

# Racial Disproportionality in AP Courses

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Presentation for the Board's Racial Equity Oversight Committee

January 24, 2022

# Agenda

What Are Advanced Placement Courses?

Current Student Demographics

AP Enrollment Trends

Current Practices for Student Access to AP/Honors Courses

Systemic Approach

Research Says

Next Steps

# What Are Advanced Placement Courses?

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**A College Board program that...**

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Offers high school courses that can qualify for college credit and/or...

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Qualifies a student to take more advanced classes while at college

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Provides an introductory college experience

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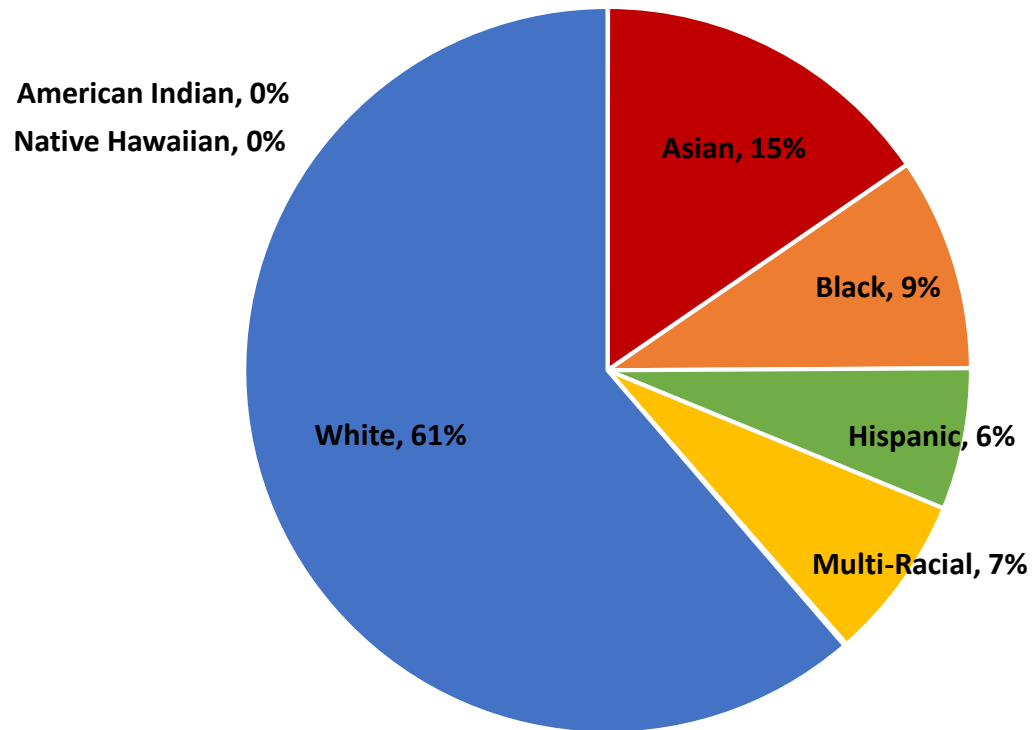
Awards college credit upon passing the AP Exam



