



CollaboRATE Self-Identification. WHITE PAPER OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Methods and Data Source

Many employers, including Denver Public Schools (DPS), have long captured data on their employees' gender and ethnicity to understand their workforce, evaluate and improve recruitment and retention, and meet legal requirements. In the 2019-20 school year, DPS introduced additional self-identification questions to more accurately capture the diversity of our community and to continue to create a culture of belonging. In



the CollaboRATE survey – DPS' annual employee engagement survey - we asked DPS team members to voluntarily and confidentially self-identify their sexuality, gender identity, disability, and race/ethnicity. Of the team members who completed the engagement survey, 40% also completed the self-identification portion.

"Having the opportunity to self-identify is like having the right to vote. It gives communities a platform to share their collective experiences, barriers, and needs; enabling them to more effectively advocate for themselves. The LGBTQ+ community is often left out of data collection efforts (both intentionally and unintentionally), essentially rendering us invisible and making it difficult for us to campaign for support and resources. By including self-identification in CollaboRATE, we can finally be seen by our colleagues, managers, and district leadership in a way that helps them better understand our experiences and more intentionally support us both personally and professionally."

-Danica Shipley, DPS Business Intelligence Analyst

Note that while additional and more detailed self-identification questions were asked, DPS committed to only sharing aggregate responses if a sufficient n-size was reported. For the sake of confidentiality, groups with these insufficient n-sizes were not included in this report. Although respondents identified, we did not include groups such as transgender, non-binary, third-gender, questioning, and short term disability because of our commitment to protect employee confidentiality.



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Trust

Despite not having dedicated questions measuring trust, trust appeared to be a major theme in our CollaboRATE self-identification analysis. A lack of trust was found in questions asking respondents to identify their gender, sexuality, and disability- aspects of identities that had not been requested in DPS before – the comments left by some respondents reflected a lack of trust of how this information would be used.

Within the items used to identify gender, sexuality, and disability, respondents had the option to “write in” an identity- to provide an opportunity to include identities that were not listed. Some respondents used this “write in” option to communicate their concerns with the self-identification portion of the survey. These included statements such as:

- *“I’m deeply confused and concerned about the purpose and appropriate nature of this question on a survey like this.”*
- *“It is totally inappropriate to ask this in a work environment. This has nothing to do with my job performance.”*
- *“I don’t think this is appropriate and don’t know how this would have impact on any data.”*

An apparent lack of trust could also be found in both the number of respondents who chose the “prefer not to answer” option (3%-10% depending on the question). These respondents choosing “prefer not to answer” also reported significantly lower levels of engagement compared to other employees that answered the self-identification survey. This elevated number of “prefer not to answer” responses suggests a lack of trust in being able to openly identify, which is reflected in the concerns stated in the quotes above.

Engagement

Engagement was measured both at the local level (an employee’s school or department) and in DPS as a whole. The engagement index was an aggregate indicator of how employees responded on five survey items:

1. I enjoy my work at my school or department or DPS.
2. I feel valued as an employee of my school or department or DPS.
3. I would recommend my school/department or DPS to others as a good place to work.
4. My job has a positive impact on my school or department or DPS.
5. I am proud to tell people I work for my school or department or DPS.

In addition to these aggregate DPS and school/department engagement measures, CollaboRATE also measured how team members perceived how their school or department and DPS lived the Shared Core Values, whether they felt empowered, the functionality of their school/department team, and their personal belief in the direction of the district.

For each aspect of identity below, we have highlighted the data points that have the largest discrepancies when comparing a team member’s engagement with their school or department and DPS.



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Engagement - Race & Ethnicity

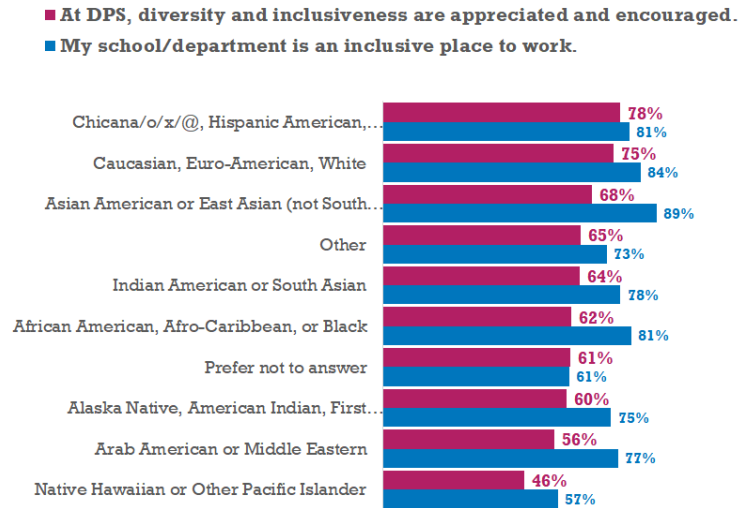
In general, employees identifying in racial/ethnic groups with little representation in DPS reported lower school/department engagement and lower overall engagement in DPS. The groups with the lowest engagement were:

- Arab American or Middle Eastern
- Alaska Native, American Indian, First Nations, Indigenous, Native, Native American
- Employees who preferred not to identify their race or ethnicity

How do you identify your race and ethnicity?	Engagement (DPS)*	Engagement (School / Department)*
All Employees	70%	85%
African American, Afro-Caribbean, or Black	77%	88%
Arab American or Middle Eastern	68%	88%
Asian American or East Asian (not South Asian)	73%	90%
Caucasian, Euro-American, White	70%	88%
Chicana/o/@/x, Hispanic American, Latina/o/@/x	81%	87%
Indian American or South Asian	77%	86%
Alaska Native, American Indian, First Nations, Indigenous, Native, Native American	75%	84%
Other	72%	84%
Prefer not to answer	61%	75%

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Overall, respondents reported a more positive perception of their individual school or department than of DPS as a whole. Across race/ethnicity, all employees reported being more engaged in their school or department than in DPS as a whole. In addition, schools and departments were perceived to be more inclusive than DPS as a whole. For example, only 62% of African American, Afro-Caribbean, or Black employees reported that that diversity and inclusiveness were appreciated and encouraged at DPS, while 81% believed that their school or department was an inclusive place to work.



Engagement-(Dis)ability

Employees identifying with a long-term disability were less likely to report high levels of engagement and feeling that their school or department was an inclusive place to work. Only 76% of employees identifying as having a long-term disability reported that their school or department is an inclusive place to work compared to 83% of employees who did not identify long-term disability.

Engagement-LGBTQ+

Across most CollaboRATE measures, LGBTQ+ team members reported lower engagement. While LGBTQ+ team members were slightly more positive on their individual team functionality (i.e., team members are willing to help each other and feel responsible for each other's success), levels of positive engagement were lower compared to employees identifying as heterosexual/cisgender. Most notably, only 54% of LGBTQ+ employees reported that they believe that DPS lived our Shared Core Values.

Engagement		Heterosexual/ Cisgender	LGBTQ+
Engagement	with school / department	89%	84%
	with DPS	74%	68%
Personal Empowerment and Benefit	with school / department	74%	65%
	with DPS	74%	70%
Lives Shared Core Values	with school / department	85%	81%
	with DPS	61%	54%
Team Functionality		82%	79%
Personal Belief in Direction of District		68%	61%



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Why Does this Data Matter?

We know from DPS data and outside research that employees are more likely to stay in the district or at their specific school or department if they feel valued and engaged. Furthermore, as we try to both recruit and retain a more diverse workforce, we know that these statistics matter. The more our diverse team members feel engaged and trust DPS, the more they will tell their networks and recruit naturally and the higher retention will be.

"If I had felt valued (even a tiny bit), I would have stayed for the students"

- Response from DPS exit survey

Intent to Stay in DPS- What We Heard

Employees identifying as LGBTQ+ were twice as likely to report that they planned to leave DPS within a year compared to employees identifying as heterosexual/cisgender. 10% of LGBTQ+ employees reported only seeing themselves working in DPS for less than a year compared to 5% of heterosexual/cisgender employees.

On average, a greater proportion of employees identifying as a person of color (34% compared to 29% of white employees) reported seeing themselves working in DPS for ten or more years. However, employees identifying as African American, Afro-Caribbean, or Black along with employees identifying as Asian American or East Asian did not follow this trend. 23% of employees identifying as African American, Afro-Caribbean, or Black reported that they will likely leave DPS within two years, while 27% of employees identifying as Asian American or East Asian reported that they would likely leave within two years.

Conclusion

The addition of self-identification questions around race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, and disability has provided valuable insight into the experiences of our team members in DPS. Providing the opportunity to paint a more nuanced lens of team DPS is integral in understanding how to create a culture of belonging. Although this was the first year, several insights have been gleaned around trust, engagement, perception of inclusivity, and intent to stay.