

# NEW TEACHER CENTER



**Centering students.  
Advancing equity.**

## **Brookline Public Schools**

Social Studies Instructional Review  
Spring 2023

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## About New Teacher Center (NTC)

NTC is committed to disrupting the predictability of educational inequities for systemically underserved students by accelerating educator effectiveness. Working shoulder to shoulder with district partners, NTC's best practices yield proven results for teachers and students.



## About Public Schools of Brookline

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) serves approximately 7,000 students in Kindergarten to grade 12. PSB operates eight elementary (K-8) schools and one high school in the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts.

The PSB mission is to ensure that every student develops the skills and knowledge to pursue a productive and fulfilling life, to participate thoughtfully in a democracy, and succeed in a diverse and evolving global society.





## Introduction

NTC partnered with Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) to review the current state of Social Studies instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy across the district. Between October 2022 and April 2023, NTC visited 35 classrooms in nine schools, reviewed instructional materials being used in classrooms, held focus groups with students, teachers, and community members from across the district, surveyed educators and families, and reviewed and analyzed student assessment and attendance data.

As we engaged in this work, we sought to understand the current state of all aspects of Social Studies instruction in the Public Schools of Brookline, with the goal of understanding the student experience in Brookline classrooms and if students are receiving equitable learning opportunities. To ensure successful instruction is happening in every classroom, we believe three components need to be in place:

1. **A Visionary Instructional Framework:** A district-wide Instructional Framework helps to create a common language for teacher and student achievement. That language helps instructional staff understand what instruction should look like across all disciplines and what approaches should be used in service of the framework. This framework outlines important areas of consideration that form the basis for program design, implementation, administration, and growth. To achieve the goals of the framework, a district needs to create development opportunities for strong leadership, a research-based, clearly articulated, and widely owned vision, coherence and collaboration, and realistic allocation of resources, creating the conditions for the framework's success.
2. **Program Guiding Principles:** Created in alignment with the Instructional Framework should be guiding principles for each instructional program. These principles outline essential components for each program, such as core instructional beliefs for program success and identification of best practices to achieve those beliefs. To ensure each program's success, leaders need to determine the resources, such as curriculum materials, and professional learning opportunities that will help teachers achieve the vision for each program.
3. **School Instructional Goals:** Working in tandem with the district Instructional Framework and each program's guiding principles should be instructional goals at each school. These goals set the bar for success and help the school work towards continuous improvement. To ensure goals are met, staff within schools and between schools need to work together to support the implementation and monitoring of goals. Feedback from implementation within schools should be shared back with each program and with the district to ensure an iterative process that leads to a stronger vision of instruction.



# Methodology

To learn how Social Studies instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy was commonly understood and implemented across the district, we collected a variety of data points, including:



1. **Classroom Observations** in each of Brookline's nine schools. In total, NTC observed 35 classrooms across grades 6-12 to better understand how Social Studies instruction was implemented.



2. **Materials Review** to understand the curriculum resources used in grades 6-12 in the Brookline Public Schools Social Studies department, including teacher-created course overviews, rainbow scope and sequence documents, syllabi and materials.



3. **Data Review** of current instructional observation and High School course indicators to understand structures that might be leading to or detracting from academic success, as well as a closer look at how METCO students and families may be experiencing instruction compared to Brookline residents.



4. **Focus Groups** to ensure the voices of stakeholders were included. We met with nine focus groups, which included Brookline teachers, students, families and METCO staff.



5. **Family and Educator Surveys** to capture the voices of those who may not have participated in a focus group. We heard from over 250 Brookline families and educators.

In the following report, we outline what **we observed and discovered about Social Studies instruction and the perception of culturally responsive learning experiences** across Brookline Public Schools through our observations and data analysis activities. Additionally, we **explore how students and families in METCO experience curriculum and instruction in comparison to Brookline resident students of all backgrounds**. We include recommendations with specific areas for future support and growth.

# Key Findings & Recommendations



PAGES 6-9

# Key Findings

**School and classroom communities are generally welcoming and support the sense of adequate learning taking place.** A healthy culture and the conditions for high quality classroom instruction were evident in the Social Studies classrooms of the Public Schools of Brookline. We found that community members, parents and caregivers largely agree that they and their children feel safe at school. Students identified having adults that they feel connected to, and classroom observations revealed significant evidence of respect and healthy boundaries among students and between teachers at all levels.

There is a belief that the appropriate learning is taking place in Social Studies classrooms. Nearly 90% of surveyed families agreed that their students have access to grade-level instruction, with fewer than 15% in disagreement that the Social Studies curriculum is equitable and culturally responsive. Additionally, the majority of teachers surveyed exhibit confidence that the material used and instruction provided is both rigorous and inclusive. A closer look at the quality of materials, instructional practices and the attention to culturally responsive pedagogy was necessary to explore those beliefs and determine the overall effectiveness of the social studies program.

**Curricular materials provide guidance but are incomplete.** Recent district and teacher initiatives are largely responsible for the development of the 6-12th grade instructional materials in Brookline's Social Studies department. Stored in a shared drive, the 6-8th "rainbow documents" consider the pacing, standard alignment, key content, skills, and assessments per unit of instruction for each grade. Though progress has been made, resources for daily instruction are available for fewer than half of the units of study. The 9-12th grade curriculum is primarily made of teacher-created course summaries, syllabi, websites and multimedia. Despite evidence of shared planning in the de-leveled 9th grade WHISP course, the majority of other courses' materials were inaccessible for review or varied significantly in their contents. Beyond the limitations of completion and course alignment, further review of adherence to the standards and cultural responsiveness uncovered gaps in content delivered at the high school and inconsistent access to complex tasks and quality resources for both grade bands.

While there was evidence of the use of district materials in more than half of the classes observed, the majority of teachers shared that they rely on themselves or peers to obtain their content. Teacher concerns about materials extend to the lack of alignment and guidance they are receiving around content and culturally responsive pedagogy.

The inconsistency of teacher access to quality materials guarantees vastly different learning experiences for students learning Social Studies. This reality coupled with the expressed need for teacher development were indicators that classroom instruction would generally need improvement.



**Enacted lessons are not meeting the standards of rigor or cultural responsiveness.**

Though 85% of observed lessons were focused on grade-level content, students were not spending the majority of lessons reading, writing and/or speaking about text(s), artifact(s), and/or primary sources. In many lessons there was no text involved, and contrary to teacher belief, fewer than half of texts used were deemed complex and engaging. Tasks students engaged with lacked cognitive demand, and instruction was teacher-centered and traditionally direct. Opportunities for students to productively struggle were minimal, with teachers often reducing the rigor and facilitating discussion with students one at a time. The result of these low-level tasks was student disengagement and the ability to opt in or out of the rigors of the work.

Overall, only 35% of the observed lessons were inclusive and reflected a culturally responsive learning experience. Fewer than 30% of lessons were inclusive of varying identities with 35% addressing issues of equity and power. The dissonance in teachers' belief around CRP further underscores the need for professional development.

**The experiences of METCO students are varied, and other identifying factors provide more insight into student success.** The analysis and disaggregation of student data does not build a clear picture of which students are having successful experiences. Students attending Brookline schools through the METCO program, by definition, reflect a variety of different identities, backgrounds, and cultures. To ensure their diverse learning and experiential needs are met, PSB leaders should prioritize analyzing student success based on the intersectionality of demographic, cultural, socioeconomic, and functional needs of all students, particularly those attending school through the METCO program.

**Time for professional learning is limited.** Throughout our analysis of focus group and survey data, it became clear that educators want and need more time in learning to be able to deeply engage with the curriculum and materials and what it means to be culturally responsive in instruction. Teachers expressed a desire for professional learning that is content-specific, differentiated, and builds their capacity to respectfully embrace a diverse history and honor all identities and stories. There needs to be more days of required professional development available to ensure teachers can implement a quality curriculum and lean deeply into the tenets of culturally responsive teaching and learning.

## Recommendations

1. Develop an instructional framework that provides a vision for excellent social studies instruction, common language and expectations, and the structures to support the district-wide implementation.
2. Adopt a high-quality inquiry-based curriculum for core secondary social studies courses or continue to strengthen the current scope and sequence documents.
3. Provide ongoing professional learning around methods of inquiry, unpacking complex sources, and promoting academic discourse.
4. Build teacher and leader understanding of high-leverage culturally responsive instructional practices that lead to success for students across all skill levels in Tier 1 instruction.
5. Analyze student success based on the intersectionality of demographic, cultural, socioeconomic, and functional needs of all students, particularly those attending school through the METCO program, in order to identify and address areas of inequity.

# Classroom Observations



PAGES 10-18



# Overview

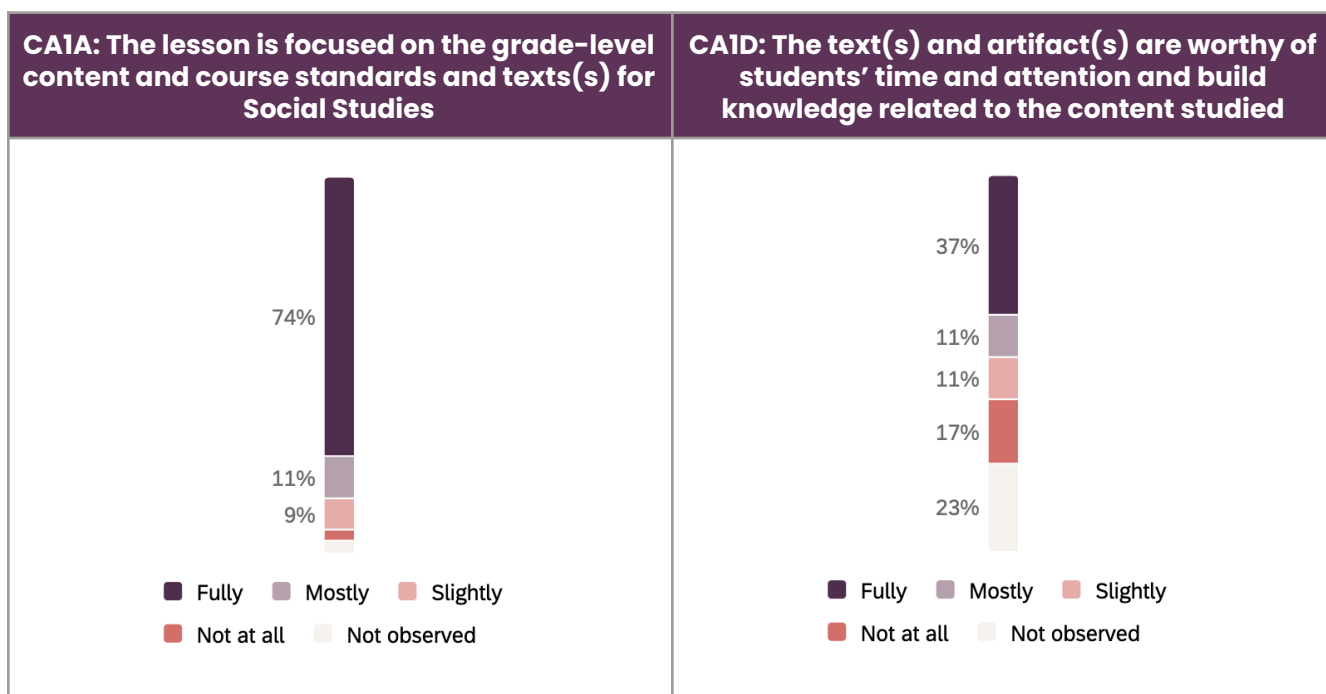
We engaged in classroom observations across 35 classrooms in Brookline. Our classroom observations were primarily guided by the Instructional Practice Guides (IPG) from Student Achievement Partners (SAP). The IPGs detail high-quality, standards-aligned instruction. Each IPG is designed around Core Actions that encompass the shifts in instructional practice required to meet the demands of College and Career Ready standards. The IPGs are designed as development tools and in this case were used to provide an instructional snapshot across the district. The fourth and final Core Action was developed internally by NTC to represent the criteria for culturally responsive instruction.

During the instructional audit, we engaged in three days of co-observations with four NTC staff members. Visits included a half-day visit to each of the eight Brookline K-8 schools (2-3 teachers per school) and one full day visit to the high school (approx 30 teachers). We observed the level of standards-aligned instruction, rigorous use of high-quality materials and culturally responsive practices in Social Studies classrooms. NTC also collected and reviewed student work samples, noting what curricular materials are being used in the classroom. Observations lasted approximately 15-20 minutes with 10 minutes in between to debrief and transition to the next classroom. Observers used a rating scale of: *Fully, Mostly, Slightly, Not at all, and Not observed* for each measure.

