

# Achievement Gap Ten Year Attack Plan

Wissahickon Public Schools

School Board Meeting Presentation—September 12, 2016



# District Academic Goals

- ▶ As a district we have academic, extracurricular and character education goals
- ▶ Tonight's emphasis is on the academic
- ▶ Our three ultimate academic goals:
  - *Each and Every Student will Strive for Excellence*
  - *Each and Every Student will Experience Academic Success*
  - *Each and Every Student will Succeed in Life after High School*



# How to achieve our Academic Goals

QUESTION: How do we plan on meeting the needs of *each and every student*?

1. Differentiated Instruction...every day, every classroom, every student
2. Post-Graduation “Mission Uptick”—my challenge to WHS
  - a) College Placement Excellence Plan--“Best Fit” is the key!
  - b) Promote and celebrate other non-college options if that is the best fit
  - c) Data gathering will be a challenge...and very important
3. Achievement Gap Ten Year Attack Plan



# The Achievement Gap

For our purposes, the “Achievement Gap” is taken to mean:

“Students from certain demographic groups are more likely to achieve at lower levels than other students.”

- There is nothing to be gained from finger pointing or assigning blame for what may or may not have happened in the past.
- We are moving forward, positive and committed.



# The Attack Plan Philosophy

We are setting out to attack this achievement gap based on the following philosophy:

1. Research shows us there is no one, single, overnight, meta-solution. As Christopher Jencks puts it:

“If we want to reduce poverty, joblessness, illiteracy, violence, or despair, we will surely need to change our institutions and attitudes in hundreds of small ways, not in one big way.”  
(*Rethinking Social Policy*, P. 203)

2. We are just one school district, focused on ~4,500 students every year. We aren't equipped to address all of society's needs, but we are prepared to address the needs of each and every student in Wissahickon.



# The Attack Plan Philosophy (continued)

3. We are going to attack the problem from multiple angles
4. We are embarking on a ten year, focused commitment
5. We are creating a flexible document and plan, subject to regular re-evaluation, assessment and adjustment as necessary
6. We will communicate every step of the way
  - a) Community meetings
  - b) Superintendent's community advisory group (Attack Plan Advisory Council-"APAC")
  - c) School Data Team meetings
  - d) Regular updates at public board meetings



# Achievement Gap History in Wissahickon

- ❑ **Prior to 2015-16 School Year:** Many sincere, formal and informal and (some) successful efforts to close the gap were undertaken. Not enough of these efforts were sustained.
- ❑ **2015-16 School Year:** Observe, talk, listen, research, analyze and plan
- ❑ **2016-17 School Year:** Launch the Achievement Gap Ten Year Attack Plan



# DATA—The Demographic Picture

What do we have in front of us now, in 2016?

| Ethnicity                        | # Students  | Percent        |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| American Indian/Alaskan Native   | 4           | 0.09%          |
| Asian                            | 593         | 13.63%         |
| Black/African American           | 431         | 9.90%          |
| Hispanic                         | 273         | 6.27%          |
| Multi-Racial                     | 242         | 5.56%          |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 3           | 0.07%          |
| White                            | 2806        | 64.48%         |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>                    | <b>4352</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |

| Program            | # Students | Percent |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| ESL                | 118        | 2.71%   |
| Free/Reduced Lunch | 893        | 20.52%  |
| Spec. Ed.          | 796        | 18.29%  |
| “Gifted”           | 417        | 9.58%   |





# DATA—The Demographic Picture

## Some important takeaways from the Demographic Picture

- This diversity makes us strong and a great place to work and live!
- The data has limits (e.g., F&R Lunch is only a proxy for income)
- There are important crossovers to keep in mind (e.g., 50% of our Black students and 60% of our Hispanic students are in the F&R lunch program)



# DATA—How do we know we have a gap?

The data we analyze are broken down into three categories:

