



December 22, 2021

Racial and Social Justice Commission's
Report to the Prince William County
Board of Supervisors



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I. COMMISSION’S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Racial and Social Justice Commission was established to examine the state of racial and social justice for people of color within Prince William County with an initial focus on policing, the provision of government services, and public education. The Commission considered the police department’s policies and practices, including its hiring practices and use of force protocols, assessed how the county government delivers its services, the diversity and inclusion of the workforce providing these services, and how public education policies impact children of color.

The methodology used to capture information and collect data was by conducting listening sessions with organizations and forming committees within the Commission to investigate further information and data received from the listening sessions. Each Committee hosted individual listening sessions to perform additional fact-finding measures.

Based on the data collected and presented, the County’s current composition in policing, county government, and the educational system continues to be dominated by white professionals. Additionally, people of color are impacted disproportionately in policing, education, and government services, as mentioned throughout the report. The Board of County Supervisors have taken great strides to ensure Prince William County is an equitable and inclusive County; however, there are areas that the County can improve.

II. COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic 2020 Census data revealed that Prince William County (PWC) is the 10th most diverse county nationally. This is significant as the data shows that the county is heavily populated with people of color on an overall national scale behind New York.

10 Counties With the Highest Diversity Index in 2020

County	Diversity index		Percentage-point difference
	2010	2020	
Hawaii County, Hawaii	77.5	77.7	0.2
Maui County, Hawaii	76.3	77.1	0.8
Queens County, New York	76.4	76.9	0.6
Kauai County, Hawaii	75.6	76.6	0.9
Fort Bend County, Texas	74.0	76.3	2.3
Solano County, California	73.3	75.6	2.4
Alameda County, California	75.0	75.1	0.1
Gwinnett County, Georgia	70.2	75.1	4.8
Kings County, New York	72.1	74.8	2.7
Prince William County, Virginia	67.7	73.7	6.0

Note: Demographic changes, as well as improvements to the ways in which race and ethnicity data are collected and processed, reveal the U.S. population is more racially and ethnically diverse than measured in 2010.

Counties were selected using 2020 data and may not include the 10 counties with the highest diversity index in 2010.

Counties restricted to those with a total population of 5,000 or more in 2020. Our accompanying data visualization shows all counties in the United States.

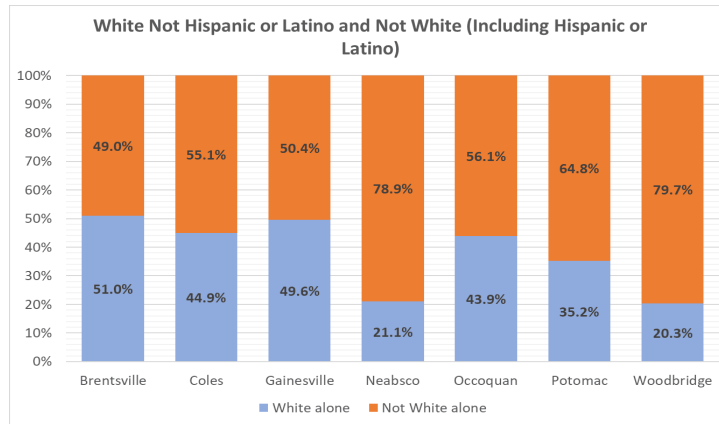
Percentage-point difference based on unrounded values.

Information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions is available at <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/summary-file/>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File; 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File.

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/202-united-states-population-more-racially-ethnically-diverse-than-2010.html>

The County’s total population is 482,204. 38.4% are White alone, and 61.6% are White alone (including Hispanic/Latino). The County comprises most people of color, and White are considered the minority. Thus, making Prince William County a majority-minority County.



Brian Engelmann, County Demographics 2021 Presentation

III. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS BY COMMITTEE

A. Government and Workforce Committee

The Racial and Social Justice Commission Government and Workforce Committee’s (GWC) mission is to examine the state of racial and social justice for people of color in the areas of government services. The Committee assessed how the county government delivers its services and the diversity and inclusion of the workforce providing these services. The objectives of the GWC were to:

1. Utilize surveys, focus groups, town hall meetings, hearings, and other methods to gather relevant information from the County's workforce.
2. Examine relevant data to assess the composition of the workforce and its relationship with the County’s demographics.
3. Examine the County's hiring and promotion practices and other personnel practices for equity and inclusion.
4. Hold listening sessions with Human Resources subject-matter-experts.

B. Government and Workforce Committee’s Executive Summary

One initial objective for the GWC was to conduct listening sessions with Prince William County’s human resource subject-matter-experts. However, after reviewing the overall county government’s organizational structure and connectivity between departments and guidance from Ex-Officio member, Chris Martino, County Executive, the GWC concluded that it would be more judicious to have listening sessions with several major departments in the PWC Government. As a result, the GWC held a listening session with the Human Resource Office, the Office of Housing and Development, the Planning Office, and the Department of Social Services. The GWC also analyzed the officials and administration workforce. Additionally, the GWC was present for the listening sessions and the presentations at the Racial and Social Justice Commission’s public meetings. Most of the presentations did not yield a sizable number of concerns for government services except for the briefing of a

citizen on the preservation of slave cemeteries which the Board of County supervisors are fully aware of the current circumstances.

Our methodology for analyzing listening sessions and data gathering during the 2021 discovery period was the Equity Impact Analysis tool presented to the Racial Social Justice Commission by the Chief Equity Officer, Ms. Maria Burgos. The tool targeted best practices (Strengths), areas of growth, opportunities to examine, and discovery questions. An additional bonus with this tool is that it could be completed online. The GWC reviewed numerous demographic data and the Prince William County, Virginia 2018 Resident Satisfaction Survey Report July 2018, conducted by Issues and Answers Network, Inc.

Most disturbing was that only 1573 residents participated, a small sampling of the PWC population. PWC Government must find a way to obtain a more extensive participation rate for the survey of the County.

The data below provides an overview of the constituents' satisfaction with County Services. Overall, 55.7% of residents are "very satisfied" with the County's services. "Very satisfied" is a score of 8, 9, or 10 on the scale of 0 to 10 used in this report. A "10" is always the highest possible score.

On the scale of 0 to 10, where ten is completely satisfied, there are seven items on which the County excels. One item has an average rating of 9.03: "Fire and emergency medical service responders are professional."

Six items have average ratings of between 8.10 and 8.85:

- "Fire and EMS responders provide high-quality service"
- "Your voting experience in Prince William County"
- "You feel safe in your neighborhood"
- "County library services including online services meet your needs"
- "Requests for police assistance receive a prompt response"
- "You feel safe when visiting commercial areas of the County"

Fifteen items score average ratings of between 7.14 and 7.98 – indeed, respectable scores.

The areas with the lowest scores are Human Services, Transportation, and Planning. However, satisfaction with almost all the items in both 2016 and 2018 has risen this year.

With Human Services, many respondents were unable to offer an opinion. For example, more than 600 people opted out of the question on addiction services, giving a "don't know" response.

No average score for any items is below 5.72. There are no areas in which most residents are dissatisfied.

GWC met many of its objectives. However, there was not enough time to review the volume of information provided to the GWC. Thus, GWC did not conduct an internal review of the workforce's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) climate. The PWC Equity and Inclusion Officer (EIO) informed the GWC that an internal assessment of the PWC workforce would be conducted, which will measure the overall workforce climate to include DEI. The GWC will conduct a comprehensive assessment analysis once results are received in the project time of 2022.

The GWC's overall assessment of the state of racial and social justice for people of color in government services determined that the programs and plans of the PWC services were mainly exceptional. We did not find any systemic/structural discrimination or social injustices. However, the GWC does not claim that systemic/structural discrimination or social injustices exist, but the data during this discovery did not yield such a claim. There are inferences of disparities (triggers) that could escalate into barriers and/or social injustices, i.e., affordable housing, demography of the Juvenile Detention Center, capturing of Veterans and individuals with disability data, and lower participation rates of people of color in higher pay bands. The GWC did not see any data on the LGBTQIA community. Accordingly, the GWC recommends further study and assessment in these areas.

