

Green Book Initiative

Findings Report for Vista Peak Preparatory

Currently Under Extended Review

Overview

Vista Peak Preparatory serves a diverse student population with complex academic, social, and emotional needs. This comprehensive Green Book Initiative assessment evaluates the extent to which Vista Peak Preparatory provides a psychologically safe, culturally affirming, and equitable environment for Black students, families, and community members.

Based on the applied rubric and scoring, Vista Peak Preparatory received an **overall score of 2.9**, placing the school within **Exodus Status**. This designation does not indicate an absence of effort or care; rather, it signals that existing structures, practices, and relationships are currently insufficient to ensure consistent safety, belonging, and thriving conditions for Black students and families. The findings below are intentionally detailed, aligned to rubric indicators, and designed to support meaningful transformation.

Findings Report:

Curriculum Inclusivity and Representation:

- Findings:
 - **Partial Representation Across Disciplines:** Vista Peak Preparatory demonstrates intentional inclusion of Black history, voices, and contributions within select courses and units. These efforts are most visible during designated cultural months or in humanities-based coursework.
 - **Inconsistent Culturally Relevant Pedagogy:** While some educators utilize culturally responsive strategies and affirm students' lived experiences, implementation is inconsistent across departments and grade levels.

- Recommendations:
 - **Curriculum Mapping for Representation:** Conduct a comprehensive audit of curricula across all subject areas to identify gaps in Black representation and opportunities for integration beyond isolated units.
 - **Instructional Coaching:** Provide sustained coaching and collaborative planning time focused on culturally relevant pedagogy, not one-time professional development sessions.

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Equity in Disciplinary Actions:

- Findings:
 - **Disparity Awareness Without Full Intervention:** Leadership acknowledges racial disparities in discipline; however, systems to interrupt patterns before escalation remain underdeveloped.
 - **Inconsistent Restorative Practice Application:** Restorative approaches are present in theory but are applied unevenly, often depending on individual staff discretion rather than a schoolwide framework.
- Recommendations:
 - **Early-Intervention Protocols:** Establish clear, preventative intervention thresholds prior to disciplinary referral, particularly for subjective infractions.
 - **Restorative Accountability Structures:** Implement fidelity checks and shared language around restorative practices to ensure consistency and accountability.

Staff and Leadership Representation:

- Findings:
 - **Limited Black Representation in Decision-Making Roles:** Black educators and staff are underrepresented in leadership positions, limiting culturally informed decision-making and mentorship opportunities for students.
 - **Retention Challenges:** There is minimal evidence of intentional retention strategies for Black staff, resulting in turnover that disrupts trust-building with students and families.
 - **Disproportionate Placement of Black Staff in Disciplinary Roles:** Black staff are more frequently positioned in roles centered on behavior management and discipline rather than in instructional leadership, policy development, or culture-shaping decision-making roles. This overrepresentation in enforcement-facing positions, coupled with underrepresentation in roles that influence school vision and climate, reinforces inequitable power dynamics and limits the institution's ability to fully leverage Black professional expertise in shaping an affirming school culture.
- Recommendations:
 - **Community Partnerships:** Develop community partnerships for Black staff to support their professional growth and retention. This type of mentorship can provide guidance, networking opportunities, and career advancement support.
 - **Intentional Leadership Pathways:** Develop leadership pipelines and mentorship opportunities for Black staff interested in administrative and instructional leadership roles.
 - **Retention & Climate Review:** Conduct exit interviews and climate assessments specifically focused on the experiences of Black staff.

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Engagement with Black Families and Communities:

- Findings:
 - **Transactional Engagement:** Engagement with Black families is often reactive, occurring primarily in moments of concern, discipline, or crisis rather than partnership.
 - **Limited Trust and Accessibility:** Families report uncertainty about where their voices fit within decision-making processes and whether feedback leads to change.
 - **Enrollment Accessibility Barriers:** The open enrollment application requires multiple digital documents and a personal statement, which may disadvantage families lacking technology access, support with paperwork, or familiarity with APS centralized systems. This applies particularly among Black and immigrant families. The strict deadline and automatic waitlisting for late submissions may also reduce equitable access to Vista Peak as a choice option.
- Recommendations:
 - **Relational Engagement Strategy:** Shift from event-based engagement to relationship-based structures such as listening sessions, community liaisons, and advisory councils.
 - **Shared Power Models:** Create formal mechanisms for Black families to inform policy, programming, and school priorities.
 - **Targeted Enrollment Support:** Partner with community organizations to host enrollment workshops, provide translation/technology support, and ensure equitable navigation of the online enrollment and documentation process.