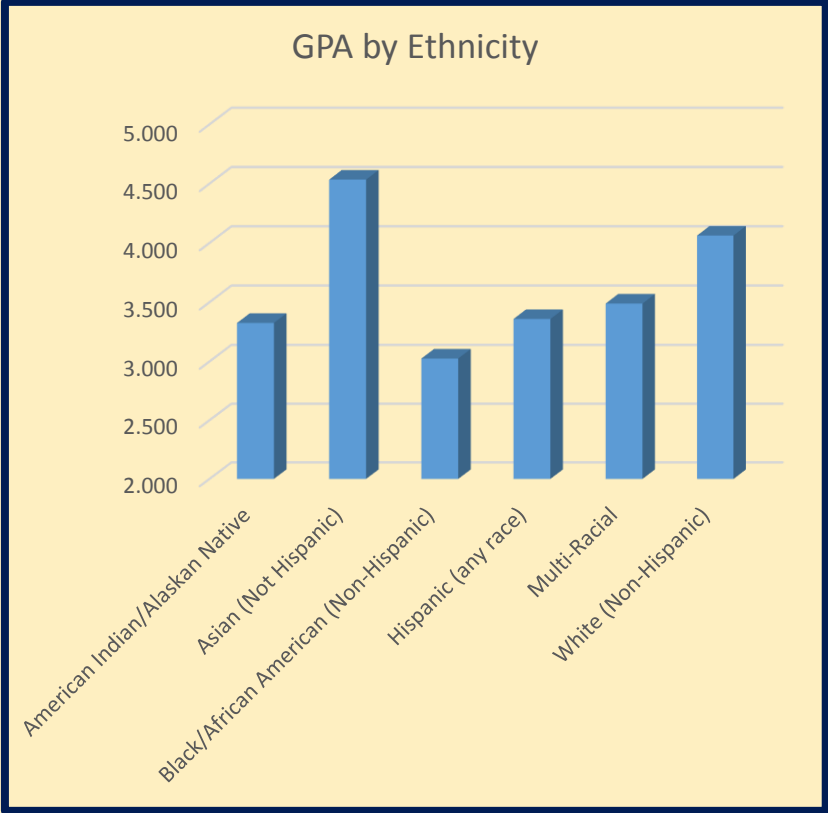
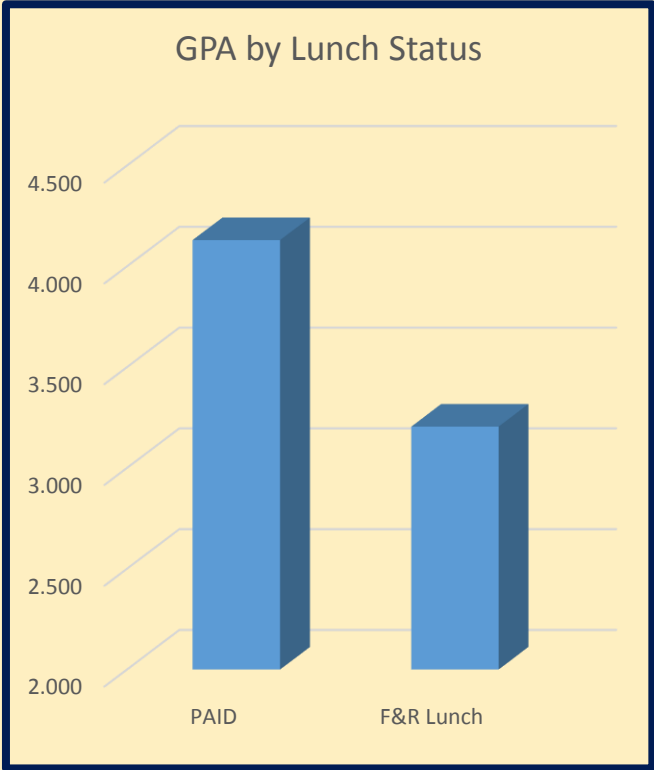
1. Classroom Achievement Disparities
2. Standardized Test Disparities
3. Program Placement Disparities

For illustration purposes, one example of each category will be provided.



