

## Summary of student responses about *belonging*: What makes you feel you belong in your academics, classroom, or school?

HC/RESA members collected responses from 107 students of a mix of racial and ethnic identities. in grades 1- 8:

- Almost a third of students mentioned friends in their answer: 32 students said **friends** make them feel they belong.
- About one quarter of students, 27, said **teachers** or their teacher make them feel they belong.
- Fifteen students said that **learning** gives them a sense of belonging, mentioned specific learning activities, or cited being acknowledged for their learning and academic work.
- Twelve students described a **welcoming classroom community** characterized by respect, inclusiveness, and supportiveness in their responses, such as:
  - *"Making friends, having an accepting environment, being able to ask questions, and being included in projects."*
  - *"It mostly has to do with the environment created by the teacher and the curriculum. The ideal teacher makes sure that my ideas are heard and understood, as well as everyone else's, and pushes all the students to engage with each other in constructive ways, trying to build a space where everyone is heard"*
  - *"Accessible and easy to work with teachers and fellow students as well as a safe environment."*
- Ten students described **culturally responsive teaching**, in which the teacher knows their students, incorporates their strengths and interests into instruction, and provides support to help each student succeed, such as:
  - *"When my teachers connect personally with me about my interests and culture"*
  - *"When my teachers understand me, and can adjust to my speed of learning"*
  - *"When teachers take time to get to know you personally and tailor assignments to your level of learning"*
- Other responses mentioned the importance of being in class with those that share marginalized identity (race, culture, gender), clubs & activities, and having common interests with peers. Addressing mental health, getting the academic and other support they need, recess/free time, and being heard/treated fairly and equally were also mentioned.

## Summary of Racial Equity Analysis considerations based on student responses about *belonging*:

**How should the AL department define racially equitable outcomes related to student belonging? \***

We will have student belonging when:

- Every student is seen, heard, and valued (6)
- Students can get help, support, and services at school (5)
- We understand each other's cultures (2)

- Instruction is relevant to students (2)
- We celebrate all forms of diversity (2)
- Students have relationships with other students and with teacher (2)
- Feelings of belonging are racially proportionate (2)
- Our teaching staff is culturally and ethnically diverse
- Students who receive special education services feel they belong
- Each student is actively engaged in school activities
- Schools work in partnership with communities

**What actions should schools and the AL department take to promote student belonging? \***

- Provide teacher training for culturally responsive teaching (5)
- Build student-student and student-teacher relationships (4)
- Teacher training for differentiated instruction, including cooperative learning and independent projects (3)
- Center student voice, especially students of color (2)
- Teach what belonging means (2)
- Provide teacher training on racial equity literacy
- Leaders set a tone of encouragement, inspiration, and inclusivity

**When taking these actions, we need to guard against unintended consequences** of “othering” groups that already feel less sense of belonging and putting too much work on teachers. We also need to be sure that the focus stays on student learning.

HC/RESA participants who completed the homework & the racial equity analysis each noted lack of diversity by race and age in the students who they collected information from, although as a group there was racial and age diversity.

\*Numbers in parentheses represent the number of responses that included this idea. Total number of responses for these questions was 11. *Add number of students who responded?*