C. Government and Workforce Committee's Findings and Recommendations

1. Human Resources Office

The Human Resources Office (HRO) briefed that they are committed to identifying and removing barriers to employment with the County. They have a partnership with the job board DiversityJobs.com, increasing their visibility with diverse groups, including LGBTQ, Veterans, women, and people of color. The county website is viewable in numerous languages. HRO has plans to redesign professional development opportunities within the next five years, implement a new human capital management system, evaluate health and retirement benefits, and plan for transition in crucial leadership roles.

Best Practices/Strengths: In 2014, Prince William County began a series of changes to promote inclusivity in employment. Notable changes are:

- a. Implementation of Ban the Box (removal of questions regarding criminal history from the employment applications to allow offenders to compete for jobs without the stigma of their past mistakes).
- b. The revision of the Personnel Policies to be more adaptive, allowing managers to work with employees to change their behavior and improve performance.

Additional Best Practices/Strengths Noted from Equity Impact Analysis: Aside from the strengths note from 2014, the GWC, through their Equity Impact Analysis, captured the following additional best practices/strengths:

- a. Offer the ability to fill out an application in person if they cannot use a computer. Personal identification information is not visible on an application, allowing for a more objective review from panel members and hiring officials. Hiring managers also must justify the reasons for hiring the selected applicant.
- b. Removed a degree requirement on positions that do not have a mandated education requirement.
- c. Prepares a clear performance profile of each position at the start of the recruitment process.
- d. The hiring manager must justify the hiring of the selected candidate.
- e. HRO use several mediums to attract and hire a diverse talent pool of candidates.
- f. Provides interpreters and application assistance for an individual with disabilities.
- g. County turnover rate is low at 8% (minus retirement) and 11% (plus retirement) in comparison to the Bureau of Labor Statistics rate for turnover is 12%-15%.¹
- h. Reviewed all classifications.

Challenges and Committee’s Recommendations to Resolve:

- a. Challenges
 - i. Challenge 1: Currently, HRO does not track or give Veteran Preference to applicants, which has been yielded positive selection practices for federal government agencies. There is a large pool of Veterans in Prince William County who have retired or were honorably discharged from military service. Veterans' Preference applies to all new appointments in the competitive service and many in the excepted service. Veterans' preference does not guarantee veterans a job, and it does not apply to internal agency actions such as promotions, transfers, reassignments, and reinstatements.²
 - ii. Challenge 2: There are no notable preferences or tracking systems for hiring individuals with a disability. Although the HRO stated that they provide reasonable accommodations when requested, there was no preference for individuals with a targeted disability or any tracking mechanism for capturing hiring data on this category. Thus, there is no data to analyze PWC hiring behavior for individuals with a disability.

¹ See <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/>

² www.opm.gov

In 2020, 17.9 % of persons with a disability were employed, down from 19.3% in 2019. For persons without a disability, 61.8 percent were employed in 2020, down from 66.3% in the prior year. The unemployment rates for persons with and without a disability increased from 2019 to 2020, to 12.6% and 7.9%, respectively. Data on both groups for 2020 reflect the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts to contain it.

- iii. Challenge 3: Hispanic/Latino PWC workforce demographics yielded a low participation rate of 10.75% compared to the overall county demographics of 23.5%. US Department of Education/ Office of Postsecondary Education is an excellent source to assist with the effort to develop a diverse recruitment outreach plan.
- iv. Challenge 4: There is minimum outreach to affinity organizations. America is one of the most diverse countries in the world. As the United States logo, E Pluribus Unum (Out of Many One), we as a county must strive to become more culturally competent.

b. Recommendations

- i. To continue to be a model employer, the GWC recommends taking proactive measures to ensure that people with disabilities are considered for employment, promotion, transfer, and training without regard to physical, mental, or sensory disability. Continue to provide an interactive process to evaluate requests for reasonable accommodation.
- ii. Develop a tracking system that includes hiring individuals with a disability (IWD). Currently, the national participation rate is 22.36%; however, PWC does not track IWDs in the hiring process to see if PWC is in parity with the national labor force, it is impossible to measure this category in the current state.³
- iii. Model the Federal government's practices for hiring individuals with a disability. Federal agencies use Schedule "A" to hire individuals with a disability (IWD).⁴
- iv. For recruitment, outreach, and best practices, the recommendation is to partner with organizations such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), and the Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology.
- v. Develop a diverse recruitment outreach plan between HR and all county departments. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity acknowledged Snohomish County, WA, for its approach to

³ See <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/statistics>

⁴ See Schedule "A" Hiring-<http://www.opm.gov/polic-data/disability-employment/getting-a-job/#url+Schedule-A-Hiring> Authority

outreach in their DEI Assessment. The County specifics were to enhance recruitment to increase a diverse applicant pool. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as new strategies for outreach, updated job posting listservs, and participation in career fairs beyond the set standard.⁵

- vi. Develop a recruitment plan that would enhance diversity recruitment. Partner with affinity groups. Affinity groups, also known as an employee or business resource groups, are employee groups organized based on social identity, shared characteristics, or life experiences. Employees generally initiate affinity groups and often involve or implicate protected classes such as sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, national origin, disability, and veteran status. Examples of affinity groups include women in the workplace, working parents, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) matters, and any other group based on a common set of interests.⁶
- vii. Provide targeted outreach to under-represented communities.⁷

2. Office of Housing and Community Development

The Office of Housing Community Development’s mission statement says Office of Housing Community Development (OHCD) will develop affordable housing opportunities and neighborhood resources for low and moderate-income residents by implementing appropriate policies and programs, which provide a safe and healthy environment to work and play.

The 2018 Satisfaction survey revealed that more housing/affordable housing/senior housing rated 2.0 for most important things the County should do to make PWC a better place to live compared to improving traffic flow which received the highest rating of 6.0.

OHCD has a 5-year consolidated plan (Action Plan) and annual plan to determine approach goals. They currently administer two federal programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – The Community Block Grant program and the Emergency Solutions Grant program. The County has a Cooperative Agreement with the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

Best Practices/Strengths:

- a. Provide training to help people to manage the loans they receive.

⁵ Source: <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/69149/Snohomish-County-DEI-Assessment--Equity-and-Inclusion-Task-Force>

⁶ Thomas Reuters Practical Law: https://content.next.westlaw.com/w-002-2144?_lrTS=20201002170927498&transitionType=Default&contextData=%28sc.Default%29

⁷ <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/rsji-2015-2017-plan.pdf>

- b. Negotiate with builders of new developments to provide units for affordable housing.
- c. Fair housing testing - The OHCD conducts fair housing testing to identify systemic issues in Prince William County.
- d. Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) goes to 1/3 to 1/2 disabled or elderly.
- e. The OHCD has a criterion for monitoring 50 properties for affordable housing annually.
- f. Dawson Beach transitional housing helps the homeless to become self-sufficient. The goal is to help the homeless move to permanent housing⁸.

Challenges and Committee’s Recommendations to Resolve:

- a. Challenges
 - i. Challenge 1: Very little participation from the residents in regard to OHCD Outreach events.
- b. Recommendations
 - i. Establish liaisons with affinity groups for maximizing participation from the public. The liaisons will have the pulse and trust of their community and could encourage participation.
 - ii. Use all available media, such as radio, tv, newspapers, social media, etc.

3. Planning Office

The Planning Office’s mission is to implement the County’s Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan goals.

The Planning Office collaborates with the community and its customers to achieve a high quality of life and regional identity through innovative land use planning. They have a 20 Year Comprehensive Plan forthcoming and expected to be completed in 2022. The Planning Office's goal is to revitalize and grow communities without displacing the current population. The median household incomes are \$107,132.

