

A Lack of Access Anywhere is a Lack of Access Everywhere: A Case Study of the Lack of Access to Advance Level Courses for Black Students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy

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Anthony Hall, EdD

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The gaps in education in America continue to march on at staggering rates. Gaps in academic achievement, college acceptance, standardized test scores, and access to resources continue to marginalize Black students in the United States compared to their white counterparts. Pittsburgh, PA, with the second-largest school district in Pennsylvania and one of the most significant budgets. Despite these financial resources, the Pittsburgh Public Schools district depicts a picture of failure and inequities to the detriment of Black students, much like the city of Pittsburgh is to Black women, as reported in a 2019 study focused on racial and gender equity. If the city is known to be the worst city in America for Black people, how can it be recognized as America's "Most livable city" (Mock, 2019)?

The issue of (in)equality and (in)equity highlighted in this study is the disparity of access to higher level courses that Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse suffer from compared to their white counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS). Specifically, Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy have less access to advanced level courses, Advanced Placement (AP), and Center of Advance Studies (CAS) than their white counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools. The study focuses on the disparity in current courses, curriculum resources, and the school culture, administration, and guidance curricula that foster these disparities. Each disparity was assessed through document analysis, survey, and formal and information semi-structured reviews, using the framing of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA)'s

expectations and guidelines for school counselors. Drawing on these data, I developed a case study of Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy's offerings of advanced placement, students' perceived access, and teachers' experiences with the courses. The goal and outcome of the case study are to develop a comprehensive scheduling team and process and supportive programming to encourage students to enroll in advanced courses (once they are available).

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Preface

This dissertation in practice is dedicated to all of the students who believed or were told at one point in their lives that they would never amount to much. This dedication is so that all students, especially students of color, understand that all things are possible through consistency, hard work, and dedication to one's craft. This comes from an educator who spent their teen years as an "At risk" student, homeless, and teen father and was told to "Not expect much from life."

Thank you to my wife, Makia Hall, for understanding the goals and journey I have set for myself and being a significant support. To my sons, Brennan Harris and Anthony Hall Jr., for providing the motivation factors to strive for excellence and the drive to advocate for all students the way I would hope educators would advocate for you. Thank you to my mentor Steven Wells Singleton for providing me the blueprint to serve urban students through trauma and for taking a former student into your home when there was nowhere else to go.

Thank you to my advisor Dr. Lori Delale-O'Connor, and committee members, Dr. Richard Benson, Dr. Dominique Thornhill, and Dr. Crystal Rose, for their holistic support, accountability, and encouragement.

1.0 Naming and Framing the Problem of Practice

1.1 Broader Problem Area

Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) is the second-largest school district in Pennsylvania. This school district comprises eight high schools with vastly different systems, expectations, and outcomes. Pittsburgh Public Schools comprises roughly 20,080 students, representing more than 57 countries, of which 53% are Black, 33% are white, and 14% are categorized as "other" (Facts At A Glance, 2023).

A recent A+ Schools report highlighted the segregation of Pittsburgh Public Schools based on the school's low-income status. The report noted that schools in Pittsburgh's Downtown and Squirrel Hill areas have the lowest poverty rates, ranging from 20% to 29%. However, the schools with higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students are in Pittsburgh's predominantly Black Homewood, North Side, and Hill District areas. This disparity is hugely significant because studies show that segregated schools have lower-quality curricula, outcomes, and resources (Segregation in Pittsburgh's schools: How inequities persist, 2022). The same report noted that a critical cause of education gaps and access gaps is the variation in the socio-economic status of families in Pittsburgh (Segregation in Pittsburgh's schools: How inequities persist, 2022). Seventy percent of students in neighborhood schools are economically disadvantaged; conversely, 39 percent of students in magnet programs district-wide are financially disadvantaged (Segregation in Pittsburgh's schools: How inequities persist, 2022).

Black students in Pittsburgh Public Schools achieve lower achievement rates and have less access to honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses than their white counterparts. Less access

to advanced classes puts students at a disadvantage in various outcomes that influence post-secondary outcomes, including receiving college credit while in high school, having weighted GPAs, scholarship receipt, and academic rigor; in short, many factors are connected to college admission. Equal access to advanced courses would offer one pathway to closing gaps in post-secondary acceptance and attendance between Black and white students. Such access would support Black students in achieving higher acceptance rates into higher education institutions. Addressing access gaps continues to be a large-scale issue in the U.S. educational system—in Pittsburgh and other cities nationwide. The problem that is the focus of this study is: **Black students are less represented in advanced level courses (including Advance Placement (AP) and Center of Advance Studies (CAS) in Pittsburgh Public Schools.**

A 2007 Pittsburgh Tribune-Review article highlighted a student from Perry Traditional Academy (a school in Pittsburgh’s North Side) looking for the answer to why he and his brother were among only a few Black students taking Advance Placement Courses. His plea to the community and PPS was to provide more AP courses in predominantly Black areas and schools (Lyons, 2007). When the article was written, students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse (a neighborhood school in Pittsburgh’s Homewood neighborhood) did not offer a single Advanced Placement class. Students had to attend Pittsburgh Allderdice (located in Squirrel Hill) for a portion of the day if they chose to take AP courses (Lyons, 2007). By 2020, Pittsburgh Westinghouse only had three AP courses (English 3 AP, English 4AP) and four CAS courses (English 1 CAS, English 2 CAS, Geometry CAS, Biology CAS).

In comparison, Allderdice High School, which is majority white in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh, boasts over 30 Advanced Placement Courses and more than 20 CAS courses. A similar comparison exists of predominantly Black schools such as Pittsburgh Perry

(North Side) and Pittsburgh Millionaires 6-12 (Hill District, 6 AP Courses) to their predominantly white, magnet counterparts Pittsburgh Science Technology (Oakland, 12 AP Courses) and Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) (Downtown, 10 Advance Placement Courses). A recent article further noted that too many Black and Latino students never get to enroll in advanced coursework through no fault of their own. No student should forfeit future success because there were not enough seats in the class or the courses were unavailable at their school (Patrick et al. Socol, 2020).

Noted in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** are the course selection sheets for Allderdice High School and Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. These figures show the disparity of advanced-level courses offered to the students between the schools. According to these course catalogs, Allderdice students can take almost three times as many advance level courses as Westinghouse students. These figures offer one depiction of the problem of practice that Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy have less access to advanced courses than their counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools.



Allderdice High School – Course Selection Sheet—Grades 9-12
Circle the numbers for the desired course



ENGLISH		MATHEMATICS		SCIENCE		SOCIAL STUDIES	
000145	English 1 Modified	550070	Integrated Math 9	000482	Biology A Modified	000578	Civics Be the Change Modified
521003	English 1 with Lab Modified	550071	Integrated Math 10	580056	Biology B Modified	000582	Civics Be the Change PSP– Gr. 9
000114	English 1 PSP	550065	Algebra 1 BC Modified	000411	Biology 1 PSP + Lab	000577	Civics Be the Change CAS—Gr. 9
000106	English 1 CAS	000302	Algebra 1 PSP	000407	Biology 1 CAS + Lab		
		550049	Geometry/Algebra 2 Modified	000796	Biology 2 AP + 2 period lab	000541	World History Modified
000146	English 2 Modified	000331	Geometry PSP	586602	Conceptual Chemistry Modified	000527	World History PSP– Gr. 10
000115	English 2 PSP	000330	Geometry CAS	580058	Conceptual Chemistry	590021	World History AP
000107	English 2 CAS	000305	Algebra 2 PSP	000417	Chemistry 1 CAS + Lab		
		000304	Algebra 2 CAS	000421	Chemistry 1 PSP + Lab	000540	U.S. History Modified
000147	English 3 Modified			000797	Chemistry 2 AP + Lab	000523	U.S. History PSP—Gr. 11
000116	English 3 PSP	000625	Pre-Calculus PSP	586603	Conceptual Physics Modified	000500	AP U.S. History—Gr.11
000100	AP English 3	000623	Pre-Calculus CAS	580070	Conceptual Physics	590102	African American History PSP
000108	English 3 CAS with AP Prep	550051	Statistics PSP	000444	Physics 1 PSP + Lab	590100	American Democracy—Gr.11/12
		000795	Calculus PSP	000440	Physics 1 CAS + Lab	590010	Comparative Religion – Gr. 11/12 Sem.
000148	English 4 Modified	000309	Calculus AP-AB	580084	Physics 1 AP + Lab	Code TBD	Genocide/Holocaust Studies—Gr. 11/12
000117	English 4 PSP	000312	Calculus AP-BC	000799	Physics 2C AP + Lab	Code TBD	History by Hollywood—Gr. 12 Sem
520040	English 4: African American Literature	000793	AP Statistics	580017	AP Physics 2C Mag. & Elec. + Lab	590014	Philosophy —Gr. 11/12—Sem.
000101	AP English 4	002090	Financial Algebra	580076	Earth Science	000557	Sociology—Gr. 11/1/12—Sem.
000109	English 4 CAS with AP Prep	554800	Matrices & Linear Algebra CAS	580005	Environmental Science AP + Lab	590011	Women Studies —Gr. 11/12—Sem.
		510000	AP Computer Science	580069	Forensic Science	000501	AP European History—Gr. 12
		510004	AP Computer Science Principles	580054	Anatomy & Physiology + Lab PSP 11/12 (Bio.1, Chem. 1, B or higher req.)	000967	AP Psychology—Gr. 11/12
						000969	AP U.S. Gov. & Politics—Gr. 12
						594903	AP Microeconomics
						590020	AP Human Geography

Figure 1. Allderdice 2021-22 Academic Course Selection Sheet

Note: Updates may have been added to the course selection sheet as these do not include elective courses.



Westinghouse Academy – Course Selection Sheet—Grades 9-12
 Circle the numbers for the desired course



ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
000145 English 1 Modified	550070 Integrated Math 9	000482 Biology A	000578 Civics Be the Change
000114 English 1 PSP	550030 Algebra 1 AB	580056 Biology B	000582 Civics Be the Change PSP– Gr. 9
000106 English 1 CAS	550065 Algebra 1 BC	000411 Biology 1 PSP	000577 Civics Be the Change CAS—Gr. 9
	000302 Algebra 1 PSP	000407 Biology 1 CAS	AP Government
000146 English 2 Modified	550049 Geometry/Algebra 2 Modified	586602 Conceptual Chemistry Modified	000541 World History Modified
000115 English 2 PSP	000331 Geometry PSP	000421 Chemistry 1 PSP	000527 World History PSP– Gr. 10
000107 English 2 CAS	000330 Geometry CAS		590021 World History AP
000147 English 3 Modified	000305 Algebra 2 PSP	586603 Conceptual Physics Modified	
000116 English 3 PSP	000304 Algebra 2 CAS	580070 Conceptual Physics	000540 U.S. History—Modified
000100 AP English 3		000444 Physics 1 PSP	000523 U.S. History PSP—Gr. 11
	000625 Pre-Calculus PSP	580118 Astronomy –Sem.	590102 African American History PSP
000148 English 4 Modified	000623 Pre-Calculus CAS	580016 Forensics– Sem.	
000117 English 4 PSP	550051 Statistics (College in High School)		000556 Psychology —Gr. 11/12—Sem.
520040 English 4: African American Literature	000795 Calculus PSP	580087 Promise Science 1	000557 Sociology—Gr. 11/1/12—Sem.
000101 AP English 4	002090 Financial Algebra	580109 Promise Science 2	
	000860 Computer Science 1 (TEALS)		
	510000 AP Computer Science		
	000363 SAT Mathematics		
	550056 Promise Math 1		
	550067 Promise Math 2		
	550068 Promise Math 3		

Figure 2. Westinghouse 2021-22 Academic Course Selection Sheet

Note: Updates may have been added to the course selection sheet, which excludes elective courses.

