



# **Empowering Black Girls through Dismantling Historical Inequities in Schools**



**2022 Council of Great City Schools Fall Conference**



**COLUMBUS  
CITY SCHOOLS**

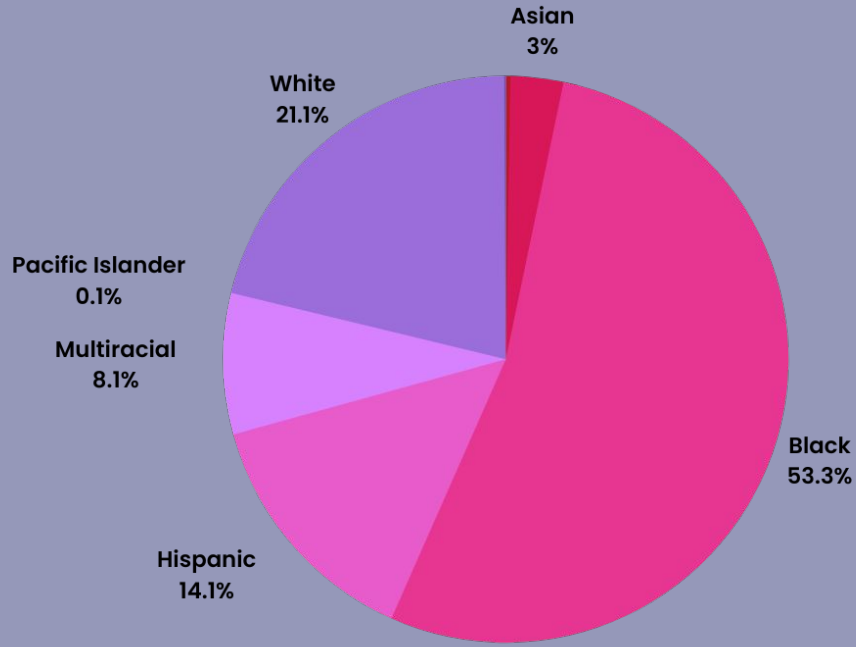
# Presentation Overview

- **Who We Serve**
- **Key Impacts**
- **Priorities**
- **Initiative**
- **Learn More**



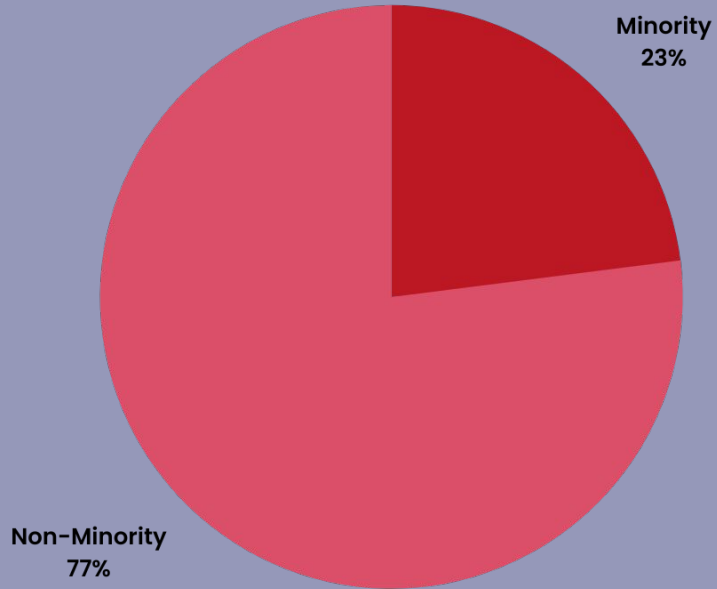
# Who We Serve: Student Demographics

The district's diverse population of more than 47,000 students is a representation of the vibrant Columbus community.