Best Practices/Strengths:

- a. The Planning Office engages with the community by conducting town hall meetings, public hearings on land use items, and information on the PWC website.

⁸ Dawson Beach Program flyer: [https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-06/Dawson% 20Beach%20 Program%20Flyer%20-%20English %20effective%20revised%206.2021.pdf](https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-06/Dawson%20Beach%20Program%20Flyer%20-%20English%20effective%20revised%206.2021.pdf)

- b. The Comprehensive Plan will consider the County’s vision to be a “Community of Choice” for families, businesses, and workers in the region. It will also consider housing options that go beyond a sole focus on affordability and implicit in the idea of attainability is the idea that a range of housing options (type, size, tenure, cost) exists in the local market for a range of household incomes and preferences and affordable dwelling unit ordinance.
- c. The Planning Office is planning to include preservation measures to protect historical and cultural sites (i.e., slave cemeteries).

Challenges and Committee’s Recommendations to Resolve:

- a. Challenges
 - i. Challenge 1: The rising cost of housing.
- b. Recommendations
 - i. The Planning Office acknowledges the County’s Comprehensive Plan will consider and address the rising cost of affordable housing.

4. Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services (DSS) gave one of the most comprehensive presentations, including a presentation from the Family Support Services, Public Assistance, Homeless Services, Protective Services, and Juvenile Services divisions. DSS employees 79% women and 73% people of color. The departments’ mission statement is simplistic, which says, “the DSS transforms lives through safety, support, and self-reliance. Focusing on individual families.”

The DSS Advisory Board was appointed by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors and chartered in November 2014. The advisory board’s purpose is to promote the mission of the Department of Social Services by keeping apprised of the ongoing business, matters and issues that affect the Department.

DSS served over 159,510 residents of all ages and their families in FY 2020. A new homeless navigation center is proposed. The homeless navigation center will be a facility to provide mostly daytime services to area residents without a permit place to live, such as help with finding, housing, counseling, help with signing up for public benefits, free meals and access to showers and laundry.

Juvenile Services has a new Public Defender’s office. Public defenders’ offices are state funded and provide legal representation to individuals who can’t afford a lawyer. The Juvenile Services Center is in the Capital Improvement Plan, and Comprehensive Services Plan that was submitted to build a center for trauma and collocated with the Juvenile Detention Center.

The PWC Child Advocacy Center will open in late 2021. The center will be staffed with two therapists, two forensic investigators, and administrative workers to help with case management.

Best Practices/Strengths: Because of the vastness of the DSS, there were a plethora of best practices/strengths.

- a. 25% of occupants residing in Birmingham Green, senior living facility are from PWC and most have Medicare.⁹
- b. DSS interview panels are diverse and reflect the community.
- c. DSS network with affinity groups for recruitment of employees.
- d. Children Services Act Division serves over 570 youth and has the largest expenditure in the DSS budget at \$27M.
- e. Assist PWC Schools Special Needs Division when needed.
- f. Customer Support and Services has a dedicated phone line for Spanish-speaking residents.
- g. Customer Support and Services provide clothing for residents going on interviews and will assist those with or without jobs with childcare.
- h. DSS requires that they have a Spanish speaker at their front desk and makes an effort to recruit Spanish speakers.
- i. Customer Support Services reduced the childcare assistance waitlist from 14,000 to 0.
- j. DSS (protective services) Fatherhood initiative helps dads by offering groups events and book series to encourage them in their role as a father.
- k. Juvenile Services full team of educators supports youth with Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) in the JDC and JUV Shelter.
- l. Juvenile Services CPP (community placement program) helps with the connection to the community and getting a GED or diploma.
- m. Juvenile Services working with the court on classrooms not courtrooms.

Challenges and Committee's Recommendations to Resolve:

- a. Challenges
 - i. Challenge 1: The GWC was briefed by the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) and took a center tour. Although we know the BOC,

⁹ <https://www.beavertonoregon.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8942/DEI-Plan-web?bidId=>

DSS, and the County Executive are aware of the inadequate conditions of the PWC Juvenile Detention Center, the GWC desire to reiterate the significant importance of constructing a new facility for our youth that does not look and sound like a prison. The current facility does provide an environment of rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the staff must manage with what they have. JDC is inadequate and needs to be remodeled, upgraded, and/or build a new facility. JDC doors throughout the facility slam shut, creating a trauma effect. JDC outdoor is insufficient and currently is not being used by tenants. JDC visiting is unsatisfactory because it is difficult to maintain security.

- ii. Challenge 2: Most residents in the JDC are people of color. The GWC had no data to answer the “why” for this challenge at the time of this report.

b. Recommendations

- i. GWC recommends that building a more modern Youth Detention Facility should be of the highest priority for PWC. It has been proven when the facilities are appointed with comfortable, homelike furnishings, creating an atmosphere more like a school dormitory than a prison creates a better climate for rehabilitation. Look for and visit youth detention centers acknowledged for best practices to envision a new center for PWC.

Partner with organizations such as Youth for Tomorrow (YFT), located in Bristow, Virginia, which has services at the top of the continuum provides intensive care to children with severe emotional or behavioral problems. Children who are referred to YFT have struggled with one or more of the following issues: foster care, poor academic performance/special needs, criminal behavioral patterns, substance abuse, bullying, defiance, depression, social anxieties, family crises, mental health disorders, pregnant teens and teen mothers, minor domestic sex trafficked girls and sexually abuse/exploited youth.¹⁰

- ii. GWC recommends that the Commission be given more time to conduct a comprehensive equity study to determine the root cause and review data to make the appropriate recommendation.

5. Officials & Administrators Workforce

The GWC reviewed the County’s Workforce Report dated December 31, 2020. The County’s Demographer informed the Racial and Social Justice Commission that Prince William County was 10th in ranking as one of the most diverse counties in the Nation which is very impressive. The PWC workforce has a 53% rating for female participation, Black/African Americans

¹⁰ <https://youthfortomorrow.org/Overview>

=19.6%, American Indian/Alaska Native=0.5%, Asian=4.0%, Two or more races=2.7%, Hispanic/Latino (of any race)=10.7% and White=62.3%.

Best Practices/Strengths: In 2014, Prince William County began a series of changes to promote inclusivity in employment. Those changes are:

- a. A large participation rate of people of color in DSS
- b. Women = 53% of the workforce

Challenges and Committee's Recommendations to Resolve:

a. Challenges

- i. Challenge 1: Lack of participation of people of color in the D and E pay bands, encompassing directorate leadership positions. Minorities equal 25% of Official & Administrators; however, minorities comprise 38% of the exempt workforce (57.1% equals PWC demographics and 37.7% equals County Workforce Composition).
- ii. Challenge 2: Women's lack of participation in the pay bands D and E, which encompasses directorate leadership positions. Females equal 28% of Official & Administrators; however, females comprise 54% of the exempt workforce (50% = PWC demographics/53.2%=County Workforce Composition).

b. Recommendations

- i. Examine current position descriptions to ensure no barriers or biases exist.
- ii. Establish career development programs to increase the competencies levels.
- iii. Establish an employee resource group to assist with reviewing data with promotions.
- iv. Establish formal mentorship programs and coaching for employees in lower pay bands.
- v. At this report, the current County Executive submitted his intent to retire at the end of 2021. The GWC recommends that a private firm conduct an executive search to replace the County Executive. The county government's applicants should be considered for the position internally and externally, which will allow a diverse pool of applicants to apply for the job. Once a suitable collection is acquired, a diverse panel should review all applications before being presented to the BOCS.

6. OmniRide Transportation Services

- a. GWC recommends that PWC collaborate with OmniRide to improve transit stops and times in PWC.
- b. Prioritize active transportation projects and public transit near low-income housing.
- c. Ensure that representatives of racial/ethnic communities who use public transit the most are at the table when discussing current and future public transit options.