2.0 Organizational System

Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy (Westinghouse High School) has a well-known Pittsburgh history stemming from its strong alum to the current state finalist football team. Pittsburgh Westinghouse is a 6-12 school serving 672 students from the East Hills, Highland Park, Homewood, and Wilkinsburg sections of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh. The racial demographics of Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy are 93 percent Black, 2 percent white, 4 percent multi-racial, and one percent Hispanic (Report to the Community on Public School Progress in Pittsburgh, 2022). Eighty-six percent of students are identified as low-income or economically disadvantaged. Additionally, reports from A+ schools indicate that 30 percent of the student population has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), excluding students identified with gifted IEPs (GIEP). Pittsburgh Westinghouse has 53 teachers, 68 percent of whom are white, 28 percent Black, two percent Hispanic, and two percent Asian (Report to the Community on Public School Progress in Pittsburgh, 2022). Figure 3 offers further insight into the school, including student suspensions and teacher absences.

Administrative turnover has been high at Pittsburgh Westinghouse, with more than four principals over the past five years. The current administration represents the first time in over 20 years that Pittsburgh Westinghouse seniors have had the same principal from their first year to their senior year. Recently there has been a change in assistant principals as both have been removed from the building, with one being promoted to principal and another being forced to move to another school-based. As a result, this year, there was a new assistant principal. The building is down one assistant principal due to staffing issues at the building level. However, the principal

indicated he has added hiring an assistant principal to support the high school to the 2023-24 school budget.

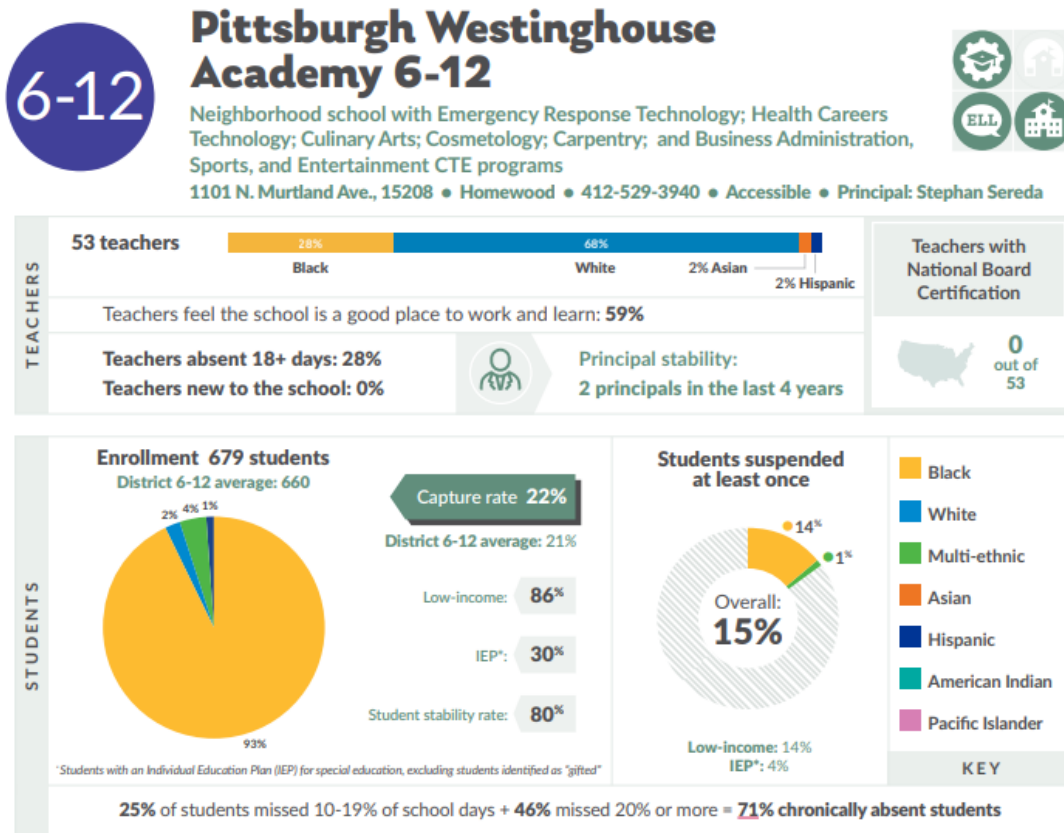


Figure 3. Community Schools Report (Report to the Community on Public School Progress in Pittsburgh, 2022)

I currently serve as the junior and senior school counselor, student service department chair, and athletic director at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. Since transitioning from Pittsburgh Allderdice in 2020, I have been passionate about assessing and addressing the inequities that Pittsburgh Westinghouse students experience. According to the American School Counseling Association, my role as a school counselor is to “Act as a change agent to assess, advocate, and improve equity, achievement, and opportunities for all students” (The Role of a School Counselor, 2023). With this responsibility and my position in the school, I have a level of access and influence to directly affect the opportunities and access for students in terms of individual course selections,

schoolwide courses offered, the master schedule on when those courses will be offered, and development and support of collaborative leadership teams that align with equity in Pittsburgh Public Schools. One example of my work in this area is the 504 CCS, where we measured ideals and processes that assess students' possible compensatory time due to time loss due to the COVID years in Pittsburgh Public Schools (COVID Compensatory Service, 2023).

My role as a school counselor is driven and outlined by the American School Counselors Association and derived from a passion that has placed me in the seat of these students. As a graduate of Pittsburgh Public Schools, notably Perry Traditional Academy, I had minimal opportunity to know about or participate in Advanced Placement courses. Then as now, enrollment in the Center of Advance Studies courses was determined by students being identified as gifted through the testing process of a school psychologist. Knowledge and testing gaps for advanced classes led and continue to lead to gaps in access to more rigorous curricula and later opportunities for college acceptance and scholarships. As noted above, Black students in Pittsburgh Public Schools have disparate access to these resources and options compared to their white counterparts.

The fishbone diagram highlights systemic issues that hinder access to advanced courses for Black students in Pittsburgh Westinghouse (See Figure 4). The fishbone highlights problems stemming from redlining in the local housing market, social and economic dynamics, visions of practice, Pittsburgh Public Schools District policies, and continued hiring practices that continue to widen the diversity gap in staffing. Drawing from the different influences on my problem of practice as highlighted in the fishbone, this dissertation in practice seeks to focus on comprehensive planning and curricular changes to increase the number of AP/Honor courses by 15 percent and ultimately yield 35 percent of Westinghouse students taking at least one advanced course. The three leading areas that directly correlate with the success of the aim and are connected

to my role as a school counselor are Pittsburgh Public Schools District Curriculum, Westinghouse Staffing, and The Comprehensive Guidance Plan.

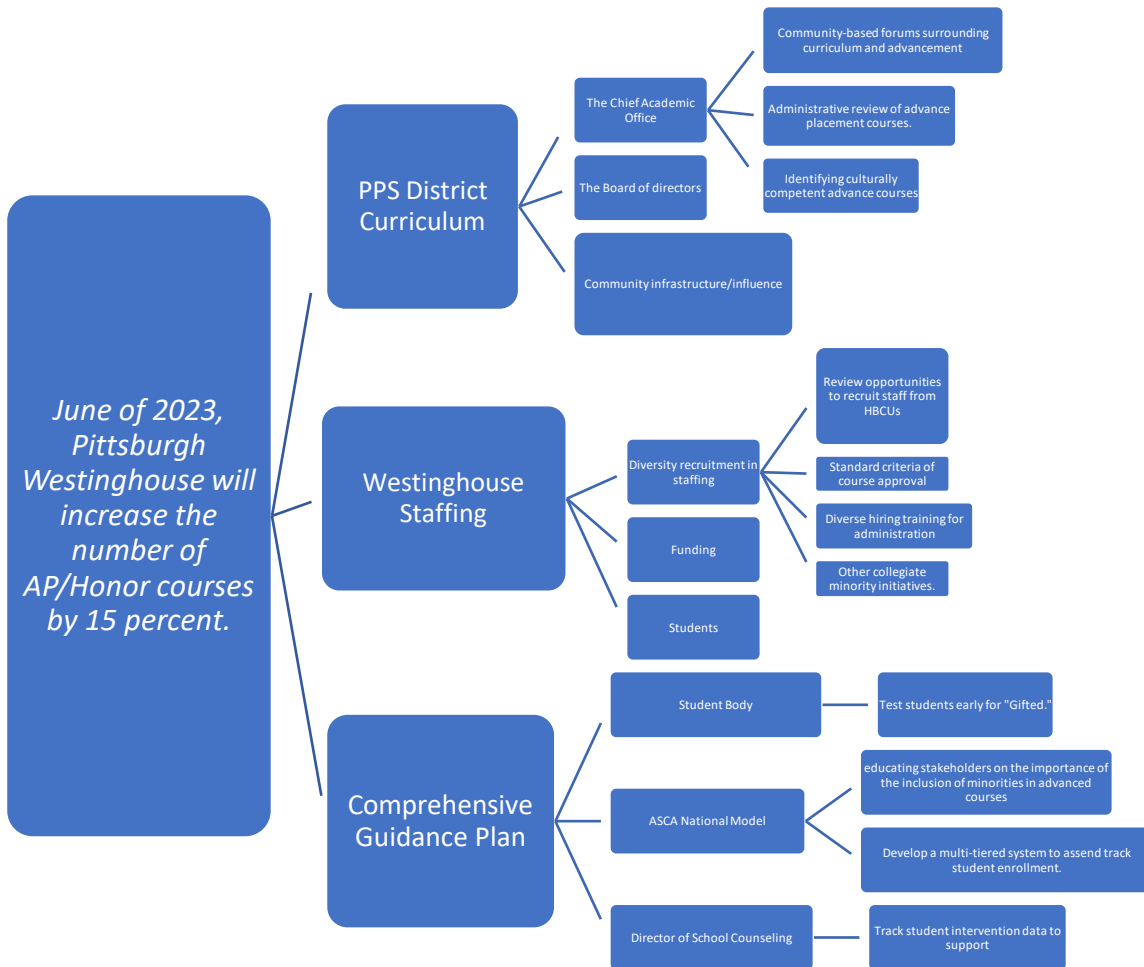


Figure 4. Fishbone Diagram

2.1 Stakeholder Description

The internal and external stakeholders responsible for the changes needed to support a school environment of access and equity includes the counseling department, school and district

administration, the school board, families, students, and community members. It is imperative to highlight these critical actors in the equity solution at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. These groups are fundamental because each connects with the problem of practice, the school's culture, and the student's ultimate success. The stakeholders support opportunities for change at the school level (Engaging Stakeholders Including Parents and the Community to Sustain Improved Reading Outcomes, 2009).