Policies and Practices:

- Findings:
 - **Policy Intent vs. Lived Impact:** While policies reference equity and inclusion, there is limited transparency regarding enforcement, outcomes, and accountability.
 - **Lack of Community Visibility:** Families and students are often unaware of how policies are meant to protect them or how concerns can be escalated safely.
 - **Enrollment Process Transparency:** Families reported limited awareness of the required admissions documents, deadlines, and waitlist practices despite their importance for access to the school. Additionally, the reliance on digital submission may not be well publicized or supported.

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- Recommendations:
 - **Policy Translation:** Develop family-facing policy summaries that clearly outline rights, processes, and accountability measures.
 - **Annual Equity Review:** Institute an annual public-facing review of policy outcomes through an equity lens.
 - **Admissions Clarity and Training:** Create family-friendly guides, translated materials, and workshops to demystify open enrollment requirements, deadlines, and the waitlist process for prospective Black families and students.

Support Systems:

- Findings:
 - **Overextended Supports:** Counseling, behavioral, and academic supports exist but are frequently stretched thin, limiting responsiveness for Black students with layered experiences.
 - **Cultural Responsiveness Gaps:** Students report that support staff are well-intentioned but not always equipped to address racialized experiences.
 - **Limited Enrollment Support Structures:** There is minimal evidence that Vista Peak provides pre-application support (such as help completing the required documentation) for prospective Black students and families, potentially disadvantaging them during the admissions process.
- Recommendations:
 - **Culturally Competent Services:** Increase access to counselors and support staff trained in racial trauma, identity development, and culturally affirming care.
 - **Student Affinity & Healing Spaces:** Establish consistent spaces for Black students to process experiences, build community, and receive affirmation.
 - **Pre-Enrollment Support Systems:** Develop pre-application support sessions with counselors and community partners to assist prospective students and families with required documents, essays, and online submission logistics.

Physical Environment:

- Findings:
 - **Neutral-to-Minimal Representation:** The physical environment is generally neutral, with limited visual affirmation of Black culture, history, or excellence.
 - **Missed Opportunity for Belonging:** Shared spaces do not consistently signal that Black students and families are seen, valued, or centered.
- Recommendations:
 - **Culturally Affirming Design:** Collaborate with students and community members to co-create displays, murals, and spaces that reflect Black identity and legacy.

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- **Ongoing Refresh:** Ensure representation evolves throughout the year rather than remaining static.

Listening Session Feedback

Intro

As part of the Green Book Initiative assessment, we conducted a series of **empathic listening sessions** with current and former students, families, and staff connected to Vista Peak Preparatory. These sessions were designed to create psychologically safe spaces where participants could speak candidly about their lived experiences without fear of retaliation or dismissal. The scenarios below are representative composites drawn from these conversations. While individual names and identifying details have been removed, the themes reflected are consistent and recurring, and they directly informed rubric scoring across engagement, discipline, representation, support systems, and school climate.

26 unique sessions were conducted during this review process. Below are themes that came from these sessions.

Theme 1: Discipline & Support

Themed outcome from sessions 9, 13, 17, 22, and 25:

When students experienced discipline (ISS or OSS), school staff/administration left no room for student perspective. One student referenced that after the discipline was enacted a member of staff helped them talk it through, but it felt like “luck” more than a system. Students spoke about the inconsistencies with one student being quoted “I don’t always know which version of the school I’m going to get.”

Theme 2: Family Engagement

Themed outcome from sessions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26:

Families reported that they only hear from the school when there’s a problem. They expressed that despite their verbal and clear desire to be involved, there has never been a clear path on how their voice fits or if it actually matters.

Theme 3: Representation

Themed outcome from all sessions except sessions 13, 15, 17, and 20:

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Current and former students and former staff reported there were a few teachers who really leaned into belonging in practice and brought the culture into the classroom. But overall, it felt like Black community, culture, and contributions were an afterthought unless it was Black History Month.

Theme 4: Trust & Policy

Themed outcome from sessions 1, 2, 5, 9, 13, 15, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26:

Feedback spoke into how policies sounded good on paper, but when students needed protection, it wasn't clear how they were enforced or who was accountable.

Theme 5: Consistency & Fairness

Themed outcome from sessions 11, 17, 19, 21, 24:

Students spoke into this in these sessions in vivid detail. In summary, the theme that came from this session was that two students can do the same thing and get totally different consequences depending on who catches it. Students reported that it is "known" culture to start learning who to avoid instead of what's expected.

Theme 6: Surveillance & Belonging

Themed outcome from all sessions except sessions 12, 18, and 19:

Students and families (both past and current) reported that it feels like they are being watched all the time, but not really supported. Students reported that "the systems" look to catch you when you mess up, not when you need help.