Challenges and Committee's Recommendations to Resolve:

- a. Challenges
 - i. Challenge 1: Lack of community centers to meet the increased population of PWC. Community centers that incorporate programs that fit the needs and interests of their community. Center space can be used for community meetings, clubs, classes, or even social gatherings, increasing community engagement and cultural awareness.
- b. Recommendations
 - i. Establish more community centers. The spirit of this center is to address the need for public spaces for communities of color, immigrants, and refugees to assemble, organize, openly foster cultural expression, and create an intentional space for cross-cultural exchange. A community center exists where members of all racial/ethnic communities in PWC feel welcome and utilize it regularly.

D. Policing and Community Committee

The Racial and Social Justice Commission Police and Community Committee's (PCC) mission is to examine the state of racial and social justice for people of color in the areas of policing. The Committee assessed how the Prince William County Police Department (PWCPD) delivers its services and the diversity and inclusion of the workforce providing these services. The Committee evaluated the police department by conducting the following:

1. Utilize surveys, focus groups, town hall meetings, hearings, and other methods to gather relevant information from the Police's workforce.
2. Examine relevant data to assess the composition of the workforce and its relationship with the County's demographics.
3. Examine the Police Department's hiring and promotion practices and other personnel practices for equity and inclusion.
4. Hold listening sessions with the Police Department subject-matter-experts.

E. Policing and Community Committee's Executive Summary

The Policing and Community Committee's mission was to gather data on different areas of police policies, practices, discipline, use of force, and interactions with the community. The information was gathered through listening sessions, presentations from the Prince William County Police department employees, different non-governmental organizations, and citizens' comments.

Based on the data and feedback presented, there was some concern about the disparity of traffic stops and vehicle searches with citizens of color throughout the geographical locations in Prince William County. In addition to the provided data, it showed that Prince William County has the highest rate of juvenile referral to the criminal justice system in the state.

Every citizen in Prince William County is entitled to equal treatment, respect for their constitutional rights, and due process of law, regardless of race, religion, national origin, immigration status. The history of racism in America, in many places and especially our communities of color, has been a barrier to effectively fostering a community relationship with the police department.

F. Policing and Community Committee's Findings and Recommendations

1. Police Department

Best Practices/Strengths:

- a. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as a global pandemic. During the height of the pandemic, despite the shutdown of local and statewide government services and the Governor's stay-at-home orders, hundreds of police officers and professional staff were required to work

in the office or respond to calls for assistance. Prince William County Police services continued to be provided regardless of being at a higher risk for transmission through interactions with the public.

- b. The lack of mental health crisis services across the U.S. has resulted in law enforcement officers serving as first responders to most crises. Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for law enforcement is critical to improving the outcomes of these encounters.

CIT training is an intensive training program for law enforcement officers collaboratively created by law enforcement and mental health providers. The training focuses on recognizing different mental health conditions and de-escalation techniques to resolve crisis. Officers trained in CIT will also identify and share mental health resources with those in crisis.

Accordingly, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) approved funding for a Co-Responder Unit. The Police Department, in collaboration with Community Services, implemented a team of highly trained mental health clinicians and Crisis Intervention Trained police officers to respond to crises with the goal of de-escalation, providing immediate clinical assessment, and connecting individuals with appropriate services within the community.

- c. The Prince William County Co-Responder Unit was selected as a National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award winner for 2021. The program is a joint collaborative effort between the Police Department and Community Services in providing services for those residents in crisis.
- d. The Marcus-David Peters Act was signed into law in late 2020 and is known as the Marcus Alert. This act is a comprehensive approach to ensuring that Virginia provides a health-focused and trauma-informed response to behavioral health emergencies. Prince William County was chosen to participate in this statewide initiative and is the first jurisdiction to implement the Marcus Alert System collaborating with Public Safety, Community Services, law enforcement, and community stakeholders. The Department of Community Services will establish a Missions Workgroup as a part of the system implementation to help them obtain community input to prioritize the needs of the County's behavioral health crisis system.
- e. Recognizing the police department is not representative of the population it serves racially and ethnically, the Police Department has commissioned the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to conduct a year-long review of its policies, procedures, and processes. Additionally, to analyze data to help the agency identify areas where improvements can be made to attract more diverse applicants. The Department has received the findings and recommendations in the

PERF report and is implementing improvements to existing processes. Included in improvements are implementing an online applicant tracking system that will allow the agency to collect, review, consolidate, and analyze data to help identify deficiencies in the hiring process and make any adjustments as necessary.

- f. The Police Department has been an early proponent of many of the police reform issues being discussed at the local, state, and national level, including:
 - 1) Use of force policies, procedures, de-escalation training and duty to intervene.
 - 2) Banning the use of chokeholds.
 - 3) Elimination of no-knock warrants.
 - 4) Police decertification program.
 - 5) Becoming state or nationally accredited.
 - 6) Reporting of traffic stop data.

On July 1, 2020, police officers collected certain data during all motor vehicle stops to increase transparency and public trust. This data includes demographic, geographic, and other actions that were taken during the stop regardless of the result of the stop, i.e., summons, arrest, or warning. Below is a list of the data that is being collected:

- 1) Race, ethnicity, gender, and age of the driver.
- 2) Reason for and location of the stop.
- 3) Result of the stop: warning, written citation, summons, or if any person was arrested.
- 4) Any/all charges related to the stop.
- 5) If the vehicle or a person involved in the stop were searched.

To increase transparency and public trust within the community, the police department released critical analysis and statistics in its 2020 Annual Report. Analysis and statistics included:

- 1) The handling of complaints or allegations of misconduct against members and the administration of the Department's disciplinary system.
- 2) Use of force analysis pertaining to any physical action, including firearms and other weapons, to overcome resistance from an individual who is being lawfully detained or arrested.

- g. In December 2020, the Police Department conducted a community satisfaction survey to gauge residents' satisfaction with police services. The Community Satisfaction survey findings in 2020 continued to show high community satisfaction with the Police Department's overall performance in meeting community needs at 96%.

More than two-thirds (67%) of Black/African American (67%), multi-ethnic/multiracial (74%), and (72%) of Hispanic/Latino (72%) residents say they are very satisfied with the overall performance of the Police Department. This is notably fewer than Asian 85% and White (82%) residents. Black/African Americans (4%), Hispanic/Latinos (7%), and multiethnic/multiracial (8%) voice dissatisfaction with the overall performance of the Police Department. A similar pattern is noted among Black/African Americans in the 2018 survey, where Black/African Americans are more likely to share lukewarm sentiments.

A 2019 survey by the Pew Research Center discussed the stark racial differences in critical aspects of policing. Black/African Americans were much less likely than Whites to say that police in their community do an excellent or good job using the right amount of force in each situation (33% vs. 75%). Treating racial and ethnic groups equally (35% vs. 75%) and holding officers accountable when misconduct occurs (31% vs. 70%). Black/African Americans were also substantially less likely than Whites to say their local police do an excellent or good job at protecting people from crime (48% vs. 78%).¹¹

- h. Since the murder of George Floyd, police departments across the nation have been forced to reexamine their use of force policies. In 2021, the PWCPD released its' first-ever report on the use of force. The report's public release was a significant step in increasing the department's transparency and provided an opportunity for fostering greater public trust.
- i. On February 1, 2021, Chief Peter Newsham became the first external Chief of the PWCPD since Chief George Owens was selected to lead the new department in 1970. The Policing Subcommittee believes hiring an outside chief was essential to bringing fresh ideas to the department on policing, professional development, and diversifying a department that is currently not racially or ethnically reflective of the community it is sworn to protect and serve.
- j. In collaboration with the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the University of Virginia, the Police Department participated in: Courageous Conversations, Listening and Learning Exchange Series. The initiative's goals were to support enhanced relationships between community representatives and law enforcement officials based on clear and honest communication. Additionally, participants can listen and understand each other's perspectives and goals—the program culminated with the Inaugural Community Fair held this past fall.