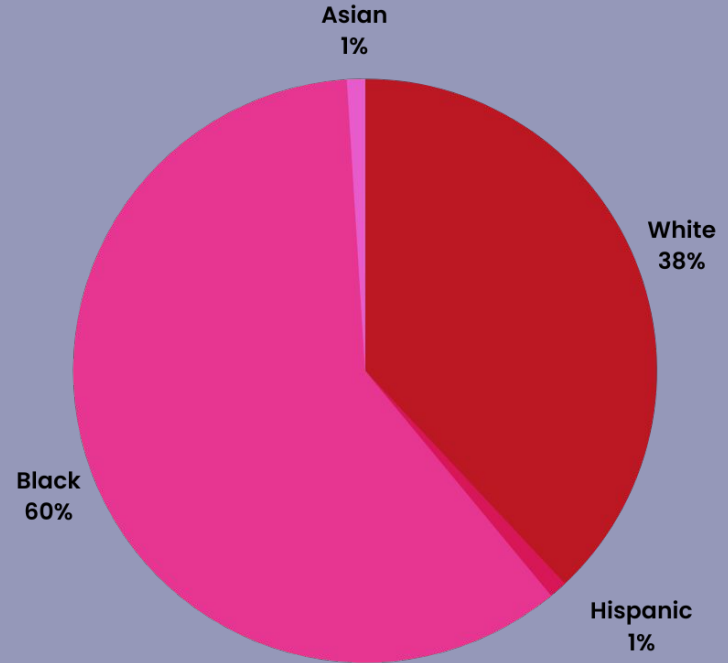


# Who We Serve: Staff Demographics

## Our Teachers



## Our Administrators



# Our Goal

“African American girls need a framework that sheds light and confronts race and gender oppression in our schools.”  
- (Evans-Winter & Esposito, 2010)

Our goal is to flip the stereotypes and perceptions of Black girls, particularly in education. African-American girls are traditionally viewed as **"loud," "sassy," "disruptive," "defiant,"** or **"bold."**

In Columbus City Schools African-American, girls will get to "flip the script" on how the world sees them, and show up just as they are. Black girls' strengths will be amplified in our work by shining a light on their bold and brilliant assets: **resilient, courageous, hopeful changemakers.** They will be able to make genuine connections with adults and Black women as role models.



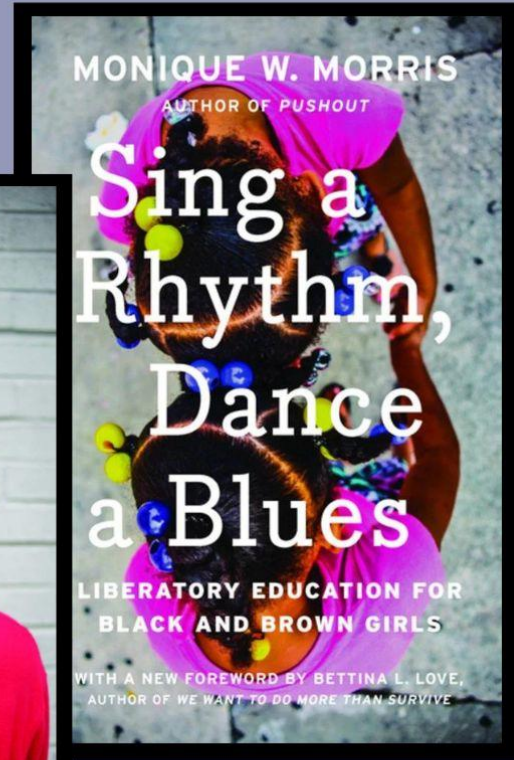
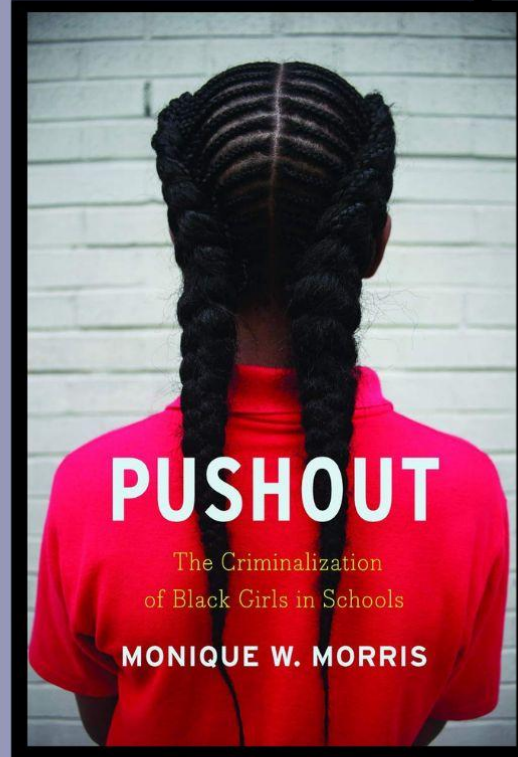
# Professional Development for Staff

