Equity Audit

Green Elementary School
Joel Besancon
Kent State University
Leading for Social Justice

Equity Audit Team
Green Elementary School

Mrs. Miller, principal
Mr. Joel Besancon, fifth grade math teacher

Mrs. Miller was able to provide most of the data utilized throughout the audit. She was also able to provide insight into the decisions that were made when consolidating to Green Elementary School.

Mr. Besancon collected any additional data via Google Forms and created the presentation.

Mrs. Miller and Mr. Besancon discussed the conclusions made from the data and Mr. Besancon provided possible research-based strategies to be implemented.

Mrs. Miller felt it best to include just she and I on the Equity Audit Team due to the inexperience of our staff with Equity Audits and due to the fact that the staff members that she would recommend already were focused on other district initiatives.

Process for the Equity Audit

The Equity Audit Team met several times to determine the staff's understanding of the meaning of equity, which will be discussed on the following slides.

We also gathered available data and determined what data would need to be collected.

Once data was collected, conclusions were made about possible initiatives that our building could establish.

What is equity?

Equity Audit Team Response:

According to interviews conducted by Mrs. Miller and Mr. Besancon, the understanding of equity within our building is that each student is getting an equal education in our school.

Actual Definition:

Education equity is the educational policies, practices, and programs necessary to (a) eliminate educational barriers based on gender, race/ethnicity, national origin, color, disability, age or other protected group status; and (b) provide equal educational opportunities and ensure that historically underserved or underrepresented populations meet the same rigorous standards for academic performance expected of all children and youth (Skrla, McKenzie, and Scheurich, 2009).

What is systemic equity?

Equity Audit Team Response:

According to interviews conducted by Mrs. Miller and Mr. Besancon, the building response is that systemic equity is providing instruction with fidelity across grade levels and content areas so that all students are receiving the same education.

Actual Definition:

Scott defined systemic equity as the ways in which systems and individuals operate to ensure that every learner has the greatest opportunity to learn in order to achieve competence, excellence, independence, responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and for life (as cited in Skrla, et al., 2009, p. 14).

Why an equity audit?

Equity audits provide the type of support educators need in making a systemic response to reducing and eliminating achievement gaps (Skrla, 2009).

Green Elementary School 2014-2015

At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, Smithville Elementary School (Grades K-4) and Marshallville Elementary School (Grades K-4) combined to form Green Elementary School. Fifth Grade also transitioned from Greene Middle School to Green Elementary School to join Grades K-4. Based on fluctuating student enrollment, there were either three or four teachers per grade level team. Kindergarten was self-contained and grades 1-5 had varying levels of departmentalization.

Green Elementary School 2015-2016

The following changes were made for the 2015-2016 school year:

Grades K-2 are self-contained classrooms. There are either three or four teachers per grade level based upon student enrollment and class size.

Grades 3-5 have four teachers per grade level with varying levels of departmentalization. This is based upon student enrollment, class size, and content area.

# Green Elementary School Statistics and Data

- 462 students in grades K-5 are enrolled at Green Elementary School as of 10/27/15.
- 53% of these students are male, while 47% of the students are female.

- 12.55% of students have IEPs.
- 11.26% of students in grades 3-5 are identified as gifted.
- 33.33% of students are economically disadvantaged.

Federal Poverty Guidelines

Household Size	100%	133%	150%	200%	250%	300%	400%
1	$11,770	$15,654	$17,655	$23,540	$29,425	$35,310	$47,080
2	15,930	21,187	23,895	31,860	39,825	47,790	63,720
3	20,090	26,720	30,135	40,180	50,225	60,270	80,360
4	24,250	32,253	36,375	48,500	60,625	72,750	97,000
5	28,410	37,785	42,615	56,820	71,025	85,230	113,640
6	32,570	43,318	48,855	65,140	81,425	97,710	130,280
7	36,730	48,851	55,095	73,460	91,825	110,190	146,920
8	40,890	54,384	61,335	81,780	102,225	122,670	163,560

Available Online at http://familiesusa.org/product/federal-poverty-guidelines.