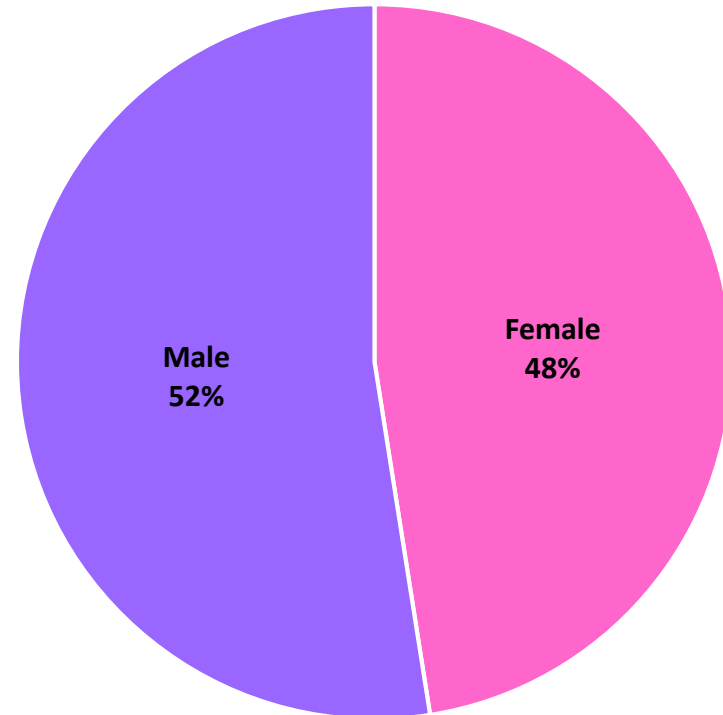
## Current Student Demographics

# Current WSD Student Demographics

## Students by Race/Ethnicity



## Students by Gender





## AP Enrollment Data

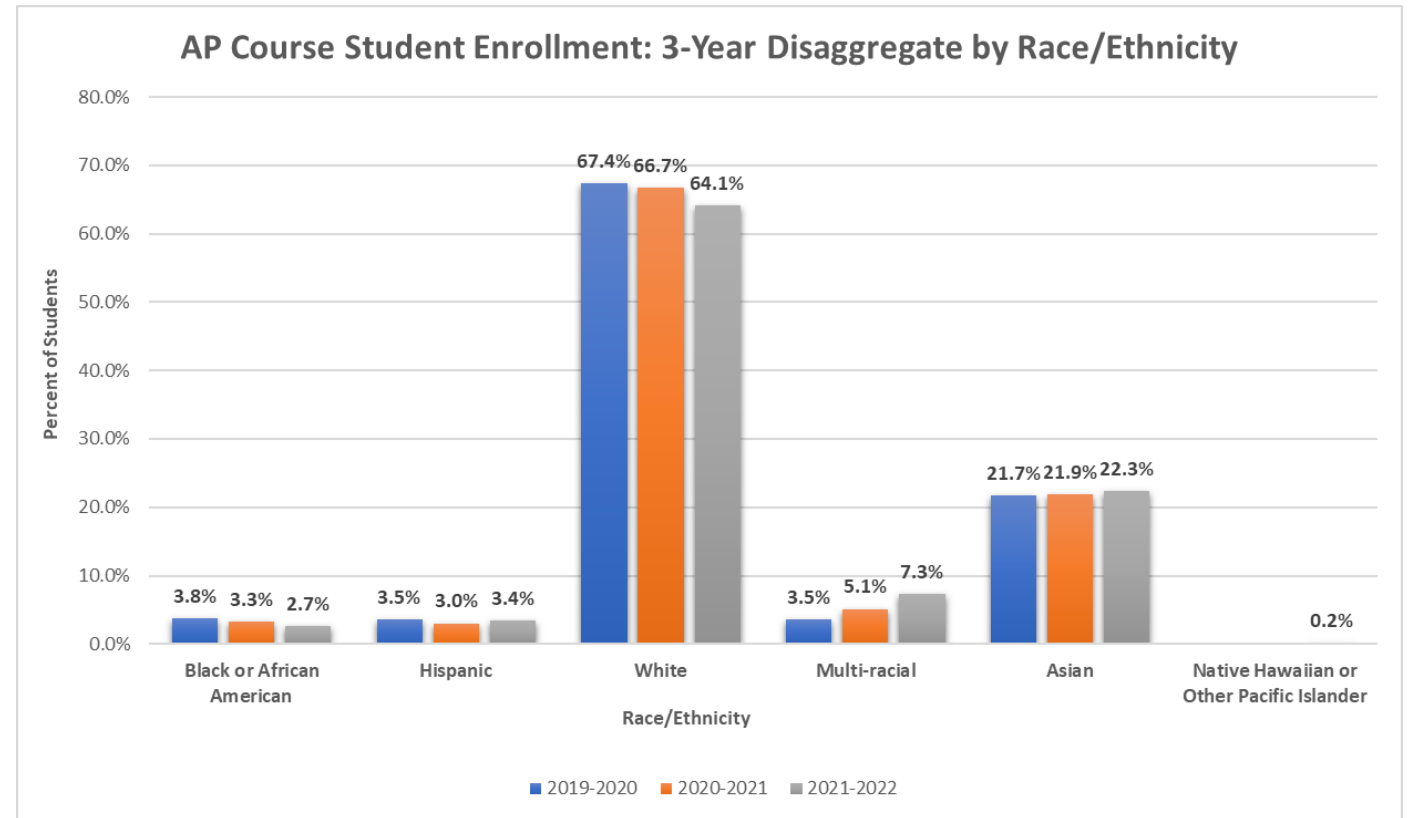
# WHS AP Courses

- AP English/Language
  - AP English/Literature
  - AP Calculus I
  - AP Calculus II
  - AP Statistics
  - AP Biology
  - AP Chemistry
  - AP Physics I
  - AP Physics II
  - AP Environmental Science
  - AP American History
  - AP U.S. Government and Politics
  - AP Economics
- AP French Language and Culture
  - AP German Language and Culture
  - AP Japanese Language and Culture
  - AP Spanish Language and Culture
  - AP Seminar (AP Capstone Program)
  - AP Research (AP Capstone Program)
  - AP Psychology
  - AP European History
  - AP Computer Science
  - AP 2-D Art and Design
  - AP 3-D Art and Design

