Equity and Civil Rights in Education

Deputy Commissioner Irina Vaynerman (she, her, hers) and Dr. Lanise Block (she, her, hers)

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Minnesota's Civil Rights Enforcement Agency

Mission:

To make Minnesota discrimination free

Vision:

To create a world where everyone can thrive, and live a life full of dignity and joy

Goals:

- Identify and eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Create a more equitable state
- Create a more inclusive state

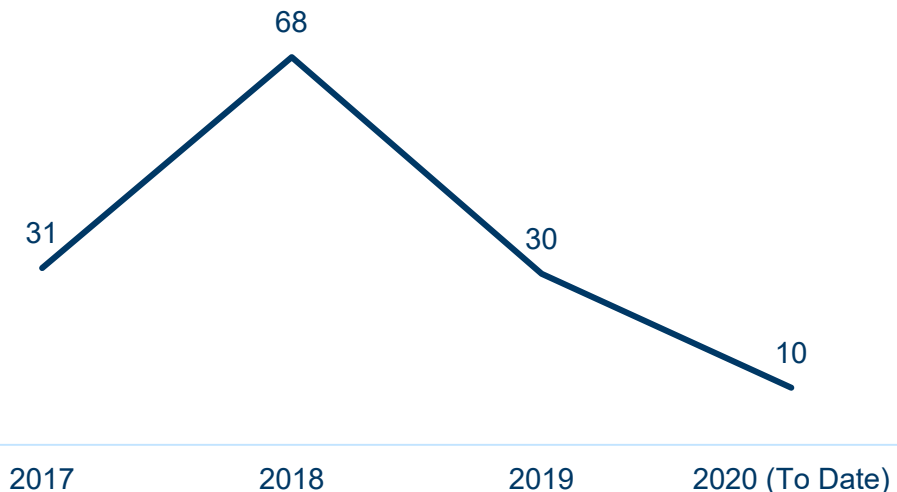| Topic |
| --- |
| **Welcome and Opening** |
| **Distance Learning**
• School climate
• Discipline |
| **MDHR Discipline Disparity Work**
• Early learnings |
| **Q&A** |
| **Close Out** |

As you look to the next school year, what are the challenges and opportunities of this new environment at the front your mind?

MDHR's Civil Rights Work in Education

Minnesota Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of any protected class status (race, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, public assistance, etc.)

Education Cases Investigated (2017-2020)

Settlement agreements with 42 school districts and charters seeking to address discipline disparities on the basis of race and disability.

- Analyzing data to identify most promising practices in this cohort

2020 Events Are Exacerbating Racial Inequities

Significant challenges further highlight the disparities that are a result of systemic racism
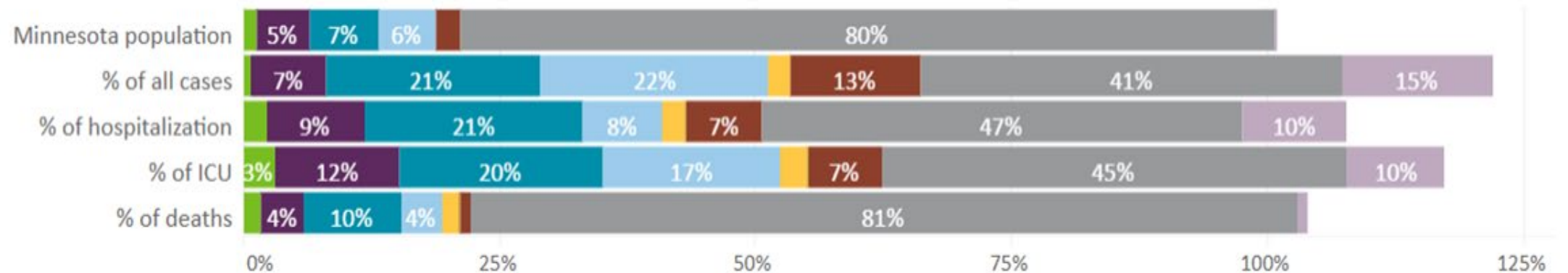
- COVID-19 Pandemic
- George Floyd