## Core Action One

Core Action One considers whether the lesson is focused on the grade-level content and course standards and texts(s) for Social Studies. Rating on a scale of *Fully, Mostly, Slightly, Not at all, and Not Observed*, the observer identified if:

- A. The lesson focuses on a course-level content standard or part(s) thereof;
- B. Students spend the majority of the lesson reading, writing, and/or speaking about the text(s), artifact(s), and/or primary source(s);
- C. The text(s) and artifact(s) are appropriately complex according to qualitative and quantitative measures for the grade, course, time in the school year, and/or topic; and
- D. The text(s) and artifact(s) are worthy of students' time and attention and build knowledge related to the content being studied.



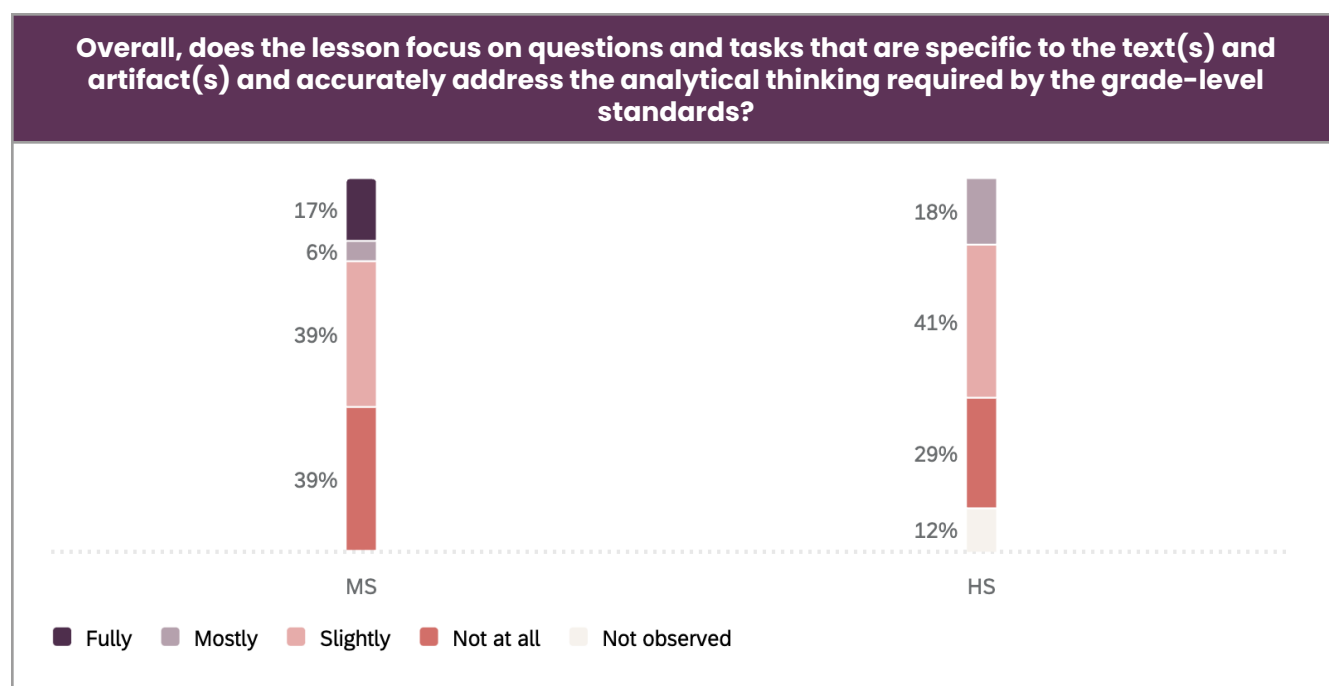
### Summary of findings:

- Finding:** *The content students engage with in their social studies courses is mostly aligned to the grade level/course standards.*
  - Core Action 1a: 85% of the observed lessons were focused on grade or course-level content standards or parts thereof.
  - Core Action 1c: 40% of the texts and artifacts observed were appropriately complex.
  - Core Action 1d: 48% of the texts and artifacts observed are complex and engaging.
    - Overall: 60% of observed lessons focused on the grade-level content and course standards and text(s) for Social Studies.
- Finding:** *Students in the same courses are having inequitable learning experiences.*
  - Overall 6th grade data shows 50% of students are *Fully* experiencing lessons on grade-level content. Only 40% of 7th grade students were observed receiving on grade level instruction.
  - Core action 1c: For 9th graders, only 33% of observed lessons had texts or artifacts that were worthy of students' time and attention, while there were no texts or artifacts observed in the remaining 67% of lessons.
- Finding:** *District instructional materials are inconsistently and infrequently used.*
  - 44% of the observed lessons in 6th-8th grade demonstrated evidence of the district's instructional materials in use.
  - 41% of the observed lessons in 9th-12th grade demonstrated evidence of the districts' instructional materials in use.

## Core Action Two

Core action two considers whether the lesson focuses on questions and tasks that are specific to the text(s) and artifact(s) and accurately addresses the analytical thinking required by the grade-level standards. Rating on a scale of *Fully*, *Mostly*, *Slightly*, *Not at all*, and *Not Observed*, the observer identified if:

- A. Questions and tasks require students to use evidence from the text to demonstrate understanding and to support their ideas about the text. These ideas are expressed through written and/or oral responses;
- B. Questions and tasks attend to the words (academic vocabulary), phrases, and sentences within the text; and
- C. Questions and tasks are sequenced to build knowledge by guiding students to delve deeper into the text and graphics.



### Summary of findings:

- **Finding:** *The majority of students are not experiencing rigorous Social Studies instruction.*
  - Core Action 2a: For 34% of observed lessons, questions and tasks observed required students to use evidence from the text to demonstrate understanding and to support their ideas about the text.
  - Core Action 2b: In 17% of observed lessons, questions and tasks attended to the academic vocabulary, phrases, and sentences within the text.
  - Core Action 2c: In 20% of observed lessons, questions and tasks were sequenced to build knowledge and by guiding students to delve deeper into the text.



- Overall: 20% of the lessons focused on questions and tasks that were specific to the texts and artifacts and accurately addressed the analytical thinking required by grade-level standards.

## Core Action Three

Core action three considered whether all students were provided opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson. Rating on a scale of *Fully*, *Mostly*, *Slightly*, *Not at all*, and *Not Observed*, the observer identified if:

- The teacher poses questions and tasks for students to do the majority of the work of the lesson including speaking/listening, reading, and/or writing. Students do the majority of the work of the lesson;
- The teacher cultivates reasoning and meaning making by allowing students to productively struggle. Students persevere through difficulty;
- Students are required to argue or explain conclusions using valid reasoning, evidence, and precision to support their ideas;
- The teacher creates the conditions for student conversations where students are encouraged to talk about each other's thinking. Students talk and ask questions about each other's thinking, in order to clarify or improve their understanding; and
- The teacher deliberately checks for understanding throughout the lesson and adapts the lesson according to student understanding. When appropriate, students refine written and/or oral responses.

**The teacher creates the conditions for student conversations where students are encouraged to talk about each other's thinking. Students talk and ask questions about each other's thinking, in order to clarify or improve their understanding.**



### Summary of findings:

- Finding:** Teachers are responsible for the majority of the cognitive lift during instruction and students opt in or out of a productive struggle.
  - Core Action 3a: In 43% of lessons observed, the teacher posed questions or tasks for students to do the majority of the work of the lesson.

- Core Action 3b: In 12% of observed lessons, the teacher cultivated reasoning and meaning through productive struggle.
- Core Action 3c: In 12% of observed lessons, students were required to argue or explain conclusions using valid reasoning, evidence, and precision to support their ideas.
- Core Action 3d: In 14% of observed lessons, the teacher created conditions for student conversations to discuss their thinking.
- Core Action 3e: In 18% of lessons, teachers were observed deliberately checking for understanding and adapting the lesson.
  - *Overall:* 26% of the observed classes provided students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.



## Core Action Four

Core action four considers whether the lesson is inclusive and reflects an equitable and culturally responsive learning experience. Rating on a scale of *Fully*, *Mostly*, *Slightly*, *Not at all*, and *Not Observed*, the observers identified if:

- A. Rituals and routines are affirming, purposeful, and promote both community and independence;
- B. There is evidence of mutual respect and healthy boundaries among students and between students and teachers;
- C. The lesson is inclusive and affirming of a variety of identities including but not limited to racial, class, sexual, religious, gender identity, and immigrant status and when applicable presents different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities;
- D. The lesson addresses issues of equity and power by centering issues of equity, power, race, identity, and/or thinking about systems and policies;
- E. A wide range of student responses are validated, given varying student experiences and perspectives;
- F. Students have agency to make choices in their classroom experience and opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways; and
- G. The lesson allows for students to interrogate the presented information.

### Summary of findings:

- **Finding:** *School and class environments are generally welcoming and there is a sense of humanity, trust, and agency.*
  - Core Action 4a: In 46% of observed lessons, there were rituals and routines that were affirming, purposeful, and promoted both community and independence.
  - Core Action 4b: In 86% of observed lessons, there was evidence of mutual respect and healthy boundaries among students and between students and teachers
- **Finding:** The majority of observed classrooms did not reflect an inclusive and culturally responsive learning experience.
  - Core Action 4c: 29% of observed lessons were inclusive and affirming of a variety of identities.
  - Core Action 4d: 25% of observed lessons addressed issues of equity and power.
  - Core Action 4e: In 35% of observed lessons, a wide range of student responses were validated.
  - Core Action 4f: In 14% of observed lessons, students had agency to make choices in their classroom experience and opportunities to demonstrate learning in a variety of ways.

- Core Action 4g: 20% of observed lessons allowed for students to interrogate the presented information.
  - Overall: 34% of observed lessons were inclusive and reflected a culturally responsive learning experience.

# Materials Review



PAGES 19–23

# Overview

NTC reviewed Brookline’s 6–12 Social Studies instructional materials in order to examine the extent to which the materials and their use is aligned to equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy and Massachusetts content standards. NTC developed a framework that provides a lens to review the instructional materials informed by the following research and resources:

- *The Massachusetts Culturally Responsive Teaching Framework*
- *The Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework*
- *The Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET)*
- *The Ed Reports Review Criteria*
- *The College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards*
- *The CARE Teaching Resource Rubric*
- *The NYU Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard*

**Table 1: Evaluation of curricular materials by focus area**

	Focus 1: Aligned to Grade Level Expectations	Focus 2: Inclusive and Culturally Responsive
6th – 8th	Mostly	Slightly
9th – 12th	Slightly	Slightly

The first focus area of the framework considers whether the instructional materials are aligned to the grade level expectations including the state content standards and the instructional shifts required by the standards. Specifically, do the materials:

- Support students in building the knowledge and skills required by the content and grade level standards required for the course?
- Give students the opportunity to engage in reading, writing, speaking, and listening about grade-level text(s) and topics?
- Reflect the seven practices in the *Standards for History and Social Science Practice* and give students the opportunity to engage in inquiry and research that are the foundation for active and responsible citizenship?

The second focus area of the framework considers whether the instructional materials are inclusive and reflect equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy. Specifically, do the materials:

- Acknowledge a diversity of perspectives and identities?
- Address issues of equity and power?
- Reflect key principles of social justice?

## 6th – 8th Grade

The current 6–8th grade curriculum is informed by a district initiative for teachers to design a comprehensive overview, “rainbow document”, of each course on a shared drive. The rainbow documents provide the pacing, standard alignment, essential questions, key content, skills, and common assessments for each unit of study.

### Alignment

Of the ten units referenced in the 6th grade *World Geography and Ancient Civilizations I* rainbow document, only four have materials provided for daily instruction. One of which is an Introduction which focuses primarily on routines and behaviors and another is an inaccessible culminating writing unit. 25% of content specific units have supporting instructional materials. Common assessments are accessible for 8/10 units including a variety of summative multiple choice tests, Document Based Questions (DBQs), persuasive writing prompts, design thinking and group research projects. The duration of each unit and a pacing calendar is provided for the entire year.

In the 7th grade *World Geography and Ancient Civilizations II* document, none of the eight units have materials provided for daily instruction. Essential questions, key content and skills are identified without access to supplementary resources. Common assessments are accessible for 8/8 units and the duration of each unit with a pacing calendar is provided for the year.

