

Equity Audit Proposal

Port Huron Area School District
(Port Huron, MI)

Prepared by:
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Port Huron Area School District, MI

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to the latest data available at the Office of Civil Rights and U.S. Department of Education (2015), academic and disciplinary disparities exist in the Port Huron School District. These academic and disciplinary disproportionalities confirm the need for a closer look at the discipline data using an Equity Audit. Certainly, the data may have improved since 2015, and demographic numbers may have shifted. And even in the 2015 data, there are positive indications. For example, when looking at the data for students in the chronically absent category, students who identify as two or more races are not overrepresented in this category.

Yet, there are other OCR/US Dept. of Ed. comparative data points that are cause for concern. For example, Black students make up 13.5% of the chronically absent students, even though they are only 7.7% of the student population. There are also indications of disciplinary disproportionalities; minoritized students are overrepresented in all disciplinary categories. Suspensions are egregiously disproportionate, especially for Black students. Black students comprise only 7.7% of the total student population but are about 31.8% of all expulsions—a measure related to both academic and school climate. In addition, 47% of in-school suspensions were given to minoritized students. We have to ask: why are school disciplinary actions disproportionate towards minoritized students? These disparities in academic achievement and discipline are an indication that students and other stakeholders interpret an exclusionary or hostile school climates. There is much more that should be explored with this data, and other points. But these preliminary trends suggest there could be much deeper issues of equity in Port Huron schools, and therefore there seems to be a strong need for an Equity Audit.

We surmise that Port Huron School District leaders are aware of these and other similar issues. That is not the purpose of this Audit. An Equity Audit would allow us to examine why these gaps are occurring in the Port Huron School District, and would allow leaders, educators, and community members to prioritize responses and reforms. It is important to note that reforms not guided by Equity Audit data would often not be successful; to implement popular or trendy reforms without looking first at the equity data would likely not bring about an intended positive result. A deeper review of disciplinary referrals (not only suspensions/ expulsions) at the secondary level might indicate a more serious problem. Also, some students are likely to be overrepresented in special education referrals and placement.

What do we offer and recommend?

Our Equity Audits assume that districts are already aware of the raw equity data from the district and from governmental sources available. Therefore, we focus on finding out why such

disproportionalities exist. To do this, we use surveys to examine eight core equity (see below) areas that are closely linked to the exact cause of inequities in schools.

- Accepting or Marginalizing Student Identity and Voice (AMSIV): Addresses how comfortable students feel voicing opinions and expressing behaviors in school?
- Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Teaching and Curriculum (CRSLTC): Address perceptions of how well diverse backgrounds and experiences are incorporated in classroom content and responded to in classroom interactions.
- Discriminatory Behaviors and Practices (DBP): Addresses perceptions about discrimination that some students experience. (i.e., certain student characteristics or groups are treated better than others).
- School Culture and Climate (SCC): Addresses how respectful adults (and students) in the school building are when speaking to students as well as the overall positivity of student experiences.
- School Community Relationship (SCR): Addresses how comfortable parents feel attending school events, approaching school staff, and effectiveness of communication between parents and schools.
- Thoughts on Achievement Gap (TAG): Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in achievement (i.e., achievement gaps) exist. Deficit understanding must be challenged, and the district must promote a positive, asset-based understanding of children.
- Thoughts on Discipline Gap (TDG): Addresses how staff, parents, students, and teachers understand the reasons for why the disparities in discipline (i.e., discipline or suspension gaps) exist.
- Expectations and Teacher Ratings (TR): Addresses perceptions on how committed and successful students from various backgrounds can be, and the expectations that are held of various student groups.

Surveys are administered to: students, teachers, administrators, and parents. What follows is a suggested Equity Audit design that will allow Port Huron Area School District to better understand issues related to student achievement inequities and identify strategies for addressing these inequities. After our brief review of the data, we recommend

- 1.) Equity Audit that has both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews) components.
- 2.) 25-30 hours of *leadership* PD (either in full/half day, or in the 2.5-day CRSLI Academy, inclusive of CRSL book study).

Assessment/Audit Purposes

1. To understand the factors that contribute to achievement and discipline inequities in Port Huron Area School District and identify areas of significant achievement differences (e.g, race, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.). This includes identifying home, school,

- classroom, and individual-level barriers to high academic performance. Determine if there is a relationship between the relationship between achievement-suspension gaps.
2. To determine the differences in perspectives and expectations that exist between school employees and stakeholders.
 3. To assist the district in identifying professional development and educational interventions to reduce achievement and discipline gaps and enhance school success for all students.

Assessment Questions

Four questions are suggested to drive this assessment:

1. Based on previous research, what are the likely causes for disproportionalities in the Port Huron Area School District?
2. What factors do staff, students, and parents identify as contributing to achievement inequities in the Port Huron Area School District?
3. What initiatives (district-level, school-level, classroom-level) can be implemented to build cultural competency and enhance students' schooling experiences in Port Huron Area School District?
4. What policies (or lack thereof) contribute to the current achievement and discipline gaps?