Green Elementary School Statistics and Data

Students' Race
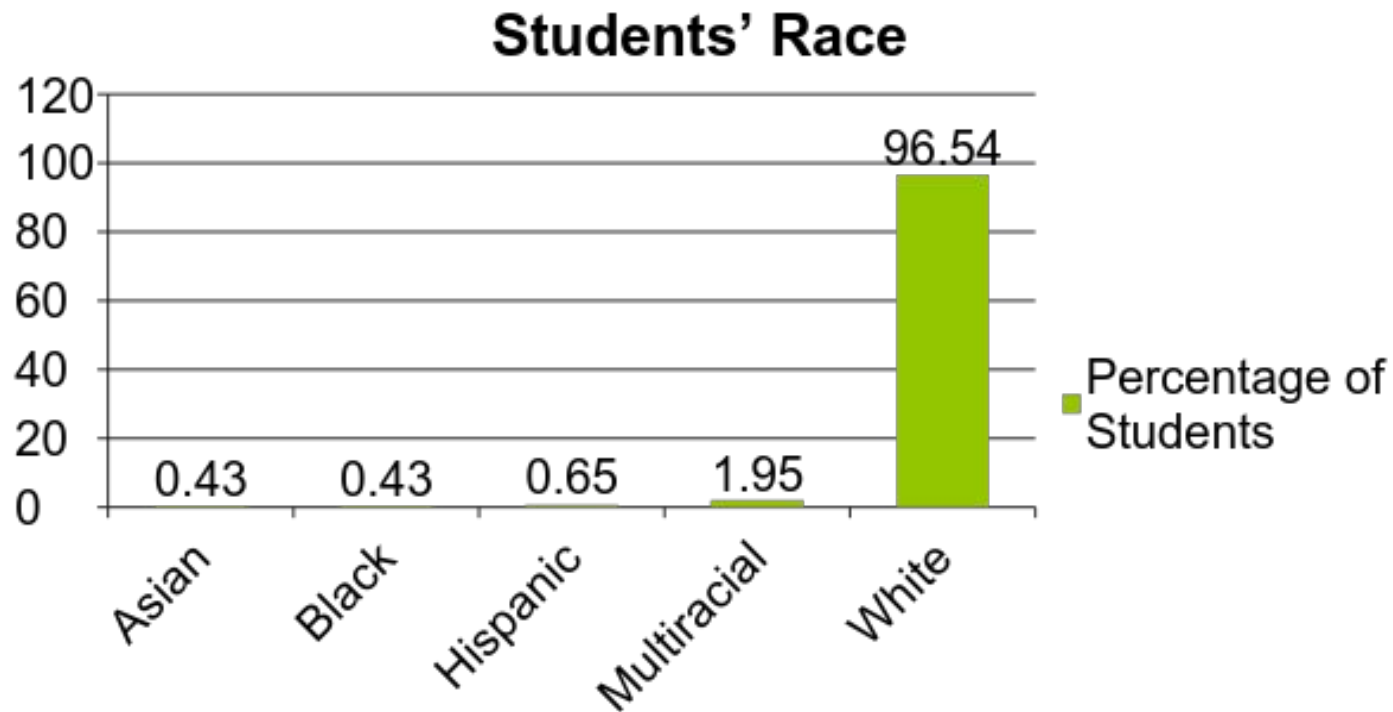
Focus of the Equity Audit

- Teacher Quality Equity
  - Education
  - Experience
  - Mobility

- Programmatic Equity
  - Special Education
  - Gifted Education

- Achievement Equity
  - Curriculum Resources
 - Student grouping
  - State Assessments

Teacher Quality

Skrla, et al. (2009) has chosen four indicators that impact student achievement. They are teacher education, teacher experience, teacher mobility, and teacher certification. Data was collected by a Survey of teachers. 70% of teachers responded. The teachers that may not have responded may have been support staff, specials teacher, or tutors.

Teacher Quality Equity - Education

Of approximately 30 teachers surveyed at Green Elementary School, 21 teachers completed the survey via Google Forms.
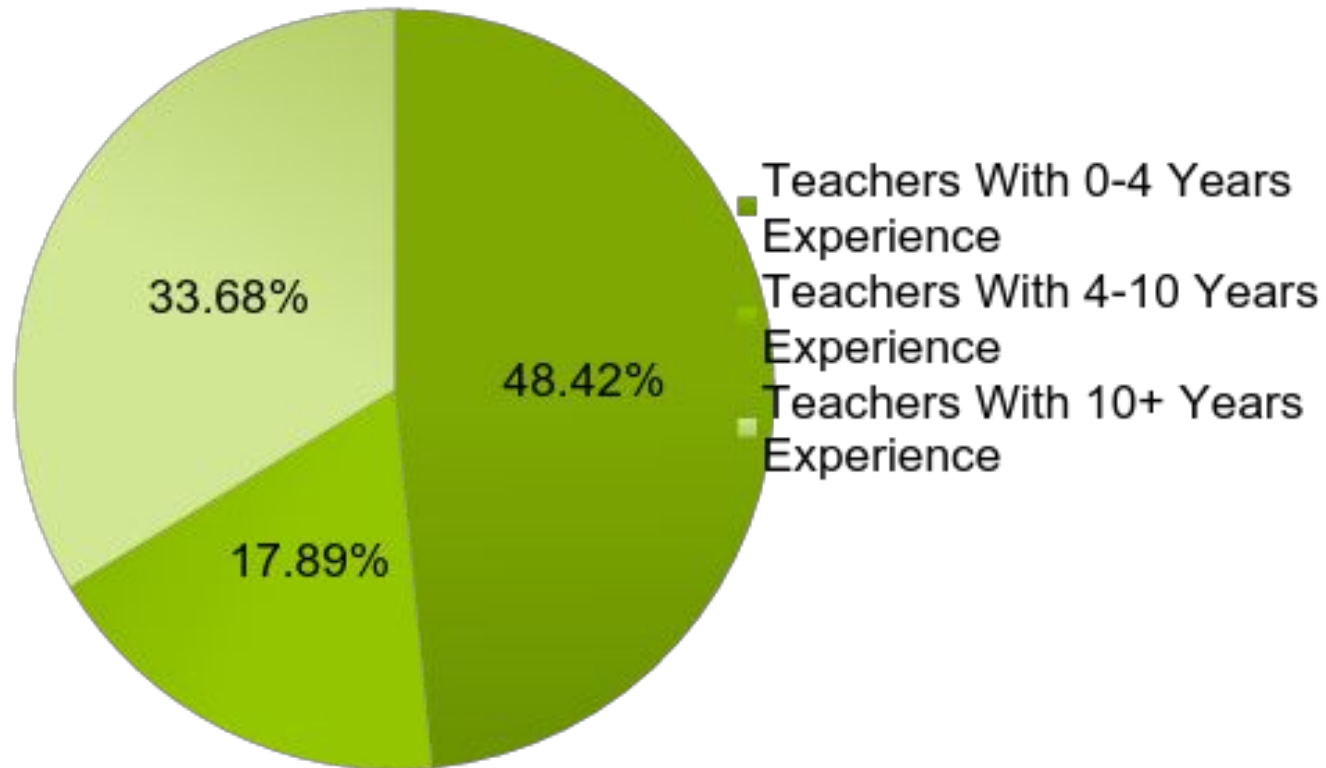
Number of Teachers