¹¹ 2020 Police-community survey: https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-04/2020_PWC_Community_Police_Department_Survey.pdf;
2021 County-community survey: <https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021/09/2021%20Prince%20William%20County%20Community%20Survey%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf>

- k. Community engagement continues to be an essential part of the PWCPD. Through direct engagement between police staff and County residents and business owners, PWCPD builds lasting relationships amongst our community while at the same time enhancing public trust with police. Some of the programs where residents engaged with the Department include the Cadet Program, Watch Programs (neighborhood and places of worship), Citizen Advisory Board, Community Police Academy, Crime Prevention Council, Law Enforcement Explorers Program, and Student Internship Program. The Prince William County Police Department's participation in the Racial and Social Justice Commission.

- l. The Police Department established the Citizen's Advisory Board (CAB) in 2017 to begin obtaining feedback from the community on critical topics and expand the lines of communication between the Department and key stakeholders within our community. As its name suggests, the CAB is advisory and comprises community members of various organizations throughout Prince William County. The Board meets regularly to provide the Chief of Police with advice on a range of topics about law enforcement within Prince William County, such as:
 - 1) Policing policies, practices, and training programs.
 - 2) Community outreach and building public trust.
 - 3) Leadership and accountability.

- m. Since its inception, the Prince William County Police Department has had an honesty and integrity policy. Before being hired, all Prince William County Police Department employees are required to sign an agreement with the agency that if they are untruthful in any of their official actions, then the Chief of Police has no other option but to terminate their employment. The Department has always held integrity and honesty as a cornerstone principle for employees, and as a result, has employees of the highest caliber.

- n. The Police Department utilizes various social media platforms to inform and educate our community on severe incidents and traffic issues, safety resources, tips, and department recruiting and engagement events. These platforms also allow Department members to message the community to address concerns and answer questions directly. Our robust social media presence includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, NextDoor, and YouTube. Currently, the Police Department maintains the highest reach on social media among County agencies with close to 188K followers and subscribers and the ability to message about 95K confirmed Prince William County residents and 430 neighborhoods on the NextDoor app.

- o. The Police Department took a leadership role in creating the Northern Virginia Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). Before being hired, all Prince William County Police Department employees are required to

sign an agreement with the agency that if they are untruthful in any of their official actions, then the Chief of Police has no other option but to terminate their employment. The Chief Executive Officer of each participating agency in Northern Virginia will have the option of calling upon this multi-jurisdictional team to investigate incidents within their localities. These incidents include but are not limited to; law enforcement involved shootings, any action taken by law enforcement that results in the death or a life-threatening injury of a person in the performance of an officer/deputy's duties, in-custody deaths, and law enforcement officer suicides.

Challenges and Committee's Recommendations to Resolve:

a. Challenges

i. Challenge 1: When comparing the demographics of the county to the demographics of the subjects of use of force, there appears to be a disproportionate impact on Black/African Americans, according to the PWC Police 2020 Annual Report. At the same time, the Racial and Social Justice Commission acknowledges that the Prince William County Police rarely used force during an arrest in 2020. When they did, it was disproportionately used against Black/African Americans. Black/African Americans accounted for 49% of the department's use-of-force incidents in 2020, compared to 23% for White and Hispanic/Latino residents. In addition, Black/African Americans accounted for 40% of the police department's total arrests in 2020, while Whites comprised 31% of arrests and Hispanic/Latinos comprised 27%. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Prince William County's population is 38.4% White, 19.7% Black/African American, 10.3% Asian, and 25.3% Hispanic/Latino.¹²

ii. Challenge 2: According to the Virginia Community Policing Act data, Between Jan. 1 and Jun. 30, 2021, Prince William County police conducted over 10,300 traffic stops. As a result of these encounters, officers cited the driver approximately 57.5% of the time, issued a warning just over 40.3% of the time, and either took no action 1.2% or made an arrest approximately 1% of the time, respectively. Officers arrested 101 persons out of the approximately 10,323 total traffic stops (less than 1%) and conducted vehicle searches in 140 of the 10,323 total traffic stops (1.4%).

It's important to note if an officer takes a person into physical custody, law enforcement officers are required by policy to search that individual incident-to-arrest. In cases where a driver is arrested, a vehicle is often towed, resulting in an inventory search of the vehicle. Searches due to an arrest accounted for over 70% of overall searches. Driving under the influence (DUI), failing to maintain lane

¹² <https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-07/2020%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

(a common indicator of DUI), and instances where the driver either had a suspended license or no license were the leading charges associated with searches amongst Whites, Hispanic/Latinos, and Black/African Americans.

The demographic breakdown of the arrests that occurred because of a traffic stop is Black/African American 22.8% (23), White 22.8% (23), Hispanic/Latino 52.5% (53), and Other 2% (2). The demographic breakdown of the searches of vehicles that resulted because of a traffic stop are Black/African American 26.4% (37), White 29.3% (41), Hispanic/Latino 40% (56), and Other 4.3% (6). According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Prince William County's population is 38.4% white, 19.7% Black/African American, 10.3% Asian, and 25.3% Hispanic/Latino.¹³

- iii. Challenge 3: Some community groups raised concerns with the School Resource Officer (SRO) program: the disproportionate police encounter with Black/African American students, the school-to-prison pipeline, and students being arrested. In a 2019 report citing 2016 and 2018 data statewide, 63.2% of the disorderly conduct complaints were made against Black/African American students. Between 2016 and 2018, the Prince William County Police Department accounted for the highest number of disorderly conduct complaints from schools (school officials or SROs) in the Commonwealth.¹⁴
- iv. Challenge 4: Being able to provide all required training and inservices to police officers promptly (i.e., Crisis Intervention Training), based on feedback from police officers.
- v. Challenge 5: According to the Human Resource Demographic Report of PWC, Prince William County Police demographics do not reflect the demographics of the county.
- vi. Challenge 6: The Prince William County Police has experienced attrition by way of retirements and resignations that are higher than usual.¹⁵
- vii. Challenge 7: Making all officers, regardless of race and gender, feel comfortable coming forward with concerns about fairness in their working environment or working conditions.

b. Recommendations

- i. The committee recommends that the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) fund the hiring of an independent contractor to analyze the

¹³ <https://www.pwcva.gov/assets/2021-07/2020%20Annual%20Report.pdf> and <https://data.virginia.gov/stories/s/Virginia-Community-Policing-Act-Data-Collection/rden-cz3h/>

¹⁴ 2019 DCJS report and listening sessions from community

¹⁵ PWC Police Human Resources Data

police department's use-of-force policies and practices. This will allow an impartial agency to audit police records, processes, and procedures to ensure employees of the Prince William County Police Department are operating within the confines of the law, police general orders, and policies.

- ii. The committee recommends that BOCS fund an independent study to review the probable cause that led to the 140 searches of vehicles that occurred during traffic stops and the probable cause that led to the 101 arrests that occurred because of traffic stops during this time frame.

Although it is currently being taught at the Prince William County Police Academy, the Commission recommends that the PWC Police Department be required to include in their general orders, individuals who are stopped are accorded procedural justice. The officer must explain the reason for the stop and use the individual's preferred communication method (i.e., sign language, use of language line if individual speaks a world language).

- iii. We are aware there were disproportionate numbers of disorderly encounters/arrests in PWC; however, in 2020, the General Assembly enacted a law change that prohibited the arrest of students for disorderly conduct during school, on school buses, or at school-sponsored events, i.e., fights.

We recommend a new, detailed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Prince William County School (PWCS) and the Prince William County Police outlining clear duties and responsibilities of the SRO. This MOU should be enforced equally in every school to allow for organizational coherence by identifying the handling of minor offenses that occur in school, including school grounds and school buses.