The 8th grade *US History* rainbow document provides guidance for seven units, six of which are content specific. The seventh topic covers current events and modern issues to be integrated into the course once weekly. Comprehensive materials for daily instruction are available for all units. Guidance for common assessments is provided, however, the resources are only accessible for 2/8 units. The duration of each unit is provided, however, the pacing calendar is only complete for the first two units.

### Culturally Responsive Lens

Despite the beliefs of teachers that their instructional materials are meeting the standards of rigor or cultural responsiveness, that is not demonstrated in the majority of classrooms. Eighty-two percent of teachers strongly agree or agree that the instructional materials they use center on issues of equity, race, power and identity, however, only 14% of classes that were observed were fully centered on issues of equity and power, with an additional 11% mostly centered on those issues.

In middle school, it was observed that the lesson was inclusive and reflected a culturally responsive learning experience mostly or fully 28% of the time. In 22% of lessons it was

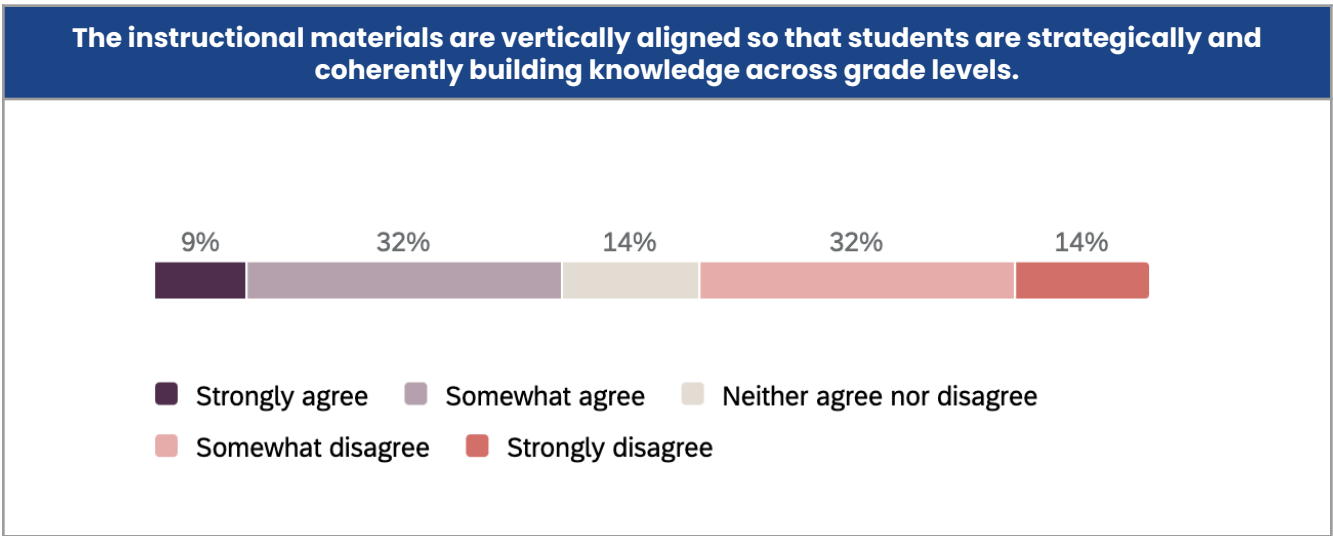
rated as not at all. Nineteen percent of teachers strongly agree, and 59% of teachers somewhat agree that instructional materials center stories of people from marginalized groups and encourage students to explore strengths and assets of non-dominant populations. Only 9% of classes were fully inclusive, with an additional 20% mostly inclusive. This means the lesson was inclusive and affirming of a variety of identities including, but not limited to race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and immigration status.

Teachers shared that there is a lack of training on how to incorporate these themes and beliefs into their classroom practice. This translates to teachers spending their out of school time to create their own resources to teach these themes in classrooms. The attempts to include culturally responsive texts and artifacts requires a significant investment of teacher time.

### 9th – 12th Grade

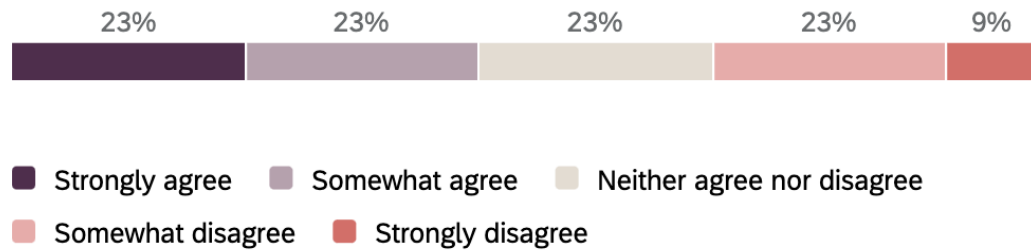
In the high school data, the experience is very similar. Only 6% of observed lessons fully demonstrated an inclusive and culturally responsive learning experience. An additional 35% were rated mostly, while 53% were rated slightly or not at all.

High school teachers note that they do a lot of their own work to find materials and create lessons and that much of their success in this area comes from their own personal passions and experiences, rather than from the support of the district.





**The instructional materials are horizontally aligned so that students are strategically and coherently building knowledge within courses/grade levels.**



# Focus Groups



Pages 24-33

# Overview

To ensure the voices of all stakeholders were included in this Instructional Review, NTC staff met with several role-alike groups to hear their perspective of the Social Studies instructional landscape and Culturally Responsive Teaching in Brookline. To get a full picture of the systems and support available to teachers, we asked stakeholders who touch the instructional system to be a part of these focus groups. In addition, as students are the primary stakeholders and instructional participants, we met with students to understand whether the planned curriculum matches the enacted curriculum in classrooms, and how students perceive its success. As equity throughout all systems is a goal for Brookline Public Schools, questions about how each stakeholder viewed equity within the instructional system also were asked.

Logistically, NTC staff met with stakeholders for 45 minutes over Zoom. One NTC team member facilitated the conversation with 5-10 participants, asking each participant to share their views on each question. Participants shared their opinions by speaking to the entire group, or by typing their thoughts into the chat window. The NTC team members also shared their email address with participants at the end of each session to allow any participant who did not feel comfortable sharing in the larger group the opportunity to share by email or in another one-on-one interview. No participants shared information outside of the focus group meetings.

Focus Groups included METCO identified students, families and staff, Brookline resident students and families, and 6th-12th grade Social Studies teachers.

## METCO Middle School Students

Analysis of responses from METCO students in middle school yielded the overarching theme that social studies content is repetitive, year after year. The following quotes were selected to provide insight into respondents' feedback:

"Pretty interesting, but it's different for each person. People in my class find it boring."

"Learning the same things over and over. It's kind of like the same things you learn over and over. Whenever it's something new it's more interesting."

Despite the repetitive Social Studies content, most students expressed an overall positive experience in PSB. The following quotes were selected to provide insight into respondents' feedback

"Students should know METCO is really good and it's really positive. It's a good thing for students to attend Brookline schools and I like the education here."

"Our social studies teacher brings in many people's point of views. My teacher is really good at making sure."

"I do feel connected because I see my teachers in and out of school."

"I feel really connected to my teachers and that's why I'm doing well."

"I don't really get any bad treatment for living in Boston."

## METCO High School Students

Analysis of responses from METCO students in high school yielded the overarching theme that the efforts being made to be more culturally responsive are often lacking, or in isolation. For example, Black history month being a focus in February or the Global Studies course as a singular example of a diverse learning experience. The following quotes were selected to provide insight into respondents' feedback:

"It's not a matter of whether they try. It's more systemic and rooted in the curriculum. When they try to include multiple cultures and identities, they are confined by everything else they need to teach."

"Last year for homework, they wanted us to listen to the soundtrack of Black Panther. We did a whole unit on Black Panther."

"They try, but sometimes it feels like they're trying really hard, but it feels disingenuous."

"I'm in my fifth social studies class and I want to change the curriculum. Our current textbook is extremely problematic. If we had newer texts that were written by people of color, it would benefit all students. This is true for AP classes, too, especially Government."

"I would like to add more black culture and black heritage because it's very diverse with many cultures. There's a class called Global Cultures or something like that. The fact that we need a class like that means that we're not focusing on multiple cultures at all."

## METCO Families

Analysis of responses from METCO families yielded one overarching theme that social studies content provides inadequate attention to the complex histories of specific systemically underserved groups. They would appreciate intentional units of learning around cultures beyond the dominant culture. The following quotes were selected to provide insight into respondents' feedback:

"When I think of social studies, I think of different cultures and their history in a truthful way. I would want my daughter to have an understanding about people, and where they come from, about the people that make up the US, the different backgrounds and cultures"

"I have 4 kids in elementary school and one in middle school. I would add critical thinking skills, and how to discern the truth from the false. I am not sure that what is presented is always the truth. What is taught about civil rights is Martin Luther King and I would like them to learn about more civil rights leaders"

"For my child, it would help her identify in a lot of ways, maybe a unit on the Mayans, and she could identify and say that's where my origins are and have a sense of pride! I don't know if they ever talk about the Caribbean, Taino, etc, but that would be a nice unit to have."

"I asked my children, and I felt many times there were gaps. Slavery being taught from a victim perspective, or westward expansion being an opportunity for white colonists. More than gaps, I was upset greatly about the Civil War and causes of the Civil War, that it was over states rights, that is what was being taught! That was not true. I sent an email to the teacher and principal, but it made me wonder how many times this narrative, which is not empowering, not fair, and harmful history is being taught. I remember this because of my anger."

In addition to underrepresentation of specific cultures and identities, some parents and caregivers felt previous interactions with school and district staff were insufficiently affirming, welcoming, or inclusive. The following quotes were selected to provide insight into respondents' feedback:

"It has been different for each of my children. They all notice that they are "one of the few." The METCO coordinators are amazing, go above and beyond supporting the students. I have had the experience of a teacher explaining the study of Kenya, but not China, for example, which I found off-putting that she had to justify studying an African country. Academically overall very positive, but socially it can be tough."

"I noticed that my middle school would treat METCO kids and children of color differently. They put them down and made them not want to be in school. METCO kids were not in the honors classes, and they could have been if they were given the support in middle school..."

"My last daughter had issues with trying to fit in and had to face racial slurs from her peers."

## METCO Staff

Analysis of responses from METCO Staff suggests a strong desire to provide authentic learning experiences for all students, but especially those in the METCO program. Examples of these authentic experiences included field trips, experiential activities, role plays, critical thinking activities vs. regurgitation, and opportunities to engage with experts and keynote speakers on various subjects.

"Students would benefit from attending field trips to see the history first hand, but it has to be done with care and intentionality."

"Service projects connected to Muslim women that aligned with the unit at the time would be beneficial to their learning."

"A missing piece is role-playing or acting out characters that could help students build standard/content knowledge."

"As students are learning things they should be able to see it in action."

Additionally, METCO staff expressed the need for social studies content that represented the varied identities in the classes, while ensuring history is taught in an accurate and responsible manner. Some indicated that staff could benefit from content-specific professional learning to avoid causing unintentional harm.

"Black and brown kids would feel more powerful if they heard more about their contributions, instead it always starts with slavery. We can empower those students by sharing the other part of our history."

"Important that staff are collaborating together to ensure students are feeling safe during this instruction. One school has a conversation that includes multiple adults to provide safe spaces and rich conversation."

"What's important is that slavery is not just connected to African Americans, colonizers tried to enslave others too. It should be equated to modern day slavery."

"We need a Civil Rights curriculum in order to do a deeper dive into the content and maybe have certain points connected across all grade levels."

"Important that power and equity is done right and not just all the time. We need to be sure to not just share the oppressive stories."

"Black and brown students feel uncomfortable in the class at times because of the conversation, particularly when they are "the only" student of color."

"The history of Native Americans is also a pain point because of the narratives. Teachers have to know it to teach it. Some teachers aren't prepared for the emotions."

"It would be great if we could incorporate other histories like, Cape Verdean history, which is the liberation of the islands, history of Black Wall Street in Tulsa, African American history outside of HS, and Latino history."

## PSB Resident Middle School Students

Analysis of responses from PSB Middle School students suggests students find social studies most engaging when it is inquiry-based and applied. They appreciate opportunities for exchanging thoughts through discussion, and welcome field trips and other more active opportunities to learn and apply their learning.

