

# Green Book Initiative

## Findings Report for Eaglecrest High School

### Overview

The review completed on May 23, 2024, highlights pervasive systemic inequities within the school's curriculum, disciplinary actions, staff representation, family engagement, policies, support systems, and physical environment. The curriculum's relegation of African American history to an Advanced Placement track excludes the broader student body from vital cultural education, while significant racial disparities in disciplinary actions and the lack of Black representation among staff and leadership exacerbate feelings of isolation and mistrust among Black students and families. Inadequate communication with Black families during crises, coupled with a history of legal disputes over translation services, deepens psychological harm and alienation. The absence of robust anti-discrimination policies and equitable support systems, along with a physical environment devoid of Black cultural representation, underscores the systemic exclusion and erasure faced by the Black community, ultimately calling for urgent and comprehensive reforms to foster an inclusive and equitable educational environment.

### Findings Report:

*Due to Eaglecrest High School opting to abstain from engaging in the Green Book Initiative process, this report does NOT include the recommendations from the Green Book Initiative Committee*

#### **Curriculum Inclusivity and Representation:**

- Findings: The school's curriculum is marked by a conspicuous absence of recognition or commemoration of the profound contributions, intricate history, and vibrant cultures of Black individuals within its "traditional" courses. Instead, African American history is relegated to the confines of an Advanced Placement (AP) track, effectively ignoring this essential aspect of our collective heritage. By segregating African American history in such a manner, the school perpetuates a deeply ingrained system of inequity, where only a select few students are granted access to this crucial knowledge, while the mass population of students are left uninformed and disconnected from the excellence of Black experiences and achievements. Furthermore, the use of terms like "African slavery" in one of the courses invalidates the cultural heritage and trauma of those who were forcibly taken from their land and enslaved in the United States.
- Impact: This isolation of African American history within the AP track not only denies students a comprehensive understanding of their nation's past but also reinforces harmful narratives of exclusion and erasure. By confining the study of Black history to a specialized program, the school sends a message that the contributions and struggles of Black individuals are secondary or optional, rather than integral to the fabric of our society. This approach not only fails to cultivate a sense of inclusivity and belonging

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among Black students but also deprives all students of the opportunity to engage critically with the complexities of race, identity, and social justice in our nation's history.

## **Equity in Disciplinary Actions:**

- Findings: There are significant racial disparities in disciplinary actions, particularly punitive punishment for Black students. The recent expulsion of four Black students highlights a disturbing pattern of racial disparities in disciplinary actions within the school. These punitive punishments have historically and continue to deprive Black students of their right to education but also underscores broader systemic issues of bias and injustice that persist within the institution. Rather than addressing underlying issues and providing support, the school's historic and continued response exacerbates existing disparities, further systemically impacting Black students and perpetuating a cycle of discrimination and harm.
- Impact: The inequitable disciplinary actions not only rob Black students of educational opportunities but also contribute to a hostile and unsafe learning environment. This systematic targeting and harsher punishment of Black students create a culture of fear and mistrust, which can lead to disengagement from the school community and increased dropout rates. The psychological toll of such disciplinary disparities can lead to long-term negative impacts on mental health, self-esteem, and future educational and career prospects.

## **Staff and Leadership Representation:**

- Findings: The school has done nothing to course-correct and address disparities in disciplinary actions, which sends a distressing message to Black students about their worth and belonging within the educational community. Witnessing their peers disproportionately targeted for punitive measures has caused generations of profound psychological consequences, reinforcing feelings of alienation, the illusion of inferiority, and mistrust in the educational system. These disparities not only undermine the academic and social development of Black students but also erode their sense of safety and well-being within the school environment.
- Impact: The lack of Black representation among the school's staff and leadership positions perpetuates systemic inequities within the school, exacerbating feelings of isolation and exclusion among Black students, families, staff, and the broader community. This profound lack of representation not only undermines efforts to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment but also sends a damaging message to students about the value of Black voices and experiences. This lack of representation reinforces harmful stereotypes and perpetuates a cycle of disempowerment, where Black students are deprived of role models and mentors who share their cultural background and can empathize with their experiences.

