



**Bernards School District**  
**Equity Audit Report Presentation**



Conducted in Partnership with US<sup>2</sup>  
November 9, 2022



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## Agenda

- ▶ Equity Audit Process
- ▶ Audit Focus Areas
- ▶ Themes
  - ▶ Strengths
  - ▶ Recommendations
- ▶ Next Steps/Questions
  - ▶ [BTConnect@bernardsboe.com](mailto:BTConnect@bernardsboe.com)



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## Equity Audit Process

- ▶ Community Town Hall
- ▶ US<sup>2</sup> Equity Audit email
- ▶ Bernards' Equity Audit Leadership Team
- ▶ Self-Assessments
- ▶ Document Analysis
- ▶ Stakeholder Surveys
- ▶ Focus Group Interviews



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## Planning Steps

- ▶ Town Hall
  - ▶ Introduced US<sup>2</sup> & Equity Audit process
  - ▶ Took questions from community
- ▶ US<sup>2</sup> Equity Audit email
  - ▶ Confidential between US<sup>2</sup> and stakeholders
  - ▶ Questions, concerns, and focus group interest
- ▶ Equity Audit Leadership Team
  - ▶ Members
    - ▶ Board Members
    - ▶ District Office Administrators
  - ▶ Purpose
    - ▶ Confirmed focus areas and dates/deliverables



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## Self-Assessments

- ▶ Self-Assessments completed by
  - ▶ District Office
  - ▶ Ridge High School
  - ▶ William Annin Middle
  - ▶ Cedar Hill Elementary School
  - ▶ Liberty Corner Elementary School
  - ▶ Mount Prospect Elementary School
  - ▶ Oak Street Elementary School



**Elementary  
School Cohort**



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## Document Analysis

- ▶ Documents submitted by each school to support their self-assessment including, but not limited to:
  - ▶ Discipline, attendance, demographics
  - ▶ Student Handbook
  - ▶ New Jersey School Performance Report
- ▶ District and School Websites
- ▶ Ridge Against Racism Website
- ▶ NJ Dept. of Education Website
- ▶ News Outlets



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## Stakeholder Surveys

- ▶ Adult surveys
  - ▶ Radio button, extensive scale
  - ▶ Staff, caregivers, community members
  - ▶ Asked to complete survey for each role
- ▶ K-5 surveys
  - ▶ Age-appropriate content
  - ▶ Emoji responses
  - ▶ Self-contained classroom version
- ▶ 6-12 surveys
  - ▶ More in-depth questions with word descriptors
  - ▶ Self-contained classroom version



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## Focus Group Interviews

### Focus groups conducted

- ▶ District Office
- ▶ William Annin Middle
- ▶ Ridge High
- ▶ Elementary Cohort

### Stakeholder groups included

- ▶ Board members
- ▶ Administration
- ▶ Hourly staff
- ▶ School Staff
- ▶ Community members
- ▶ Caregivers
- ▶ Students



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## Focus Areas

- ▶ Stakeholder Culture
  - ▶ Perception data gleaned from focus groups and supported by survey responses
- ▶ Instructional Pedagogy
  - ▶ Classroom Culture (Sense of Belonging)
  - ▶ Family & Community Engagement
  - ▶ Instruction
  - ▶ Teacher Leadership
- ▶ Social Emotional Learning
  - ▶ CASEL Competencies



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## What themes were identified?

- ▶ Voice & Decision-Making
- ▶ Sense of Belonging & Culture/Climate
- ▶ Communication & Transparency
- ▶ Disproportionality, Representation, & Access



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## Voice & Decision-Making



### STRENGTHS

- ▶ Vocal and Invested Stakeholders
- ▶ Building Administration & Staff Relationships
- ▶ Support by District for Controversial or Difficult Conversations



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## Voice & Decision-Making



### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Restore the Relationship Between District Administration and Building-Level Staff
- ▶ Implement More Collaborative Decision-Making Around Curriculum Updates
- ▶ Overcome Fear of Stakeholder Response
- ▶ Intentionally Involve Lesser Recognized Stakeholders



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## Sense of Belonging & Culture/Climate



### STRENGTHS

- ▶ Student Self-Worth in Self-Contained Programs
- ▶ Highly Invested Caregivers
- ▶ Commitment to Social-Emotional Learning



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## Sense of Belonging & Culture/Climate



### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Capitalize on Existing SEL/Academic Supports, Develop More Services, and Ensure Accessibility
- ▶ Implement JEDI/DEI Training to Encourage Student Empathy
- ▶ Create Cross-Building Communication and Collaboration
- ▶ Implement Clear Reporting Guidelines for Incidents & Close the Communication Loop
- ▶ Provide JEDI/DEI Training for All Student-Facing Staff, with topics including, but not limited to, Student Ability, LGBTQIA+ Identities, and Language Barriers and Resources



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## Communication & Transparency



### STRENGTHS

- ▶ Friday Folders
- ▶ Building Administrator's Open Door to Staff
- ▶ Streamed Board of Education Meetings
- ▶ Students Know Expectations



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## Communication & Transparency



### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Standardize Communication Methods & Collaborate
- ▶ Create an Overarching Calendar for Communication
- ▶ Communicate & Modify Participation Fee Structure
- ▶ Compile and Post an All-Inclusive Staff Directory
- ▶ Collect Interest and Pre-Register for Caregiver Sessions
- ▶ Create Follow-Up Guidelines for Disciplinary Incidents



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## Disproportionality, Representation, & Access



### STRENGTHS

- ▶ Academic Support
- ▶ Access to Technology



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## Disproportionality, Representation, & Access



### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Implement Restorative Practices (including Restorative Justice)
- ▶ Provide a Simplified Summary of Student Expectations and Consequences
- ▶ Recruit, Employ, and Retain Candidates from Underrepresented Identities, with a specific focus on Race and Gender Identities
- ▶ Encourage Diverse Student Participation in AP/Honors and Music Programs
- ▶ Track Demographics of Students Denied from Courses



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## Disproportionality, Representation, & Access



### RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

- ▶ Implement Process to Support Special Education Students in Pursuing Advanced-Level Classes
- ▶ Analyze Physical Accessibility
- ▶ Provide Quiet Zones for Neurodiverse Students in General Education
- ▶ Implement Programs to Integrate Self-Contained Classroom Students into other School Dynamics



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## Next Steps/Questions



- ▶ Nov. 10, 2022: BTSD Equity Audit Report shared via email and on District website
- ▶ Questions for US<sup>2</sup>
  - ▶ Email: [BTConnect@bernardsboe.com](mailto:BTConnect@bernardsboe.com)



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**THANK YOU!**



Facebook/LinkedIn/Instagram/Twitter:  
US2Consulting

[info@US2Consulting.com](mailto:info@US2Consulting.com)

<https://us2consulting.com>

