



NEWS RELEASE

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SPS Response to News Conference

SEATTLE – Thank you for the opportunity to respond. We are sharing a brief summary of data, programs and examples that reflect the district’s unwavering commitment to racial justice in public education as outlined in our strategic plan, Seattle Excellence. These outcomes represent work over the last couple years.

- Created in partnership with diverse communities a [Listening & Learning Tour](#), comprised of 21 community meetings, 22 staff sessions, seven regional town halls, as well as online engagement and solicited input from over 2,500 stakeholders including students. This data informed development of the district’s bold strategic plan, Seattle Excellence.
- Developed in partnership with community representatives “[Seattle Excellence](#),” SPS five-year strategic plan (adopted by SPS Board of Directors, May 2019), that is unapologetically centered on supporting students of color who are furthest from educational justice, beginning with focus on African American boys and teens.
- Prioritized thirteen elementary schools with a high percentage of African American male students in support of our 3rd grade reading goal. Schools have received enhanced professional development, coaching, and resources. Launched the Seattle Super Reader Campaign in partnership with Seattle Public Library and other community organizations. Have distributed over 62,000 books for student home libraries with a prioritized focus on the 13 schools. Created “Black Boy Joy” reading lists for students and families in partnership with SPL.

- Created the Office of [African American Male Achievement](#) (AAMA) in August 2019. Seattle Public Schools is the first district in Washington state, and one of the few across the nation, to create an office that intentionally cultivates the cultural and academic strengths of African American male students while simultaneously addressing their needs. AAMA's work focuses on four strategic areas: culture, conditions, competencies, and community connection.
- Launched the AAMA Student Leadership Council in February 2020. The AAMA managers conduct bi-weekly remote meetings and individual check-ins to ensure Black boys and teens continue to have a seat at the table when it comes to making decisions that affect their lives and education.
- Launched a representative Student Advisory Committee to the Superintendent to ensure the district's work is grounded in the lived experiences and perspectives of students. Each High School is represented on the committee.
- In alignment with Seattle Excellence goals the district increased hiring staff of color over the last three years. For the 2020-21 school year, SPS has surpassed its diversity hiring goal by an average of 10%.
 - Teachers of Color
 - * 26% (2018-19); 27% (2019-20); 36% (2020-21)
 - School Leaders of Color
 - * 35% (2018-19); 40% (2019-20); 54% (2020-21)
 - Central Office Leaders of Color
 - * 36% (2019-20); 55% (2020-21)
- One way the district is hiring more educators of color is the Academy of Rising Educators. The 20-2021 cohort is two times as large as the previous year and represents 4 times as many African American male candidates. [Read more about Academy of Rising Educators.](#)
- Cross-credited 6 high school ethnic studies courses to provide opportunities for students to take these important classes for graduation.
- Next semester, SPS will launch a Black Studies course available to students across the city.
- During remote learning the district expanded access to šəqačib. The focus of the class is to promote school engagement and academic progress in a culturally sensitive environment. šəqačib is a place of community building and belonging for Native high school and middle school youth.
- Worked to center Black male seniors during a time of remote learning and unexpected obstacles. In partnership with other departments, AAMA audited high school senior transcripts and worked with schools to ensure

Black male students were on-track for graduation by employing culturally responsive engagement practices.

- Audited central supports focused on Black boys and teens and conducted focus groups with some recent graduates and seventh-12th graders to identify aspects of school culture we need to improve and support systems that work well for them.
- Hosted a four-day Liberation Through Anti-Racist Education Institute held in August 2020. AAMA worked with the Department of Racial Equity Advancement to create an opportunity for Black boys and teens to use and share their brilliance directly with the SPS staff, educators, and community members who attended.
- The Office of AAMA collaboratively secured \$1.8 million dollars from local philanthropies in service of AAMA's work to create policies, structures, and systems designed for Black male students' success.
- In collaboration with City of Seattle, creating Kingmakers of Seattle Extended model. Kingmakers of Seattle is an elective facilitated sessions for Black male students, facilitated by Black male educators. The course curriculum emphasizes black history, cultural knowledge, positive self-identity, literacy and academic mentoring.
- Reduction of disproportionate discipline continues to be a focus of staff and the district. –
 - Reduction in discipline for African American boys from 28/100 students (2015-16) to 20/100 students (2018-19).
 - Reduction in suspensions in secondary Schools of Promise (Sept. 2019-March 2020) – 161 reduced to 133; 116 reduced to 69 (African American students receiving special education services)
 - Reduction in discipline rate for African American students with IEPs (Individual Educational Program) – 17.1% (2015-16) to 8.0% (2018-19)

Continued Engagement and Accountability to Community

- The Office of AMMA met twice with Seattle/King County NAACP youth leadership group (October 2020)
- Dr. Keisha Scarlett, SPS Chief of Equity, Partnerships and Engagement and Dr. Diane DeBacker, SPS Chief Academic Officer, hosted meeting with Ethnic Studies Advisory Group, focusing on healing, answerability and accountability (Oct. 8, 2020).
- Hosted discussion on Black Women and Intersectionality in Anti-Racism Policy Development – attend by more than 60 Black Women, discussing SPS Policy 0040 (anti-racism policy) and intersectionality (Oct. 5, 2020).

- SPS Dept. of Equity, Partnerships & Engagement hosted Equity Synergy Retreat– a collective of Communities of Color, committees including Equity & Race Advisory Committee, African American Male Achievement Committee, Disproportionality in Discipline, and district staff. Supt. Juneau opened the event, reaffirming the commitment to SPS becoming an anti-racist organization (Oct. 3, 2020).
- Holds bi-monthly meetings with NAACP – Seattle King County leadership
- The district hosts ongoing affinity groups and partners with community organizations to reach and engage English Learner families in alignment with strategic plan commitments. Engagements include both sharing information and finding out how services and supports can be improved.

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