2.2 Counseling Department

The counseling department at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy has been completely revamped in recent years, with only one of the remaining five counselors from 2020. This is a significant change during the major upheaval of the COVID years. Each counselor who left voluntarily transferred to another school in the district. Such drastic change left an opportunity for new systems to be built. These systems include course selections, scheduling, and adhering to Pittsburgh Public Schools District policies surrounding credit recovery, 504 planning, and graduation. The counseling department is also responsible for scheduling students in rigorous and supporting post-graduation planning.

The counseling department is responsible for defining, managing, assessing, and delivering systems of academic and social support that support the individual educational planning for students (The Role of a School Counselor, 2023). Additionally, the school counseling department is geared to act as a change agent to support inequities of systems to support students (The Role of a School Counselor, 2023). Moreover, in creating schedules and suggestions of the master schedule, including adding and subtracting courses that are deemed necessary.

The demographics of Westinghouse's counseling team consists of one Black male with 15 years of experience in education and nine years as a school counselor and three women (two Black and one white). One of the woman counselors has ten years of experience in PPS, eight as a teacher, and two as a school counselor. Another counselor has nine years as a Transition counselor and is responsible for servicing the special education population at Pittsburgh Westinghouse, which currently sits at 28 percent of the population. The newest team member is a first-year counselor with a background in alternative education. It is significant to have a counselor with the knowledge and experience dealing with students of color and students who are deemed " At risk" because of the school currently being over 95 percent African American; some have a notion that students' success can depend on the support of their indigenous culture; it is crucial to have members of the students' racial and ethnic culture to support their academic and social development (Butler, 2003).

2.3 School and District Administration

For many reasons, principal turnover in urban school districts broadly has been consistently high. This trend toward turnover has been reflected at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. Research points to the increasing responsibility of maintaining schools norms, allocating resources, managing school goals, coordinating with stakeholders, the gap between salaries of teachers and principals, and time away from their families as critical factors that contribute to the turnover of principals in urban schools (Yan, 2020). While the principal at Pittsburgh Westinghouse is now embarking on his fifth year after taking over the helm from the former principal (removed from the school and placed on special assignment because of allegations of mistreatment and abuse of student while breaking up a fight (Ex-Westinghouse et al. Accused Of

Abusing Girl Working At Pittsburgh Public Schools Central Office, 2020), the school has experienced turnover in assistant principals in four of the last five years, with a new assistant principal starting this year.

Until this school year, Pittsburgh Westinghouse has consistently had three administrators (one principal and two vice principals) who direct and supervise the school's day-to-day operations. These duties include overseeing discipline, security, and instruction, managing staff, and selecting curriculum. In addition, an assistant superintendent is responsible for overseeing their designated building and supporting implementing policies for each building in Pittsburgh Public School's mission and vision. Although the high schools have an assistant superintendent overseeing the operations, there is also an assistant superintendent of supportive services (health services, counselors, social workers, and athletics) who manages the implementation and policies of these departments in the schools. The Chief Academic Officer and the Superintendent of Schools supervise these assistant superintendents.

Each of these administration entities plays a significant role in closing gaps in access to advanced-level courses that Black students face at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. For example, as noted above, the principal of the building reports to the assistant superintendent of the high school regarding the operational improvements of the building, which include staffing, safety, accountability, and approved curriculum. Approving curriculum and scheduling requires prepared staff to teach advanced-level courses. More importantly, the advocacy, accountability, and the process of staff identifying students of color for specialized advanced courses and GIEPs and recommendations for advanced level courses are represented through staff identifying these students. These factors all contribute to adding classes to the master schedule for students to take

at Westinghouse and staffing the school effectively so that students can access and take more advanced-level courses.

2.4 Families, Community, Students, and Board of Directors

2.4.1 Families and Community

Pittsburgh Westinghouse serves students in Pittsburgh's Homewood, East Hills, Larimer, and Wilkinsburg communities. Historically and contemporarily, these communities are predominantly Black and underserved and under-resourced. The lingering effects of redlining in Pittsburgh continue to create academic disadvantages and poverty in these neighborhoods (Rutan & Glass, 2017). Figure 6 shows the historical redlining in Pittsburgh. Redlining played a significant role in creating the lines of education, school locations, and resources given to sections of Pittsburgh. Though these communities have rich histories, limited educational resources, and access to other needs have limited family and community capacity to advocate for and support the needs of the students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. For example, the lack of an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) limits opportunities for community members and families to voice and share collective feedback about the academic and social goals of Pittsburgh Westinghouse. Studies point to factors of childcare, lack of transportation, working schedules, and family priorities as to why a successful PTO has not run in Pittsburgh Westinghouse over the past five years or more. Moreover, the foundation of education of a student comes from their home. The responsibility of norms, habits, resources, needs, and supports before and after the thirty-five hours or so that students are in the actual school setting are those of the parents and families of the

students. Families, economic and social challenges become factors in a student's success in the classroom. Additionally, families' understanding of the role of advanced courses in college plays a huge role in a student's ambition to seek advanced educational opportunities. During my time at Pittsburgh Allderdice and Pittsburgh Westinghouse, I have witnessed parent involvement, advocacy, and influence that should be available and is legally required stifled because families are intimidated or do not know how to access these supports on behalf of their children. This includes fighting for advanced curricula and options to enhance their student's learning environment and course opportunities that provide them with a competitive balance when applying to colleges.

2.4.2 Students

Students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse are the most important stakeholders in this project. More students' voices need to be part of the decisions and policies made at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. Student groups such as African American Centers of Advance Studies (AACAS) and the "Student Voice" group currently do not have strong teacher advisement to push for change in school culture and course offerings. Although individual students have a voice in choosing their courses through student requests from their counselor and teacher recommendations, there is no collective mechanism to understand disparities and advocate for access and resources.

2.4.3 Board of Directors

The final stakeholder in this problem of practice is the PPS Board of Directors. The elected board member's role is to serve as the voice and advocate of the students in the community.

Furthermore, these elected officials approve policies, curriculum, funding, hiring, and supervising of the superintendent of schools. There are nine school board members representing the nine sub-districts comprising Pittsburgh Public Schools (Board of Directors, 2022). Figure 5 shows the district representation of the current school board member of Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. This representation is essential to understanding most of the population of the students, the parents, and the families represented at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.

These sub-districts are also influenced by the redlining process described above and subsequent integration policies in Pittsburgh.

The board member now tasked with representing Pittsburgh Westinghouse is Silvia Wilson, a retired schoolteacher who also served as a Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers committee member before her retirement (District 1, 2023). Because of the volume of parents with limited knowledge of their rights, the education system must have a champion at the table to advocate for the inequities steering them in their faces. As such, Pittsburgh Public School Board members play a significant role in being able to fight in pushing the advocacy of approved policies and courses that will close the gap of the inequity of advanced-level classes being offered at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.



Areas Represented in District 1:

- Homewood
- East Hills
- North Point Breeze
- Parts of Point Breeze - Park Place
- Regent Square
- Friendship
- Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar
- Friendship
- Larimer
- Parts of East Liberty
- Parts of Shadyside

Figure 5. Pittsburgh Public Schools District 1 Zone, 2023

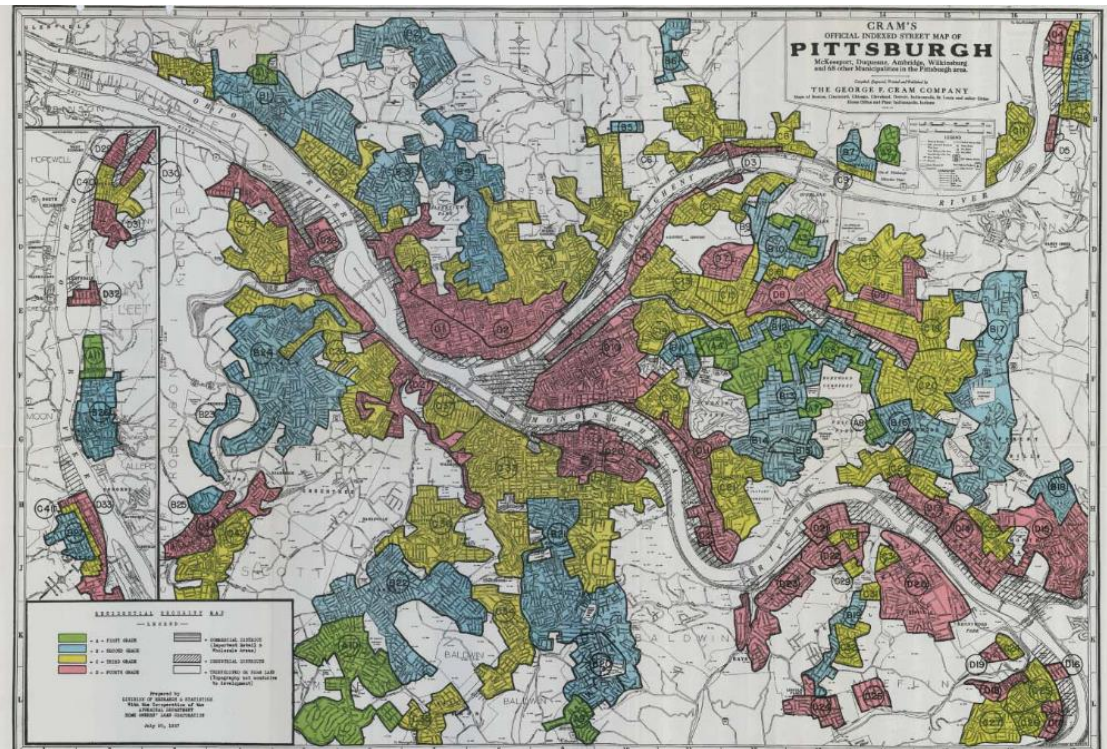


Figure 6. Redlining of Pittsburgh (Rutan & Glass, 2017)

2.5 Statement of the Problem of Practice

As noted above, the problem of practice that animates this study is: *Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy have less access to honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses than their white counterparts at Pittsburgh Public Schools.* This disparity is on par with the national averages in other major cities. These disparities are particularly significant within Pittsburgh Public Schools because Black students are the majority student population. Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse are disadvantaged when applying for post-secondary opportunities, such as college acceptance, scholarships, and possible academic resources. Additionally, the access disparities further widen the gap between placement and the representation of Black students in Advanced Placement and other honors courses. Policies and practices within Pittsburgh Public Schools have perpetuated the disparities. In particular, the following influence students' access and course pathways: (1) Policies and practices for identifying students; (2) The comprehensive guidance plan, (3) School culture; and (4) School administration.

2.6 Policies and Practices for Identifying Students

In Pittsburgh Public Schools, students have two pathways to being placed in Center of Advance Studies (CAS) honors courses. In one pathway, students' parents request their child to be tested, and a school psychologist and their teachers engage in the process of academic testing and data that provides an educational picture of placement for the student. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, while the benchmark for "Gifted" is having an IQ of 130,

it is the total collection of data and feedback that can allow a student who does not carry that IQ an opportunity to be "Gifted" and have access to advanced courses (Gifted Education-Frequently Asked Questions, 2023). It has been widely documented that Black students are disproportionately excluded from testing for "Gifted" programming (Grissom & Redding, 2016). Scholars have pointed to many factors influencing why this is happening nationally. For example, the disparity may be because of the lower achievement of Black and Brown students in education, connected to access in the social and economic hierarchy. Further, schools that Black students attend have inadequate access to resources to fund and staff these courses. Researchers also point to Black students experiencing lower teaching quality (less experienced and less effective teachers), leading to a lack of higher-level courses (Grissom & Redding, 2016).