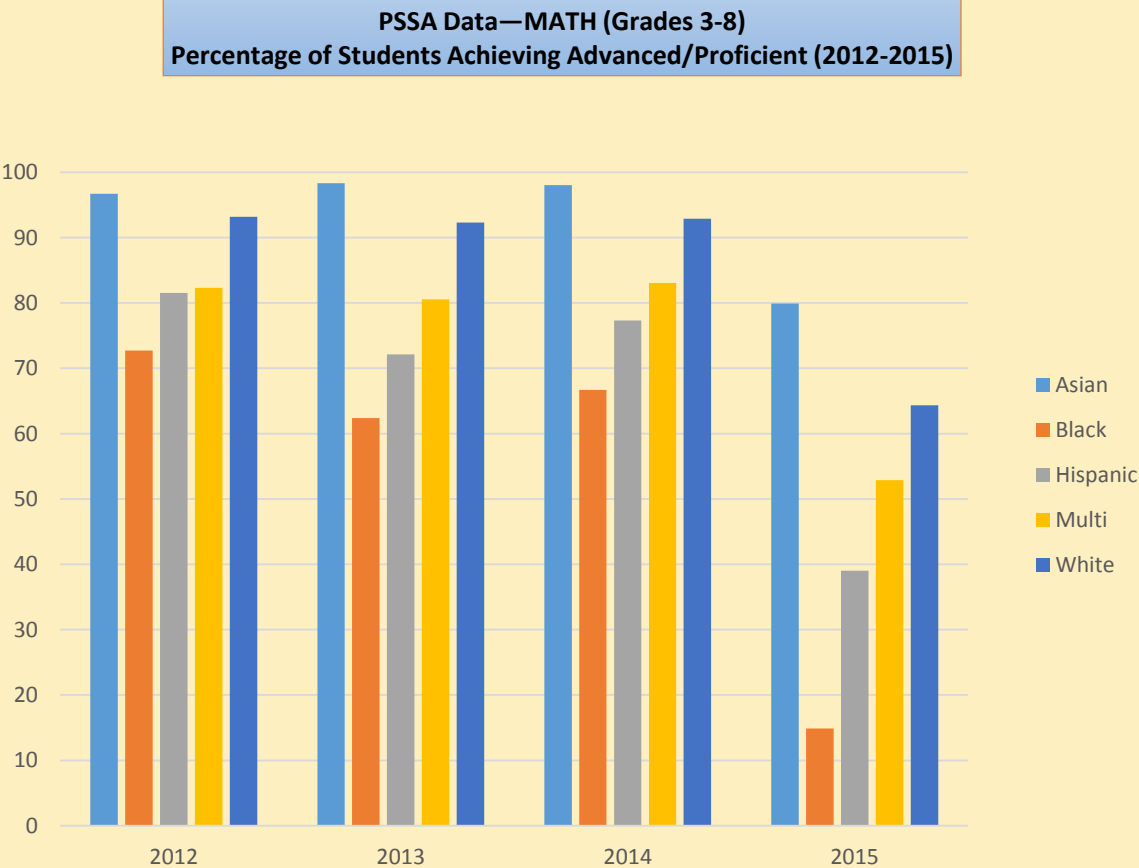
# DATA—Classroom Achievement Disparities

EXAMPLE: GPA Data from WHS, 2013-16



# DATA—Standardized Test Disparities

EXAMPLE: PSSA (Math) Data from 2012-2015 (Grades 3-8 combined)



# DATA—Program Placement Disparities

EXAMPLE: “Gifted” and Special Education (SE) Enrollments (mid 2015-16)

|                  |                        | <u>"GIFTED" TOTAL DISTRICT (K-12)</u> |                            |                          |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
|                  |                        |                                       | Total # of Students        | % of Total               |
| <u>Ethnicity</u> | <u>Total # in K-12</u> | <u>% of Total K-12 Students</u>       | <u>in "Gifted" Program</u> | <u>"Gifted" Students</u> |
| Asian            | 605                    | 13.64%                                | 98                         | 26.49%                   |
| Black            | 444                    | 10.01%                                | 7                          | 1.89%                    |
| Hispanic         | 277                    | 6.25%                                 | 6                          | 1.62%                    |
| Multi-Racial     | 247                    | 5.57%                                 | 24                         | 6.49%                    |
| White            | 2861                   | 64.52%                                | 235                        | 63.51%                   |
| <b>TOTALS:</b>   | <b>4434</b>            | <b>100.00%</b>                        | <b>370</b>                 | <b>100.00%</b>           |
|                  |                        | <u>SE TOTAL DISTRICT (K-12)</u>       |                            |                          |
|                  |                        |                                       | Total # of Students        | % of Total               |
| <u>Ethnicity</u> | <u>Total # in K-12</u> | <u>% of Total K-12 Students</u>       | <u>in SE Program</u>       | <u>SE Students</u>       |
| Asian            | 605                    | 13.64%                                | 36                         | 4.72%                    |
| Black            | 444                    | 10.01%                                | 135                        | 17.72%                   |
| Hispanic         | 277                    | 6.25%                                 | 79                         | 10.37%                   |
| Multi-Racial     | 247                    | 5.57%                                 | 48                         | 6.30%                    |
| White            | 2861                   | 64.52%                                | 464                        | 60.89%                   |
| <b>TOTALS:</b>   | <b>4434</b>            | <b>100.00%</b>                        | <b>762</b>                 | <b>100.00%</b>           |



# Achievement Gap Research

Common research themes that have informed our Attack Plan:

- ▶ The dominant demographic variable is income level (other variables can be correlated, which also informs the plan, and in any case none will be ignored)
- ▶ A growth mindset is key—believe in the potential of *each and every student*
- ▶ Relationships are key—know something about *each and every student*



# Ten Year Achievement Gap Attack Plan

*[click the below link for the Attack Plan online presentation]*

<https://prezi.com/uepbntrvafri/achievement-gap-attack-plan/>



# The Why

## Why are we committing to a TEN YEAR effort?

1. <https://animoto.com/play/7HPH4ET0YESb9YK4oJPUDQ>
2. The “why” is actually plain and simple:

Because it’s the right thing to do.





# Next Steps

## Next steps in the journey:

1. Execute the Plan.
2. Monitor, assess, brainstorm, think, re-think, report and adapt.
3. Repeat.



**QUESTIONS?**