"There should be more field trips and involved trips."

"I would like to add more discussion in class and involvement."

"My social studies class is really fun and interesting because not only can we learn a really good lesson, but also we often work with groups and work on projects, and it's really fun cooperatively working with everyone and getting the job done."

"That's [a specific group sharing activity] pretty helpful because you get to listen to what other people are thinking and what they came up with as a response, and you also get to have a little fun."

"Our class is very discussion-based, and we have debates and stuff, which I think is really helpful for my learning and participation. It engages everyone, and we hear a lot of voices that don't usually speak a lot and I think that's really helpful."

"We have discussions sometimes, but I wish we had more because...it's like we're all working by ourselves. I wish we could all share ideas that we all think, and all talk about it together as a discussion."

Additionally, middle school students would like to learn about certain topics that are not part of the current curriculum.



"I think my social studies classes are actually really interesting and fun, and there are a lot of good things about it, but I wish we could learn more things like learning Black history in 6th grade curriculum of social studies."

"I would want more projects, and I would also want to learn more about World War II, more specifically the Holocaust, because I know we don't cover that until late in high school but I think it's important to learn about that relatively soon."

While students generally felt their social studies classes are inclusive and respectful, there were some concerns.

"I feel very connected to the teachers at my school. Obviously I'm at the end of middle school and I've known them for a long time. But I think that everyone, if you asked anyone in my grade they all feel really connected to the school and like a part of the community."

"I just wish that we had a better relationship with the teachers and they got to know us more...but they don't really exclude us based off anything."

"Sometimes in my class there's a little bit of "shade" thrown at people who identify as Republican or more conservative viewpoints, which I find a little inappropriate. My teacher is very forward about his opinions of past presidents and political parties, which I don't think is that great because I know there are some people in my class that have Republican family members or that might not agree, and that can influence people, maybe not in the right way."

"My favorite subject is ELA, because for some reason in ELA we're learning more about Black history than we are in Social Studies, and we're getting into more topics like Japanese internment and certain things that involve identity and other Black historical topics."

## PSB Resident High School Students

Analysis of responses from PSB High School students suggests students find social studies most engaging when academic discourse is present and students are able to extend each other's thinking around a complex topic. They appreciate opportunities for exchanging thoughts through discussion, and welcome topics about war and religion.

"We are examining how war plays a major role in society. My teacher is amazing and I love the people in my class."

"We have a lot of discussions. Anytime you have a discussion you go to basics and then dig into complex topics and that challenges thinking. I think that is provided in discussions and not necessarily in class."

"Within my history class, the content is not as challenging, but the actual class and discussion are very difficult and challenging based on the ideas brought up and people in the class."

"The challenge lies in the discussion and not the content."

"I enjoy Humanities most because it is almost entirely discussion based. You do your best learning when you're talking."

"History has the opportunity to be the best. It's all about the amount of discussions and how they are facilitated."

"Teaching of Judaism is not talked about much, like how it has shaped Christianity and other religions. They don't really acknowledge or mention Holocaust Remembrance Day which is disappointing. I personally am a little bit upset by that."

Additionally, students expressed concern about the lack of diversity in their Advanced Placement classes and suggested that the content of the courses also lacked accurate and appropriate information about other cultures and religions.

"We spent 2 weeks on Hinduism in 9th grade and it was not good at all. I couldn't listen to the teacher talk about it because they were making the most stereotypical comments about it and it was not what I experienced."

"A lot of students of color drop the classes at a higher rate due to lack of support along the way."

"If we were to teach a more diversified history that may encourage students of color to be attracted to these courses."

"In my AP history class, it is primarily a white, male class. AP and honors classes have been primarily dominated by white students which may be a testament to issues in our district of students of color being dissuaded from taking AP/Honors classes and making it difficult to advance up the levels."

"In freshman year, the curriculum touches on a huge period of time. They do a decent job with some religions, but just one day on Judaism and a tiny bit on other religions and two and a half weeks on Christianity. In order to change that it starts with the curriculum."

"They always seem to be putting Europeans on a pedestal."

"I just felt like the class was just about the founding fathers, gilded age...just not the history of the US. We spent half a week on civil rights, which only mentioned the Harlem Renaissance. We did study slavery, but after that it was all about white people."

"We cover a lot of information and it's interesting, but the school doesn't have leeway because it's an AP course. Teachers supplement our textbook to get minority voices in there, but it is extremely limiting and is a Eurocentric viewpoint. No blame on the district as it is a college class."

## PSB Resident Families

Analysis of focus groups from PSB families suggested a desire for more coherence in the scope and sequence within and across grade levels, and a desire for students to gain specific skills with critical thinking, problem solving, empathy, and social justice in order to make sense of complex issues.

"I would like to see them building knowledge in a much more cumulative, coherent way. I feel like they get bits and pieces, particularly in elementary school there isn't much time spent on social studies, and they get to middle school and the expectations have gone way up that they have lots of background knowledge that they are supposed to have in order to make sense of the very complex issues they learn about in high school. And they haven't had that opportunity to build that knowledge in a cumulative way... so that explicit

connections are made from grade to grade...and [I would like to see] more reading, more reading, more reading, please."

"When I looked at the 6th grade social studies curriculum, I was gravely disappointed because it looked like a Jeopardy curriculum. One fact after another. ... What I'd like students to do, not only for Africa but for every part of the world including the United States, is some sociology. For students to meet people, *groups* of people, people who would like some changes...what are their values?"

"All these things are happening in our world around racial justice or certain polarizing issues. Those issues are going to come into the classroom no matter what a teacher does. So why aren't we arming and equipping them to have those conversations that directly impact students and then linking it to what they're learning and making it more relevant?"

"My interest is really in inquiry-based learning and having them have opportunities to experience learning in more of a hands-on project-led inquiry-based way; also in connecting what's going on in the real world to what they're learning in school and having that inspire some sort of informed action. For my kids that's really missing, this whole idea of service learning or doing something that has a positive impact on the community."

Families also noted a desire for more coverage of content related to Africa, Western Civilization, the Holocaust, and Indigenous people from a standpoint of joy and strength.

"I was really disappointed last year with the content that was taught [last year]. It was really disjointed. I find that there should be a little more emphasis on Western Civilization and culture, particularly the Greeks and Romans - things that have really influenced who we are as Americans, what our society is...it was all over the place last year...there was no cohesion to the whole year. It basically seemed like a bunch of different countries or societies that were just chosen to just touch on them, some more than others."

"I'd like to see the curriculum focus on the Holocaust. Last year in 7th grade on Holocaust Day, my son's teacher didn't even mention it. This year it's his English teacher who's doing it."

"My daughter was studying the Trail of Tears. As a person who is also from The Americas, when I got welcomed to America having come from another America, it was a bit of an insult. Studying the story of our Native Americans through only evaluating the pain that was inflicted on them is not dignifying. I just got a little concerned that she was only learning the sad part of the story and doesn't approach the dignity of that culture."

## Middle School Social Studies Teachers

Analysis of teacher focus groups from Brookline middle schools suggested a desire for more coherence in the scope and sequence within and across grade levels, and a desire for professional learning to gain specific skills with supporting English Language Learners and culturally responsive pedagogy.

"Oftentimes, the 6th graders are not ready for me because they had SS once or twice a week for 20 min over the course of the last few years."

"The content can vary drastically from school to school; the school I'm at, students come with a good amount of content knowledge and skills; For example, the first few years the intro units weren't relevant and kids had already done it."

"In terms of culturally responsive pedagogy, there is no training; We're given a textbook that does not address it; Grades 6th and 7th do ancient civilization; American in 8th grade, which is a civics course not history."

"Students have trouble connecting the content from K-5 to 6-7 then to 8; but the skills build nicely."

"In grades 6th through 8th, the skills do build on each other; not sure what is being taught 9-12; we aren't integrated well enough to answer that question."

There is more pressure this year than last year to vertically align to make sure my students are getting an education similar to other 6th grade classrooms or am I setting them up for success with the social studies teachers they will have at my school."

"We are not really aligned on content, either. For example, we had a 6th grade student whose 9th grade sister was learning the same thing about Hinduism."

"I would love direct instruction materials for English learning students, for every unit we teach; for every reading level; Direct instruction materials for lower reading levels for English speaking kids, like 4th grade level in 8th grade."

"This is my second year in the district and zero training at all for anything; not a lot offered to me outside of summer PD; there's a menu of PD to pick from in the summer."

"They say they want us to do this but don't give us the resources or time, in the past they would get an O day; opportunities to do this are expected on our own time instead of built into contracted hours."

## High School School Social Studies Teachers

Teachers from Brookline High School touched on a few key themes also identified in classroom observations and teachers' survey responses. When asked about opportunities to deepen their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers indicated that opportunities were limited, dependent on an individual's own capacity and resources, or "missed the mark" when offered, which led many teachers to conclude that they did not have a clear understanding of what culturally responsive pedagogy looked like in practice.

"I do a lot of my own work. About 2 hours [preparing for] my lesson... I am part of groups on how to do anti-racist work. This is a personal passion of mine. I did diversity and inclusion work in my study of history. I get frustrated that the school community wants nuanced and incredibly well thought out lessons. People don't realize the effort it takes to produce that. It's more than time, it's about who is leading us through that work and is confident. What does culturally responsive teaching really mean?"

"We need to update our curriculum to include more voices and have more meaningful pacing."

"Difficult for teachers to learn, find the resources, and collaborate. It would be helpful if it is specific to our content. We don't need as much professional development around racism, and more specific to the content."

Teachers also discussed issues caused by a lack of vertical alignment between middle school and high school, horizontal alignment across middle school campuses, and horizontal alignment within the BHS Social Studies department. Teachers collectively felt that the lack of clear scope and sequence for both curriculum and student skills contributed to a collectively unclear sense of alignment and strategic direction.

"The way new courses get introduced is because teachers have a passion. That's the process. There's no strategic plan."

"As someone who has been in the district for 3 years, I don't know what the district vision is across schools. I don't know much about what other teachers are doing or teaching."

"Skills should be scope and sequenced better. Once upon a time there was a skill scope and sequence by year so we can understand what we are teaching curriculum-wise but also around the skills students should have."

"Decide more collectively around the initiatives that the department is approaching. It currently feels like a directive. It needs continuity year over year."

"I think that it is reasonable to expect our leaders to give us a basic document that tells us what is being taught in K-12."

"I have no clue about what's happening in other classrooms; no understanding of the vertical progression of learning."

"We don't talk about levels. There was a time when we used departmental meetings as a team meeting and to share out across other teams. There is a common planning block and a collaboration time where they are generally free. [This] enables small teams to meet but not across each other to share. Based on the dynamic nature of our curriculum, it would be helpful to know the scope and sequence."

Teachers also discussed a variety of factors that influenced school, department, and individual capacity to meet students' needs, including the ever-expanding number of responsibilities placed on teachers, the negative impact of administrative turnover, issues related to technology access and skills, and a lack of access to substitute teachers as a means of participating in professional learning.

"Teaching has become way too big of a responsibility. Technology, SEL, trauma informed classrooms. The point that is being made is there is a lack of overall direction. Seven superintendents in nine years. It's hard to gain traction due to the leadership changes."

"Town hall has been a revolving door and [there] seems to be little direction."

"[There is a] lack of technology in the district. We can't get chargers for these chromebooks. In some cases, students actually don't have the tools to access materials sometimes."

"Professional development on how to use the technology in our classrooms is needed. Some teachers don't have these skills, which creates inequities."



