeling overly scrutinized and disproportionately disciplined, a perception supported by data in some schools.
- 3 Accessing Tailored Supports.** Many parents described challenges convincing schools to provide their students with RtI supports to help them when they experienced challenges with daily instruction; however, once students received tiered services, parents found the supports available to be beneficial.
- 4 Emerging Culture of Inclusion.** ACPs schools have taken steps to build a culture of inclusion that shows an appreciation of different cultures and histories; however, Black and Latinx students still describe experiencing frequent microaggressions from their peers and teachers. Additionally, all students' cultures are not consistently represented, how students' cultures impact their experience in school is not always considered, students do not feel comfortable talking about issues of race in school, and, based on classroom observations, students' engagement in culturally relevant materials is limited.
- 5 Family & School Interactions.** Although schools have made an effort to go out into the community and coach teachers on family engagement, families would like more information on what their students are doing in school and how they can support students at home; additionally, some families distrust the school division, especially families of color who are not confident their students are getting access to the best resources.

Themes: Classroom Level Experiences of Students of Color

- 1 Theory vs. practice.** The Division has invested in curricular resources and instructional approaches to strengthen instruction; however, these investments, which are supported by sound pedagogical theory, do not consistently translate into rigorous classroom practices.
- 2 Professional learning system.** ACPS has developed ample structures for professional learning, with a clear focus on collecting and analyzing student data; school-based staff want a more intensive, systematic approach to professional development that supports data-driven instructional practices.
- 3 Analyzing vs. acting on data.** Staff across the Division are increasingly collecting and analyzing student data disaggregated by subgroup; however, formative assessment data is not consistently used to inform timely decision-making at the classroom level.
- 4 Tier 1 instruction vs. RTI supports.** The Division has purchased High-Quality Instructional Materials and developed standard approaches to some Tier 1 instructional practices; school-based staff expressed a desire for more Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention supports to meet the needs of all students.
- 5 Compliance vs. engagement.** Most schools and classrooms maintain safe environments in which students are generally compliant with school rules; however, authentic student engagement grounded in rigorous instructional practices and high expectations for all students was not observed in all classrooms.

Themes: The Role of Systems and Structures in the Experiences of Students of Color

- 1 Equality vs. equity.** Stakeholders across ACPS described an ongoing shift within the Division toward a more equity-based approach to decision-making and resource allocation; some see a need to go even further to ensure schools and students who need the most support receive what they need to be successful.
- 2 Fidelity vs. autonomy.** Recent moves to standardize elements of ACPS' approach to learning and push for fidelity in implementation across schools can support more rigorous and consistent instruction; however, there are differing opinions from school leaders on what the Division should hold "tight" versus "loose".
- 3 Inclusive decision-making.** ACPS has developed some structures for collecting feedback from students, families, staff, and other stakeholders; however, there are gaps in how the Division gathers feedback and input from key constituencies to inform decisions before they are made, and then communicate the rationale for decisions once made.
- 4 Talent systems.** ACPS benefits from talented, deeply committed teachers, support staff, and leaders; however, many staff do not feel supported in their professional learning, and ACPS struggles to attract and retain staff that more closely reflect the demographics of the Division's student population.
- 5 Collaboration and alignment.** School-based adults report strong, collaborative relationships within school walls; however, inter-school and inter-team collaboration is not as strong, and many stakeholders described tensions between school-based staff and central office staff.