# AP Course Enrollment

## AP Course Enrollment: Students

- 2019-2020: 423 Students
- 2020-2021: 430 Students
- 2021-2022: 412 Students

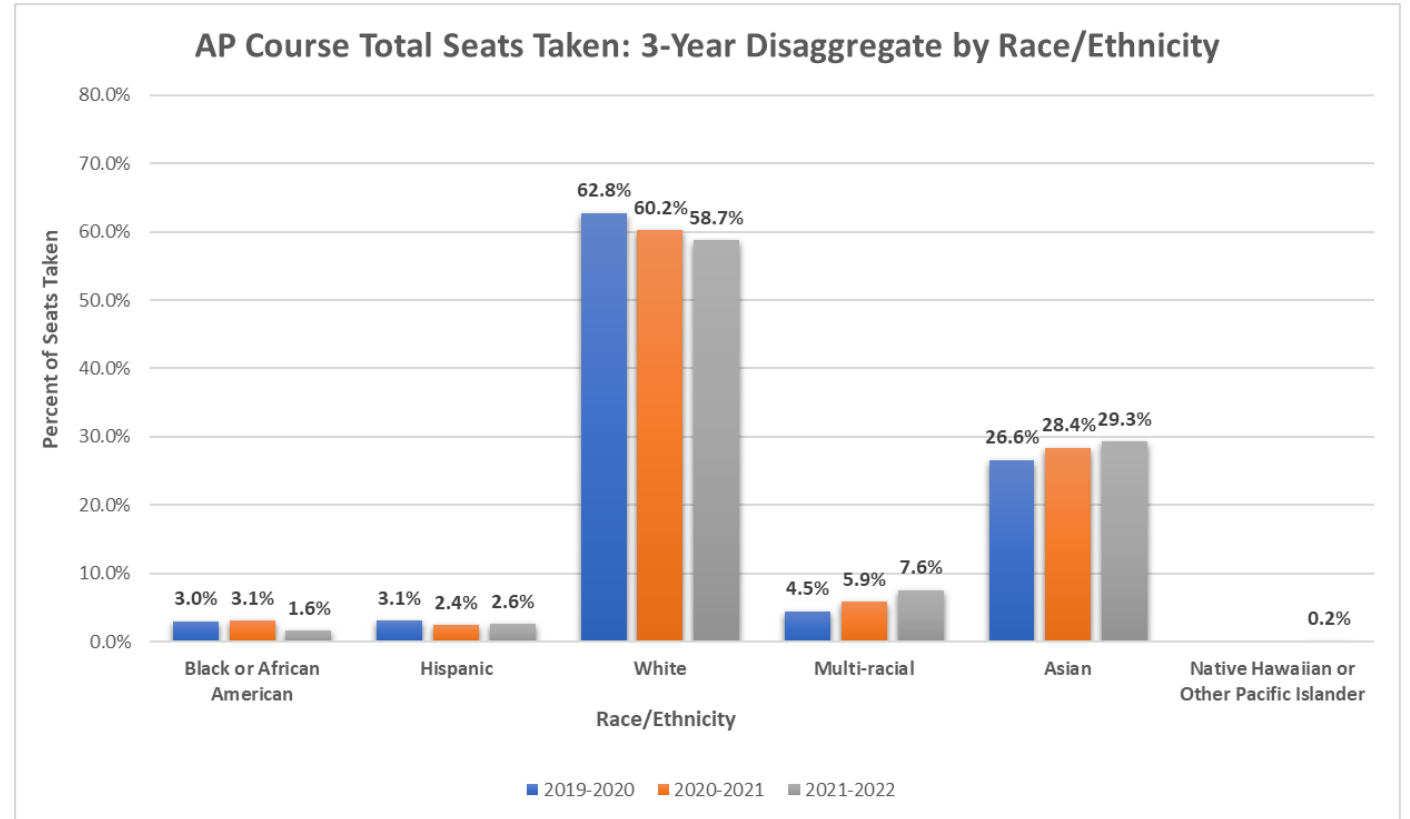




# AP Course Enrollment

## AP Course Enrollment: Seats Taken

- 2019-2020: 965 Seats
- 2020-2021: 968 Seats
- 2021-2022: 950 Seats



# Student Access to AP/Honors

- **Past Practice:** Teachers recommended students to Honors/AP
- **Present Practice:** Administrators and counselors review the list first, followed by teachers and parents/guardians
- **Important: There's no "cap" on AP seats**

# Current Practices for Student Access to AP/Honors

## At WMS...

- Honors course student visits