# Surveys



PAGES 34-46

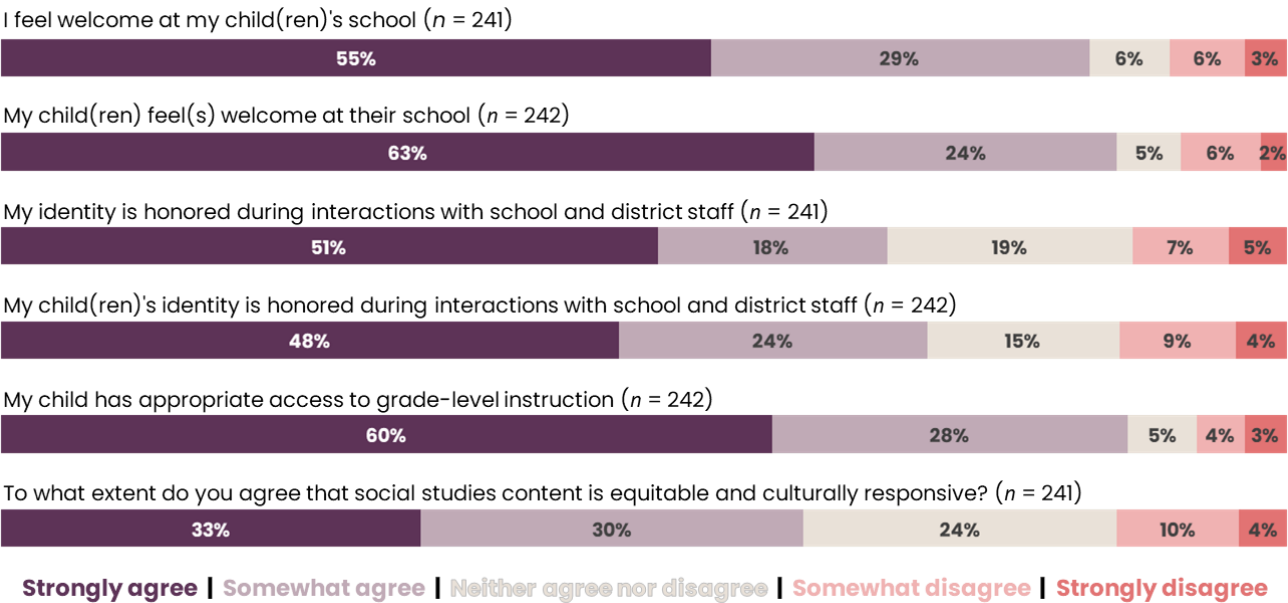


# Overview

NTC administered two surveys in Fall 2022 to provide parents/caregivers and social studies teachers an opportunity to confidentially voice their opinions about PSB. Parents and caregivers were asked about interactions with district staff and familiarity with the social studies curriculum. Middle and high school social studies teachers were asked about curriculum alignment with equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy and Massachusetts content standards. Survey participation was voluntary, and language translations were provided to parents and caregivers.

## Family Survey

As displayed below, a majority of parent and caregiver respondents provided generally favorable responses and largely felt that interactions with district staff were positive, inclusive, and identity-affirming for themselves and their children.



In total, 242 parents and caregivers responded to the Family Survey, which consisted of the six items noted above with three additional qualitative prompts (discussed below). Respondents who disagreed with one or more of the above statements were asked to explain their reasoning as a means of better understanding what led to their negative perception. In total, parents and caregivers who disagreed with one or more statements comprised 24% of respondents (n = 58), and those who strongly disagreed with one or more statements comprised 9% of respondents (n = 21). Seven families with students attending Brookline schools through the METCO program completed the survey. Their

responses are not disaggregated in this report to protect their anonymity and confidentiality.

Analysis of written responses for the 24% of respondents who disagreed with a particular statement yielded one overarching theme that **social studies content provides inadequate attention to the complex histories of specific systemically underserved groups**. The following quotes were selected to provide insight into respondents' feedback:

"Though better, social studies material [is] still Eurocentric. Also, more attention is given to groups that 'shout the loudest' should be more equitable. Would also recommend reinstating the Facing History and Ourselves mandatory curriculum as was back in the day given continuing hate incidents."

"Curriculum seems to honor diversity and equity except for its Jewish students. I presume the hesitation of the Public Schools of Brookline to outwardly support its Jewish students is fear from the left in conflating support for Jewish students with support for Israel. Heritage months, curriculum, ect. ignore Jewish students and the American Jewish experience."

"Issues of racial equity seem relatively well represented but LGBTQ identities are less likely to be centered or viewed from a strengths based perspective."

"The high school social studies curriculum is phenomenal; the changes to the 9th grade curriculum a few years ago were excellent. However, some administrators (not teachers!) have been closed to considering how their decisions disproportionately and negatively impact students from underrepresented groups."

"Re child's identity: Sometimes the school appears to pay too much attention to a student's color, race, or ethnicity, thereby ignoring the person's individuality and their individual needs. The school's intentions are good, but the ultimate effect can be counterproductive because the students are not treated and respected as individual human beings. For example, after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol, there was a school-wide assembly to address the disturbing event. That was good. However, after the assembly, "students of color" were invited to attend additional smaller discussion groups. In our family, we were disappointed and deeply saddened by this segregation based on outward appearance or even self-identified race. How would a child decide whether they belong in a group "of color"? Would they be welcomed, or not, into the discussion group based on their outward appearance? Moreover, the painful implication was that if you didn't look like someone of color, or if you identified as "white," then you were expected to be less afraid or less disturbed by this frightening event. It would have been appropriate to offer smaller follow-up discussion groups for all those students who wanted additional emotional support. This was a missed opportunity for all our students to discuss uncomfortable topics in the safe and inclusive environment of BHS, facilitated by their caring teachers and staff. It was a missed opportunity for students to learn from each other, and to learn to trust each other."

"I think Brookline should have students read more books and have more discussions on people who lived through these historical and social events. I also think there are still negative stereotypes that are associated with students of color as well as students of different religious backgrounds. I think it would be in Brookline's best interest to further

diversify [its] staff with not only people from various different ethnicities but different cultural backgrounds as well. I also think incorporating field trips that touch more on different cultural backgrounds would help.”

“Cisgender students are sometimes made to feel left out due to a very strong and seemingly unending praise of LGBTQ+ identities. These minority groups deserve total acceptance and protection. But cisgender kids are made to feel guilty, ashamed of their own state of being because [of] the constant praise and focus on the LGBTQ student body. You’d be surprised what is said to cisgender kids by LGBTQ kids within their own friend circles. Please support ALL kids and find balance. ”

In addition to underrepresentation of specific cultures and identities, some parents and caregivers felt **previous interactions with school and district staff were insufficiently affirming, welcoming, or inclusive:**

“My race or my children’s race have never been affirmed or even brought up by any district staff. I do not feel particularly welcomed at the school because parent access is extremely limited and often only provided at times that are unhelpful for working families.”

“The staff and administration routinely commit acts of discrimination against ‘white’ people.”

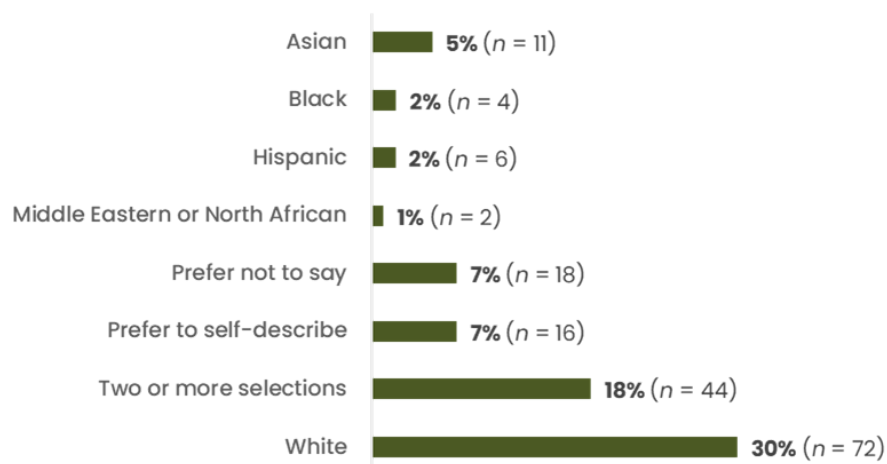
“Not everyone incorporates skin color or ‘race’ centrally as part of their identity. Moreover, the views the school adopts are driven by external parties neither connected to the school nor Brookline. Additional, over-reliance on arbitrary and sometimes offensive US racial designations. School must be inclusive of international students who do not ascribe to US-centric identity politics.”

“We are a bi-cultural, multilingual, multiracial family. Oftentimes we are referred to [as] Hispanic even [though] we are not Spanish speakers. Or, Latinx, which... doesn’t exist in our native language. We are Latinos of non Hispanic [origin].”

“Hate directed at white children and families. Most of the ‘consultants’ are just race grifters who do nothing but profit off misery.”

“White, cis parent... Based on conversations with my kids, there is not just a need for a broader understanding/narrative of the people’s history, but the way the classes are taught are not addressing the [impact] of white supremacy culture. There is a sense of urgency, little time to [acknowledge] what is happening in the body and an expectation that folks will say/write things perfectly. My Junior has been shown painful videos of Bloody Sunday, with no time to process or feel the impact of that, ‘ok here is another painful video.’ He has cried silently. [T]here is not a trauma responsive container, identities are not shared, there are no practices to help folks get regulated and actually integrate and metabolize the history. Yes to more cultural responsiveness, and yes to more explicit practices to address white supremacy culture/dominant culture in the classroom because it is not working for anyone.”

Seventy-one percent (71%) of all Family Survey respondents provided optional demographic information with respect to student race/ethnicity, student gender identity, student sexual orientation, household education attainment, religious affiliation, METCO status, and/or citizenship status.



These items were included to assess whether the sample was representative of the broader PSB community, and to better understand the relationship between respondents' experiences and demographic characteristics of interest. As displayed in the figure on page 35, the sample of respondents included a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds but notably underrepresented the voices of Asian, Black, and Hispanic families as a percentage of total Brookline families.

## Qualitative Items

Parents and caregivers were asked to respond to the following qualitative items as a means of adding context to quantitative survey responses:

- What aspects of your culture and/or history are important for schools to include in social studies class content?
- What goals do you have for your child/children while they attend school?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Public Schools of Brookline?

With respect to aspects of culture or history that parents and caregivers felt was important to incorporate into instructional content, many responses referred to specific racial or cultural histories and experiences (e.g., Asian American, Jewish, Indigenous American, African American, LGBTQ+, persons with disability-related functional needs). Many parents and caregivers also felt it was important to **expose students to a variety of perspectives and viewpoints as a means of cultivating critical thinking skills**. They noted the importance of covering undeniably tragic topics (i.e., slavery as an early institution of United States history), but **voiced a desire to balance potentially deficit-based narratives with uplifting stories**.

With respect to goals for their children, many parents and caregivers wanted their children to **acquire traditional academic knowledge and skills** (e.g., critical thinking, knowledge of diverse histories and cultures, social skills, life skills, study skills) in a dynamic, engaging, stimulating classroom environment (i.e., feeling seen and heard; being fully engaged; cultivating curiosity about cultures, histories, and experiences; developing a love of learning).

Finally, parents and caregivers shared some culminating thoughts about their experiences in PSB. **The majority of comments were supportive of teachers, staff, instructional methods, curriculum, and overall culture**; however, some respondents provided additional suggestions for improving students' experiences, including:

"A more concerted effort at integrating METCO students into the school community. More speakers/events around racial equity issues."

"We need more diversity when it comes to educators."

"Many Brookline teachers are well meaning but still need to do further work. (Such as white male teachers making generalizations about African people based on their Peace Corps experience)"

"It's hard to tell how challenged my student is. It seems as if his classes either aren't covering much material, or he's not engaged in what's being covered. But again, that's my perception, and it's hard to tell!"

"It would be great if PSB spent much less time focusing on identity and encouraging activism. School time is very precious and teachers are experts in important areas of learning that the students will need to become productive and independent adults. Values and identity issues can be covered by parents and caregivers."

"I appreciate the concerted effort to make [the] curriculum inclusive. I'd like to see the value of inclusivity attended to with day to day systems like helping a new Brookline resident be integrated in the system. We had many interactions which did not make us feel welcome or able to integrate smoothly."

"I found great teachers at BHS. They are very professional. But the intellectual landscape is very limited and limiting. There should be more intellectual diversity and heterodoxy should be actively promoted."

"Overall good experience but students are not challenged in any way."

"Personally, I've had positive experiences, but a former parent felt alienated in our liberal bubble when the conservative opinions of her family were discounted; her kids were uncomfortable speaking up in class."

"Social change has been reduced to tokenism across the district. Student[s] can and want to go deeper and [participate] in student-led action. Social studies is a great place for them to start, but we need to push more inquiry-driven learning that result[s] in real action."

"I have found inconsistencies throughout based on the teacher – some are very progressive and culturally aware. Others teach the same way they did 20 years ago."

## Limitations

While survey data can provide meaningful insight into respondents' thoughts, feelings, and experiences, the results presented here are subject to certain limitations that readers should consider when interpreting findings. NTC's scope of work focused on middle and high school social studies curriculum and instruction; however, the family survey includes responses from parents and caregivers from all grade levels, including elementary grades. In addition, given the sample itself only represents a small percentage of PSB families, we urge caution when generalizing findings to the broader PSB community. Lastly, survey responses are subject to various external factors (e.g., mood, hunger, time of day, social desirability) that can influence respondents' favorability or lack thereof.