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Higher than a Master's Degree

10

8

3
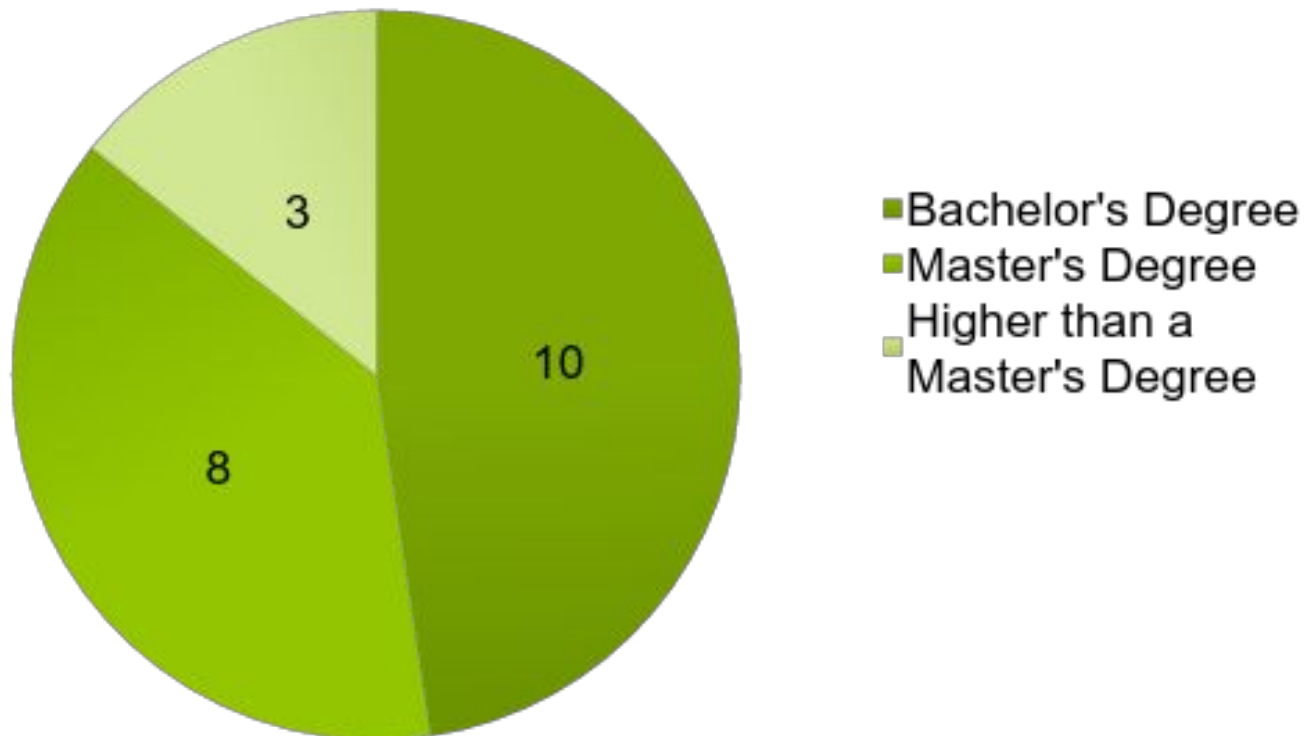
Teacher Quality Equity - Experience

○ The following data is representative of the Green Local School district.

