

**Using Street Data to Inform Sustainable Strategies in  
Integration Work: New York City's District 3**

## Context

Integration work requires the collection and analysis of multiple types of data to inform strategies and to understand the impact of the work in the community. In order to inform strategies for addressing segregation, data collection needs to be nuanced enough to include insights into how key stakeholders, such as students, families, and educators are experiencing and perceiving integration efforts. “Street Data,” a term coined by Shane Safir and Jamila Dugan, are data collected from the stories and experiences of people who are often on the margins yet closest to the issue being studied.<sup>1</sup> This teaching case outlines selected strategies used by New York City Public School’s (NYCPS) District 3 to listen to and learn from families and community members in order to develop meaningful relationships within the community and to foster buy-in and support for an integration initiative aimed at creating a more equitable school and classroom environments for students.

### Using Three Types of Data to Examine the State of Segregation

Before diving into the experience of District 3, we will explain how Safir and Dugan’s typology of data provides a framework for understanding the ways in which districts can focus on real-time, ground-level data to examine the state of segregation in their district and to understand the underlying causes for it. A description of each type of data is provided below in order to help districts understand the ways in which each of these can be used in their integration work. In addition, Step 2.1 in this [Integration Toolkit](#) provides an overview of the use of these data to examine the state of segregation in a district.

#### Satellite Data

Satellite Data refers to ‘zoomed out’ data that “tell an important but incomplete story of equity” (Safir and Dugan, 2021, p. 56). They include trend data such as standardized test scores and graduation rates as well as rates of teacher attrition or parental participation. These are important because they can highlight inequitable trends in student achievement, as well as contextual factors that may be related to these trends. However, while they provide important indicators of the achievements of a school or district, they tend to be available after a lag (e.g., at the end of a

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<sup>1</sup>Safir S. & Dugan J. (2021). Street data a next-generation model for equity pedagogy and school transformation. SAGE Publications. Retrieved November 21 2022 from <http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6453646>.

school year, when it's too late to make any changes for that year); and often "serve to reinforce implicit biases and deficit thinking" because they highlight underachievement rather than the underlying drivers of underachievement (Safir and Dugan, 2021, p. 56). Thus they do not provide administrators and educators with enough insight into the causes of inequity in their district, making it difficult to develop strategies to address these effectively.

## Map Data

Map Data refer to slightly more detailed, medium-grain sized data, such as data that identify student skill gaps or teacher skill gaps. Map data can provide insights into "socio-emotional, cultural, and learning trends within a school community" (Safir and Dugan, p. 56). However, like satellite data, map data is not detailed enough to inform concrete next steps to address the inequities that might be highlighted by the data.

## Street Data

Street Data are qualitative and experiential data about students, families and staff that are asset-based. Street data can identify underlying causes of inequities observed through satellite or map data by focusing the attention of educators on what is working for students and communities and what might be getting in their way:

They represent systematic information about student learning – how students are *performing vis-à-vis* developmental expectations, *feeling* about their learning environment and themselves, what might be impeding a child's ability to thrive, and what *instructional or leadership moves* should come next (Safir & Dugan 2021, p.57).

Street data illuminate the causes of inequity while highlighting areas of opportunity, knowledge, and cultural wealth. So what are street data?

Street data can consist of artifacts, stories or narratives, and observations of communities and people at the margins. Here are some more examples of Street Data from Safir and Dugan (2021):

Examples of street data in education:

- Audio-recorded focus groups or interviews
- Listening campaigns involving anonymous quotes by theme from a set of interviews
- Equity participation tracker within classrooms measuring which students are called

- Ethnographies of a group of students or subculture
- Fishbowl dialogues or panel discussions
- Home visits to families
- Shadow a student through their school day
- Equity-focused classroom demographics scan
- Structured educator or district team meeting observations
- Student-led community walks

## Overview of District 3

NYCPS's District 3 is a mid-size, urban school district that stretches from 59th Street in Manhattan's Upper West Side (a primarily White neighborhood) to 122nd Street in Harlem (a primarily Black neighborhood). Prior to starting its integration work in 2017, among districts in New York City, District 3 middle schools were the most segregated by race and socioeconomic status.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1 depicts District 3's student composition by race and ethnicity.<sup>3</sup> About 30% of the students in the District identified as White, 32% as Hispanic or Latino and 19% as Black or African American. The disaggregated data by race and subgroup in Figures 2 and 3 below show the differences in ELA and Math test scores in District 3 as compared to the statewide average.<sup>4</sup> English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students in the District perform well below their peers as well as in comparison to statewide averages. Hispanic and Black students also score lower than their Asian and White counterparts and below the statewide averages.

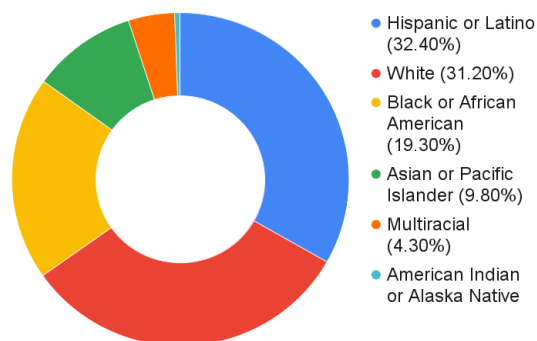
<sup>2</sup>D15 Diversity Plan (2018). Retrieved from [http://d15diversityplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/190620\\_D15DiversityPlan\\_FinalReport.pdf](http://d15diversityplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/190620_D15DiversityPlan_FinalReport.pdf).