## Educator Survey

Twenty-seven ( $n = 27$ ) Social Studies teachers in grades 6–12 were surveyed about curriculum alignment with equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy and Massachusetts content standards. Educators' responses highlighted four key areas of concern: (1) **insufficient guidance from department and/or district leadership**, (2) **unclear or inadequate vertical and horizontal alignment of instructional materials**, (3) **questionable academic rigor**, and (4) **a need to further embed culturally responsive pedagogy**.

## Guidance

As indicated in the figure on the next page, a majority of Social Studies teachers indicated disagreement or neutrality regarding three of the four specified areas of instructional guidance. When prompted to explain why they disagreed, teachers provided the following explanations:

(On culturally sensitive experiential learning activities)

"The district has offered us no support or guidance on how to improve our teaching in this realm. They provide generic speakers on racial and equity issues, but no guidance has been provided regarding culturally sensitive experiential learning activities."

"I have a very specific understanding of '[experiential] learning activities' that is rooted in the mandate that they actually lead and require students to engage and act with the world outside of their school's walls. At the middle school level in Brookline, these experiences are often pursued by teachers on an individual basis and not systematically laid out in a district curriculum for educators."



Guidance is provided to teachers on engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities ( $n = 26$ )



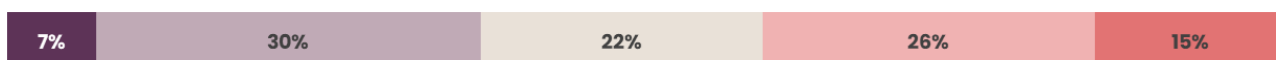
Guidance is provided to teachers on opportunities to engage students' families to enhance lessons ( $n = 27$ )



Guidance includes a range of possible student responses that could all be valid, given the range of student experiences and perspectives ( $n = 25$ )



Guidance is provided to teachers on customizing and supplementing the curriculum to reflect the prior knowledge, cultures, traditions, backgrounds, and interests of the student population ( $n = 27$ )



**Strongly agree** | **Somewhat agree** | **Neither agree nor disagree** | **Somewhat disagree** | **Strongly disagree**

### (On engaging students' families to enhance lessons)

"Home-communication is usually related to classroom procedures & expectations or other learning-related needs. While I've done a few "interview a family member" activities, I've never received any direct instruction about how to be more inclusive of students' families."

"Again, the district has offered no guidance in this realm. We receive support from our curriculum coordinator, but the district provides no guidance."

"We do not always fully know our students' backgrounds early on. I'm also unclear on what this means. When would we include families in a high school lesson? We at times have them ask family members about events as assignments."

### (On guidance regarding the range of possible valid student responses)

"I think there is a shift currently happening in the district from teaching social studies as a more or less inevitable and set historic narrative to encouraging students to engage in the process of thinking like historians and active civic participants seeking to make change in the world. This shift is evident, but it is only beginning to be integrated into district curricula."

"Not sure where this would apply."

"Similar to previous answers, the district fails to provide any guidance in this realm beyond that of our curriculum coordinator."

### (On guidance related to customizing and supplementing curriculum to better reflect the student population)

"Oftentimes, teachers are provided with a curriculum, and they are given the option to customize it, but specific guidance or examples of how to do so are not provided. As the

6-8 middle school curricula becomes more fleshed out in the next couple of years, I think that this guidance will be built in.”

“Some guidance, but not inclusive enough, not adequate time to incorporate materials provided in a meaningful way.”

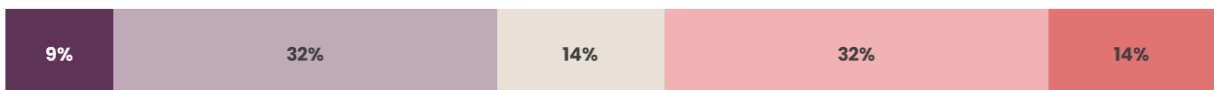
“This is an area that we need most, in my opinion. It’s hard for teachers to just teach about more identities in a responsible and informed way. We, like our students, need to learn and keep up with our fast changing world. We often have to seek professional development opportunities ourselves to gain new content knowledge, which is a part of our jobs. At the same time, it would be helpful if we got resources from work as well where we can gain content specific professional development. Or at least some tools & support on how we can gain content knowledge in a collective and productive way.”

“Again, the district does not provide guidance in this realm. The district only pays lip service to this goal – last year, a message came from [the] central admin telling us to incorporate SEL activities, but no time or direction was offered. This year, a non-aligned dean told us to include more AAPI instruction, but again, his message was ‘do this’ with instructions on how or time to get the task completed.”

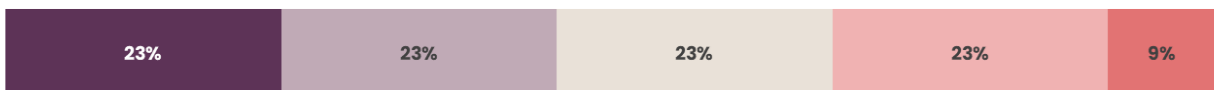
## Alignment of Instructional Materials

Many teachers disagreed that Social Studies instructional materials were vertically or horizontally aligned so that students could strategically build knowledge within and across grade levels.

The instructional materials are vertically aligned so that students are strategically and coherently building knowledge across grade levels ( $n = 22$ )



The instructional materials are vertically aligned so that students are strategically and coherently building knowledge within course/grade levels ( $n = 22$ )



**Strongly agree** | **Somewhat agree** | **Neither agree nor disagree** | **Somewhat disagree** | **Strongly disagree**

When prompted to explain, teachers who disagreed with either statement responded with the following:

“Not [vertically] aligned at all. I have no idea what happens one grade below or one grade above.”

“There is next to no cohesion between the k-8 grade curriculum and what we do here at BHS.”

"This is something we need! We've talked about it as a department and I know we're just getting the ball rolling to meet across grade levels to ensure we have coherence in our curricula as students move through our three mandatory history courses. I'm eager for us to get into the full swing of this discussion because it'll make a huge difference in reiterating to students that we do cover a lot of different people's histories and that they all have strong strings threading them from the ancient to the modern."

"We just don't work that well across grade levels."

"The introduction of our new 9th grade curriculum, WHISP, has upset the balance that previously existed. The course covers excellent content, but, in my opinion, was created in a vacuum without concern for what later grades expect students to know. In order to be successful, we need time to meet and discuss content, something that the district has failed to provide (see previous responses regarding the district's failure to provide guidance)."

"To my knowledge, our content isn't horizontally aligned. Things that could line up well are often taught at different times of year, and lack of shared planning time makes it hard to tackle this at a school level. It's definitely something I'd love to work on."

"Not consistently across schools [in re horizontal alignment]."

## Academic Rigor

**Many Social Studies teachers indicated uncertainty whether students were sufficiently challenged to demonstrate or practice knowledge, skills, or dispositions acquired through the learning process.** Half of responding teachers ( $n = 10$ ) selected "neither agree nor disagree" in response to the statement that instructional materials require students to demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, with one additional teacher indicating disagreement. When asked whether students have opportunities to practice using the knowledge and skills that enable them to participate in civic life, 30% of teachers ( $n = 6$ ) responded "neither agree nor disagree" and an additional 15% ( $n = 3$ ) responded "somewhat disagree." **These results align with classroom observation trends suggesting that teachers were responsible for the majority of the cognitive lift during instruction and that students could opt out when desired.**

## Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As mentioned earlier, a substantial minority of Social Studies teachers (42%,  $n = 11$ ) did not agree that they had received guidance regarding culturally sensitive experiential learning opportunities. Teachers were similarly skeptical that Social Studies curriculum and instructional materials were adequately culturally responsive. **A majority of responding teachers did not agree with the notion that instructional materials encouraged students to take action to combat inequity or promote equity within the school or local**

**community** (Neither agree nor disagree: 37% [ $n = 10$ ]; Somewhat disagree: 26% [ $n = 7$ ]). Teachers who disagreed provided the following comments:

"I think that our curriculum does offer students many opportunities to think about the inequities in our world and the history/reason of systems built on inequity. However, in an ancient world history class, we don't often get to how students can translate all the historical knowledge to modern day action in Brookline/Brookline High. If we do spend time thinking about action against inequities & systems of inequity, it often is a special lesson on current events that's not directly related to the course content."

"There is not enough support on how students can apply the knowledge they are learning."

"I work with my students on these issues but the main instructional materials do not focus on this in depth."

"I don't see evidence of this in the 6th/7th curriculum as a whole. Teachers may opt to work this in, but to my knowledge it's not standardized/ a common expectation for all classes."

**Many teachers echoed a similar muted sentiment regarding district-level efforts to ensure educators use culturally responsive pedagogy** (Neither agree nor disagree: 20% [ $n = 4$ ]; Somewhat disagree: 10% [ $n = 2$ ]; Strongly disagree: 10% [ $n = 2$ ]).

"I'm not sure they could 'ensure' this. I have not received any trainings or heard anything in this district about culturally responsive pedagogy though I am sure folks aren't 'against' it"

"There is not a mechanism in the district by which teachers' pedagogies are checked for being culturally responsive. The only way a concern may arise is if a teacher makes a poor choice, and specific concerns arise from students and/or families on a case-by-case basis."

"There is no advanced professional development around this. There is no guidance for teachers, we're all attempting to handle [it] on our own."

These perspectives further support classroom observation findings that while classrooms were generally welcoming and inclusive environments, Social Studies curriculum and instruction did not utilize culturally responsive pedagogical practices.

## Qualitative Feedback

Teachers were asked to provide written feedback to the following questions:

- Where do you obtain your content for your daily instruction?
- Have you engaged in learning opportunities about culturally responsive pedagogy?
- Are there materials/resources you wish you had access to that you currently do not?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about the district's Social Studies curriculum?

- Do you have any other feedback you would like to provide about the district's efforts to utilize equitable and culturally responsive pedagogical practices?

## Key themes

Much of the feedback provided here echoed what was shared previously in the staff focus groups and prior survey questions. **Teachers indicated that they had significant freedom to identify and use instructional content from a variety of sources, and that no system(s) existed for aligning content within or across grade levels.** A small number of teachers mentioned collaborating with their grade-level teams to identify content and align instruction.

With respect to participation in learning opportunities on culturally responsive pedagogy, most teachers indicated that they had participated in a handful of formal learning opportunities in their time with PSB (e.g., Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity [SEED], Facing History, Primary Source) as well as opportunities that appeared to be voluntary and external from the district. Notably, one teacher wrote that **"the [professional development] that exists is geared towards people who do not know what culturally responsive teaching is."** Another echoed this sentiment and noted that teachers desired more content-specific learning opportunities: **"Some educators definitely still need basic levels of reminders, skill building, etc. However, I think a lot of us are craving more next steps and increased levels of equity training so that we can continue our growth to [become] a more equitable school."** A third also voiced a desire for content-specific learning opportunities:

"I think we have a mindset to continue to grow and evolve our curriculum. Certainly there can be challenges when teachers have a background in certain parts of history taught a certain way. They may be open to including new stories or journeying to new parts of the world, but might feel a lack of confidence in their own content knowledge with it. I'd love to see more true PD for us that actually teaches us more history from more places, rather than just PD that tries to teach us to value diversity/inclusion/equity. We've absolutely got a critical mass of teachers who value diversity and inclusion in our curriculum, but how confident do we feel to teach outside of our respective comfort zones? If that can be addressed in a more targeted way, I believe we'd have something incredibly special going."

One teacher felt that existing time commitments hindered teachers' capacity to focus on culturally responsive pedagogy and identify department best practices:

"Taking some content expectations off our plate would free us up more [to] go deeper on equity and culturally responsive pedagogy. Identifying some department-wide best practices that we all implement could also be really powerful while still honoring each teacher's individual approach."

A handful of teachers wrote that learning opportunities were never offered by the district, possibly indicating a lack of clear communication about available learning opportunities.

Regarding materials or resources, teachers indicated a need for access to the following:

- Online newspapers (e.g., Boston Globe)
- Workshops or courses (with time allocated during the school day rather than evening/weekend)
- Online and physical textbooks for students with materials differentiated by functional learning needs
- Teachers' editions of online textbooks in order to access multimedia content
- Primary source materials

Regarding vertical/horizontal alignment of curriculum/instructional materials:

"I wish there was more cross-course communication to create a better sequence over the four years."