Experience of Teachers

33.68%

48.42%

17.89%

Teachers With 0-4 Years Experience

Teachers With 4-10 Years Experience

Teachers With 10+ Years Experience

Teacher Quality Equity - Mobility

Of approximately 30 teachers surveyed at Green Elementary School, 21 teachers completed the survey via Google Forms.
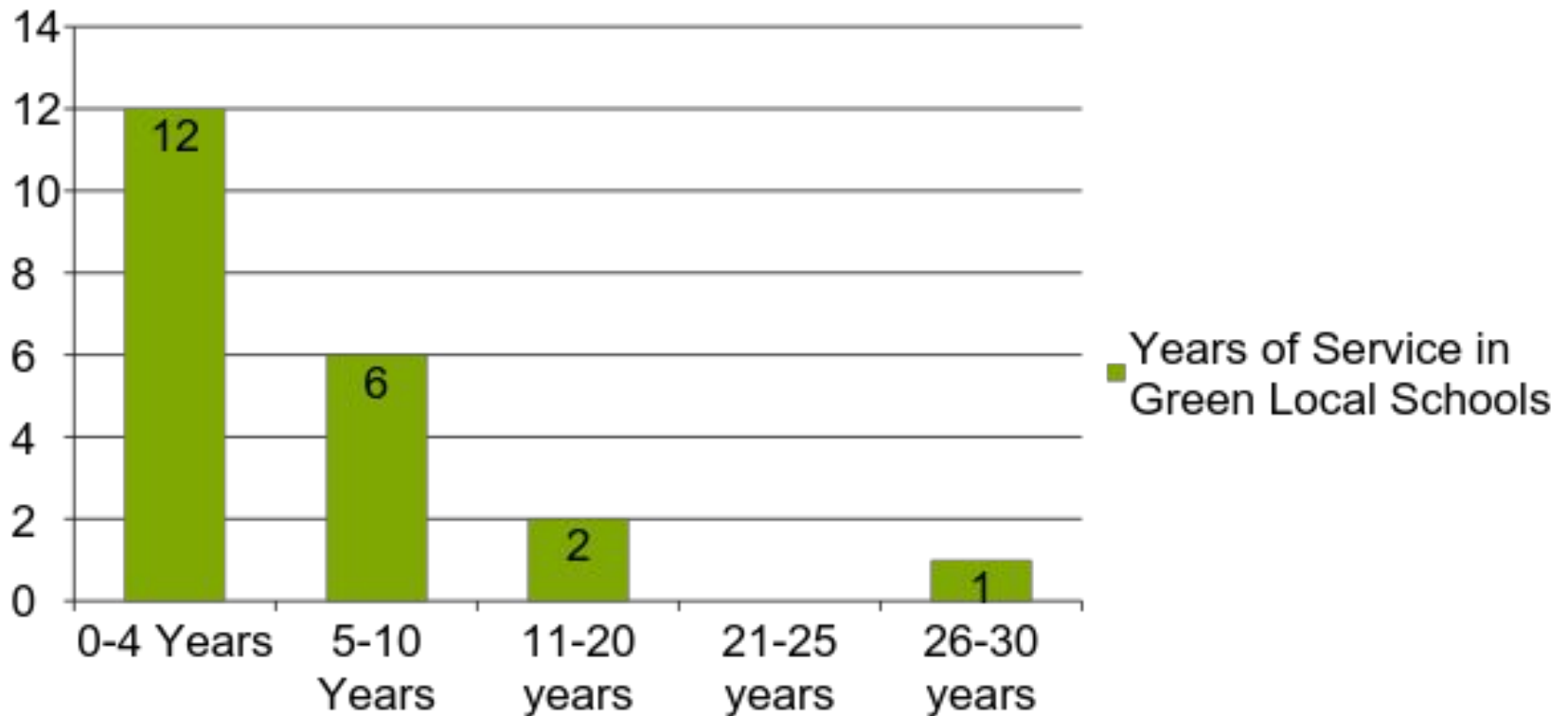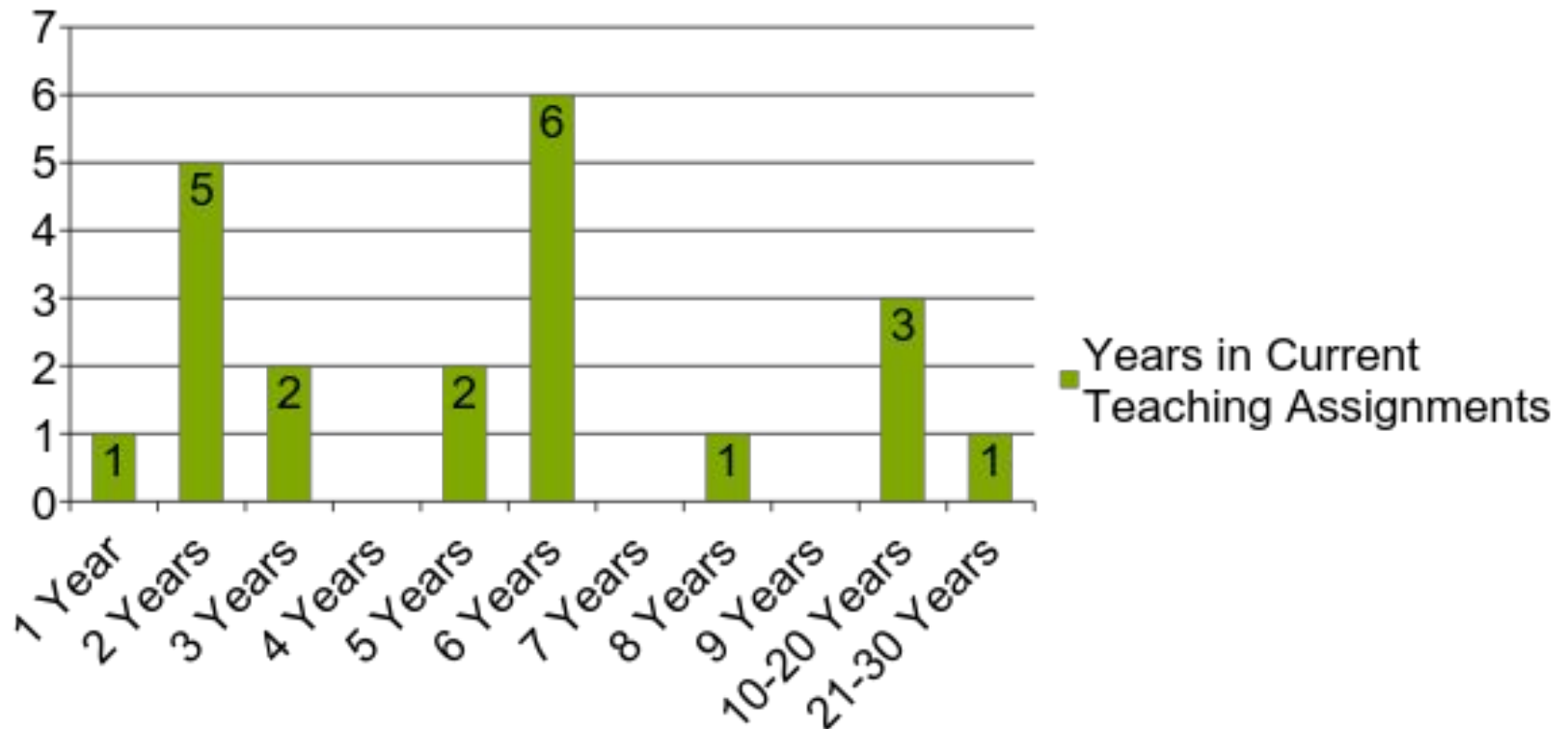
Teacher Quality Equity - Mobility