<sup>3</sup>NYC geog dist #3 - Manhattan - enrollment data (2020-21). [data.nysed.gov](https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2021&instid=800000047476). Retrieved October 25, 2022, from <https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2021&instid=800000047476>.

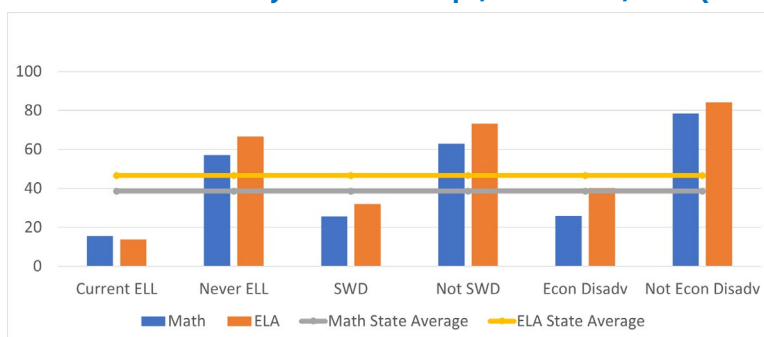
<sup>4</sup>Test Results. NYC Department of Education InfoHub. Retrieved October 25, 2022, from <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/academics/test-results>.

<sup>5</sup>Downloads. [data.nysed.gov](https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php). Retrieved November 4, 2022 from <https://data.nysed.gov/downloads.php>.

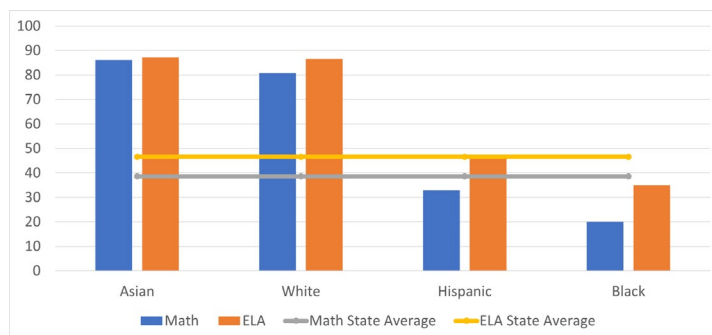
**Figure 1: Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, SY 2020-21**



**Figure 2: Academic Achievement by Student Groups, Grades 3-8, 2022 (% scoring 3s & 4s)**



**Figure 3: Academic Achievement by Race Grades 3-8, 2022 (% scoring 3s & 4s)**



District 3’s work began in 2017 when it joined the New York State Integration Project – a multi-year grant initiative to integrate schools and classrooms, sponsored by the New York State Education Department. The primary goals of District 3’s integration plan were for schools to increase academic performance and achievement levels for historically underserved students; for families to have greater empowerment and investment in their community schools; and for students to have opportunities to learn and thrive in an inclusive environment. To increase the diversity of school composition, the District 3 planned to leverage controlled choice through revised admissions

processes that align with its demographics. Simultaneously, they planned to implement inclusive curriculum and assessment alongside aligned professional learning for teachers and staff.

### **District 3: Turning to Street Data to Dig Deeper**

In December 2020, NYCPS eliminated the use of screens in its citywide middle school admissions policy. Prior to this change, District 3's integration plan had focused on setting aside a percentage of seats in the District for students receiving free and reduced price lunch, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners. After the removal of screens, District 3 restructured its lottery system with the goal of offering 97% of students admission to one of their top three choices for the 2021-2022 school year. District 3's expectation was that this policy shift would result in more integrated schools because students could now apply to, and ultimately attend, a wider range of schools than they had access to before.

District 3 learned from their enrollment data (an example of satellite data) that while some groups of students did apply to a greater number of schools once the new lottery system was rolled out, these were primarily White students. Consequently, schools did not become more diverse as a result of increased availability of seats for underrepresented students:

*Access doesn't necessarily mean opportunity. Just because we open a school to the community doesn't mean the community feels that's the school for them. So you have to think about what will make students feel welcome at a new school and make sure schools know how to welcome historically underserved students. (District 3 Administrator)*

District administrators decided that they needed to listen more closely to community members in order to integrate and improve schools in a collaborative fashion, leading to growth in student engagement and learning. The next section provides some examples of the ways in which District 3 is collecting and utilizing street data to engage families, students and community members in developing a shared understanding of inequitable outcomes in the District in order to co-create strategies by which these might be addressed. While the District's integration work began in 2017, this teaching case is based on interviews of District administrators, staff, principals and community representatives in the Fall of 2022 and therefore begins with the arrival of the newly appointed District Superintendent in July 2022. It captures selected achievements as well as ongoing plans to use Street Data in the district's integration initiatives.