"I don't doubt that teachers are asking students to consider incredibly diverse and rich histories. I frequently go through colleagues' folders for teaching inspiration. That said, we are disconnected in terms of our vertical alignment of skills & content from 9th to 12th grade. I also think our electives need a shake-up. For the most part, they are all part of the broader "social sciences" rather than history-specific. (For this reason, I don't have much of an interest in asking to teach any of them, and they also seem to be "owned" by individual teachers...) Perhaps we could consider some sort of semester-based program that allows students to focus on specific histories. Many of our neighboring districts have courses on contemporary U.S. and global/region-specific histories from 1945-present, genocide (important considering the new MA law), and more."

Final thoughts from one teacher (emphasis added):

"I think that our department is wonderful and we have some amazing teachers. At the same time, **we need to take a deep examination internally on the fact that we are not a very diverse department and yet we're tasked to teach the histories of many different people and cultures at a fairly diverse school.** I would love for us to use this opportunity to have meaningful discussions on what concrete steps we can take as individuals, educators, and a department as a whole to be even better."

## Limitations

While survey data can provide meaningful insight into respondents' thoughts, feelings, and experiences, the results presented here are subject to limitations that should be considered when interpreting findings. The sample of Social Studies teachers for this survey was targeted; respondents knew that only their middle and high school colleagues would be responding to the survey. In essence, awareness of one's responses being part of a small, specific sample could inadvertently influence one's ability to honestly self-disclose. Survey responses are subject to various external factors (e.g., mood, hunger, time of day, social desirability) that can influence respondents' favorability or lack thereof.



# Data Review



PAGES 47-51

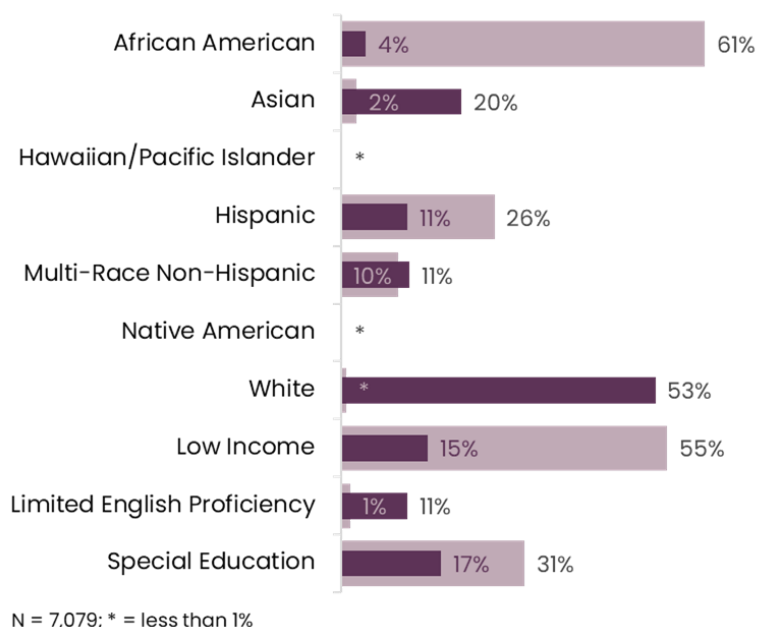
# Overview

NTC analyzed data from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years with respect to course enrollment, demographics, attendance, and standardized test scores to determine how the experiences of students who attended school through METCO differ from those of students who attended their neighborhood school.

## Demographics

METCO students comprised 4% of the PSB student body in 2021-22 ( $n = 282$ ). Compared to their non-METCO peers, **METCO students were 7x more likely to come from a low income household and twice as likely to have an IEP.** Based on PSB race designations, METCO students were predominantly classified as African American or Hispanic. A greater proportion of METCO students with individualized education programs (IEPs) were classified as having a learning disability (37%;  $n = 32$ ) than their non-METCO peers (19%;  $n = 214$ ), while fewer METCO students with IEPs were recognized as having an Autism diagnosis (2%;  $n = 2$ ) compared to non-METCO students (16%;  $n = 179$ ).

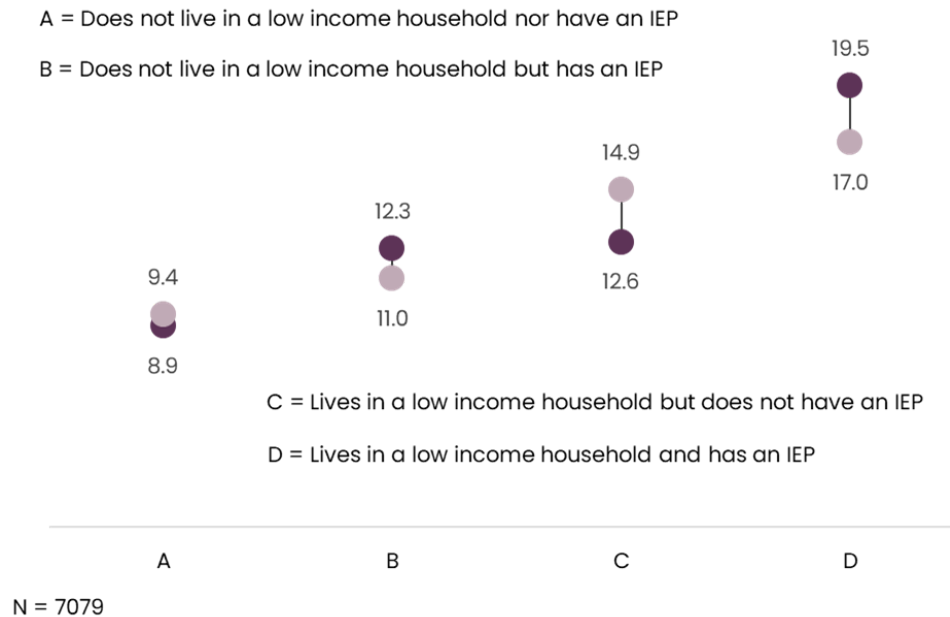
Students attending school through **METCO** were more likely than **non-METCO** students to be African American or Hispanic; to come from a low income household; or to have an IEP.



## Attendance

Analysis of attendance records for 2021-22 indicates that **the average METCO student missed 13 days of school ( $n = 282$ ) compared to 10 days for the average non-METCO student ( $n = 6,795$ ).** When analyzing the demographic factors that most influenced student attendance, **socioeconomic status and IEP status were more strongly related to attendance than METCO status**; however, given that METCO students were more likely to come from low income households or have an IEP, the cumulative effect of these risk factors—as well as other possible factors not captured in this analysis—indicates that METCO students may require more complex systems of support.

Household socioeconomic status and IEP status appeared to have a larger effect on school absences than participation in **METCO** (compared to **non-METCO**)

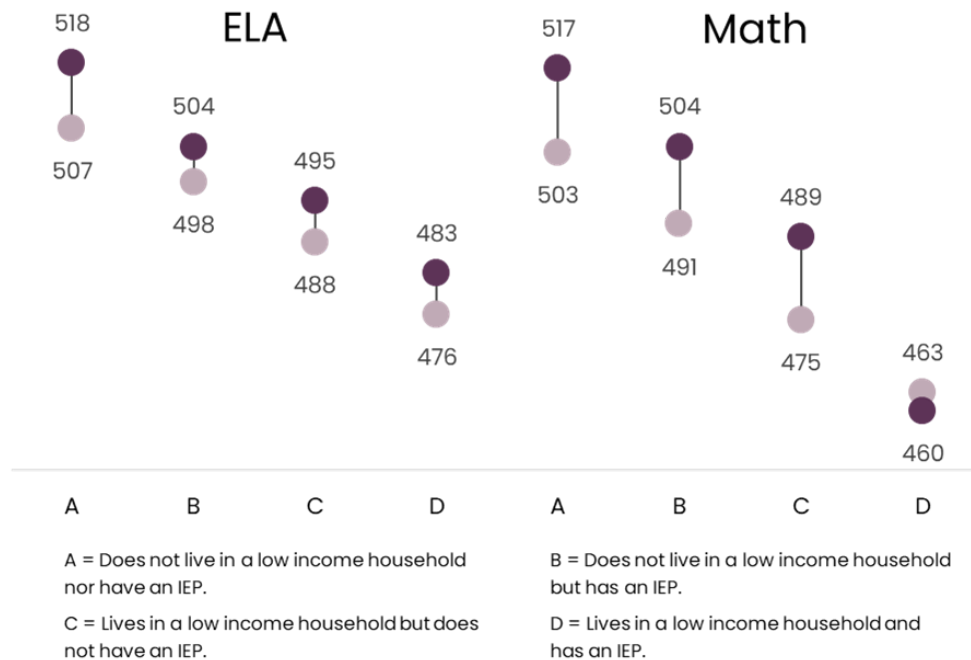


**Notably, Hispanic female METCO students missed an average of 21 school days in 2021-22** ( $n = 45$ ) compared to an average of 13 absences by their non-METCO Hispanic female peers ( $n = 376$ ) and 10 absences for the average non-METCO student. Attendance rates had no significant influence on MCAS Math or ELA scores for Hispanic female METCO students but did significantly influence scores for non-METCO Hispanic female students. The magnitude of the difference in attendance rates is noteworthy relative to similar comparisons by race, gender, and METCO status, and indicates a need to further explore the factors contributing to an unusually high number of missed school days for this group of students.

## MCAS Math/ELA

METCO students' performance on MCAS Math/ELA in 2021-22 was significantly influenced by whether the student had an IEP. Controlling for household socioeconomic status and attendance, a METCO student without an IEP could expect to score 23 points higher on the MCAS Math and 32 points higher on the MCAS ELA than their METCO peers receiving such support. Socioeconomic status and attendance did not have significant predictive value for METCO students' MCAS ELA performance, and only attendance had minimal predictive value on MCAS Math. However, demographics nonetheless appeared to have noticeable impacts on the MCAS scores of all students, as displayed below.

Students attending school through **METCO** generally underperformed their **non-METCO** peers on MCAS ELA/Math after accounting for household socioeconomic status and IEP status.

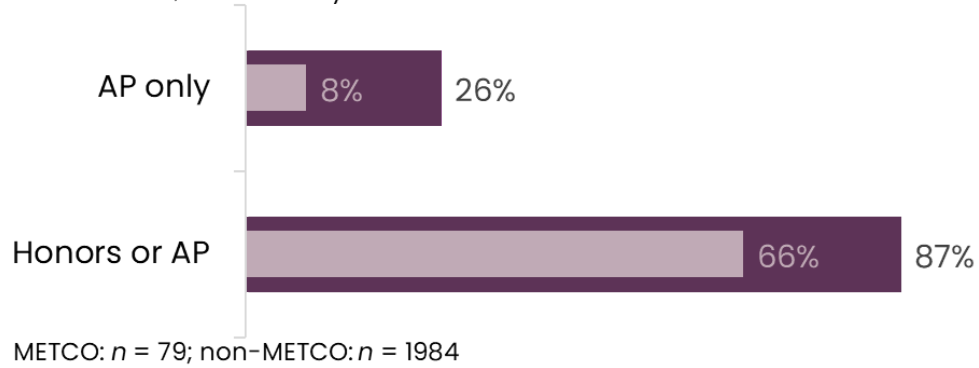


Note. MCAS scores represent scale scores. N = 3991.

## Honors/Advanced Placement Enrollment

Analysis of honors and advanced placement (AP) enrollment indicates that the overwhelming majority of students at Brookline High School (86%;  $n = 1761$ ) were enrolled in at least one honors or AP course during 2022–23. Enrollment in AP courses was more selective than honors, with only 25% of BHS students ( $n = 526$ ) enrolled in AP courses. Compared to their non-METCO peers, METCO students at BHS ( $n = 79$ ) were less likely to enroll in either honors or AP courses (as displayed on the next page). In addition, **while 8% of METCO students were enrolled in AP courses, they comprised only 1% of the students in AP classrooms.**

While a majority of **METCO** and **non-METCO** students participated in honors-level courses, substantially fewer **METCO** students enrolled in AP courses.



## Limitations

As noted earlier, the data analysis included in this report is based on a limited data set. Conclusions made in this report should not be generalized without additional analysis that incorporates data from multiple school years in order to determine if the relationships identified in this report persist over time and across student groups.