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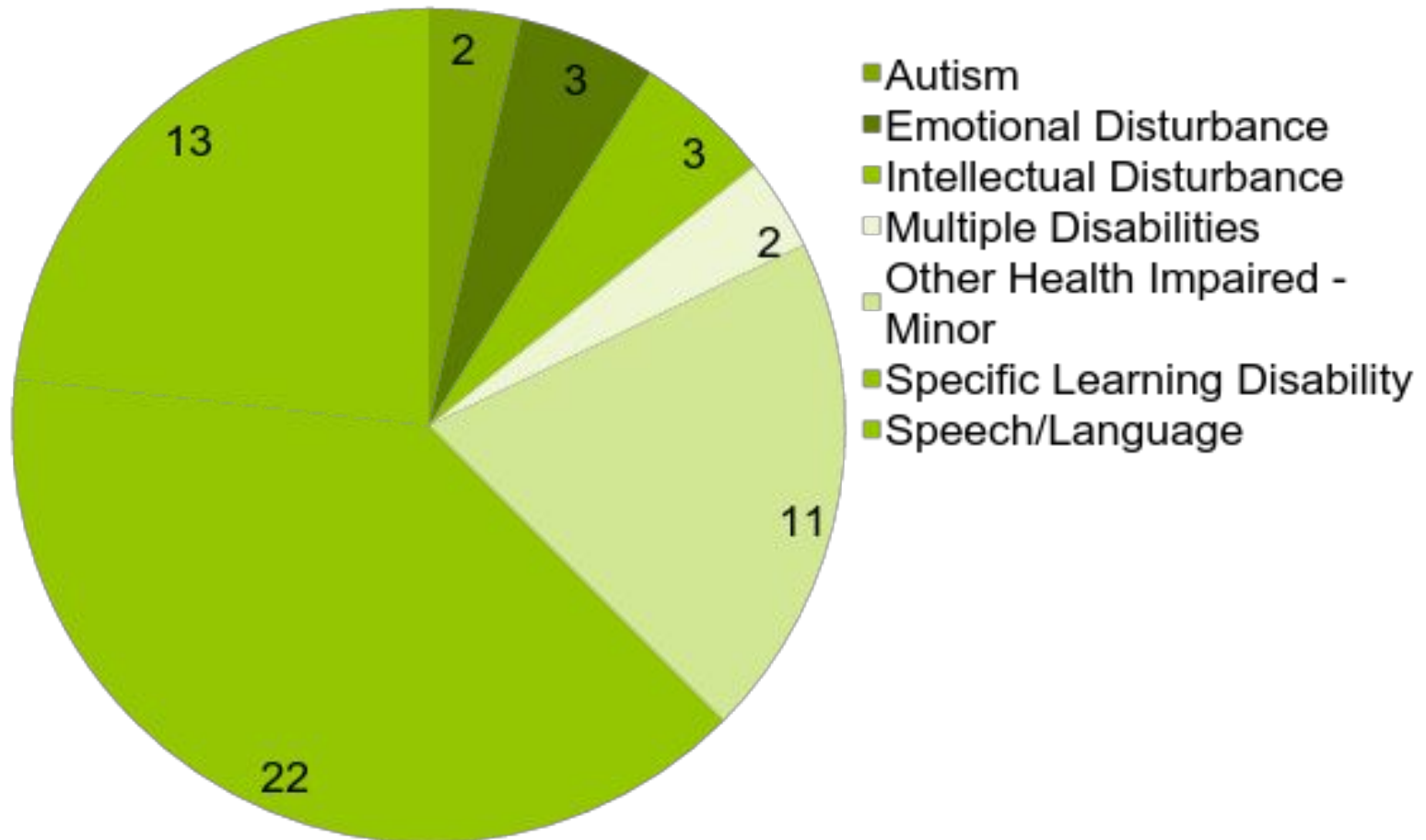
Programmatic Equity