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## Engagement with Black Families and Communities:

- Findings: The psychological harm inflicted upon Black students by witnessing these disparities cannot be overstated. Beyond the immediate consequences of punitive punishment, the long-term effects of experiencing or witnessing racial discrimination have had lasting impacts on mental health and academic achievement for the Black community of Eaglecrest High School.
- Impact: The stark reality of the school's demographic makeup reveals a concerning truth: less than 5% of staff members (and less in school leadership) identify as Black, a mere fraction that falls far short of reflecting the diversity of the student body and surrounding community. This profound lack of representation among staff and leadership positions perpetuates systemic inequities within the school, exacerbating feelings of isolation and exclusion among Black students, families, staff, and the broader community. This dearth of Black representation not only undermines efforts to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment but also sends a damaging message to students about the value of Black voices and experiences.

Furthermore, the psychological toll of this underrepresentation is systemic and intentional. For Black students, families, staff, and community members, the absence of their voices among school staff curates feelings of alienation and distrust. Without adequate representation and support, Black voices and experiences are silenced, further perpetuating a system that prioritizes the perspectives and interests of the dominant white narrative while systemically excluding the Black community and cultural capital.

The school's communication with Black families and communities during times of crisis or threat within the school environment is not only inadequate but deeply concerning. Black families have reported being consistently left uninformed and misled, as they are often not contacted when there are threats in the school or provided arbitrary responses when they engage with the school staff. This lack of communication not only undermines the safety and well-being of Black students but also perpetuates feelings of mistrust and neglect within the community.

Moreover, the school's troubling pattern of covering up disruptions to protect its reputation further compounds the issue. By prioritizing its image over the safety and concerns of Black families, the school demonstrates a blatant disregard for their welfare and perpetuates a culture of secrecy and distrust. This systemic failure to prioritize transparency and accountability only serves to deepen the psychological harm experienced by Black families, who are left feeling ignored and undervalued by the institution entrusted with their children's education and well-being.

Adding to the distressing narrative is the school's history of legal disputes, including settlements through US courts due to its failure to provide language translation services in communication with non-English-speaking families (which includes the Black population). This failure to ensure effective communication further isolates Black

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families, making them feel unseen and unheard by the school administration. The cumulative effect of these inadequacies is profound psychological harm, as Black families grapple with feelings of frustration and alienation in their efforts to navigate the educational system and advocate for the needs of their children.

## **Policies and Practices:**

- Findings: The absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination policies and procedures within the school perpetuates a distressing culture where racism and bias thrive unchecked, causing profound harm to students and families, particularly those from Black communities. Several families and students have reported feeling targeted by staff members, experiencing firsthand the detrimental effects of a system that fails to address systemic racism and bias.
- Impact: The lack of attentiveness when a student speaks up about incidents of racism further compounds the issue, eroding trust in the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all. When students bravely come forward to report instances of discrimination, they are met with indifference or even dismissal, leaving them feeling unheard and invalidated in their experiences. This systemic failure to address racism and bias not only undermines the school's commitment to equity and inclusion but also perpetuates a cycle of harm that disproportionately affects Black students and families. Without robust anti-discrimination policies and procedures in place, the school fails to fulfill its duty to protect and support all members of its community, perpetuating a culture of impunity where racism and bias continue to flourish without consequence.

## **Support Systems:**

- Findings: Black students within the school are disproportionately left without the comprehensive support necessary for their academic and personal growth, exacerbating feelings of isolation and trauma in the face of racial tension. Numerous students have bravely voiced their experiences of being overlooked and undervalued, highlighting a distressing reality where the school fails to provide equitable support to its Black student population.
- Impact: These students have expressed profound feelings of pressure to assimilate in order to receive any semblance of support from the school. This harmful dynamic forces Black students to compromise their identities and suppress their cultural heritage in a desperate bid for recognition and validation. Instead of feeling empowered to embrace their true selves, they are compelled to navigate a hostile environment where their very existence feels invalidated and unsafe. Black students are left to grapple with the enduring impacts of systemic racism and discrimination alone, further disrupting their experience within the school community.