SUMMARY OF CASES, HOSPITALIZATION, ICU, AND DEATHS
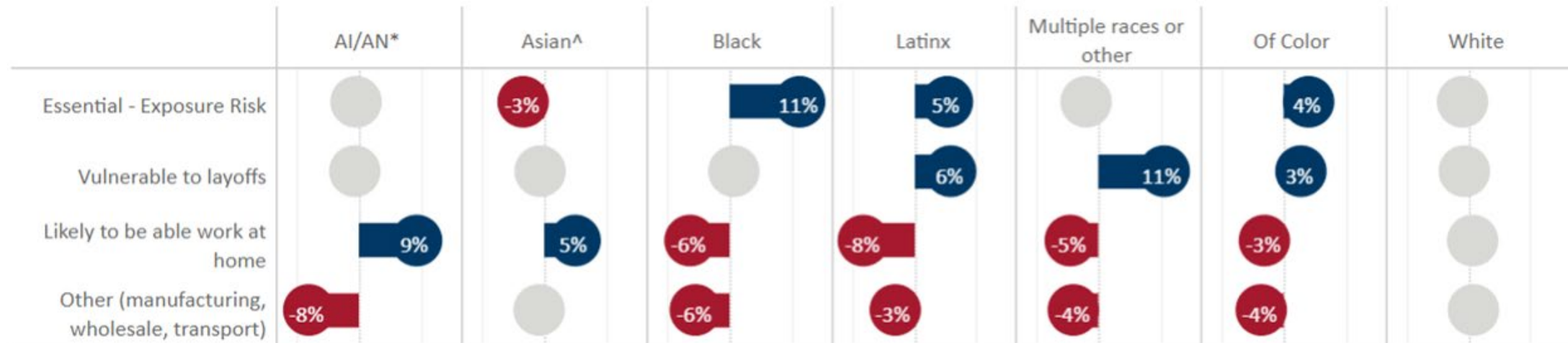BY RACE/ETHNICITY WITH STATE OF MN COMPARISON
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE | ASIAN | BLACK | LATINX | MULTI | OTHER | WHITE | UNKNOWN

Source: https://mn.gov/covid19/data/data-by-race-ethnicity/index.jsp

Percent of Group Working in Industry Type Compared to Total Population
Lower % <<< >>> Higher %
than population overall

	AI/AN*	Asian^	Black	Latinx	Multiple races or other	Of Color	White
Essential - Exposure Risk		-3%	11%	5%		4%	
Vulnerable to layoffs				6%	11%	3%	
Likely to be able work at home	9%	5%	-6%	-8%	-5%	-3%	
Other (manufacturing, wholesale, transport)	-8%		-6%	-3%	-4%	-4%	

Source: https://mn.gov/covid19/data/data-by-race-ethnicity/index.jsp

Distance Learning: School Climate

Given these challenges, how do we build a positive school climate in any model (distance, hybrid, in-person)?