- Conversations with students and parents/guardians
- Review student data (grades, level of engagement, & effort in respective courses)
- Review list of potential students for Honors
- Any student who does not receive a recommendation for Honors will meet with an administrator/counselor again and be encouraged to work hard with a possibility of changing a course recommendation to Honors by April.

## AT WHS...

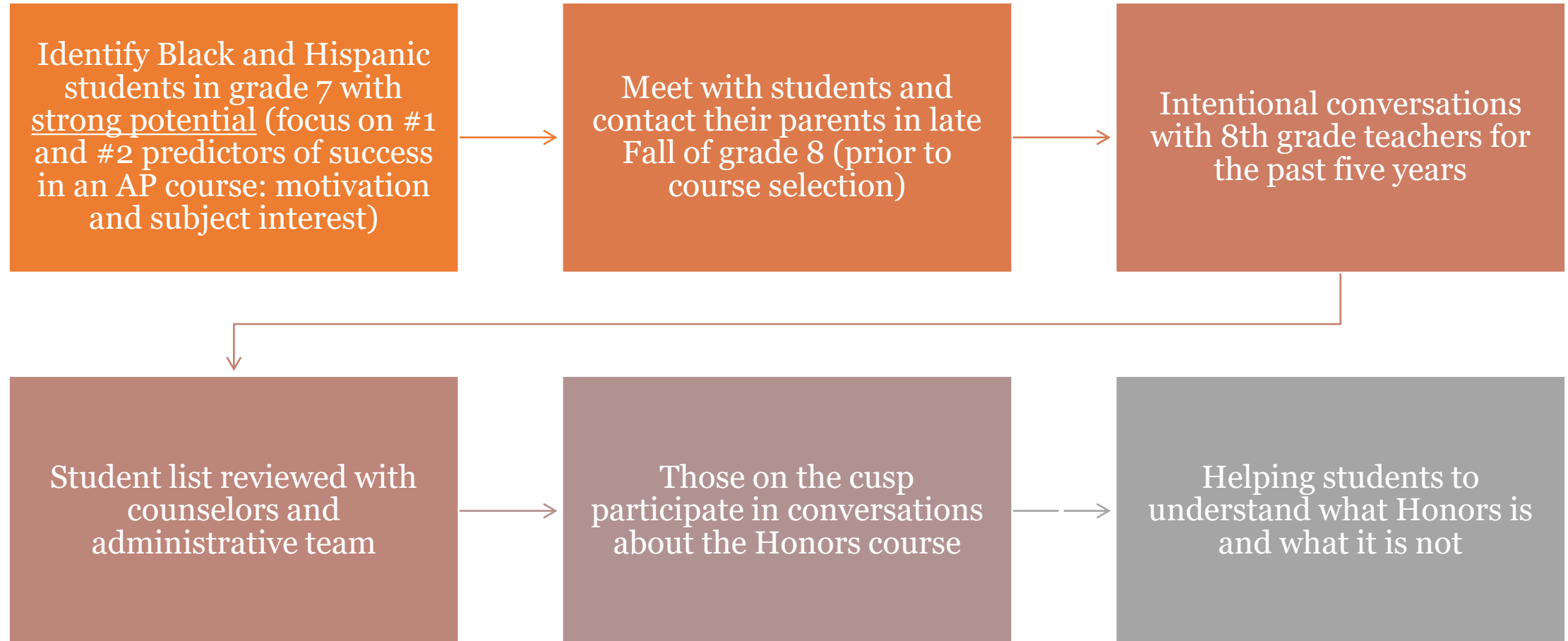
- Eighth grade students visit 9th-grade Honors courses
- Pre-teaching Summer Academy offered to build students' confidence and competence
- Faculty mentors to pair with students
- Conversations with students and parents/guardians