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## Physical Environment:

- Findings: While the physical structure of the school may be well-maintained, its lack of representation of Black culture and history is glaringly apparent to the Black community. Within the halls and classrooms, there is a noticeable absence of imagery, artwork, and educational materials that celebrate the contributions and experiences of Black individuals. This omission sends a powerful message to Black students, families, and staff alike, reinforcing the notion that their identities and histories are not valued or recognized within the school's ethos.
- Impact: The design of the school, devoid of any meaningful representation of Black culture, underscores a troubling truth: that the institution was not built with the needs or perspectives of the Black community in mind. Instead, it serves as a physical manifestation of the systemic exclusion and erasure that Black individuals have long endured within educational spaces. This realization is deeply disheartening for Black students, who are denied the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the very environment where they spend a significant portion of their formative years. Without tangible reminders of their heritage and contributions, Black students are left to navigate an environment that fails to acknowledge their presence or validate their experiences.

## ***2023-2024 Parent and Student Handbook Policy Review***

After conducting our empathic listening series with students, staff, parents, families, and the community of Eaglecrest High School, we integrated these narratives into the review of the Parent and Student Handbook. ***Here are specific ways in which Black students can be targeted by racism, discrimination, and bias according to the student handbook 2023-2024:***

### **1. Dress Code Policies (Page 14):**

- a. The enforcement of dress codes often disproportionately affects Black students due to cultural and stylistic differences. Specific dress code policies that can lead to biased enforcement include:
  - i. "Clothing or accessories that contain images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized group."
  - ii. "Items that may be interpreted as representing unauthorized groups (bandanas, logos, symbols, and/or language)."

### **2. Disciplinary Actions (Page 28):**

- a. The policy includes broad categories like "Engaging in verbal abuse, i.e., name calling, ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements addressed publicly to others that precipitate disruption of the school program or incite violence." These categories can lead to subjective enforcement and higher rates of punishment for Black students due to implicit biases.

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### 3. Notification of Nondiscrimination (Page 28):

- a. While the nondiscrimination policy states that the district does not discriminate on various bases, the actual practice and enforcement of these policies have still resulted in biased treatment against Black students. This is especially true as there is no robust mechanism for addressing implicit bias among staff and peers.

### 4. Disciplinary Procedures and Athletic Sanctions (Page 32):

- a. Sanctions such as suspension from participation in athletic events can disproportionately impact Black students who may rely on sports for scholarships and other opportunities. The subjective nature of determining violations can lead to discriminatory practices. Recent findings have also shown that Black students are not treated the same as their white counterparts in matters of discipline. These instances were outlined in grave detail during our empathic listening sessions.

These sections highlight areas where policies continue to inadvertently or explicitly lead to discriminatory practices against Black students, often through subjective enforcement or lack of culturally responsive approaches.

## Conclusion

The cumulative effect of these findings reveals a deeply rooted system of inequity and exclusion within the school. Black students, families, and staff face significant barriers to equity and inclusion, which have profound and lasting impacts on their mental health, academic achievement, and overall sense of belonging. The school's current practices and policies not only fail to address these systemic issues but also perpetuate a cycle of discrimination and harm.

| Green Book Initiative   |            | Your Status: Exodus Governance | Instructions  |  |  |
|---|------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| Name of Institution   |            | Eaglecrest High School         |               | Enter the score for each category based on the detailed assessments in the respective sheets. The overall score and recommendation will be manually calculated based on the total score. |  |
| Criteria  | Score      | Scoring Key                    |               |  |  |
| Curriculum Inclusivity and Representation   | 2          | 5                              | Exemplary     |  |  |
| Equity in Disciplinary Actions  | 1          | 4                              | Above Average |  |  |
| Staff and Leadership Representation   | 1          | 3                              | Average       |  |  |
| Engagement with Black Families and Communities  | 2          | 2                              | Below Average |  |  |
| Treatment and Involvement of Black School Board Members<br><b>**Use for Governance ONLY**</b>   | N/A        | 1                              | Poor          |  |  |
| Policies and Practices  | 1          |                                |               |  |  |
| Support Systems   | 2          |                                |               |  |  |
| Physical Environment  | 4          |                                |               |  |  |
| <b>Score</b>  | <b>1.9</b> |                                |               |  |  |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Green Book Schools/Governance will be expected to achieve a minimum score of 4.5, indicating exemplary support and commitment to inclusivity.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> |            |                                |               |  |  |