Programmatic Equity is broken down into the following four categories by Skrla, et al. (2009): special education, gifted and talented education, bilingual education, and student discipline.

Special Education Data

Students on IEPs by Disability

- Autism
- Emotional Disturbance
- Intellectual Disturbance
- Multiple Disabilities
- Other Health Impaired - Minor
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech/Language

2
3
13
3
2
11
22

Special Education Data

- Throughout the 2014-2015 school year, 24 students were tested for a disability.
    - Typically, there are about 14-15 initial evaluations per year.
- Of the 24 students, 3 students did not qualify and one family refused special education services.
- All students receiving special education services are white, non-Hispanic.

Programmatic Equity – Special Education

- Four Intervention Specialists are assigned to Green Elementary School to provide services to these students using the inclusion model. Students are provided with 30 minutes of intervention daily, based on IEP goals.

  - One intervention specialist in grades K-2 for math and language arts inclusion and intervention.
  - Two intervention specialists in grades 3-5 for math and language arts inclusion and intervention.
  - One intervention specialist in a pull-out multi-categorical unit.
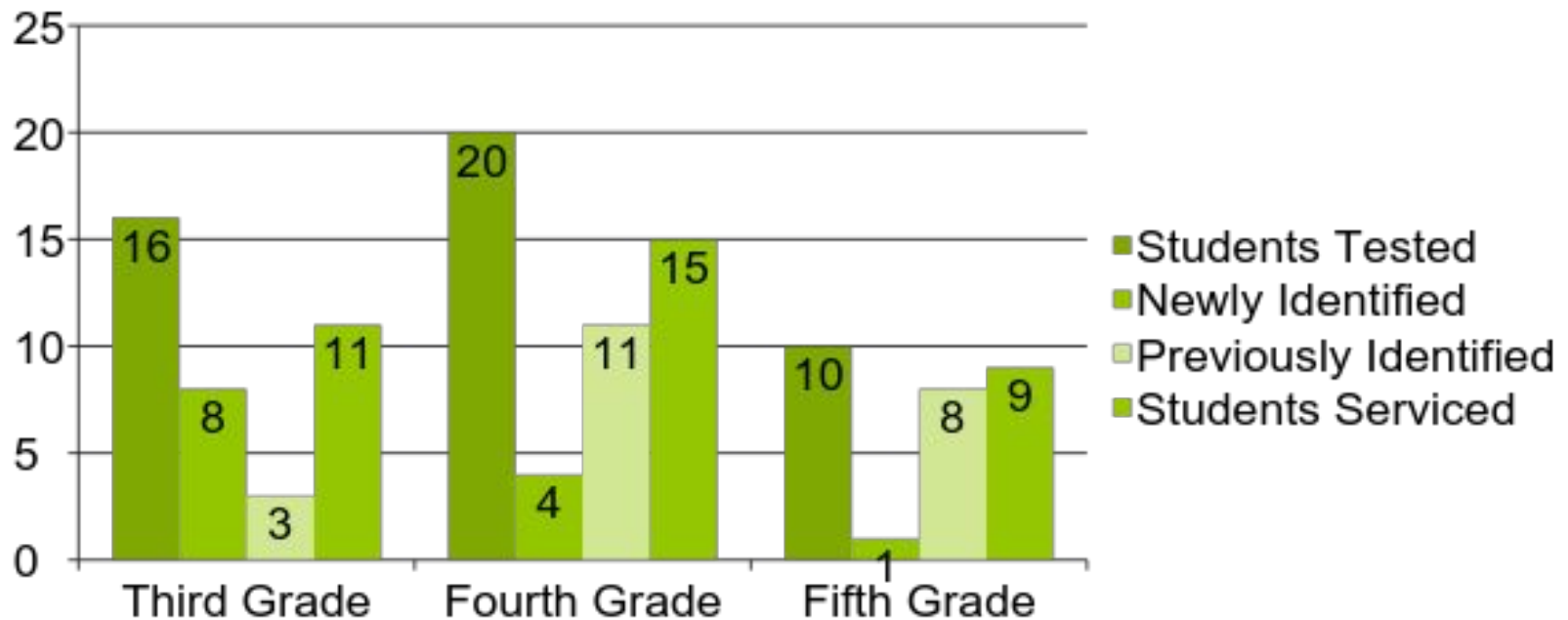
Programmatic Equity – Gifted Education