# Appendices



Pages 52-67



## NTC Brookline Social Studies Materials Review Framework

### Introduction

In the fall of 2022, NTC reviewed Brookline's 6–12 Social Studies instruction materials in order to examine the extent to which the materials and their use is aligned to equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy and Massachusetts content standards. This framework provides a lens to review the instructional materials and is informed by the following research and resources:

- [The Massachusetts Culturally Responsive Teaching Framework](#)
- [The Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework](#)
- [The Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool \(IMET\)](#)
- [The Ed Reports Review Criteria](#)
- [The College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards](#)
- [The CARE Teaching Resource Rubric](#)
- [The NYU Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](#)

### Materials Review Framework

<b>Focus Area 1: The instructional materials are inclusive and reflect equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy.</b>
Do the materials acknowledge a diversity of perspectives and identities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The instructional materials are inclusive and affirming of a variety of identities including but not limited to racial, class, sexual, religious, gender identity, and immigrant status.</li><li>• The instructional materials incorporate diverse perspectives and acknowledge that perceptions of events are affected by race, ethnicity, culture, religion, education, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and personal experience.</li><li>• The instructional materials center stories of people from marginalized groups; prompt students to question dominant narratives to expose marginalization; and encourage students to explore the strengths and assets of non-dominant populations.</li><li>• The instructional materials present different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities.</li></ul>
Do the materials address issues of equity and power? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The instructional materials center issues of equity, power, race, and identity, and encourage thinking about systems and policies.</li><li>• The instructional materials emphasize stories of resistance and perseverance.</li></ul>
Do the materials reflect key principles of social justice? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The instructional materials encourage students to take actions that combat inequity or promote equity within the school or local community.</li><li>• The instructional materials make racism visible and address bias.</li><li>• Guidance is provided to teachers on engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities.</li><li>• Guidance is provided to teachers on opportunities to engage students' families to enhance lessons.</li><li>• Guidance includes a range of possible student responses that could all be valid, given the</li></ul>

- range of student experiences and perspectives.
- Guidance is provided to teachers on customizing and supplementing the curriculum to reflect the prior knowledge, cultures, traditions, backgrounds and interests of the student population.

### NTC Brookline Social Studies Classroom Observation Tool

<b>Core Action 1:</b> The lesson is focused on the grade-level content and course standards and texts(s) for Social Studies.	
a. The lesson focuses on the grade or course-level content standards or part(s) thereof.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
b. Students spend the majority of the lesson reading, writing, and/or speaking about text(s), artifact(s), and/or primary source(s).	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
c. The text(s) and artifact(s) are appropriately complex according to qualitative and quantitative measures for the grade, course, time in the school year, and/or topic.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
d. The text(s) and artifact(s) are worthy of students' time and attention and build knowledge related to the content being studied.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
<b>Overall, is the lesson focused on the grade-level content and course standards and text(s) for Social Studies?</b>	<b>Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed</b>

**Core Action 2:** The lesson focuses on questions and tasks that are specific to the text(s) and artifact(s) and accurately address the analytical thinking required by the grade-level standards.

a. Questions and tasks require students to use evidence from the text to demonstrate understanding and to support their ideas about the text. These ideas are expressed through written and/or oral responses.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
b. Questions and tasks attend to the words (academic vocabulary), phrases, and sentences within the text.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
c. Questions and tasks are sequenced to build knowledge by guiding students to delve deeper into the text and graphics.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
<b>Overall, does the lesson focus on questions and tasks that are specific to the text(s) and artifact(s) and accurately address the analytical thinking required by the grade-level standards?</b>	<b>Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed</b>

<b>Core Action 3:</b> Provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.	
a. The teacher poses questions and tasks for students to do the majority of the work of the lesson including speaking/listening, reading, and/or writing. Students do the majority of the work of the lesson.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
b. The teacher cultivates reasoning and meaning making by allowing students to productively struggle. Students persevere through difficulty.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
c. Students are required to argue or explain conclusions using valid reasoning, evidence, and precision to support their ideas.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
d. The teacher creates the conditions for student conversations where students are encouraged to talk about each other's thinking.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all

Students talk and ask questions about each other's thinking, in order to clarify or improve their understanding.	Not observed
d. The teacher deliberately checks for understanding throughout the lesson and adapts the lesson according to student understanding. When appropriate, students refine written and/or oral responses.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
<b>Overall, does the lesson provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson?</b>	<b>Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed</b>

<b>Core Action 4:</b> The lesson is inclusive and reflects an equitable and culturally responsive learning experience.	
a. Rituals and routines are affirming, purposeful, and promote both community and independence.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
b. There is evidence of mutual respect and healthy boundaries among students and between students and teachers.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
c. The lesson is inclusive and affirming of a variety of identities including but not limited to racial, class, sexual, religious, gender identity, and immigrant status and when applicable presents different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
d. The lesson addresses issues of equity and power by centering issues of equity, power, race, identity, and/or thinking about systems and policies.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
e. A wide range of student responses are validated, given varying student experiences and perspectives.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed

**Core Action 4:** The lesson is inclusive and reflects an equitable and culturally responsive learning experience.

f. Students have agency to make choices in their classroom experience and opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
g. The lesson allows for students to interrogate the presented information.	Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed
<b>Overall, is the lesson inclusive and does it reflect a culturally responsive learning experience?</b>	<b>Fully Mostly Slightly Not at all Not observed</b>

## NTC Educator Survey

Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) is seeking input from educators to ensure social studies curriculum is aligned with equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy and Massachusetts content standards. Your answers to the following questions will help inform future discussions about PSB curriculum and instruction.

All responses are anonymous and confidential.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your district's social studies instructional materials:

The instructional materials are inclusive and affirming of a variety of identities including but not limited to racial, class, sexual, religious, gender identity, and immigrant status.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials center stories of people from marginalized groups; prompt students to question dominant narratives to expose marginalization; and encourage students to explore the strengths and assets of non-dominant populations.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials present different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials center issues of equity, power, race, and identity, and encourage students to think about systems and policies.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials emphasize stories of resistance and perseverance.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials encourage students to take actions that combat inequity or promote equity within the school or local community.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree



	Strongly agree
The instructional materials make racism visible and address bias.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Guidance is provided to teachers on engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Guidance is provided to teachers on opportunities to engage students' families to enhance lessons.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Guidance includes a range of possible student responses that could all be valid, given the range of student experiences and perspectives.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Guidance is provided to teachers on customizing and supplementing the curriculum to reflect the prior knowledge, cultures, traditions, backgrounds and interests of the student population.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
<p>The following statements are about the extent to which Brookline Public School's social studies curriculum supports students in building the knowledge and skills required by the content and grade level standards required for the course.</p> <p>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your district's social studies curriculum:</p>	
Students have the opportunity to learn about the legacy of democratic government.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials integrate knowledge from multiple fields of study including but not limited to history of the arts, philosophy and ethics, religions, and developments in science, technology, and mathematics.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

The instructional materials expose students to a breadth of knowledge, not as isolated facts to be simply memorized, but as usable knowledge to be integrated into an understanding of the world.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Students have the opportunity to study current events and build news/media literacy.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials are vertically aligned so that students are strategically and coherently building knowledge across grade levels.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials are horizontally aligned so that students are strategically and coherently building knowledge within courses/grade levels.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Materials regularly ask students to complete culminating tasks in which they demonstrate their knowledge of a topic.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Materials are aligned to the grade level content standards and regularly provide all students, including those who read, write, speak, or listen above or below grade level, or who are multilingual learners with extensive opportunities to work with and meet grade-level standards.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Texts are worthy of students' time and attention: texts are of quality and are rigorous, containing rich academic language, meeting appropriate complexity criteria for each grade.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Materials support students in building reading comprehension, in finding and producing the textual evidence to support their responses, and in developing grade-level academic language.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials require students to demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree

	Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
The instructional materials guide students to develop focused questions or problem statements and conduct inquiries in history and the social sciences.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Students act as researchers to gather and organize information and data from a variety of online, print, and other sources, using both primary and secondary sources.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Students are able to become discerning readers by analyzing the purpose and point of view of a variety of sources and distinguishing opinion from fact.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Students are required to argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Students have the opportunity to practice using the knowledge and skills that enable them to participate in civic life by determining next steps and taking informed action, as appropriate.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
Students are prompted to think historically.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
My district ensures educators incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy into their teaching practices.	Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree
[For respondents who indicated “Somewhat disagree” or “Strongly disagree” to any of the above statements.]  Can you share why you disagreed with the following statement:	

Where do you obtain the content for your daily instruction?	
Are there materials/resources you wish you had access to that you currently do not?	
Have you engaged in learning opportunities about culturally responsive pedagogy? If so, please describe:	
Is there anything else you would like to share about the district's social studies curriculum?	
Do you have any other feedback you would like to provide about the district's efforts to utilize equitable and culturally responsive pedagogical practices?	
<p>The following demographic items are included to ensure we have a diverse set of voices and to elevate perspectives of historically marginalized groups.</p> <p><u>Reminder that all responses are anonymous and confidential.</u> If you would like to decline to respond, please select "Prefer not to say."</p>	
Please indicate the response that best describes you:	Male Female Prefer to self-describe Prefer not to say
Which option(s) best describe you? You may select more than one response.	American Indian or Alaskan Native (For example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.) Asian (For example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.) Black or African-American (For example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.) Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (For example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadorean, Dominican, Colombian, etc.) Middle Eastern or North African (For example,

	<p>Lebanese, Iranian, Israeli, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.)</p> <p>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (For example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.)</p> <p>White (For example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.)</p> <p>Prefer to self-describe:</p> <p>Prefer not to say</p>
What is your religious/spiritual affiliation?	<p>Judaism</p> <p>Islam</p> <p>Buddhism</p> <p>Baha'i</p> <p>Hinduism</p> <p>Atheist</p> <p>Agnostic</p> <p>Something else - please describe</p> <p>Prefer not to say</p>

## NTC Family Survey

Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) is seeking input from families to ensure the district's social studies curriculum is aligned to equitable and culturally responsive pedagogy and Massachusetts content standards. By culturally responsive, we mean "using the cultural characteristic, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*).

Your answers to the following questions will help inform future discussions of curriculum and instructional materials. Please note that your participation is voluntary. All responses are anonymous and confidential.

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

I feel welcome at my child(ren)'s school(s).	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
My child(ren) feels welcome at their school.	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
My identity is honored during interactions with school and district staff.	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
My child(ren)'s identity is honored during interactions with school and district staff.	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
My child(ren) has appropriate access to grade-level instruction.	Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
If you have some familiarity with your child(ren)'s social	Strongly agree



studies content, to what extent do you agree that the content is equitable and culturally responsive?	Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
You disagreed with one or more of the prior statements. Can you tell us why? Reminder: Your responses are completely confidential and anonymous.	
What aspects of your culture and/or history are important for schools to include in social studies class content?	
What goals do you have for your child/children while they attend school?	
Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Public Schools of Brookline?	
The following questions are included to ensure we have a diverse set of voices and to elevate perspectives of historically marginalized groups. If you would like to decline to respond to any item, please select "Prefer not to say."  <u>Reminder: All responses are anonymous and confidential.</u>	
Which of the following option(s) best describes your child(ren)? Select all that apply:	American Indian or Alaskan Native (For example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.) Asian (For example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.) Black or African-American (For example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.) Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (For example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadorean, Dominican, Colombian, etc.) Middle Eastern or North African (For example, Lebanese, Iranian, Israeli, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan,

	Algerian, etc.) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (For example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.) White (For example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.) Prefer to self-describe: Prefer not to say
My child(ren) attends school in Brookline through the METCO program:	Yes No Prefer not to say
My child(ren's) gender is (select all that apply):	Male Female Prefer to self-describe: Prefer not to say
My child(ren)'s sexual orientation is (select all that apply):	Heterosexual Homosexual Bisexual Prefer to self-describe: Prefer not to say
What is the highest level of education completed in your household?	Less than high school High school graduate Some college 2-year college degree 4-year college degree Professional degree Master's degree Doctorate Prefer not to say
Citizenship status	I am a U.S. citizen I am a naturalized U.S. citizen I am not a U.S. citizen Prefer not to say
What is your religious/spiritual affiliation?	Christianity Judaism Islam Buddhism Baha'i Hinduism

	Atheist Agnostic Something else - please describe: Prefer not to say
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