Be Supportive

- Intentionally create safe spaces for students

- Digital Tools & Applications: Blogs, Breakout Rooms
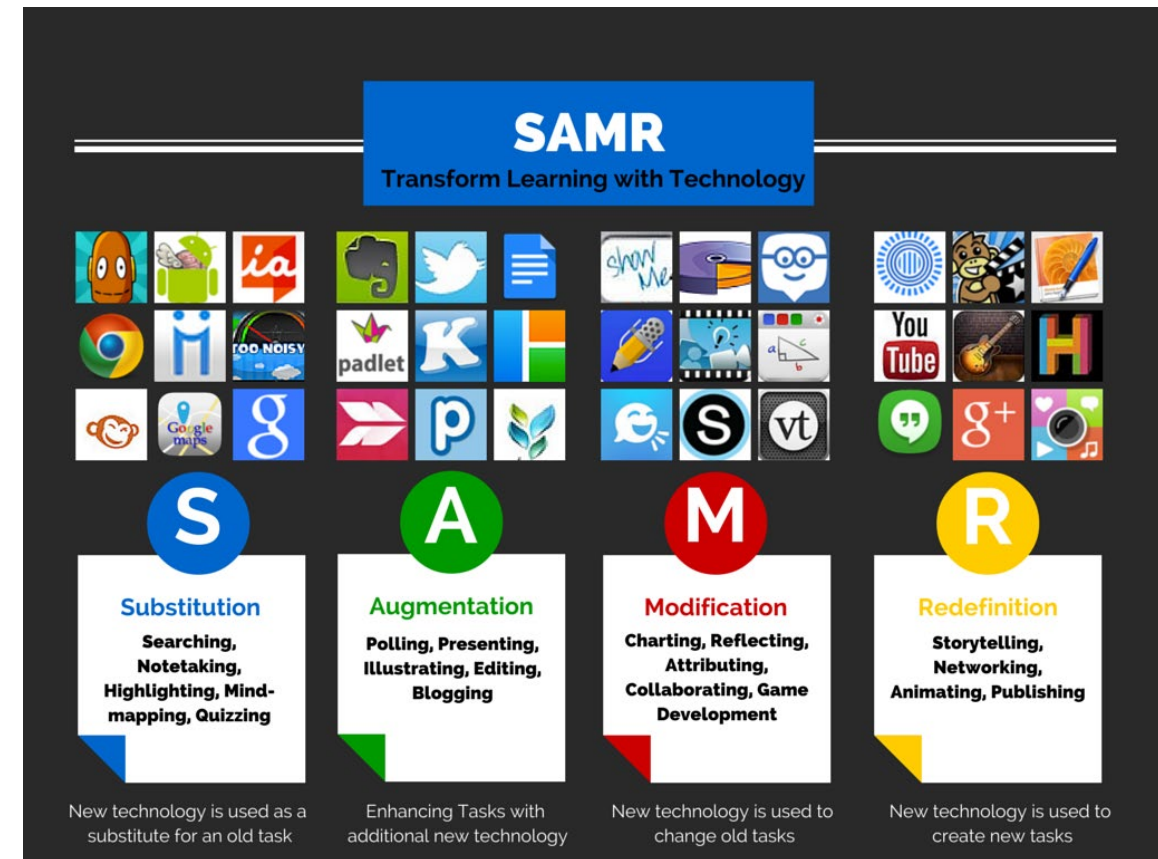
Develop Clear Communication Protocols

- Digital Home Base – all up to date information in one place, who can students/families contact for help

- Standardize some classroom procedures and tools

- Protect student privacy (*i.e.*, everyone uses a Zoom background)

Provide Engagement Opportunities for Parents/Guardians

- How to Guides in parent-friendly language

- Office Hours/Check-in process for parent support (optional)

Use Culturally Responsive and Personalized Teaching Strategies

Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategy	Digital Resource/Consideration
Positive Perspectives on Parents and Families	• Engagement Tools: FlipGrid, Video Ask • Attention to Workload & Work Type
Communication of High Expectations	• Screencast-to-matic
Learning Within the Context of Culture & Culturally Mediated Instruction	• Adobe Spark • Get Free Hip Hop Civics • Netflix: Black Voices
Student-Centered Instruction & Teacher As Facilitator	• Renzulli Personalized Learning Projects
Reshaping the Curriculum	• MN Humanities Center Absent Narratives • Zooniverse

Promising Practices

Mental Health /Support Professionals	*Increased Investment and Intentionality*
Creating Fun to connect with young people	*Virtual: scavenger hunts, show and tell, talent show/open mic, etc.*
Repurpose Team Members	*Example: Paraprofessionals assigned a cohort of students to check-in with*
Coordinated, Strategic Outreach Plan for families	*Point person who manages all the contacts/tracks it – who is making contact, what is the feedback, what is our response?*
Engaging Parents/Guardians as Co-Teachers/Community Experts	*Allow them to support/instruct from their strengths and knowledge base or use as guest speakers*

Discipline & School Climate

What does discipline look like in this new environment?