Students may also access a pathway toward advanced-level courses by completing a CAS application that is then processed by the Gifted and Talented Office in Pittsburgh Public Schools; however, in this pathway, school counselors can exercise discretion based on the student's previous coursework and test scores to justify (or deny) access to advanced level placement. This is an excellent tool in the toolbox for a school to use to break the barriers created by the need for knowledge of processes and resources provided to parents about their student being able to be identified or participate in advanced-level courses. However, this practice is new and inconsistently applied; there is no guarantee that a student completing this application can enroll in these advanced-level courses. Moreover, this process is subjective and allows for human error and more significant disparities if an unfamiliar counselor or a counselor that struggles to identify and be proactive can target Black students in advanced-level courses.

2.7 The Comprehensive Guidance Plan

Pittsburgh Public High School has six high schools with vastly different missions and goals. Those goals extend beyond the school's demographic makeup and bleed into the classrooms and the counseling teams. As a practice, counselors should adhere to the model spelled out in the American School Counseling Association (ASCA); however, because of the need of the school, these duties and missions often become primary to the "best practices" outlined in ASCA. The essential roles of a high school counselor include levels of direct and indirect services, according to ASCA:

Direct Services

- Instructions- Providing instruction to support ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success.
- Appraisal and Advisement- Assessing the student's ability and interest in creating academic planning for post-secondary lives.

Counseling- This comes in the form of a small group, heightened levels of stress, crucial changes, and other aspects of the student's lives that inhibit their success and growth.

Indirect Services

- Consultation- apportioning stratagems encouraging student achievement with parents, teachers, other educators, and community organizations.
- Collaborations- collaborating with other educators, parents, and the community to support holistic student achievement.

- Referrals- assistance for students and families to school or community resources for additional support and information (The Role of a School Counselor, 2023).

Far too often, these best practices are ignored or discarded because of the need to attend to the school's day-to-day operations. As a result, continued programming and steadfast approaches to providing services to identify the student's needs and support students' planning become secondary. Planning and advocacy are tremendous tools in fighting the inequities associated with schools labeled "At risk." And the students who attend these schools. As a school counseling department, it is imperative to act as the change agent for students, identify and support practices that will address inequities, and genuinely provide holistic support for students to succeed and have added opportunities in their academic and social endeavors. School counselors must identify courses, advocate for classes, and identify pathways to provide these courses for students in their buildings.

2.8 School Culture

Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy is a school nestled in the heart of the Homewood section of Pittsburgh. Figures 5 and 6 highlight the areas which are serviced by the school directly. Though students can choose to come to Westinghouse for half a day to participate in the school's six Career and Technical Education Programs (CTE), they are not accounted for in the 679 students currently housed at Westinghouse. Of the 679 students, roughly 400 are high school students from grades 9-12. As noted above, over 80 percent of the students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse come from disadvantaged backgrounds and homes (Report to the Community, 2021). Many of the students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse suffer from ongoing trauma related to issues, such as violence

and abuse at home, food insecurities, violence in the neighborhood, and the loss of friends and classmates due to various factors, including gun violence. To further note these struggles of trauma, there was violence right outside their school, where four students were shot just a few short months ago (Four students shot outside Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy 6-12, 2023). Hence, Pittsburgh Westinghouse has one of the region's most necessary student service teams.

This year, the football team is a bright spot of the Pittsburgh Westinghouse culture. The team helped galvanize the community on their run to the state finals, where they fell short of the championship. It is essential to highlight this team because the administration has noted that the football team is the model of a standard that the school hopes to embrace in changing its norms. The football team, otherwise known as "The Program," was recently featured by DICKS Sporting Goods and *Good Morning America* for the holistic work to support the students in the Program. This work includes a mandatory study hall, no cursing policy, afternoon practices, and mentorship of a model called "Boys to Men." The process and subculture of "The Program" cultivate a safe space for students to be the best they can be on and off the field.

Student and staff relationships are another critical aspect of the school culture. A recent student survey focused on addressing the school improvement planning process found that students feel they need to be better supported by staff. Chronic staff absences (noted previously in Figure 3) have led to a lack of cohesion of norms and continued curriculum in some critical areas, such as mathematics. While most staff note in surveys that they feel supported by the administration, both school staff and security mention that the lack of accountability on staff allows opportunities for more significant disparities in education and school norms. For example, the lack of staff members that adhere to the lunchroom and hallway duties connected to beliefs from the staff surveyed that the building is a safe space to teach. In addition, because of the recent act of violence

around Pittsburgh Westinghouse, the staff are also experiencing trauma. The required triage work takes away some opportunities to address curricular inequities at Pittsburgh Westinghouse compared to other Pittsburgh Public High Schools.

2.9 School Administration

Pittsburgh Westinghouse's administration plays a massive role in the student's academic progress and success (or lack thereof) and the (in) equity surrounding the distribution of resources. Two administrators, one white male and one Black woman, currently support the day-to-day operations at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. While the principal has been there for five years, at the end of 2022 (as noted previously), the assistant principal, who had been at Westinghouse for three years, was displaced from Westinghouse and moved to another school in Pittsburgh Public Schools. This departure left a massive hole in curricular progress, as the former assistant principal had district-level experience and started initiatives to assess and create planning for change. With the lack of an assistant principal for months, the initiatives focused on equity and curricular growth have halted. This is in large part because of having to prioritize discipline and staffing.

The administration is responsible for building hires; one staffing highlight to note—after losing three counselors in the past year, the administration hired two Black women counselors and a Black woman assistant principal. These hires are essential—as research indicates that when there are Black staff and Black educators, suspension rates are lower and Black students receive better quality of education (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). Administrative consistency and support are essential to closing the access gaps for Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse.

Beyond the specific context of Westinghouse, academic and evaluation literature provide further context for the problem of practice. The following literature review focuses on critical race theory (CRT) as it correlates to educational processes and inequities—the gap in education systems and how they may affect the place of practice. Lastly, broader literature also highlights the importance of access to equal curriculum and courses.

2.10 Literature Review

This section will explore the concept of critical race theory (CRT), gaps in education systems, and the importance of equitable curriculum-related problem of the practice and the Pittsburgh Public Schools more broadly. These areas of study help frame possible root causes, theories, and possible interventions as to why students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy have less access to advanced-level courses than their white counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools. Critical Race Theory provides an overview of institutional processes that have limited and inhibited Black and other people of Color from fair treatment under the laws and discriminatory practices. Gaps in education systems are pertinent to my problem of practice problems that are not simply local to Homewood or Pittsburgh but part of the larger landscape of K-12 schools. Further, insight into these gaps will offer possible responses and solutions to address the issue of less access to higher-level courses.

2.10.1 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the 1980s from critical legal studies to assess and analyze how legal processes do not adequately serve Black Americans' struggles (Kevin Brown, 2013). CRT seeks to acknowledge concepts of race inequality in traditionally legal discourse-based on supporting the liberal thoughts and actions of equal opportunity, community, and desegregation of schools (Parker, 2019). At its core, CRT focuses on the idea that race is socially constructed and employed in ways that systematically and systemically disadvantage Black and other people of Color and privilege white people in arenas such as law, public policy, and education. Research points to social outcomes that can be explained with CRT and continue to perpetuate disparities in education and beyond, limiting opportunities for Black and other students of Color (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). The assertions forwarded in CRT directly align with the discriminatory practice of Blacks in the U.S. regarding housing (noted previously with the illustration of redlining in Pittsburgh). As such, the lack of resources attributed to education and housing for Black people in Pittsburgh and at Pittsburgh Westinghouse illustrates aspects of CRT (Rutan & Glass, *The Lingering Effects of Neighborhood Appraisal: Evaluating Redlining's Legacy in Pittsburgh*, 2017).

When examining the landscape of Pittsburgh Public Schools, segregation and afterlife of redlining are apparent. An A Plus Schools report highlights that this segregation is closely linked to the zip code and neighborhood of students (*Segregation in Pittsburgh's schools: How inequities persist*, 2022). Even within individual schools, such as Allderdice High School, there is a lack of diversity among students in advanced-level courses. These courses tend to be dominated by white students, especially those from more affluent zip codes and neighborhoods that feed into Allderdice, as well as those on "Magnet" status, rather than Black students from lower socio-economic neighborhoods like East Hills and Hazelwood sections of Pittsburgh. This trend is also

evident in schools like University Prep and Pittsburgh Perry, which are considered "Lower achieving" schools. They have the lowest student enrollment and provide fewer holistic educational opportunities compared to other high schools in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. They also serve the greatest percentage of Black students. These racial inequities can be directly traced back to the students' zip codes and policies attributed from the purpose actions of redlining in Pittsburgh. Policies that cases such as *Brown v. Board* were designed to address.

The current state of Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse may be explained further by the inequitable practices in learning and policies. For example, without continued exposure to same-race teachers, Hart and Lindsay suggest that disciplinary outcomes of Black students compared to their white counterparts are disproportionate (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). Further, their study found that Black and white students showed significant achievement gains when the same race teachers taught them. While their research demonstrates modest gains for students in having Black teachers, it highlights the importance of diversity in school staff, administration, and teachers. They further note that scholars often speak to the cultural mismatch inequalities of student outcomes. The low numbers of Black teachers and administrations in Pittsburgh Westinghouse mean that Black students would be significantly disadvantaged in learning while maintaining a higher suspension rate and less access to advanced-level courses.

2.10.2 Gaps in Education: Parent Involvement

Rowley and Wright (2011) spoke to the achievement gap between Black and white students in their article in the *Negro Journal of Education* as it was demonstrated through No Child Left Behind. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was a government reaction to ensuring accountability for the achievement gap between low-income students of Color and their white,

middle-class counterparts. The act was geared to give students "better" educational options regardless of their demographic area. Rowley and Wright (2011) suggest that the NCLB act had a crucial gap not accounted for: parents' willingness and ability to be involved in their child's educational process. However, there are layers to parent involvement, and that measure can be subjective. There is less parent involvement here at Pittsburgh Westinghouse than at some other high schools that I have worked at in Pittsburgh Public Schools. However, a deeper look at why parents are less involved includes childcare, working long hours, single parents, and lack of transportation. This is significant in advocating for students' equal access to courses and post-secondary education (Rowely & Wright, 2011). While Pittsburgh Westinghouse does not currently have a PTO, the collective voice and advocacy of the student's right to a "Better" school, as outlined in NCLB, is not conducive to equality. Low-income parents need support with school involvement because of the nature of the resources and the proximity of resources that support them in getting to the schools and staying engaged. Again, as noted earlier this is a space where having a teacher, counselor, and administrator that looks like you provide a level of understanding of factoring the barriers that inhibit parent involvement, thus creating a proactive atmosphere to meet parents where they are and to advocate for students equity (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). It is vital that any institution of education, but especially an institution that serves low-income students, like Pittsburgh Westinghouse, that the institution maintains positive and active engagement with parents and stakeholders to continue to access and build on sustained outcomes, curriculum, and programs that will support students in closing the access and achievement gaps of these Black students (Engaging Stakeholders Including Parents and the Community to Sustain Improved Reading Outcomes, 2009).