- iv. Provide the police department with adequate funding and professional development resources – i.e., funding to pay for overtime so officers can do training.
- v. Implement the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) recommendations in addition to continuing to recruit from diverse locations (i.e., Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Hispanic Serving Institutes (HSI), military installations, working with diverse minority organizations and religious institutions, etc.). Open executive and leadership positions to external candidates.
- vi. Analyze the causes of the higher than usual resignations to include an analysis during the exit interviews. Ensure salaries are competitive with other agencies in the national capital region; provide retention incentives with the obligated service agreement, i.e., homeowner programs, paying for school loans, tax incentives.

Develop mentorship programs, i.e., female officers and 2-10-20 program.

- vii. Educate police officers and other staff of their rights and process to report concerns; establish a program to have easier access to the Chief; develop a process for anonymous reporting of issues or incidents within the police department.

G. Education Communities of Color Committee

The Education Communities of Color Committee (ECCC) is tasked with examining how public education policies impact students of color. To be more directed in our work, the Education Committee prioritized three initial areas of study:

1. The School Resource Officer (SRO) program
2. Prince William County Schools (PWCS) discipline practices
3. The information included in the Annual PWCS Equity Scorecard

H. Education Communities of Color Committee’s Executive Summary

The information and analysis included in this initial report are limited to those focus areas. They are sourced from presentations delivered by members of the SRO program, the ex-officio School Board member, and various community partners at the general RSJC meetings. Additionally, the Committee heard from staff from the PWCS Central Office, including Student Services' offices and Student and Professional Learning.

While the following report reflects the Committee's thorough examination of the three established priority areas (SRO, discipline, and Equity Scorecard) over the past year, further study of the areas is still required. The Committee's work was impacted by several external factors, such as the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, a significant change in administration at the school district, and time constraints. Over the next few months, the Committee looks forward to increasing engagement with stakeholders (community members, parents, students, faculty, etc.) through listening sessions, focus groups, surveys, and public comment time and aims to build our understanding of what programs and policies PWCS are continuing to put into place, especially in light of the new administration and the inclusion of a Chief Equity Officer in the Superintendent's Executive Cabinet.

I. Education Communities of Color Committee’s Findings and Recommendations

1. Prince William County Public School

Best Practices/Strengths:

- a. ***Prince William County Public Schools School Resource Officer Program*** - From the personal experiences shared by the School Resource Officers in their presentation to the Commission, it appears that the current program provides the opportunity for relationships to be built between students and police officers. Some students see school Resource Officers as trusted adults and/or mentors in the school environment, and students may gravitate towards such individuals. As stated by the officers in their statements, these relationships sometimes

also lead to increased cooperation in community policing initiatives and can be a tool for recruiting Prince William County youth into the police force.

These relationships are partially the product of the flexibility afforded to School Resource Officers conducting their day-to-day operations. While we discuss the need for more clearly defined roles in the growth areas section of the report, it is worth noting that the ability to form bonds with the student body is sometimes predicated on an officer's flexibility in interacting with students. Flexibility and individual discretion in programming and incident resolution could lead to more sustainable, positive relationships between officers and students.

Finally, as addressed in this report, the Prince William County Police Department and Prince William County Public Schools have undergone significant leadership changes in recent months. As the School Resource Officer program is a collaborative effort between the two entities, we expect it to be one of the areas explored and updated as a part of the new leaders' initiatives. This collaborative quality is another positive aspect of Prince William County's School Resource Officer program.

- b. ***Prince William County Public Schools Discipline*** - The PWCS Equity Scorecard (which will be discussed in its section below) has led to increased transparency in the data available to the Prince William County community at large. The data includes exclusionary discipline for percentages for elementary, middle, and high school students, and is further disaggregated by race, gender, socio-economic status, or student group type (English Language Learner or Special Education). Additionally, there is also a section for the percent of students with discipline referrals. Considering some of the disparities highlighted by this data (and will be discussed in the growth areas section), progress has been made at the state and district level to address these continuing trends that disproportionately negatively impact Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students. The 2019 conference for Prince William County middle school administrators, allowed for insightful discussions about the impact of exclusionary and other discipline practices that impact student learning and well-being. The detailed program included sessions on supporting positive behavior, holistic approaches to helping students, building a culturally responsive environment, and multiple sessions on restorative justice practices. This, specifically, was highlighted as another best practice for the district that certain schools have implemented restorative justice practices as a part of their disciplinary program. There were 774 fewer individuals suspended at the middle school level between 2016-2019.

Prince William County is an early adopter of some of the changes that have been issued at the state level regarding student discipline. Namely, these include updating behavior categories for leveled administrative responses and discipline coding to be more supportive of student social

and emotional welfare and preventative to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, the 2020-2021 Code of Behavior was updated to align with the Model Guidance issued by the Virginia Department of Education. This includes flexibility in the dress code for students, the inclusion of culturally responsive language and practices, and proactive approaches and interventions. Additional efforts by the school district, such as strengthening capacity to provide trauma-informed professional development to staff, sponsoring student groups like No Place for Hate and truancy diversion programs, are also best practices that should be studied further for impact and expanded upon.

- c. ***Prince William County Schools Equity Scorecard Data*** - The existence of an annual Equity Scorecard (starting with the 2018-2019 academic year) for the Prince William County school division is a promising start to looking into where disparities exist and what patterns can be derived from the data presented. This living set of documents allows for some measured comparisons between various data points across school years and can help establish specific benchmarks for PWCS. The commitment introduced in the Digital Equity Plan (also referenced in the 2018-2019 Equity Scorecard) for 1:1 computer access for students was realized in part due to the environment brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic response but also due to it being a stated goal of the school division. This practice is a step towards alleviating some of the equity issues surrounding access to technology for students.

The school division has also made impressive strides in increasing on-time graduation rates for most population subgroups identified in the Equity Scorecard (with the notable exception of Hispanic/Latino students). This rate appears to have been impacted slightly by the 2020-2021 school year numbers, but there is an upward trajectory when viewing the numbers in five-year increments from 2009-2019. The increase for Black/African American students in this period was ten percentage points, seven percentage points for Asian students, and seven percentage points for White students.

Another identified best practice is a downward trend in disciplinary data. This most notably includes decreases in elementary and middle school students with exclusionary discipline across ethnicity and other demographic groups (economically disadvantaged, ELL, and SPED). The percentage of Black/African American students with exclusionary discipline went down two points while each of the other identified ethnic groups saw a one percent decline between 2017 and 2019. The numbers for 2019-2020 were reduced as well, but due to a much-shorter academic year, they do not represent the same breadth of time as the other years and are undoubtedly impacted by this fact. Conversely, high school student rates stayed constant or increased during the same period. Between 2017 and 2019, the overall percentage of students with discipline referrals also decreased by one point across virtually all student population subgroups.

Challenges and Committee's Recommendations to Resolve:

a. Challenges

- i. Challenge 1: The School Resource Officer program was repeatedly mentioned in presentations by community leaders and organizations to the Commission and the public. Many of these comments raised issues with the current program and its impact on specific students of color. Prince William County organizations, which included VOICE, NAACP, Unity in the Community, and CASA, called for a serious overhaul of the current program or an end to the program altogether. Much of the community concern was elevated by news articles surrounding a 2019 report from the Department of Juvenile Justice that showed a staggering number of school disorderly conduct charges against students in Prince William County Public Schools. Between the fiscal year 2016 to 2018, Prince William County Schools had the highest number of school disorderly conduct complaints (216) from schools, many of which were filed by School Resource Officers. Black/African American students make up roughly 20% of the Prince William County Public Schools' student population. Between 2017 and 2019, Black/African American students accounted for half of all school-based disorderly conduct charges. These rates mirror the disparities seen in other aspects of school discipline and underscore the need for a deeper look into the causes of the disparities. Prince William County Police officials point out that only 24.7% of the total intake complaints (including disorderly conduct and other offenses) were eventually petitioned by the School Resource Officers. The remainder were handled informally (through diversion, informal counseling, mediation, etc.). The resulting diversion programs are only offered as an option after the School Resource Officer's complaint has been filed and highlights the absence (or limited availability) of good programming options without a complaint needing to be filed. In 2020, Virginia House Bill 256 made it unlawful to charge students in school or on the school bus with disorderly conduct to reduce the impact of such charges on Virginia's youth.