Give students a lot of grace

- Attention to equity
- Home space

Distance Format

- Make expectations clear in this environment
- Check-in protocol at the start and end of each class

In-Person Format

- Understanding that for students/staff this is totally new, and may be uncertain and uncomfortable
- Masks
- Social distancing
- Re-adjusting to in-school settings – students may re-enter with new trauma

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MDHR's Discipline Disparity Work

- Settlement agreements with 42 school districts and charters seeking to address discipline disparities on the basis of race and disability.

- Partnership with Dr. Block (Education Equity Consultant), MDE, and American Institutes for Research (AIR)

AIR is one of the world's largest behavioral and social science research and evaluation organizations. Our overriding goal is to use the best science available to bring the most effective ideas and approaches to enhancing everyday life. For us, making the world a better place is not wishful thinking. It is the goal that drives us.
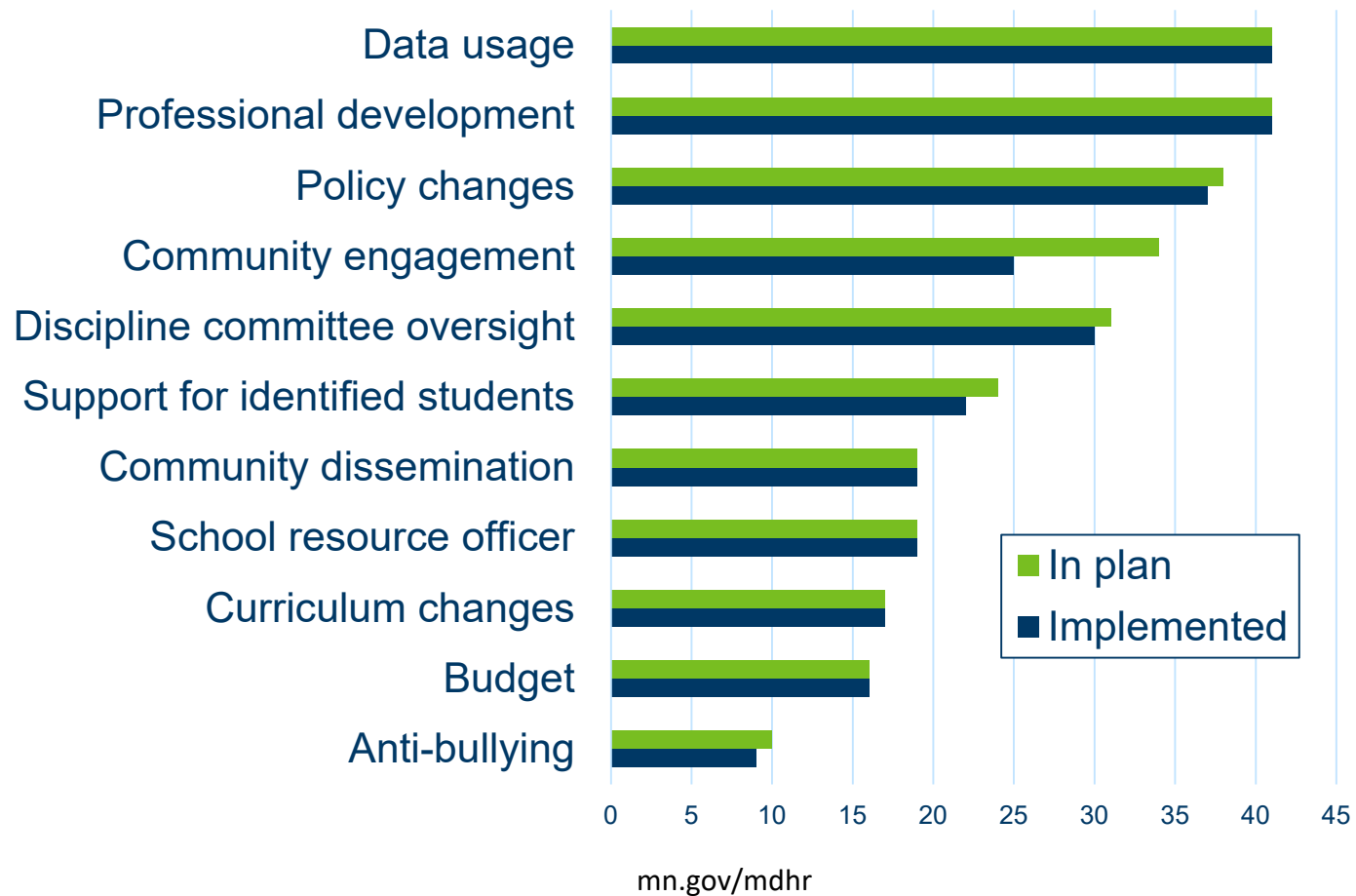
Focus areas of data analysis with AIR:

1 Plan components associated with decreased discipline disparities between students of color/Indigenous students and their peers, and between students with disabilities and students without disabilities

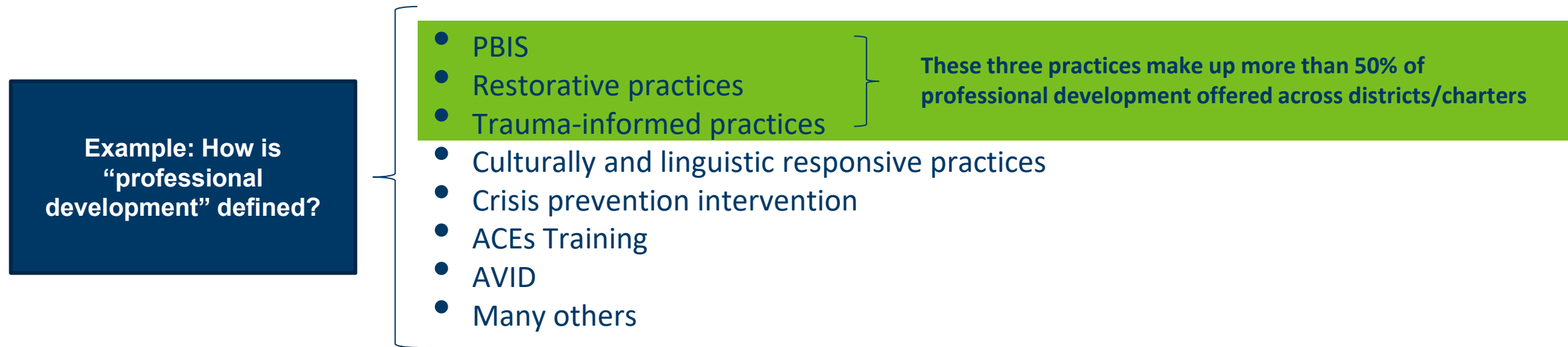**2** Districts/charters in the cohort vs. those outside the cohort

Districts/Charters Efforts to Reduce Disparities

As of January 2020, the most common components of district/charter plans included:

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Districts/Charters Efforts to Reduce Disparities

What does each of these categories mean for each district/charter?

Example: How is "professional development" defined?

- PBIS
- Restorative practices
- Trauma-informed practices

These three practices make up more than 50% of professional development offered across districts/charters

- Culturally and linguistic responsive practices
- Crisis prevention intervention
- ACEs Training
- AVID
- Many others

- Analysis Question: Which of these components are correlated with decreased discipline disparities?
  - Looking into causation where possible

Questions?

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What is one equity issue that you will turn attention to as you focus on the challenges and opportunities for the coming academic year?

Thank you

Irina Vaynerman and Lanise Block