2.10.3 Access to Equal Curriculum

Historically, Black students have been underrepresented and less likely to participate in advanced-level courses. Even with test scores to qualify, Black students often do not participate in advanced-level classes (Jefferies & Silvernail, 2019). There are many barriers that inhibit participation and ensure that Black students are kept out, creating a natural segregation in some Pittsburgh Public Schools. Some reports indicate that Black students do not feel comfortable, sometimes have imposter syndrome, and do not want to take courses with teachers and students from the same culture (Jefferies & Silvernail, 2019). The exclusion of these students becomes a natural way of education because if students are unwilling to take, parents are not involved in asking for advanced-level courses. Therefore, schools choose not to provide advanced-level courses at an equitable level (Jefferies & Silvernail, 2019) Thus, creating an inequitable gap in access to advanced-level courses for Black students here at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.

3.0 Theory of Improvement and Implementation Plan

3.1 Theory of Improvement

As noted previously, Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) is the second-largest school district in Pennsylvania. The school district comprises eight high schools with vastly different systems, expectations, and success. Pittsburgh Public Schools demographics include 53% Black students, 33 % white students, and 14% other races representing 57 countries (Facts At A Glance, 2023). Black and other racially minoritized students in Pittsburgh Public Schools achieve lower rates with less access to the same education as their white counterparts. Specifically, Black students in Pittsburgh Westinghouse have less access to CAS/AP than other Pittsburgh Public High Schools Students. My scholarly practice focuses on identifying factors and agents of change that will close the gap in disparities of access and achievement of Black students in honors and AP courses. Accomplished findings and theory would show growth in the number of advanced courses offered and successful completion, which included a lower percentage of dropout rate.

3.2 Driver Diagram

In addressing the preceding Problem of Practice, the following aim statement provides a heightened level of progression to begin to address the disparities laid out in the POP.

Aim Statement: *Pittsburgh Westinghouse will increase the number of AP/Honor courses by 15 percent.* A subsequent goal would be for 30 percent of Westinghouse students will take an advanced course before graduation.

PPS Curriculum is placed in the primary driver stage as it is the agent schools can approve to service their student body. The curriculum office supports such courses and is set in schools that require the administration to believe most beneficial. One would be able to assess change by accessing approved advanced courses equitably.

Staffing is placed in the primary driving stage as it is the most influential agent to whether the courses can be offered at the schools. This can often be directly aligned with the organizational goals, guided by the budget and proposals to the curriculum department. Many factors play with the alignment of purposes, including the consistency of staff and administration turnover. For example, Pittsburgh Westinghouse has had six principals in 10 years. Additionally, one must highlight the ability of staff and the willingness to allow the team to grow into a position where they have mastery in the context that can drive student interest innovatively; one who finally assesses the change based on the consistent growth of staff and student relations, vision, and administration procedures.

Comprehensive Guidance Planning is in the primary driver section, directly affecting academic planning and course selections. School counselors in Pittsburgh Public Schools are the gatekeepers to college and career planning. In that planning, students, with their counselor's guidance, can choose courses that will align with higher levels of rigor. School counselors are responsible for suggesting the need for courses and diagnosing students' ability to succeed in those courses. The counseling team's responsibility is to assess and address concerns that inhibit students from having a holistic learning experience by providing resources and advocating for students'

success. One would be able to access change based on data supporting students enrolled in the advanced courses and the success rate of those students.

3.2.1 Secondary Drivers

The curriculum's secondary drivers include community infrastructure/influence, the board of directors, and the chief academic officer. One would need to understand the concept and diameter of depth that Pittsburgh Public Schools has to effect change. The notion that community influence does not directly equate to advocacy and opportunity for students would be mistaken. The impact of those members is responsible for electing school directors, who are responsible for voting on wholesale changes that may occur in PPS, which includes hiring higher-level administrators such as the chief academic officer, who is ultimately responsible for approval of courses, graduation requirements, and curriculums. *The change ideas and interventions* to include community-based forums surrounding curriculum and advancement, identifying culturally competent administration to review advanced placement courses.

Staffing secondary drivers include the number of students, funding, and diversity recruitment in staffing. In the district, staff members are usually based on students. In addition, there are circumstances where grants and funds are allocated to support specific initiatives. For example, with the merging of Pittsburgh Westinghouse and Wilkinsburg high school, there are funds allocated from Wilkinsburg to support student services to assist with the transition and transportation of students living in the Wilkinsburg area. The practice's issue is the need for more diversity among the teaching staff. Many studies show that students are more likely to learn better from culturally equipped students than from the student body taught. Currently, Pittsburgh Westinghouse and PPS High School teaching demographics read the following:

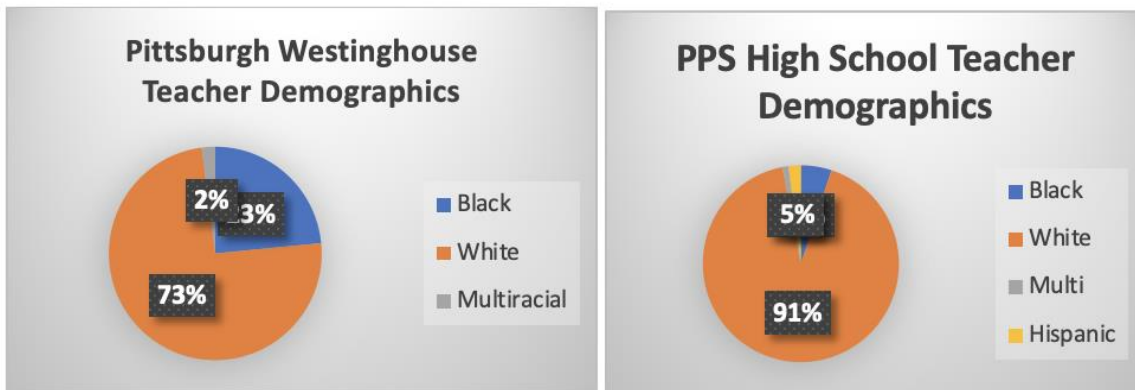


Figure 7. Teacher Demographics for Pittsburgh Westinghouse & PPS High School (Report to the Community, 2021)

The change ideas and interventions for staffing should include diverse hiring training for administration, standard criteria of course approval, review opportunities to recruit staff from HBCUs, and other collegiate minority initiatives.

3.2.2 Guidance Curriculum Planning

These secondary drivers associated with comprehensive guidance planning include the student body, American School Counseling Association (ASCA) Model Updates, and the director of schooling counselor initiatives. The ASCA National model provides innovative updates and best practices to the counseling curriculum that should serve as a basis for school counselors' ethical, professional, and progressive methods nationwide. These initiatives provide a holistic approach to advocating for students as it stands. It is essential that the director of the district counseling program follows and allows the autonomy for counselors to seek training and become experts in the ASCA Model and innovative ways to support students equitably, including fighting

for representation and the successful completion of advanced courses. The study body plays a role in selecting courses and fighting rigor and exposure to advanced classes; additionally, the willingness to learn and be taught material that may be difficult.

The change ideas and interventions associated with this driver could include educating stakeholders on the importance of including minorities in advanced courses. These ideas and interventions would consist of the following:

- Develop a multi-tiered system to assess and track student enrollment.
- Track student intervention data to support students in the classrooms.
- Create a comprehensive scheduling team/process.
- Meet with administration.
- Test students early for "Gifted."
- Survey and solicit feedback from teachers who teach core subjects.
- Survey and solicit feedback from prospective students and student leadership.
- Build summer programming.

The change focuses for this study will consist of creating a comprehensive scheduling team and process, meeting with administration, surveying and soliciting feedback from core teachers, building summer programming, surveying and soliciting feedback from prospective students and student leadership, and building summer programming to supports students who may qualify for advanced-level courses.

Noted in this writing has been an overview of the shift of dynamics, staff, and culture at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. One of the factors of the change is the consistency of the master schedule and the role people have played in completing this process. Until this year, the master schedule

was primarily conducted by the principal and the assistant principal with little input from sta. However, the execution of the master schedule and operations of the master schedule fell solely with the counseling team. Pittsburgh Westinghouse students have less access to advanced-level courses than their counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools, and a considerable part of fighting this problem of practice is students having these courses available at times that are not conflicting with the schedule and having teachers available to teach these advanced-level courses. As a result, in 90 days is my hope to manage and create a comprehensive scheduling team and process that will include scheduling classroom presentations of courses and possible courses, students' electronic requests of courses, teachers' electronic recommendations of courses, instructional leaders' input of the master schedule, administrators input, and counselor input. Some tools that will be used to achieve these goals will be ESchools Plus programming, students' home access center, teachers' access center, Microsoft programs, and Zoom. The entities listed above will help create a process that we begin to develop and input more advanced-level courses in the master schedule.

An essential part of the change ideas will be meeting with the administration regularly to gain insight into staffing from year to year, to approve academic planning, and to help create an inclusive culture in the scheduling process that will allow input from the stakeholders. Therefore, throughout the school year, my goal will be to set up bi-weekly meetings with the administration to discuss these matters and adjust planning throughout this process.

Surveying and soliciting teacher feedback are significant to closing the access gap for students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. As a lead counselor in the building, I intend to have the teacher's voices heard within their placement recommendations for students. We will use their Teacher Access Center to place core course recommendations for each student by the end of

February 2023. Doing so will provide an opportunity to identify students who were tested as gifted and may begin a process of assessing or providing a service plan for those students to take advanced-level courses. This data will be accessible to the counseling team for possible advanced placement of these students.

Surveying and soliciting student feedback also play a significant role in creating the culture of wanting to be placed in advanced-level courses, additionally identifying possible courses that still need to be added to the current schedule. I plan to go into the English classrooms in hopes of reaching a large sample size of students to solicit their course requests, survey the knowledge of advanced-level courses, survey their understanding of how to read a high school transcript and promote and provide pros of taking advanced level courses in high school. This information will be translated to more students requesting advanced-level courses in their course requests. I will use their Home Access Center as a tool for students to request classes and translate the data to Eschools Plus for assessment and placement.

Building Summer Enrichment, programming will be the last part of the idea of change. This is significant in building culture and supporting students to make the bonds and confidence to do advanced-level coursework. It will also be a measure to keep growth points for students who may have received average or negative marks in a previous advanced-level course. In part, my role would be to solicit support from core subject teachers, create a program with a proven concept that the school can fund, and meet with the administration to approve the Program. Building this idea of change and approval should conclude in January 2023.

The data was assessed and supported students to complete enrichment work to set a standard for high-level thinking and work while attending high school.

3.3 System Measures

The data that will continue to be assessed over the next five years will determine the success of the change measures. For example, one would look at the number of Black students enrolled in advanced-level courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. Additionally, it will be essential to measure how many courses are available for students and follow the course successes of the Black students in this class. Finally, it was necessary to assess the scheduling process of school counselors and how the guidance plans are implemented.

3.3.1 Questions of Understanding

As previously mentioned in this project, I focused on creating a comprehensive scheduling team and process, meeting with administration, and surveying and soliciting feedback from core teachers. This data helped me to build a case study of Pittsburgh Westinghouse that I can then build upon to make continuous changes to address first the lack of AP/honors courses and then student enrollment and success in these courses. To build this case and better understand the current context of AP and honors courses at Westinghouse, I reviewed the guidelines surrounding students being placed into advanced placement or honors courses. To do this, I will address the following:

- How many students are currently in AP/honors courses?
- How successful are those students in those courses?
- How many are AP/honor courses offered at the school?