While the program is a partnership between the school district and the police department, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that governs the relationship does not explicitly address the delineation of roles between School Resources Officers, school security specialists, and school administration as it relates to student discipline. The document deals mainly with the provision of resources, evaluation of performance, information sharing, and general guidelines of cooperation on law enforcement issues between the school and the police officer. Furthermore, when combined with the site-based operation of Prince William County public schools, the role a School Resource Officer plays in a school building becomes almost solely dependent on the interactions

between specific school administrative teams and the School Resource Officer. A School Resource Officer at one school, for example, may have daily functions which differ considerably from that of another officer in a different building. This could be a factor that impacts the involvement of the police in discipline matters that school officials otherwise address per the Prince William County Code of Behavior. The MOU is approved yearly by the Prince William County School Board, but it has not undergone significant changes or revisions in recent years.

The absence of clear official channels for providing performance-related feedback on individual School Resource Officers, the program, or on the MOU largely excludes Prince William County residents from being involved with a program that affects close to 90,000 of our youngest community members. Students, staff, or other individuals may file a complaint or provide positive feedback by contacting the commanding officer, filing a complaint on any member of the police on the Prince William County Police website, or visiting a police station to register their comments/complaint. However, this information is not readily available to the public on the Prince William County Public Schools websites. Additionally, it limits accessibility for communities that are more hesitant to interact with the police (as referenced in Police Chief Newsham's address to the Commission and comments by various community organizations) and for students that may not have the resources to file a complaint outside of the school building. Student, administration, and community feedback is also not incorporated into a School Resource Officer's performance review, which is already, according to the MOU, conducted solely by the unit commanding officer. Public comment time and community organization listening sessions held by the Commission have already shown that Prince William County residents have valuable feedback to share about the School Resource Officer program.

- ii. Challenge 2: While some data related to disciplinary actions is available and was highlighted as a best practice in the preceding section, there are vast growth areas in this arena. The available data is not disaggregated beyond the usual categories that assign singular identities to students (ELL or special education or Black/American, etc.). The data is also provided in percentages and on a district level, which does not account for individual school populations or includes a composition index or a relative risk ratio for any subgroups. This approach to data collection and presentation will be discussed further in the Equity Scorecard section of the report as the discipline data was presented as a part of that report. There remain deep disparities along racial lines that persist year over year from the available data. The percentage of Black/African American high school students with exclusionary discipline was at least three times that of White and Asian students from 2016-2020. The rate of

Hispanic/Latino high school students with exclusionary discipline was also over two times that of White and Asian students from 2016-2020. While middle school data shows a decrease in the overall exclusionary discipline (as highlighted in the best practice section), the disparity between Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students and the White and Asian populations remains. A smaller percentage of elementary-level students have exclusionary discipline, but these groups also see similar disparities.

Further analysis is necessary that considers the composite index of each school site and other factors that may contribute to these disparities, regardless of the student's level of study. Sharing the discipline data in such a manner is reserved for a limited audience (administrators who may or may not share it with their community) and is not available to the public. There is, therefore, a lack of transparency on what categories of reporting are mandated and at what level. Whereas some schools might use this data to proactively prepare their discipline strategies and programs for the coming years (by including staff and community partners), other schools may not use their available data similarly. There does not appear to be a platform or protocol for sharing best practices across the division; especially, best practices that effectively reduce the need for disciplinary actions in schools. This highlights the final point that there does not appear to be a universal urgency in pursuing preventative measures for disciplinary issues.

The public availability of the Equity Scorecard has increased transparency concerning academic performance, participation, demographic and discipline data from the school district. However, the presentation of this data is not multi-dimensional and relies on categorizing students within one group alone instead of approaching data analysis from an intersectional lens. For example, students are either categorized by race or special education, or economic or English language status and not broken down further. There are also no geographical considerations in the presentation of the data considering the size of Prince William County. While it would be impractical to include every cross-section of the population in the Equity Scorecard, the data analysis that goes into preparing the information should involve considering the above-referenced information. Also absent from the data presentation are relative risk ratios, which would provide a clearer picture of the risk of students of color (particularly Black/African American and/or Hispanic/Latino students) to experience disproportionate discipline and academic outcomes compared to all other subgroups.

Racial disparities are present in almost all the data categories included in the Equity Scorecard. These disparities show themselves not just in performance but also in program participation and demographic representation. Despite making up 72 percent of the

student population in 2021, non-White individuals only make up 26 percent of the instructional staff and 31 percent of the administrative staff. There is also an underrepresentation of non-Asian students of color in the gifted program at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, with the rate of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students being almost half of Asian and White students. This underrepresentation is also present at the high school level in advanced and dual enrollment programs. However, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino students are participating in Career and Technical Education programs at a higher rate than other racial subgroups. Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students continue to be overrepresented in all discipline related categories (referrals and exclusionary discipline).

One of the strengths of PWCS has been in increasing the overall graduation rate of students. Despite this, we see that while the Hispanic/Latino student graduation rate increased sixteen points between 2009 and 2019, that increase was limited to 2009-2014. The number stayed at 84 percent until 2019 (with a two-point rise since then). The opportunity gaps in math, reading, writing, science and history SOL scores range from ten to twenty percentage points for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students compared to Asian and White student populations. This trend continues despite significant advances in math SOL scores for the 2018-2019 school year for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students. While changes in the number of verified SOL credits needed for graduation may continue to help increase graduation rates, the type of diplomas awarded also show significant racial disparities. An Advanced Studies diploma is an important predictor of student enrollment and success in postsecondary institutions. A Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) study found that a graduate with an Advanced Studies diploma is 33 percent more likely to enroll in a postsecondary institution and twice as likely to graduate after four years. While Asian and White students earned Advanced Studies diplomas at rates of 70 and 62 percent, respectively, only 47 percent of Black/African American students and 39 percent of Hispanic/Latino students graduated with an Advanced Studies diploma in 2021. These disparities remain relatively consistent for the previous years reported in the Equity Scorecard. Any evaluation of the success of graduation rates must also consider the type of diplomas that students receive upon graduation. It is also noteworthy that the percentage of students not making it to graduation is drastically higher for Hispanic/Latino students than any other racial group included in the reporting. The 2019-2021 overall dropout rate was five percent, yet that rate was eleven percent for Hispanic/Latino students. This rate is nearly four times higher than that for Black/African American students and eleven times higher than the rate for White students.

iii. Challenge 3: Finally, while the annual presentation of data through the Equity Scorecard is critical to increasing transparency for the school district, it is also equally important to be transparent about the actions taken to alleviate the disparities brought to light by the data. The reporting categories are inconsistent year over year, and comparisons are not readily apparent to community stakeholders. There is no inclusion of accountability measures for reporting the data or how the district holds itself accountable for improving performance for the categories included in the Equity Scorecard. While this information may be included in other presentations to the School Board or in internal documents, it remains uncoupled from the presentation of the Equity Scorecard, which is where many of the community stakeholders witness the opportunity gaps and racial disparities.