- One teacher provides services to students identified as gifted in grades 3-5 for 30 minutes each day.
- Professional development is provided for math and language arts teachers in grades 3-5 to enhance differentiated instruction for students identified as gifted.

Programmatic Equity – Gifted Education

- Students are tested for superior cognitive ability in second grade.
- Star Data is used in grades 2-5 to identify giftedness in math and reading.
- Referrals from parents and teachers are also accepted.

Programmatic Equity – Gifted Education

2014-2015 Gifted Program Data

Programmatic Equity – Gifted Education

○ Data related to the gender of students identified as gifted was not readily available. It appears to be relatively equal between males and females.

○ There is one Hispanic student and one Asian student identified as gifted.

Achievement Equity

Achievement Equity considers state achievement tests, dropout rates, high school graduation rates, and SAT/ACT/AP/IB results (Skrla, et al., 2009). State Achievement test results were the only available data for this Equity Audit. Interviews with each grade levels Building Leadership Team member were conducted.

Achievement Equity

2014-2015 State Testing Results		
Test	Percent Proficient	Percent to Meet Indicator
Grade 3 Math	86%	65%
Grade 4 ELA	74%	69%
Grade 4 Math	78%	64%
Grade 4 Social Studies	92%	70%
Grade 5 ELA	64%	66%
Grade 5 Math	45%	68%
Grade 5 Science	66%	62%

Achievement Equity

Based on state assessment data, the following list was completed by Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Welch (Director of Curriculum and Instruction) to identify the curricular needs of GES. This list was distributed to the staff on November 19, 2015. The curricular needs are:

- Technology Curriculum -Media

- Fundations (Wilson) K-3

- Writing Units K-5

- Math Curriculum K-5

- Reading Benchmarking Assessment System (F&P/DRA)

Achievement Equity (specific teacher concerns via teacher interviews)

- The grouping of students into homerooms and instructional groups has been problematic since the consolidation into Green Elementary.
- Each grade level has approached student grouping differently and there is inconsistency in the creation of student groups.
- WIN (Intervention) tutors and classroom aides are not equally distributed among the grade levels.

Achievement Equity
(specific teacher concerns
via teacher interviews)

○ Due to the inclusion model for students identified as gifted and students on IEPs, there needs to be a consistent process in grades K-5 to group students accordingly.

○ At the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, the fourth grade teachers created heterogeneous homerooms and followed the cluster grouping model to create individual student schedules for the fifth grade teachers.

○ It is the opinion of the fifth grade team that this model is much more effective than the model used previously.

○ One concern is that if students are to change classes, that the previous or current grade level teachers be consulted prior to the change being made.

Conclusions

○ Teacher Quality

 ○ Retaining teachers at Green Local Schools is essential to student success, as more than 65% of teachers have less than 10 years experience.

○ Teacher Mobility

 ○ Approximately 45% staff members at GES have been in their current teaching roll for less than 4 years.

Conclusions

- Student Grouping
  - A systemic and systematic process is needed to group students effectively to maximize instruction and achievement of all students in grades K-5.
  - Aligning student grouping with programs for students that are gifted and on IEPs will maximize instruction and achievement for these populations. This affects approximately 25% of our students.

Goal #1
Programmatic and Teacher Equity

Allow class size to dictate the number of teachers in grades K-2 (self-contained) with a class size of no more than 25.

Commit to four departmentalized teachers per grade level in grades 3-5 until there are three consecutive classes of less than 72.

Goal #1 Research

Whenever a teacher changes positions, there is a learning curve period that takes place while the teacher learns to be effective and comfortable operating in a new system of routines and procedures and a new culture (Skrla, McKenzie, & Scheurich, 2009).

Teachers in buildings with high mobility rates find it virtually impossible to plan, implement, and sustain change (Skrla, et al., 2009)

Departmentalization in fourth and fifth grades offers academic specialization in which self-contained classrooms are deficient. It takes full advantage of the best of teacher resources and facilitates instructional planning. (Chan, Terry, & Bessette, 2009).

Departmentalized teachers experience higher moral, lighter workload, and increased overall job satisfaction in comparison to self-contained teachers in the same school (Strohl, Schmertzing, Schmertzing, & Hsiao, 2014).

Goal #2
Programmatic and Achievement Equity

Teacher-Based Teams will use a systemic and systematic approach to student grouping near the end of the 2015-2016 school year to group students for the 2016-2017 school year.