To implement these interventions of the case study, I communicated with their team to create allies for steps of intervention, after meeting with the team to devise a plan of action that

would include how each intervention would be implemented. I would specifically ask for a meeting with the Chief Academic Officer, our building administration, a school board member, and the Parent Group president to create a plan of action that would include a system of approving courses in a more efficient timeframe and equitably.

3.3.2 Method

I conducted this case study about prospective students and students currently in AP/CAS courses and the access to these courses for the students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. I used quantitative and qualitative data to assess pre- and post-assessments and qualify the data and agents of change. My methods to build the case study and address the questions posed above include student and teacher surveys, as well as focus groups with teachers.

Westinghouse Staff is placed in a primary driver stage as it is the most influential agent to whether the courses can be offered and who teaches them at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. Pittsburgh Westinghouse staff is divided into departments (Student Services, English, Math, Science, History, Physical Education, and Arts). Each department has an Instructional leader (ITL) or chair (Student Service Chair) that sits at the larger table and requests courses, class sizes, placement of schedule, and policies that align with student successes in the advanced techniques. Because of their influence as change agents, it is vitally essential that interventions of change provide culturally competent bodies and training that will align with services that would match the demographics of the school and the level of care needed for students. The interventions would include intentional staff hiring and recruitment of minority candidates, standard criteria of course approvals, and enriched diversity training for all staff members.

To implement the interventions, I met with the ITLs to discuss large-scale scheduling and courses that may be requested. These leaders are influential because they represent their department's voice in policies and decisions. The hope is to have the voice of each department; therefore, they will feel a part of the decision-making process rather than being told what to do. It is always better to have collective voices at the table when implementing large-scale changes in adaptive leadership. Additionally, I met with student leadership to devise PowerPoints and structure teacher psycho-educational training. This training would be held in a four-part series during district professional development days.

One measure the data was based on the number of courses that increased and the number of certified staff that is minorities from a quantitative-based format.

3.3.3 Comprehensive Guidance Plan Description

Comprehensive Guidance Planning is placed in the primary driver section, directly affecting students' academic planning and course selections. School counselors in Pittsburgh Public Schools are the gatekeepers to college and career-planning students. In that planning, students, with the guidance of their counselor, can choose courses that will align with higher levels of rigor. School counselors are responsible for suggesting the need for courses and diagnosing students' ability to succeed in those courses. In addition, the counseling team's responsibility is to assess and address concerns that inhibit students from having a holistic learning experience by providing resources and advocating for students' success. These notions directly align with the Problem of Practice.

The change ideas and interventions included:

- Educating stakeholders on the importance of including minorities in advanced courses.

- Develop a multi-tiered system to assess and track student enrollment.
- Track student intervention data to support students in the classrooms.
- Test students early for "Gifted."

To operate these interventions, I sought professional development from the American School Counseling Association on implementing a multi-tiered system that would support creating strategies to enhance student enrollment. An option to get qualitative data taken by competing for a semi-structured interview via Zoom of high school counselors represented at all Pittsburgh Public High Schools. It results in the transcription of the interview.

3.3.4 Questions

The following questions were used for the semi-structured discussion:

- What current systems are used to recruit students for advanced advanced-level?
- What are the systemic issues that you have with creating a course?
- Are students of color being supported in these courses?
- What stops students of color from succeeding in these courses compared to their PPS counterparts?

3.3.5 Data Analysis Plan

Creating change is fundamental and is identified in the POP and AIM statements. The data consists of document review to understand current practices and offerings, surveying students, staff, and community members using Microsoft Forms, and conducting focus groups with teachers and administration. Microsoft forms allowed me to have QR code access and link access of the

surveyors, allowing the results to be processed into visual form to share with the administrative team and inform potential changes. I conducted qualitative semi-formal and formal interviews of Pittsburgh Public School district employees, students, and families and transcribed the information into a Word document. I analyzed the interviews and focus groups by coding the data for reoccurrence of problems or factors mentioned by the participants. I drew from these data to first build a full picture of Westinghouse's AP/honors curricula, the disparities, and student and educator sentiments around these disparities and then used them to develop recommendations and change interventions for a solution.

4.0 Evaluation Results

This project focuses on understanding why Black students in Pittsburgh Westinghouse have less access to higher-level courses (Honors/AP) than their counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools. Further, I have also focused on increasing Black students' access to higher-level courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. The data collected by surveying twenty-two students and a semi-structured interview of four teachers who were chosen out of a convenience sample as all of the people either taught or were students in AP or CAS courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy helped to illustrate what it looks like to be a current student or teacher in AP/CAS course at Pittsburgh Westinghouse; additionally, understanding the current structures used in this content analysis supports, and feelings of these students in hopes of using this data to develop a new theory of improvement and process using grounded theory.

4.1 Baseline Data

The data from my semi-structured interview with the focus group of teachers and informal surveys offered insight into people currently educating or learning in honor and AP courses in Pittsburgh Westinghouse. Twenty-six people (22 students and four teachers) participated in the data collection process. This survey was open to the sixty-four students to participate chosen from the school-wide CAS/AP English courses. Students were given the survey in their CAS/AP classroom, and the teachers were interviewed via Zoom in the school setting. The transcript of the semi-structured interview was downloaded using the Zoom platform. It was studied to find

potential themes associated with supporting the improvement science and theory of how creating a new proactive process can provide greater access to advanced courses for Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. As different themes arose, such as administration, magnet schools, and student readiness, I assessed how these themes individually affected the participants in the semi-structured interview, but more importantly, how they affected my problem of the practice.

As previously noted, participants in this case study were chosen out of a convenience sample focusing on those currently enrolled or teaching CAS/AP courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. The semi-structured group interview included two Black teachers (one male and one female) and two white male teachers. One of the teachers taught advanced-level math courses, one taught advanced-level history courses, and the other two taught advanced-level English courses. The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes via Zoom, which was later transcribed into Microsoft Word from the Zoom platform software.

The students that participated in the survey ranged from grades 9 through 12. Of the twenty-two participants, 95 percent were Black and 5 percent were white. Figure 8 shows the demographic makeup of the students who participated in the survey. The survey concentrated on engaging and assessing students in advanced-level Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy courses. Noted above, out of the convenience sample, these students were chosen from the advanced-level English courses (English 1 CAS, English 2 CAS, AP English 3, AP English 4) at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. Limitations to the participation of these students occurred as the survey was made available only for the first three days after the first semester of the school year.

The survey's finding was as follows: out of the 22 students surveyed, 16 have a GPA of 3.0 or above and a median age of 15.

Of these students, 63 percent surveyed felt supported in the AP/Honor courses they took. This was important to measure to assess the interpreted supports the students may have in the class. Additionally, 63 percent of the students who completed the survey received a "B" grade, which is significant in allowing students to have a heavier weighted GPA as AP/Honors courses are scored higher than mainstream courses. More importantly, it indicates that Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy can be successful in advanced-level courses. Conversely, the responses of the other 37 percent indicate that they have received average (C) or below marks in those courses. However, with such a small sample size, it does not depict the full picture of students who may have failed these courses and are no longer in advanced-level classes, nor those who were successful in those courses and either chose not to return or have conflicts with other courses and was unable to. Students gave a median score of 4 on a 5-point Likert Scale that assessed the teachers' effectiveness and support in AP and CAS courses. Again, such a small sample size may depict a more excellent picture of students who could have been more successful in their studies. Appendix C offers the full results of the "Questions of Understanding" on which students were surveyed.

The information from this survey indicates that students beginning as soon as their 9th-grade year at Pittsburgh Westinghouse has the strengths and supports to navigate advanced-level courses. One could assert from these data that there is a proven concept of successful completion of coursework; however, there needs to be a connection between the process of access to advanced-level courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.

Westinghouse CAS/AP Inquiry

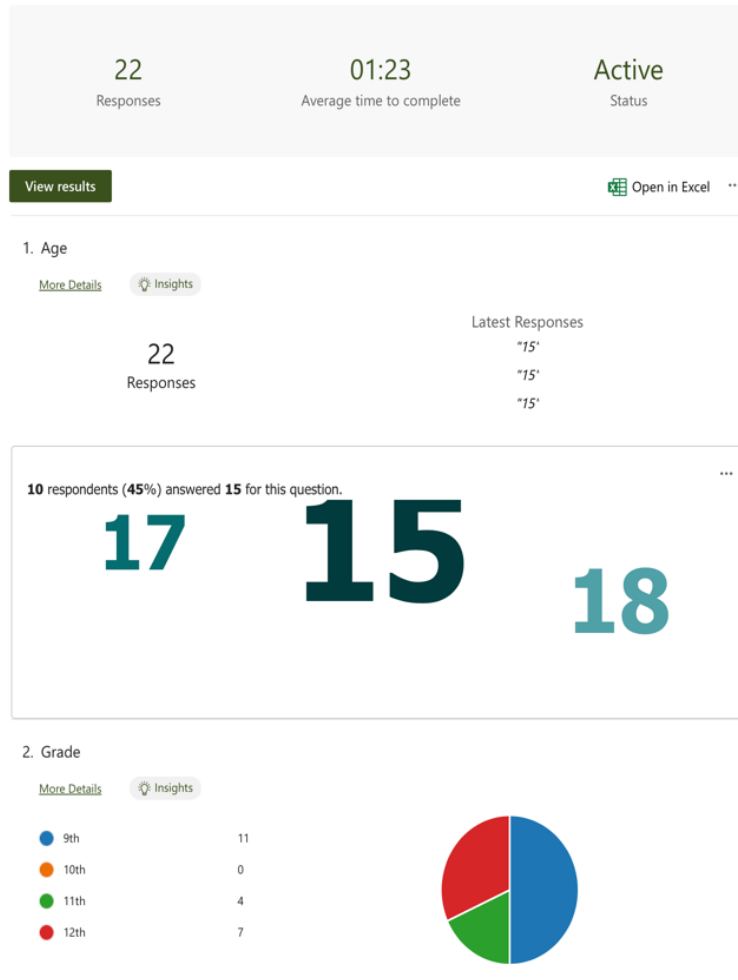


Figure 8. Student Survey Demographics

To obtain the current perspective of teachers teaching AP/ CAS courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse, a semi-formal interview with a group of teachers who currently teach advanced-level courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy was conducted. This semi-structured interview was conducted using Zoom. The interview lasted approximately 55 minutes long and focused on topics such as: why so few students take AP/CAS courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse, school culture, teacher supports and barriers to teaching advanced-level courses, what advanced courses one would like to see added, and what policies and processes could support or hinder those courses

being added and students being successful in advanced-level courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy?

One primary theme that came up in the interviews was the issue of access for Black students in Pittsburgh Westinghouse. All teachers interviewed wanted the students to have adequate and equal access to advanced-level courses compared to their counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools. However, the teachers interviewed focused on their perception of students' ability to succeed in advanced courses and not just based on a small sample size of grades. It was the consensus of the teachers I spoke with those developing students to be prepared for the rigor and structure of advanced courses should begin in middle school. For example, when asked, "What are the barriers to students getting in and completing these courses?" *Respondent 1*, a senior AP English teacher, stated, "I spend so much of the time trying to fortify basic elemental standard skills that should be taken care of along the way in some of the core classes that are not solidified when I get them." This quote is significant as *Respondent 1* questions the system in which some students are identified in place in their course without the support and skills, they believe students should have before coming to their course. As a result, *Respondent 1* attributes his student's failure and lack of student interest to their reputation and representation in their classroom. Identifying students sooner and supporting students in middle school would allow a cohort of students focused on continued higher learning while also allowing other students to have access to these courses along the way.