Theme 7: Staff Roles & Power

Themed from sessions: 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 16, 18, 22, 23, 25, and 26:

Students reported that most of the Black staff they interacted with were the ones writing referrals or breaking up issues. Students and families reported that they didn't really see Black staff in roles where they were shaping the school or making decisions.

Theme 8: Access & Navigation

Themed from sessions: 1, 4, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26:

Students and families (both past and present) reported that there are a lot of systems to keep up with (e.g., attendance lines, portals, rules). They advised their sentiment saying if

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you miss one step, it feels like the school assumes you don't care, instead of asking what support you need.

Theme 9: Discipline Impact

Themed from sessions 1,5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 21, 25, and 26:

Students and families advised that after a few incidents, the students and families started seeing themselves as a “problem”. They reported that no one ever sat down with them to reset or rebuild trust. Several reported that “it just kept escalating.”

Theme 10: Support Systems

Themed from sessions 3, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, and 22:

Primarily in these sessions the current students reported that there are supports at the school, but they have to already know how to ask for them. Former and current students that described themselves as introverts advised that because they present as quiet or struggling silently, they inevitably “fell through the cracks.”

Theme 11: Culture & Leadership

Themed from sessions 8, 15, 17, 20, and 24:

The theme from these sessions was that there's a lot of talk about care and restoration, but the pressure is still to manage behavior quickly. Those who shared reported that it doesn't always leave room for understanding what students are carrying.

Theme 12: School Identity

Themed from all sessions:

Each session spoke about the harm and reality of not feeling like the school offered a space for authentic identity. One of the quotes that seemingly summed up the sentiment of our empathic listening sessions is: “I don't think the school is trying to hurt Black students. It just doesn't always feel built with us in mind.”

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2025-2026 Parent and Student Handbook Policy Review

After conducting our empathic listening series with students, staff, parents, families, and the community of Manual High School, we integrated these narratives into the review of the Student Handbook. ***Here are specific ways in which Black students can be supported and some recommendations to further enhance the institution’s practices according to the student handbook 2023-2024:***

Barriers Identified: Family Engagement

The Student & Family Handbook emphasizes procedural compliance (appointments, documentation, digital systems) without parallel commitments to proactive relationship-building with Black families. This framing may unintentionally deter engagement and reinforce power imbalances between families and the institution.

- **High procedural burden on families** (24-hour notice for visits, advance scheduling expectations, proof of residency enforcement, multiple required calls/emails) without corresponding **school responsibility for relationship-building**.
- Family presence is framed primarily through **compliance and control**, not partnership:
 - Visitors “will be asked to leave” if core values are not practiced.
 - Parents arriving without appointments are explicitly deprioritized.
- Communication systems assume **time flexibility, digital access, and system fluency** (Infinite Campus, attendance line by 6 a.m., documentation follow-up).

These patterns appear throughout:

- *Parents/Guardians & Visitors* (pp. 8–9)
- *Returned Mail & Proof of Residency* (p. 15)
- *Attendance & Notification to Home* (pp. 18–22)

Why This Is a Barrier

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For many Black families (especially those navigating work inflexibility, transportation challenges, language barriers, or historic mistrust) these policies **signal distance rather than welcome**. Engagement becomes conditional and reactive, reinforcing the low engagement score.

Recommendation

Relational Engagement Redesign: Shift family engagement expectations from compliance-based to relationship-based by embedding flexible access points, community liaisons, and culturally responsive communication norms within school policy and practice.

Barrier Identified: Policies and Practices

Discretion Without Equity Safeguards: While policies reference restorative intent, the handbook relies heavily on staff discretion without clearly articulated equity checks, appeal pathways, or anti-bias protections, increasing the risk of disproportionate impact on Black students.

- **Broad discretionary authority** is granted to administrators and staff with limited guardrails:
 - Discipline determinations rely heavily on “professional judgment.”
 - Habitual disruptive designation can escalate to expulsion after suspensions.
- Policies emphasize **what students/families must do**, but rarely outline:
 - How bias is mitigated,
 - How families can appeal or intervene early,
 - How restorative practices are prioritized before exclusion.

Seen most clearly in:

- *Behavior and Interventions* (pp. 21–29)
- *Label of Habitual* (pp. 26–27)
- *Academic Integrity & Technology Policies* (pp. 10–16)

Why This Is a Barrier

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Given national and local data on racialized discipline, **discretion without transparency** disproportionately impacts Black students. The handbook does not sufficiently reassure families that equity safeguards are actively embedded.