GENERAL METHODOLOGY

- **Quantitative Component:** Data and survey research methods will be used to conduct the audit. Data will be collected by document review, online survey administration, and data analysis.
- **Qualitative Component:** This will strengthen the research findings and allow for even more precise equity reforms. ***We will conduct three qualitative interviews with students, one with a parent group and one with a staff group.*** A 2–3-member research team will conduct all aspects of qualitative research.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

- Develop the framework for the audit, including critical issues and questions, sources of data, and standards for analysis
- Design and administer online equity audit tool
- Individual interview and focus group protocols (optional)
- Data analysis of all data collect/ develop and submit evaluation report

TENTATIVE WORK TIMELINE

Below is a draft work timeline for conducting the Equity Audit/Needs Assessment in 2022. Dr. Khalifa and the Ajusted research team will work with Port Huron Area School District to send surveys out to Students, Teachers, Parents, and Administrators. This data will be analyzed and will be part of the final report generated for the district. Below is a tentative timeline:

Equity Audit Proposal- Port Huron Area School District, MI (2022)

Table 1. Proposed Project Work Timeline

Activity (2022)	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3		
Phase 1 (Online Equity Audit and Surveys)					
Customize Online Audit Tool for District	X	X			
Customize Surveys: admin., teachers, students		X			
Customize Survey: parents		X			
Administer Admin., Teacher, and Student Surveys		X			
Administer Parent Surveys		X			
Administer focus groups		X			
Phase 2 (analyze surveys and submit reports)					
Analyze Surveys			X		
Compile report			X		
Submit Evaluation Reports and Recommendations to District			X		

ESTIMATED EQUITY AUDIT BUDGET

Port Huron Area School District has 16 schools and 7,200 students. The total cost for the Equity Audit with both a qualitative and quantitative component is **\$112,000**. ***50% of this total to be due upfront, as a retainer.***

Table 2. Budget

Equity Audit/Needs Assessment (Online/Quantitative)	
Project Activities	Cost \$
Data Collection and Analysis (Qualitative and quantitative) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative Component include three focus group interviews with students and one focus group with parents. 	<u>\$112,000</u> <i>50% due upfront, as a retainer.</i>
Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online Equity Audit Tool Summative Reports for schools - District Summative Reports, Executive Summary, and Recommendations Report 	
Project Total:	<u>\$112,000</u>

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES BUDGET:

The following table outlines additional activities that may be included within the Equity Audit or that could be used as good follow up activities. We offer discounts with partnerships that include multiple activities.

OPTIONAL Equity Audit and CRSL Academy activities	
Project Activities	Cost \$
Culturally Responsive School Leadership Academy (in-person): <ul style="list-style-type: none">2.5-Day (Cohort of 45; other school districts can join a cohort)District-wide 5-Day Virtual Academy. This includes: One 2-hour Zoom Keynote, five half-day training sessions (3 hrs.)	<u>\$2,500</u> per person \$65,000 for district (up to 50-75 participants).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keynote or full-day or half-day workshop (Interactive lecture/ PD) (half-day is 3 hours or less)<u>Guided Book Conversation or Leadership Mentoring via Zoom</u> (2 hrs.) (Book: <i>Culturally Responsive School Leadership</i> by Dr. Muhammad Khalifa): https://www.amazon.com/dp/1682532070/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8	\$8,000 per day <u>\$5,000</u> per half-day \$3,500 per session

AJUSTED SCHOOL EQUITY SOLUTIONS TEAM

- **Dr. Muhammad Khalifa**: Dr. Muhammad Khalifa is a professor of educational administration and Executive Director for Urban Education Initiatives at the Ohio State University. Before coming to OSU, Dr. Khalifa held the Robert Beck Endowed Professorship in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Having worked as a public-school teacher and administrator in Detroit, Dr. Khalifa's research examines how urban school leaders enact culturally responsive leadership practices. His latest book, *Culturally Responsive School Leadership* (2018) was published by Harvard Education Press. He has led Equity Audits in U.S. schools as a way to reduce achievement and discipline gaps, and he is the first to develop and use online Equity Audits for schools. In addition to his urban work in the U.S., Dr. Khalifa has engaged in school leadership reform in African and Asian countries, including a recent U.N. project in East Africa.
- **Dr. Bodunrin Banwo**: Bodunrin serves as lead research and technology consultant for CRSLI. Bodunrin Banwo has spent over 13 years working in youth and community development. Currently, Mr. Banwo is pursuing his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota, in the School of Education and is housed in the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership. His research focus is on liberatory effects of Afrocentric and ethnic educational programming. Before beginning his Ph.D., Mr. Banwo served as a food access manager for the City of Baltimore, where he was tasked with improving the city's

healthy food supply chain and promote the economic viability of selling healthy food in Baltimore City. Throughout his career, Mr. Banwo has served as a public-school teacher in Camden, NJ; Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay, South America; Food System Manager for the Philadelphia based nonprofit, The Food Trust; and an Arizona public advocate and lobbyist for a Washington DC-based nonprofit, Project Vote. Bo's professional life has been dedicated to the continual improvement of the lives of people from the African Diaspora. However, he looks forward to working with individuals with a passion for advancing the work began by "the ancestors" to make our world more merciful and just for the less fortunate in our society.