- All Staff **MUST** be on the Same Page Regarding How to Solve Conflict
- Influence on Student Expectations
- Book Study
- Dr. Morris PD



# Culture & Climate

- Tiered Discipline System
- Restorative Practice
- Relationship Building
- Outside-the-Box Culture Building



# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN SCHOOLS

A Developmental Approach to  
Exploring Race and Racism

TRACEY A. BENSON  
SARAH E. FIARMAN

Foreword by  
GLENN E. SINGLETON

- Equity Focus of District
- Regional Book Study with Principals
- Self Reflection: Addressing Own Bias (Black Boys)
- Embracing Discomfort: Non-Negotiable



# Three (3) Types of Disciplinarians - Where Do You Fit?

- **Overt Racial Justifiers:** We identified principals as overt racial justifiers when they held deficit perspectives about the Black community and Black students. These principals often blamed Black parents explicitly for student misconduct while using race-neutral language to explain how the existence of the racial discipline gap was a side effect of fairly implementing codes of conduct.
- **Rigid Rule Enforcers:** We identified principals who made sense of student discipline as a fact-based process guided by policy and applied disciplinary consequences without modifying decisions based on particular circumstances as rigid rule enforcers.
- **Flexible & Cognizant Disciplinarians:** Principals who believed discipline required an individualized and case-by-case approach were identified as flexible and cognizant disciplinarians. These principals considered the particular circumstance, policy, and antecedents; however, they also considered the potential harm and/or benefits inherent in their disciplinary decision-making.

# Data Points: Principal Testimonials



The program allowed some of our black girls who usually don't connect or speak to each other to create and build positive relationships. These relationships exuded throughout the building, and they began to take on leadership roles within the building - Yolanda Cooper, Woodcrest ES

The girls made sure they were holding themselves accountable for their actions. The girls were determined to stay a part of the group and better themselves as students. At the end of the year, **60%** of the girls scored proficient or higher on the OST - Shatoya Wilburn, Scottwood ES

The dance team allowed the girls to form a sisterhood and to be supportive of each other through their school and home challenges. The dance team captains were able to refute narratives that had been written about their behaviors by being able to engage in leadership. The girls were each other's accountability, and in return, we saw an increase in their attendance, a decrease in their negative behaviors, positive shift in their grades - Roderick Watson, Yorktown MS

# Say My Name Project

The Say My Name Project will allow Black girls to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline by exploring and analyzing issues in the Black girl community and how they can address these vital needs.

Our young women will teach the world to Say My Name by showing the power and promise of Black girls solving their community problems. Girls at each Region 2 school will move through stages of awareness, efficacy, empowerment, and leadership.

They will learn to find their voice, power, and purpose through a book study and discussion, writing journals and projects, speaking, and active involvement in social justice projects they foster. This will lead to a culminating Say My Name Summit where 400 young women of color across Columbus City Schools will participate in activities, engage with speakers, and be immersed in projects the Say My Name Project young women will design and lead.

# Say My Name Project



**LAYLA CASTLE**  
Senior, Independence HS

# Experience vs Consequence

Do you focus on the behavior or the reason behind the behavior ?

What systematic supports do you have to address the behaviors?

What infractions result in your suspensions?

How do your students re-enter after suspension?

Do You offer replacement behaviors?  
How do you model the behavior you want?

# Questions?

Thank you!