## Use of Street Data in District 3

When the new District Superintendent was appointed in July 2022, he began touring playgrounds throughout the district, observing playground interactions and speaking with families. The goal was to learn about the experiences of underserved families outside of town halls or formal meetings, in spaces where they are most comfortable:

I can see the way that some middle school children are acting, and watch the body language of another family reacting. Going to their own sites and forums, I can literally see everything that my principals are talking about playing out with parents and children on the playground. (District 3 Superintendent)

Next, in order to make sense of what is happening in schools and classrooms, the District plans to hold several District-wide conversations that bring people together and raise awareness of equity issues happening in the District. Such conversations would serve two functions: (1) to bring people into the same room to meet each other so that they might begin to build an understanding of each other's varied experiences and common interests, and (2) to model to principals and other school leaders how to stay engaged during difficult conversations. The District will then hold more localized conversations, such as within one school or across a few schools that experience issues related to segregation. District 3's goal for these "Courageous Conversations" is to collaborate with community members in developing proposals to address problems related to systemic racism, inequity, and school culture.

The District has also leveraged data collected by principals within the District, consulting with a core group of dedicated principals who have steered the District's integration work – the District Equity Leadership Team (DELT). This group of principals has been part of a larger group of principals [advocating](#) for the removal of screens in New York City. There are many ways these principals use street data to understand what is happening in their schools in real time. For example, one principal surveys parents while they are waiting for parent teacher conferences to see if they feel connected to the school and whether they feel they are able to communicate with administrators and teachers. A parent association member described how she engages parents on a regular basis to understand and problem-solve any challenges faced by their children in the school:

I think we need to acknowledge that parents can participate in many ways, and that participation is not a dollar sign. It's about how you appreciate their participation. That is the

difference that makes a parent want to be more involved for the rest of their child's education (Member, Parent Association, District 3)

District 3 teachers are also finding ways to utilize street data by incorporating student input into the curriculum in ways that reaffirm student identity. Although both teachers and families report that they cannot easily perceive the impact of CR-S strategies because these might emerge clearly in the long term, some promising practices are emerging. In one school, students work in groups with a teacher to create the curriculum for each Friday's advisory period. In another classroom, a teacher works with her students to create identity webs (based on Tiffany Jewell's book *The Antiracist Kid*), which they use to determine which books they might like to read and in order to identify culturally relevant writing prompts. In math classes, teachers are replacing workbooks with differentiated workstations that cater to students' different learning styles and make use of problems relevant to students' own lives.

Kids actually drive this work. They bring a lot of themselves and share a lot of themselves. We're getting to know the students and their families and where they come from and using that to build curriculum and get student input. (District 3 Teacher)

District 3 has been listening carefully to students, teachers, principals and community members to understand the underlying causes of inequitable student outcomes. It plans to bring the same equity-oriented lens to implementing its integration initiatives in the District:

We shouldn't do things *to* people but *with* people. We can say we'll do workshops, but that's *us* doing *to* [someone]. We speak about what it looks like to engage our families differently. Where can we go? We want information from families. The families that are most disenfranchised won't show up. We have to go where they are. We have to partner with entities outside of the [Department of Education]. Who do they trust? How do we build a relationship? How do we listen? (District 3 Administrator)

This is where the District plans to use what it calls 'Anchor Partnerships'. District administrators are aware that not all families feel welcomed by or trust the District's outreach, so the District is working to reach traditionally underserved families by forming strategic partnerships with community and cultural organizations and leaders. The District hopes these partnerships will not only help them to engage traditionally underserved communities, but also to sustain their equity efforts in the long term. The goal is to create a network that leverages the strengths of community institutions in order to sustainably fund and implement integration and equity work in schools and



in the wider community. These relationships can also help support and sustain the District's programmatic efforts, such as its dual language programs.

Schools should know communities well. Where are your parents when not in school? Whose direction do they follow? Whose advice would they listen to? It might be [community based organizations] that support communities, it might be faith-based organizations. We're a Community School District. We have to be part of the community. So, what parts of the community can we access? (District 3 Administrator)

## Considerations

Based on District 3's use of street data, here are some considerations for districts wishing to focus on street data to develop, monitor and evaluate their integration project:

1. What are some ways in which you might use street data to develop, refine and measure the impact of your integration efforts? What are some challenges you might face?
2. How might you engage in inquiry *with* those at the margins, rather than inquiry *for* those at the margins?
3. What are some challenges you might face in implementing Street Data and what resources might you need to address these challenges?

## Resources

M. Goodman, 2002. *The Iceberg Model*. Hopkinton, MA: Innovation Associates Organizational Learning. Copyright 2002 by M. Goodman.

Safir S. & Dugan J. (2021). *Street data a next-generation model for equity pedagogy and school transformation*. SAGE Publications. Retrieved November 21 2022 from <http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6453646>.

School Reform Initiative. *Peeling the onion: Defining a dilemma protocol*. Retrieved from [https://schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/peeling\\_onion.pdf](https://schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/peeling_onion.pdf).