- **Sherief Elabbady**: As the Technology Innovations Manager at Land O' Lakes and current COO of Ajusted School Equity Solutions, Shereif has led oversight of all Technology Innovation Portfolio and Innovation Strategy activities including idea generation events, prototype development and scaling, as well as partnerships with Corporations, Universities and Startups. He is leading efforts the selection, implementation and rollout of an Enterprise Innovation Management platform. He also educates the overall organization on the best practices and frameworks in the Innovation space

REFERENCES

- White Bear Lake (MN): Dr. Alison Gillespie
 - Equity Audit Year: 2020
 - Email: alison.gillespie@isd624.org
 - Phone: 651-407-7567
- Bloomington Public Schools (MN): Dinna Wade-Ardley
 - Equity Audit Year: 2016-2019
 - Email: dwade@isd271.org
 - Phon: 952-681-6417
- Jackson Public Schools (MI): Dr. William Patterson
 - Equity Audit Year: 2018
 - Email: William.patterson@ipsk12.org
 - Phone: 517-841-2208

CONCLUSION

In agreement with the Port Huron Area School District, initial evidence resulting from conducting the Equity Audit/Needs Assessment will lead to identification of district-level, school-level, and classroom-level initiatives that can enhance the overall culture for academic excellence and enhance all students' learning experiences in Port Huron Area School District. This Equity Audit will include the establishment of trusting relationships between administrators, teachers, and *Ajusted* evaluation partners as a springboard for continued partnership in remedying the challenges being investigated. It will help districts not only identify gaps, but also the source of the gaps and what the precise appropriate responses of the district should be.

Contract Details

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Upon provision by the Ajusted team of a complete accounting of deliverables, activities, products and expenses, or other invoicing procedures as agreed upon by both parties, the Ajusted team will be compensated. Given the length of the project, two equal payments will be made: one upfront and one at the end of the Equity Audit. Exact dates will be determined at the beginning of the project.

LENGTH OF CONTRACT

Under this contract, the term of this agreement shall be from the effective date until TBD, unless a termination is agreed upon by all parties. The parties shall consult prior to the end of the Term to determine whether to renew the agreement for an additional time period. The first phase of the audit is contingent upon receiving necessary (anonymous) discipline and achievement data from the district. The second phase of the audit is contingent on district input of emails of survey participants and data around school/district policies. The time commitment is not significant, but v does need to contribute this basic data for the audits to be completed.

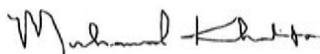
INDEPENDENT ENTITY/CONSULTING

The members of the Ajusted/CRSLI Team expressly understand and agree that they are independent consultants and shall in no way be deemed to be and shall not hold themselves out as an employee or agent of Port Huron Area School District. The members of the Ajusted/CRSLI Team understand that they shall not be entitled to any fringe benefits of Port Huron Area School District, such as, but not limited to, health and accident insurance, life insurance, paid vacation or sick leave, or longevity. Ajusted/CRSLI Team shall be responsible for all the withholding and payment of all income and social security taxes to the proper federal, state and local governments.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this contract can be made with the written consent of both parties. Both parties have reviewed and understand the terms set forth in this agreement and have executed this agreement by their duty as authorized representatives, as of the reflected dates.

Ajusted Representative

Signature: 

Name: Dr. Muhammad Khalifa
(type or print)

Title: CEO/President

Port Huron Area School District Representative

Signature:

Name: 

Title: SUPERINTENDENT

Ajusted School Equity Solutions, LLC

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Saint Paul, MN 55105 US
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**INVOICE**

BILL TO
Port Huron Area School District

INVOICE 1077
DATE 01/11/2023
TERMS Net 30
DUE DATE 02/10/2023

DATE	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
01/11/2023	Equity Audit - Quantitative and Qualitative	Half of total amount - Equity Audit - Quantitative and Qualitative	1 56,000.00	56,000.00

BALANCE DUE

\$56,000.00

RECEIVED

JAN 12 2023

Finance Dept.

Ajusted School Equity Solutions, LLC

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Saint Paul, MN 55105 US
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s.kube@ajusted.org

**INVOICE**

BILL TO
Port Huron Area School District

INVOICE 1088
DATE 05/19/2023
TERMS Net 30
DUE DATE 06/18/2023

DATE	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
05/19/2023	Equity Audit - Quantitative and Qualitative	1	56,000.00	56,000.00
	Equity Audit - Quantitative and Qualitative - balance remaining - final payment per contract			

BALANCE DUE

\$56,000.00

RECEIVED
MAY 31 2023
Finance Dept.