Another point of emphasis is the perceptions of systemic disparities between "magnet" and "neighborhood" schools that the teachers interviewed identified. They asserted that the Pittsburgh Public Schools magnet systems allow opportunities for other schools to "pluck" the stronger students from neighborhood schools and leave fewer students in neighborhood schools who are

viewed as having the academic ability to take advantage of the advanced level courses, thus making it less likely that neighborhood schools will be pushed to offer these courses. As a result, these "magnet" schools tend to have greater offerings of advanced courses. A significant comment supporting this theme was made by *Respondent 3* who stated:

Our school (Westinghouse), our building goes all the way. Our feeder pattern goes all the way up in Highland Park. Moreover, I know people then; we all know Highland Park, and I will say it. *Brown versus Board* is there for a reason; I understand all you know. The communities should actually feel that they can send their children to our school, too. Our students deserve the same as any other student that lives down the street. People would be successful but have resources, courses, and experiences if we provided them more often. Just look at the courses we have to offer.

In this quote, Respondent 3 who teaches social studies connects to one of the direct issues I outlined at the onset of this problem of practice. Specifically, Respondent 3 makes it clear that segregation and redlining are still apparent in our schools today and impact students' access to advanced curricula. While "magnet" schools within Pittsburgh Public Schools have more resources that allow them to offer a variety of advanced courses, neighborhood schools like Westinghouse Academy are left to serve their student bodies without equitable resources. This creates different demand for the schools which only exacerbates the disparities and allows students whose feeder schools are in more affluent to transition to other schools with more scholastic opportunities, which according to *Respondent 3*, includes experience and courses.

When asked, "What change would be needed to support getting more advanced-coursed at Westinghouse? and What courses would you like to add?" *Respondent 2* focused his thoughts on the technology gaps the district continues to have. Though it is reported that the district is one-to-

one, suggesting each student has a computer, *Respondent 2* suggested a computer may not be all that is needed to make the technology accessible to all students. Computer literacy impacts Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse not being equipped to take the AP Computer Science courses offered elsewhere. *Respondent 4, a white male English teacher*, took a different focus in responding to these questions and focused on the issue of staffing. They report that coverages and associated duties contribute to teachers being unwilling to advocate for and teach advanced courses. As Respondent 4 noted, teachers feel like they are “Running, running, running...” to support the building. As a result, they have little time to be creative and support initiatives that might further equality and access to certain experiences, including advanced-level courses.

This data from both students and teachers illustrates my problem of practice further. The in-depth interviews illustrate that teachers are undoubtedly a problem that they are passionate about seeing change. Data further suggests that purposeful alliance with teachers may yield allies for an added initiative that will surround my problem of practice. My place of practice is in transition, and because of that, there are opportunities to create solutions that will generate small wins to create a more significant ripple.

The issue of student preparation for advanced courses, as raised by respondents here, continues to come up and would have to be addressed with both relationships with feeder schools, in preparation before and during high school, and not just left to the individual teachers of these courses to assess. As noted by teacher respondents, both plucking of students deemed prepared and the underpopulation of students prior to coming to high school impacts teachers in neighborhood schools, as well as the ways these schools view the need for advanced courses. Beyond the scope of this study, questions of student barriers, teachers' abilities, teachers' biases, and school culture need more in-depth analysis.

4.2 Action Steps

The qualitative data assessment offered clear insights that supported the work I conducted over the past year to create systems to add and make accessible advanced-level courses for Pittsburgh Westinghouse students. As a result of the systemic concerns raised by teachers and the necessity of greater support raised by the students, the counseling team and administration looked deeper at the systems surrounding our school's scheduling process, and in particular the role of student and teacher voice in course selections. Because of my prior experience at Pittsburgh Allderdice, I recognized the disparities in scheduling systems as schools such as Pittsburgh Allderdice employ electronic scheduling to support student requests and teacher recommendations. This allows the scheduling process to have actual data on student requests and students recommended for advanced-level courses by teachers. I recommended a shift to such a system to further support our work at Westinghouse.

4.2.1 Communicating with Administrators and Teachers

The first action step was to inform administrators, teachers, instructional leaders, and students of the disparities in advanced course availability between Pittsburgh Westinghouse and other schools in the district. As the lead counselor at Pittsburgh Westinghouse, I meet with Instructional Team Leaders (ITLs) and the administration bi-monthly to discuss updates, challenges, and planning in the building. In these meetings, I drew upon the data collected from the student survey (described previously) indicating that students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse are enlarged part successful in advanced-level courses, shared the difference in offerings of advanced-level courses between Pittsburgh Westinghouse and other high schools in Pittsburgh Public

Schools, and raised the themes around the semi-structured teacher interviews, focusing in particular on the concerns that “Magnet schools” are “plucking” the brightest students that feed into Pittsburgh Westinghouse. I further offered insight into the ways teachers offered connections between our current disparities and *Brown v. Board of Education*, as well as perceived barriers such as teacher coverage and duties that inhibit advocacy and teacher availability from teaching advanced-level courses.

In a meeting with administrators, the accessibility and comparison were assessed regarding courses offered at Pittsburgh Westinghouse vs. those offered in more affluent buildings in the district. As noted, Pittsburgh Allderdice students had ten times the advanced-placement courses than Pittsburgh Westinghouse students prior to 2020. Citing a meeting in February 2023 with the assistant superintendent of high school, the assistant superintendent of student services, the director of counseling, the director of data, and the systems support specialist where senior transcripts were audited to assess graduation status and possible supports needed for the school. Information about Westinghouse's college readiness and GPA disparity was given, including the lack of resources surrounding credit deficiencies and course enhancements. Specifically, citing *Student A*, the valedictorian of his class with a GPA of 4.29 and never received a grade lower than an “A,” was still rejected from some of his top schools. Noted by *Responded 2* and the *interviewer* that this may have looked different if this student had attended Allderdice, and instead of having a 4.29 getting As in every course, he would have a 4.89, much like their valedictorian. The difference of course was due to the disparity of access to and number of advanced-level courses between Pittsburgh Allderdice High School and Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. Both building and district administration assured that support would be available to Pittsburgh Westinghouse to combat the credit deficient and to find ways to close the gap of advanced-level courses. The

assistant superintendents of high schools offered support and responded by saying, “Devise a plan and meet with your principal.”

4.2.2 Scheduling and Systems Training

The counseling team assessed that Pittsburgh Westinghouse had the staff to support adding AP courses to its curricula by looking at the student transcripts, the study survey, and feedback from the administration and teachers noted previously. However, we also needed and obtained systems support from the IT department to activate course codes allowing students to request or be recommended for the course. After receiving support from the IT department, we met meeting with instructional leaders to identify teachers best suited in their departments to teach these high-level courses was imperative. As such, with the administrative approval of the designee, the counseling department was able to add courses to the master schedule and begin the process of scheduling for students to identify requests and recommendations.

As noted previously, other schools in Pittsburgh Public Schools utilize electronic requests and recommendations to assist with the master scheduling process of their school. However, this was not a practice at Pittsburgh Westinghouse. Pittsburgh Westinghouse had no formal process of teacher recommendations or student requests as of 2020. Student requests and teacher recommendations were electronically tracked. This data was housed from the student’s Home Access Center (HAC) and the Teachers Access Center (TAC). Though this has been a resource in other schools in the district, this was the first time it was utilized at Pittsburgh Westinghouse to assist with scheduling students; as such, teachers and students had to be trained by the counseling department to utilize it. Students were given a presentation highlighting graduation requirements,

student transcripts, college information, and courses available to take and request. Additionally, counselors use this opportunity to promote new, advanced-level courses that students may explore.

Teachers and instructional leaders were trained and instructed by their departments to review the class list to recommend students for progressing core courses. For example, if a student took English 3 PSP (mainstream 11th-grade English course) and received a B or better, that teacher could now recommend that student for AP English Literature. Similarly, a student who took Civics PSP (mainstream 9th-grade social studies) and received a B mark or grade could now be recommended for AP World History (a 10th-grade social studies course).

Once student requests and the teachers' recommendations are gathered, the counseling departments are responsible for assessing and placing students appropriately and ethically in courses that best suit their academic needs. This process is completed electronically through the Eschools SIS systems. At times, some of the struggles with proper placement are the conflicts with student programming, especially if a student is in the CTE program where they have to take three of the same course in succession, which takes up almost half their school day additionally, if a student has a GIEP, which allows them to take advanced level courses regardless of grade requirement, to have those discussions of proper placement.

5.0 Outcomes

As a result of the steps that were taken to have to have teachers trained in the electronic process of recommending students for courses and students having been trained on how to request courses electronically, counselors were able to identify possible course interests, possibly conflicts, identify teachers to teach recommended/requested courses, and was able to receive approval for adding additional advanced-level courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. Additionally, 89 students were recommended advanced-level courses out of the 491 recommendations given as of June 2023. Moreover, there were 122 requests for advanced-level courses from students. However, it is yet to be determined how many students will be enrolled for the 2023-24 school year based on counselor placement. Nevertheless, twenty-four of the graduating seniors in 2023 were enrolled in advanced-level courses out of 102 students during their senior year. To continue to support the process of closing the gap of access to advanced-level courses for students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy, we must understand the data and process surrounding the identification, recommendation, and placements that will enhance these same opportunities for Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.

Using the data from the semi-structured teacher interviews, the information from the student surveys, and feedback from the meeting with ITLs and administration, the counseling department created a system that would allow students' voices, teachers' recommendations, and proper placement to justify adding courses that would better support the access to the Black students in Pittsburgh Westinghouse. Since this process began in fall 2022, the following courses have been approved and added to the course catalog at Westinghouse for the student to take: AP Government, AP Statistics, AP World History, AP Computer Science Principal, AP

Environmental Science, Algebra 2 CAS, Biology 1 CAS. The aim of having advanced-level courses increased by 15 by June 2023 was met and has exceeded the aim by adding five additional AP courses and two more CAS courses, doubling the courses available in 2020. This growth is a direct result of the data gathering and application conducted for this study. Student survey data and feedback from the teachers, in addition to extant data on student grades, illustrated that students are equipped to be successful if there are systems in place to refer them to these courses. This is a testament to the counseling department's steadfast commitment, the student's voice, and the administration's support.

6.0 Conclusion

A lack of access anywhere is a lack of access everywhere. This case study and subsequent action was deeply rooted in my passion for equity for Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy. Over the last decade, Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy has been a struggling school limited by inequitable resources. This case study illustrates that Westinghouse students had less than half the access to advanced-level courses than their white counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools. My assessment of teacher interview data, student surveys, as well as an examination of the systems supporting advanced college going (such as student transcript records and referral processes) ultimately led to a series of meetings, a change of the scheduling process, student requests, teacher recommendations, and other advocacy actions to support and market new advanced courses for students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.