b. Recommendations

- i. To continue Further study of jurisdictions that have implemented alternatives to School Resource Officer programs for impacts on racial disparities, discipline issues and climate surveys.¹⁶
- ii. Evaluate the impact of SROs on school safety.
- iii. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of data on non-criminal incidents involving SROs.
- iv. Evaluate impact of SRO presence on school climate.¹⁷
- v. Increase transparency in the MOU review process by inviting stakeholders to participate in the drafting process.
- vi. Increase diversion programs available to schools/ SROs without a complaint being made.
- vii. Delineate roles of SROs and school safety specialists and administrative staff.
- viii. Formalize feedback process from the community (students, teachers, parents, etc.) on SRO performance.
- ix. Increase diversity of SRO pool to reflect the populations that are served (to include linguistic capacity).
- x. Formalize SRO curriculum in schools to be more standardized across the district.
- xi. Conduct an equity audit of Prince William County Public Schools

¹⁶ https://dailyprogress.com/news/local/education/county-schools-plan-to-replace-resource-officers-with-safety-coaches/article_54c04514-8209-11eb-87b8-dfb3f7bd09c3.html

¹⁷ <https://strategiesforyouth.org/sitefiles/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/How-Do-SROs-Impact-Racial-Equity-in-Schools.pdf>

systems of discipline.¹⁸

- xii. Review PWCS exclusionary discipline process/data to evaluate it for benefits in student academic, social and behavioral outcomes.¹⁹
- xiii. Increase reporting categories to include relative risk ratios, composition indices and the relative difference in composition in discipline disparities.²⁰
- xiv. Use data to inform policy and practice by implementing P-D-S-A like processes at the school and district levels to understand and reduce disproportionalities in discipline data.²¹
- xv. Assemble stakeholders from the community and school staff and students to identify gaps and select which key indicators to measure and track.²²
- xvi. Share findings on climate, discipline and safety data across the division (develop policy on data sharing and to whom and when).²³
- xvii. Use data on discipline in conjunction with other academic and safety indicators.²⁴
- xviii. Collect anecdotal evidence to evaluate the impact of strategies that are being put into place to target disparities in discipline.²⁵
- xix. Develop overall district and school specific strategies to expand social-emotional learning programs/restorative practices.²⁶
- xx. Make sharing best practices between schools easier, more transparent and regularized.
- xxi. Quarterly updates on Equity Scorecard progress to identify benchmarks and report on the implementation of programs to alleviate disparities.
- xxii. Identify accountability measures for improving data included in the Equity Scorecard.
- xxiii. Include a breakdown of data into subcategories of demographic groups (i.e., English Language Learner (ELL) data broken down by

¹⁸[https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/files/BCZUWL7C75CE/\\$file/External%20Expert%20for%20Equity%20Report-FCPS.Discipline%20report.Final.6.9.19.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/files/BCZUWL7C75CE/$file/External%20Expert%20for%20Equity%20Report-FCPS.Discipline%20report.Final.6.9.19.pdf)

¹⁹ <https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/events/resources/school-discipline-data-indicators.pdf>

²⁰ https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2017240.pdf and

<https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/perspectives/understanding-disproportionality-part-2-measuring-disproportionality-2019>

²¹ https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2017240.pdf

²² <https://healthysafechildren.org/sites/default/files/Data-Collection-Brief-508.pdf>

²³ <https://healthysafechildren.org/sites/default/files/Data-Collection-Brief-508.pdf>

²⁴ <https://healthysafechildren.org/sites/default/files/Data-Collection-Brief-508.pdf>

²⁵ <https://healthysafechildren.org/sites/default/files/Data-Collection-Brief-508.pdf>

²⁶ <https://mychesterfieldschools.com/family-and-community-engagement/equity-in-ccps/>

special education, race, etc.).

- xxiv. Additional reporting on Title 1 funding allocation and what steps are being taken to drive outcomes (i.e., teacher placement).
- xxv. Increased transparency in how and where teachers are placed in schools. within the school district.
- xxvi. Explore establishing teacher incentive programs at lowest performing schools.²⁷
- xxvii. Assemble stakeholders from the community and school staff and students to identify gaps and select which key indicators to measure and track.²⁸
- xxviii. Increase reporting categories to include relative risk ratios, composition indices and relative difference in composition in academic disparities.²⁹
- xxix. Study how student and staff mindsets impact student academic outcomes through focus groups, updated school climate surveys and data analysis.³⁰
- xxx. Conduct an audit of school-based resources to assess level of inequity in facilities, technology and instructional materials.³¹
- xxxi. Establish new (and expand on existing) partnerships with higher education teacher preparatory programs to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to specifically address school climate and instructional strategies for diverse students.³²
- xxxii. Develop monitoring benchmarks and strategies for each area of disparity identified in the equity scorecard at the school and district levels.³³
- xxxiii. Provide specific in-house and contracted interventions and services to support students who have increasing/continuous attendance and discipline problems to reduce the number of dropouts in Hispanic/Latino and other populations.³⁴

²⁷ <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22146>

²⁸ <https://healthysafekids.org/sites/default/files/Data-Collection-Brief-508.pdf>

²⁹ https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2017240.pdf and

<https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/perspectives/understanding-disproportionality-part-2-measuring-disproportionality-2019>

³⁰ <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/how-to-improve-student-educational-outcomes-new-insights-from-data-analytics>

³¹ [https://www.capss.org/uploaded/2014_Redesign/Leadership_Development/Student-](https://www.capss.org/uploaded/2014_Redesign/Leadership_Development/Student-Centered_Learning_NEWSLETTERS/44_june_2018/Kamm-Solutions_Equity-and-Opportunity_Closing-the-Achievement-Gap.pdf)

[Centered_Learning_NEWSLETTERS/44_june_2018/Kamm-Solutions_Equity-and-Opportunity_Closing-the-Achievement-Gap.pdf](https://www.capss.org/uploaded/2014_Redesign/Leadership_Development/Student-Centered_Learning_NEWSLETTERS/44_june_2018/Kamm-Solutions_Equity-and-Opportunity_Closing-the-Achievement-Gap.pdf)

³² http://www.cwu.edu/teaching-learning/sites/cts.cwu.edu.teaching-learning/files/documents/afam_achievement_gap_report.pdf

³³ http://www.cwu.edu/teaching-learning/sites/cts.cwu.edu.teaching-learning/files/documents/afam_achievement_gap_report.pdf

³⁴ http://www.cwu.edu/teaching-learning/sites/cts.cwu.edu.teaching-learning/files/documents/afam_achievement_gap_report.pdf

- xxxiv. Evaluate success of “Growing Our Own Program” in placement and retention of educators of color in Prince William County Public Schools.
- xxxv. Include specific references in Equity Scorecard on how COVID has impacted the disparities (positively or negatively).³⁵

³⁵ <https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2018-11-23/black-teachers-improve-outcomes-for-black-students>

IV. COMMISSION'S OVERALL CONCLUSION

Although Prince William County is the 10th most diverse County in the nation, there are areas of improvement as notated throughout the report that will cultivate a more equitable and inclusive government, school system, and police department.

The Racial and Social Justice Commission identified “issues of concern and best practices on the police department’s policies and practices, provision of government services, and the workforce providing these services, and public education.”³⁶ The Commission spent the last 10-months collecting and reviewing data, conducting listening sessions, and hearing citizen comments. However, 10-months is not enough time to review all policies and procedures in policing, government services and education, encourage more constituent participation, and communicate with county and school employees either in-person or by conducting surveys.

The overall recommendation is that the Racial and Social Justice Commission continue to identify best practices, identify additional issues of concern, collect and review education's local data, and conduct a deeper review of the police department's and County government's policies and procedures. Additionally, the Commission will help the County to continue improving its best performances and serve as an accountability partner with the police department, county government, and school system, ensuring the recommendations throughout the report are reviewed, discussed, and implemented. The sustainability of the Commission allows the people of color to have confidence and assurance that the Board of County Supervisor’s priority is to continue to make sure all county citizens are treated equitably and fairly.

³⁶ <https://www.pwcva.gov/department/racial-social-justice-commission/overview>