# Systemic Approach

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# Plans at WMS



# Transition Plan for Students Who Register for Grade 9 Honors

As 8th graders, the students visit an Honors 9th grade class (demystify the fear)

Encourage participation in the Summer Academy to prepare for the Grade 9 Honors Course

Schedule the student in a mentoring study-hall (Grade 9)

Assign the student a faculty mentor who tracks progress

# Plans at WHS: 10th –11th Grade

Register for a relevant Honors level class in Grade 10

Encourage participation in the Summer Academy to prepare for the Grade 10 Honors Course

Schedule students in a mentoring study-hall (Grade 10)

Same mentor continues to work with the student and tracks student's progress

During Grade 10, the student participates in BTE (Bridge to Employment) and takes the Strategies to College Success course (we ask the MCCC Team to emphasize study skills that will be helpful in an AP course)

As a 10th (or 11th grader), the students visit the 11th or 12th grade AP Class

# Plans at WHS: 11th –12th Grade

Register for an AP class  
in Grade 11

Encourage participation  
in the Summer  
Academy to prepare for  
the Grade 11 AP Course

Schedule the student in  
a mentoring study-hall  
(Grade 11)

Same mentor continues  
to work with the  
student and tracks  
his/her progress

Student serves as a  
mentor for a Grade 8  
student while in Grade  
11

Repeat as appropriate  
in Grade 12





What does the research say?

# What does the research say?

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- Remove biases and barriers in the identification of students for enrollment in AP classes
- Provide professional development for educators to extend AP offerings
- Waive test fees for students to take AP exams
- Create peer learning communities for teachers and students during the school year to support their teaching and learning
- Ensure the dissemination of information on advanced coursework employs varied channels and is available in families' home languages

Center for American Progress Action Fund, 2021



# What does the research say?

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- Use data to identify barriers that prevent students of color and students from low-income backgrounds from enrolling in advanced courses.
- Set clear and measurable goals for fostering access to and success in advanced courses
- Provide consistent support for students to prepare for advanced coursework
- Disrupt structural barriers that affect how students are placed in academic courses, including admission to honors courses.

The Education Trust, 2022

Roegman & Hatch, 2016



# What is the connection between Belonging and AP Courses?

- "Students from racially ethnic minority groups and women are more likely to *feel engaged* in group conversation and problem solving, and those students now feel like it's a *safe environment*. They're willing to actively participate without feeling judged."
- Research shows that students who are "underrepresented in large groups *can lack a sense of belonging* and fall victim to perceptions that they are not meant to succeed in the discipline."

University of Pittsburgh, 2021

# Next Steps

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- **Two-prong Approach:** Access & Belonging (Engagement)
- **Belonging Climate Tool:** impact teaching and learning in the classroom and student perceptions
- **Flexible scheduling** is part of small group instruction: Approaching small group instruction with flexible grouping
- **Continue building** teachers' capacity by addressing deficit-thinking and cultivating their cultural responsiveness in their teaching practices
- **Curriculum Audit Tool:** Culturally Responsive Curriculum/Engagement
- **Acceleration Opportunity** offered in 6th grade in Math, opening pathways
- **Qualities of Learner:** What qualitative information are we employing to identify students for Honors/AP opportunities (beginning at MS)?
- **Continue intentional conversations** with students and parents/guardians

# Next Steps

- **Continue** to review respective cohorts as an ongoing process
- **Maintain** an approach of reviewing the list before and after teacher and parent/guardian recommendations have been submitted
- **Continue** to maintain high expectations for all students
- **Review** demographic data for our Honors courses to monitor how many Black and Hispanic students are enrolling in these classes.

# Questions, Feedback, & Additional Ideas to Move Us Forward