To address the disparities, it is crucial to encourage greater student participation, improve teacher communication, and provide social worker support. The objective is to meet the holistic needs of students, which include their social and emotional learning, in hopes of this supporting them in being academically successful and eligible for courses with more rigor. For instance, some students may not be eligible or perform well in courses due to truancy, therefore identifying and addressing issues beyond academic performance is important. Social workers in Pittsburgh Public School prioritize improving attendance data and play a crucial role in ensuring more students attend school and receive outside services to succeed in all courses, especially core courses that make them eligible for advanced-level courses. In addition, connections to elementary and middle schools and their curricula and teaching would help to address this problem at its roots. Similarly, more in-depth research into processes of school placement, scheduling, and class demographic

makeup would allow insight into other factors contributing to disparities in advanced course taking. Noted by the A-Plus Schools 2022 report, the segregation gap in PPS is beginning to widen (Segregation in Pittsburgh's schools: How inequities persist, 2022). My research points to the need for better access, improvement systems of student identification, and a more robust and proactive space to enhance access to advanced-level courses and resources for Black students as one component of addressing this re-segregation.

Finally, this study provides data on why it is vital to establish systems and advise counseling teams on successfully studying, assessing, and advocating for all students, especially for inequities of students of color. This case study provides one look at the long-term impacts of redlining of Pittsburgh, creating and continuing to uphold gaps of not only financial wealth and access to equal education. Students' abilities and voices, coupled with teachers' voices, proper scheduling process, and advocacy, directly resulted in Pittsburgh Westinghouse offering to add seven more advanced-level courses to their curricula. Though it still falls short of equality, this ongoing work will begin to address some of the disparities faced by Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse.

Appendix A Questions of Understanding/Group Protocols

These questions of understanding aim to evaluate the data and barriers of Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse in AP/CAS courses who do not do as well in those courses as their counterparts in Pittsburgh Public Schools. Through the questioning process, the hope is to analyze the data to effectively provide solutions that may assist with understanding the students in the courses in hopes of having adequate information to close the access gaps of advanced-level courses for Black students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.

A) First 5-10 minutes: Introductions, group norms, and group goals.

B) School Culture AP/CAS Courses:

- Grade?
- Age?
- GPA?
- Did you feel prepared for this course?
- Do you feel supported in this course?
- How many students, on average, are in your AP/CAS courses?
- Do you have friends on these courses?
- What star would you rate your AP/CAS Teachers?
- Did you receive a B grade or better? Did you fail a class?
- Do you have tutoring available?

- Did your parents take AP/CAS?
- What is the highest level of education of your parents?

C) One would have a timekeeper and develop structured responses to keep everyone on task.

D) Transcript but would have assistant moderator support in the notetaking (My intern and a teacher).



<https://forms.office.com/r/gj0g8D7LLc>

Appendix B Appropriate Activities for School Counselors

Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors

Appropriate Activities for School Counselors	Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors
■ advisement and appraisal for academic planning	■ building the master schedule
■ orientation, coordination and academic advising for new students	■ coordinating paperwork and data entry of all new students
■ interpreting cognitive, aptitude and achievement tests	■ coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs
■ providing counseling to students who are tardy or absent	■ signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent
■ providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems	■ performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences
■ providing short-term individual and small-group counseling services to students	■ providing long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders
■ consulting with teachers to schedule and present school counseling curriculum lessons based on developmental needs and needs identified through data	■ covering classes when teachers are absent or to create teacher planning time
■ interpreting student records	■ maintaining student records
■ analyzing grade-point averages in relationship to achievement	■ computing grade-point averages
■ consulting with teachers about building classroom connections, effective classroom management and the role of noncognitive factors in student success	■ supervising classrooms or common areas
■ protecting student records and information per state and federal regulations	■ keeping clerical records
■ consulting with the school principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems	■ assisting with duties in the principal's office
■ advocating for students at individual education plan meetings and 504 meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards, as necessary	■ coordinating schoolwide individual education plans, 504 plans, student study teams, response to intervention plans, MTSS and school attendance review boards
■ analyzing disaggregated schoolwide and school counseling program data	■ serving as a data entry clerk

Figure 9. Appropriate Activities for School Counselors

(Appropriate and Inappropriate Activities for School Counselors, 2023)

Appendix C Results of Questions of Understanding

Westinghouse CAS/AP Inquiry

22 Responses	01:23 Average time to complete	Active Status
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[View results](#)

[Open in Excel](#)

1. Age

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

22
Responses

Latest Responses

"15"
"15"
"15"



2. Grade

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

9th	11
10th	0
11th	4
12th	7



3. Current GPA

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

2.0 or Below	0
2.01-2.49	0
2.5-3.0	6
3.01-3.49	8
3.5-4.0	8



4. How many students on average are in your AP/CAS courses?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

10 or Below	19
11-20	3
20 or more	0



5. Did you fail a course?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Yes	1
No	21



6. Do you feel supported in this course?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Yes	14
No	8



7. Did you receive a B grade or better?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

Yes	14
No	8



8. Was tutoring available?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

Yes	7
No	2
Not sure	13



9. Did your parents take AP/CAS?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

Yes	5
No	17



10. Highest level of education of your parents?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

High school	7
2 year /4 year College	12
Trade School	0
Grad School	3



11. Do you feel support in the AP/CAS courses?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

Yes	14
No	4
Maybe	4



12. What rating would you give your teacher?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

4.05
Average Rating

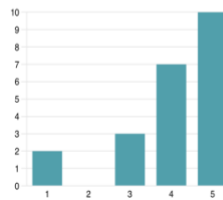


Figure 10. Results of Questions of Understanding

Appendix D Westinghouse Counseling Scheduling Presentation

Westinghouse Counseling Scheduling
February 2022

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENT	CREDITS
ENGLISH	4.0 English I, II, III, IV
MATHEMATICS	4.0 Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry
SCIENCE	4.0 Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
SOCIAL STUDIES	4.0 Civics, World History, US History
ARTS	2.0 Visual Arts, Music, PE
HEALTH	1.0 Health I, Health II
TECHNICAL EDUCATION	2.0
EXTRACURRICULAR	1.0
TOTAL CREDITS	18.0

PROMOTION CREDITS

9TH - 10TH GRADE
 Freshman **MUST** complete 6.0 credits
 4 credits **MUST** be academic
 1 English
 1 Mathematics
 1 Science
 1 Social Studies
 1 Foreign Language & Elective Credits

PROMOTION CREDITS

10TH - 11TH GRADE
 Sophomores **MUST** complete 13 credits
 8 credits **MUST** be academic
 2 English
 2 Mathematics
 2 Science
 2 Social Studies
 1 Foreign Language & Elective Credits

PROMOTION CREDITS

11TH - 12TH GRADE
 Juniors **MUST** complete 18.0 credits
 13 credits **MUST** be academic
 3 English
 3 Mathematics
 3 Science
 3 Social Studies
 1 Foreign Language & Elective Credits

ENGLISH COURSES

CURRENT COURSE
 English I P/P or English I CAS
 English I P/P or English I CAS
 English I P/P or English I AP
 English I P/P or English I AP

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS
 English I P/P, English I CAS
 English I P/P, English I AP
 English I P/P, English I AP
 Advanced American Lit P/P

ELD COURSES ENG I ELD, ENG II ELD, ENG III ELD, ENG IV ELD

MATH COURSES

CURRENT COURSE
 Algebra I
 Geometry P/P or Geometry CAS
 Algebra I P/P or Algebra I CAS
 Algebra I P/P or Algebra I CAS

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS
 Geometry P/P, Geometry CAS
 Algebra I P/P, Algebra I CAS
 Pre-Calculus P/P
 College & High Math/Stats
 AP Computer Science Principles
 Financial Algebra

MATH COURSES

CURRENT COURSE
 Pre-Calculus P/P or Calculus CAS
 Calculus P/P

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS
 Calculus P/P
 AP Statistics
 AP Calculus
 AP Computer Science Principles
 Financial Algebra

ELD COURSES MATH ELD, ALGEBRA I ELD, GEOMETRY ELD, ALGEBRA II ELD

SCIENCE COURSES

CURRENT COURSE
 Chemistry P/P or Physics I P/P
 Physics I AP

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS
 Advanced Science P/P, Anatomy and Physiology P/P
 AP Environmental Science

SCIENCE COURSES

CURRENT COURSE
 Biology P/P or Biology I CAS
 Chemistry I P/P or Chemistry I CAS

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS
 Chemistry P/P
 Chemistry I CAS
 Chemistry/Physics, Physics I P/P
 Physics I AP

SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES

CURRENT COURSE
 Civics P/P or Civics CAS, AP US Gov
 World History P/P, World History AP
 World History P/P, World History AP
 US History P/P, US History AP
 African American History P/P
 AP Psychology

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS
 World History P/P, World History AP
 US History P/P, US History AP
 African American History P/P
 AP Government
 AP Psychology

Additional Science Credits Philosophy, Sociology, Comparative Religion, Western's Studies, Psychology, Social Justice, CAS US History

FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES

CURRENT COURSE
 Spanish I, II, III, IV P/P or CAS, AP
 Spanish I, II, III, IV P/P or CAS, AP

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS
 Spanish I, II, III, IV P/P or CAS, AP

NEED-TO-KNOW

- 3 years of the SAME World Language
- College Technical Education courses (CTE)
- Session and Justice OCEC
- Ready-to-Work Award (R/W/A)
- Work Skills
- Work Behavior - TBD

Figure 11. Westinghouse Counseling Scheduling Presentation

Appendix E University of Pittsburgh IRB Approval

From: Fuhrman, Amy B <fuhrman@pitt.edu>
Sent: Monday, December 19, 2022 11:57 AM
To: Hall, Anthony D <ADH93@pitt.edu>
Subject: RE: Hall IRB

Hello Anthony,

Thank you for reaching out to our office. Based on the information provided below, an IRB submission would not be required.

Sincerely,
Amy

Amy Fuhrman, *Research Review Specialist*
University of Pittsburgh
Human Research Protection
Office of Research Protections
Phone: 412-383-1494
Email: fuhrman@pitt.edu
www.hrpo.pitt.edu

The Human Research Protection Office and the University of Pittsburgh will be closed from Friday, December 23, 2022 through Monday, January 2, 2023 for winter recess.

Re: Hall IRB



The Human Research Protection Office and the University of Pittsburgh will be closed from Friday, December 23, 2022 through Monday, January 2, 2023 for winter recess.

----- Original message -----

From: "Hall, Anthony D" <ADH93@pitt.edu>
Date: 12/19/22 10:27 AM (GMT-05:00)
To: ASKIRB <askirb@pitt.edu>
Subject: Hall IRB

----- Original message -----

From: "Hall, Anthony D" <ADH93@pitt.edu>
Date: 12/19/22 10:27 AM (GMT-05:00)
To: ASKIRB <askirb@pitt.edu>
Subject: Hall IRB

Good morning,

I am completing an improvement science project to finish my EdD program, and I need to know if I need to complete an IRB application. I am using measures and interventions to support students accessing the advanced-level academic classrooms to evaluate the roadblocks to progress in advanced-level courses and their access. I am a school counselor and will be implementing educational interventions, administering teacher surveys to determine their perceptions of the roadblocks, and administering student surveys which will be anonymous, to assess their perceptions of support or lack thereof. I have access to school and student assessment data and am implementing interventions to improve the access of black students taking AP/Honors courses at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.

Please let me know if you need anything from me!

Figure 12. University of Pittsburgh IRB Approval

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