Goal #2 Research

The four key program areas that research consistently has shown to be likely sites for inequity are special education, gifted and talented education, bilingual education, and student discipline (Skrla, et al., 2009).

The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM) ensures a balance of abilities throughout the grade level and reduces the learning range found in every classroom (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).

Research suggests that all students, including those categorized as average and below average, thrive when placed in heterogeneous classes according to the guidelines of the SCGM (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).

Diverse students in heterogeneous classes don't simply know more or less than each other-they approach problems in different ways (Robinson, 2013, p. 302).

Goal #3
Achievement Equity

WIN (Intervention) tutors and classroom aides will be assigned to each grade level in grades K-5 based on achievement data for the 2016-2017 school year.

Goal #3 Research

There is often a lack of meaningful analysis of what state achievement tests show about a particular school in term of equity or inequity. Changes in programs and policies need to me made to target achievement gaps (Skrla, et al., 2009).

Students transitioning from elementary to middle school have the need to feel secure, accepted, safe, connected and validated as the stakes for academic achievement increase (Chan, et al., 2009).

The residual effects of specialized instruction were shown to result in improvement in student achievement rates (Strohl, et al., 2014).

Reflection

1. To what extent did this equity audit project increase consciousness about equity in schools for team members? For you as an aspiring school leader?

We did not realize how much of an effect that equity had on our school district. There are many policies and decisions that are made without the consideration of equity for all students. There are many solutions identified throughout the project that can be implemented as we begin our third year at GES. We are BETTER TOGETHER!

As a school leader, there is a need for all teachers to have a sense of equity in their classrooms. The equity mentality can trickle down from a building-wide perspective to each and every classroom and teacher.

Four central beliefs that teachers need to be aware of and act upon are that all children are capable of academic success, regardless of race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, learning differences, culture, language and religion, adults are responsible for student learning, and traditional school practices may work for some students but are not working for all children (Skrla, et al., 2009).

2. What did you learn about yourself as an educational leader?

I learned that there are activities that I have done in my own classroom that are not equitable for all students. I also have held students to different standards because of their social class, gender, and academic ability. There are ways for me to collect data in my own classroom and resources that will help me to shift my teaching to become more equitable. Building on this experience will prepare me to collect data at the building or district level to implement change on a much larger scale.

With cluster grouping, all the classes in the grade level have students with a range of learning abilities and levels. Learning opportunities are open to all students in the class, and teachers use their students' readiness to determine levels and pace of curriculum (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).

3. What did you learn about yourself as a leader for social justice and equity in relation to those you serve?

I learned that teacher mobility and student grouping can provide inequity. This inequity is supported by achievement data over the past two years in the grade level and content area that I teach. Last school year, I was responsible for teaching 74 students in fifth grade math and 25 students in language arts. This year, I am responsible for teaching 78 students in fifth grade math. I am a living example of the effects mobility can have on a teacher, as well as student achievement. Now that I am departmentalized, there is an increase in moral among the fifth grade team and an increase in job satisfaction. I have become an advocate for my students and fellow teachers to limit teacher mobility and allow departmentalization of four teachers per grade level, regardless of student enrollment in the grade level.

Departmentalized teachers plan and prepare for fewer subjects, resulting in fewer obstacles and barriers and increasing job satisfaction (Strohl, et al., 2014).

4. What did you learn about addressing issues of educational equity within your school? What does it mean to speak truth to people about the reality of their lives? To what extent can this equity audit team equip school community members to resist oppressive practices/policies?

Teachers were very receptive to concerns of teacher mobility and student grouping. These issues of equity are most prevalent in our building and have an effect on almost all teachers and students. Often times decisions and policies are put in place by administrators based on cost and budget restrictions instead of their effect on teachers, students, and achievement. These oppressive behaviors need to be addressed by not only teachers, but also students, parents, and community members.

Every time a teacher who has had specific district training leaves the district or moves to a different teaching assignment, it is necessary to train the new teacher, and valuable knowledge walks out the door with the departing teacher (Skrla, et al., 2009).

5. To what extent does this equity action plan move school community members into action?

I believe that issues raised that are controlled at the building level will be addressed within 3-6 months. Decisions to improve equity that are made at the district level will be more difficult to attain. I hope that issues of student grouping, departmentalization and scheduling will be seriously considered and acted upon in the coming months.

Every year, teachers and administrators go through the appropriate steps to place students for the upcoming school year. Teachers should re-evaluate each student's achievement every year to ensure appropriate student placement and a balanced classroom makeup at all grade levels (Winebrenner and Brulles, 2008).

References

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Skrla, L, McKenzie, K., & Scheurich, J. (2009). *Using   equity audits to create equitable and excellent   schools.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Strohl, A., Schmertzing, L., Schmertzing, R. & Hsiao, E. (2014). Comparison of self-contained and departmentalized elementary perceptions of classroom structure and job satisfaction. *Journal of Studies in Education, 4(1),* 109-127

Winebrenner, S. & Brulles, D. (2008). *The cluster grouping handbook: How to challenge gifted students and improve achievement for all.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.