Recommendation

Equity Accountability Mechanisms: Establish explicit equity review processes for disciplinary decisions, including data monitoring, family notification protocols, and clearly defined appeal and restoration pathways.

Barrier Identified: Support Systems

Reactive Support Orientation: Although the handbook outlines multiple supports, access is frequently triggered by behavioral or academic infractions, placing the burden on students and families to navigate complex systems rather than receiving proactive, culturally responsive intervention.

- Supports are **reactive and compliance-triggered**, not preventative:
 - Students access support after referrals, violations, or attendance issues.
- Heavy reliance on **self-advocacy** by students and families:
 - Students must initiate contact after absences.
 - Families must navigate systems independently to prevent withdrawal or truancy escalation.
- Limited acknowledgment of **racialized stress, trauma, or identity-specific needs** despite strong language around “standard of care.”

Evident in:

- *Attendance & Make-Up Work* (pp. 18–21)
- *Counseling & Academic Planning* (pp. 30–31)
- *Professional Standard of Care* narrative (pp. 4–5)

Why This Is a Barrier

The philosophy of care is strong, but **infrastructure does not match rhetoric**. Black students often encounter systems after harm has occurred, rather than being wrapped in proactive, culturally responsive supports.

Recommendation

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Preventative & Identity-Affirming Supports: Invest in proactive support structures, including affinity-based spaces, culturally competent counseling, and early-intervention teams that engage students and families before disciplinary or attendance thresholds are reached.

Barrier Identified: Equity in Discipline Actions

Context-Neutral Enforcement: Several disciplinary and attendance policies apply uniformly without sufficient consideration of context, compounding harm for students experiencing trauma, instability, or systemic barriers.

- Despite restorative language, **punitive escalation remains dominant:**
 - Frequent references to suspension, law enforcement, trespass notices.
 - “ABSENCE IS AN ABSENCE” language removes context (medical, counseling, disciplinary).
- Surveillance tools (SwipeK12, tardy sweeps) are normalized without equity impact analysis.

Found in:

- *Attendance Policies* (pp. 18–22)
- *SwipeK12 & Tardy Sweeps* (pp. 9, 21)
- *Behavior Matrix* (pp. 23–26)

Why This Is a Barrier

Zero-context policies and surveillance-heavy approaches disproportionately impact Black students and contribute to disengagement, even when framed as “safety” measures.

Recommendation

Context-Responsive Discipline: Recalibrate disciplinary and attendance practices to incorporate context reviews, restorative thresholds, and family-centered problem solving prior to punitive escalation.

Conclusion

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Vista Peak Preparatory stands at a critical juncture. The current **Exodus Status** reflects systemic gaps that, if left unaddressed, will continue to undermine trust, belonging, and outcomes for Black students and families. At the same time, the presence of partial strengths signals opportunity. By moving from intent to infrastructure, and from symbolic gestures to shared power, Vista Peak Preparatory can begin the work of transformation required to ensure Black students are not merely enrolled but fully protected, affirmed, and positioned to thrive.

This report is offered as both a mirror and a roadmap. Because there has not been sign of infrastructure that would support this type of transformation, our team will leverage our resources to support any current or prospective Black students and families to discern their choice before committing to this school environment.

Green Book Initiative		Your Status: Exodus Status
Name of Institution	Vista Peak Preparatory	
Criteria	Score	
Curriculum Inclusivity and Representation	3.8	
Equity in Disciplinary Actions	3.1	
Staff and Leadership Representation	2.6	
Engagement with Black Families and Communities	2.1	
Treatment and Involvement of Black School Board Members **Use for Governance ONLY**	N/A	
Policies and Practices	3.1	
Support Systems	2.8	
Physical Environment	3	
Score	2.9	
<p><i>In our comprehensive assessment process, each category will be meticulously evaluated using a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where a rating of 1 signifies inadequate support for the thriving of Black students, while a rating of 5 represents exceptional support. Through this methodical approach, we aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the school's safety and inclusivity for Black students. By averaging the scores across all categories, we will generate total scores, offering a comprehensive overview of the school's performance in fostering an environment conducive to the success of Black students.</i></p> <p><i>Green Book Schools/Governance will be expected to achieve a minimum score of 4.5, indicating exemplary support and commitment to inclusivity.</i></p> <p><i>Schools/Governance On Notice will be held to a minimum score of 3.0, ensuring that even institutions requiring improvement maintain a baseline level of support.</i></p> <p><i>Exodus Schools/Governance will be capped at a maximum score of 3.0, reflecting the need for significant enhancements to better support the thriving of Black students. This scoring system enables us to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for targeted interventions, ultimately fostering continuous progress towards equity and excellence.</i></p>		