



CASE STUDY | PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Developing an Equity-Focused District Strategic Plan

A Maryland public school district partnered with Hanover to build a data-driven strategic planning process focused on equity and cultural responsiveness.

## THE DISTRICT

Prince George's County Public Schools

## LOCATION

Upper Marlboro, Maryland

## THE CHALLENGE

Synthesize districtwide data to develop a strategic plan framework and monitoring structure

## HANOVER SOLUTIONS

Strategic Planning, Benchmarking, Surveys, Focus Groups, Data Analysis

With a mission to provide a transformative educational experience anchored by excellence in equity, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is the second largest school system in Maryland, proudly serving a diverse student population from urban, suburban, and rural communities.

In 2020-21, the district's Board of Education and the leadership team initiated an inclusive process to build a five-year strategic plan that reflected as many voices as possible, guided by a commitment to ensure all schools support students equitably.

As they gathered community feedback, PGCPS collaborated with Hanover Research to analyze the data, identify goals and indicators, and build reporting mechanisms.

## THE CHALLENGE: BUILDING A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Partnering with Hanover Research provided PGCPS with the additional support the district needed to carry out the planning and implementation phases.

Hanover's team conducted an equity analysis of five-year trend data of student behavioral and academic outcomes. The analysis revealed disparities across racial/ethnicity, economic, gender, English learner, and special needs student service groups.

*"The beauty of the equity dashboard is that every employee can see the under- and over- representation across different student groups. While we could have collected some of this data on our own, the analysis would have suffered, and we wouldn't have had that external push to investigate critical feedback. Hanover allowed us to have more critical conversations."*

**David Rease**  
*Director of Equity, Diversity and Belonging*

Based on this baseline data along with benchmark data from other districts, PGCPS, in partnership with Hanover, synthesized four aspirational goals to describe the desired outcomes of transformation:

- Attain educational excellence
- Achieve excellence in equity
- Realize workforce and operational excellence
- Increase awareness of mental health and wellness linkage to learning

## THE SOLUTION: ESTABLISHING A MEANINGFUL EQUITY FRAMEWORK

### EQUITY DASHBOARD

Hanover created an equity dashboard, which helped employees access district data and identify new intersectional insights (for example, investigating chronic absenteeism rates among female English language learners).

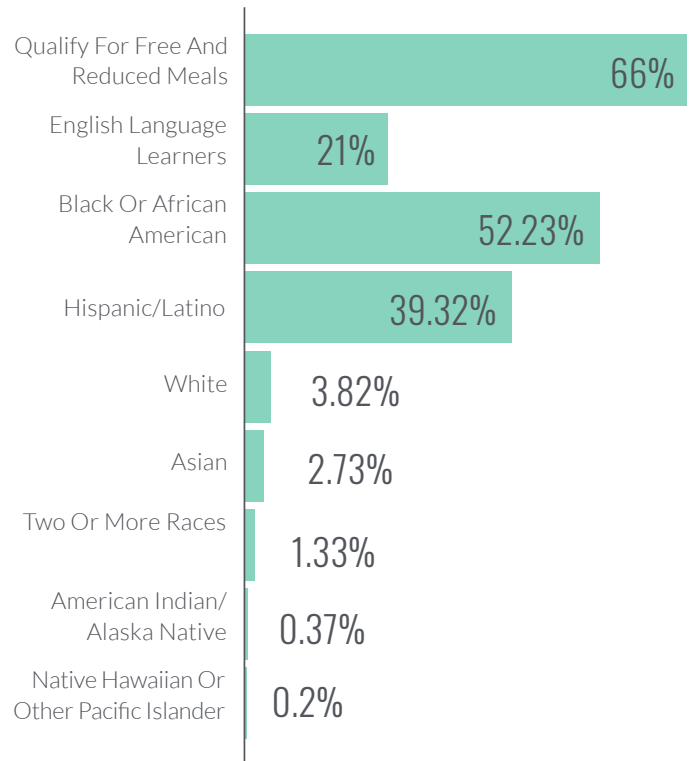
### COMMUNITY INPUT

To round out the quantitative data, Hanover also worked with the district to understand lived experiences in the community through qualitative research, including a diagnostic survey, a climate and culture survey, focus groups, and districtwide discussions. District administrators used an “illuminate, refute, confirm” feedback process to capture groups’ input and then reflect it back to them in videos so they could see how their comments were represented. They also held 50 public video meetings to exchange ideas and prioritize needs.

### METRICS AND MONITORING

The planning process yielded over 100 performance indicators to achieve the desired outcome goals. Working with Hanover, PGCPS staff created a multi-tiered set of critical success indicators (CSIs) and metrics that are tied to the plan’s goals and imperatives. Then reporting and monitoring tools were developed to track the progress on each CSI and help each office build its own progress-reporting capacity.

### PGCPS STUDENT PROFILE



## THE OUTCOME: A CLEAR PATH TO STRATEGIC ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The quantitative and qualitative data analysis and progress monitoring plans culminated into a comprehensive strategic framework that includes a vision, mission, four goals, and five imperatives focused on equity and cultural responsiveness. To reach its targets by 2026, the district now has in place:

- An equity-focused strategic plan vetted and validated by thousands of parents, students, staff, and community members
- A set of clear outcome goals that align with measurable success indicators
- A plan for focused implementation
- A monitoring system to evaluate changes and report on progress over time
- An equity dashboard outlining progress in key metrics across student groups
- Continued access to benchmarking and best practice data to stay abreast of national trends

Looking to the future, the district is also working with Hanover to create a public-facing version of the equity dashboard to help the community follow the district’s progress on its ambitious goals for transformative change.

---

“Our monitoring tool has allowed us to do progress reports twice a year, plus an annual report at the culmination of the school year. After each report, we meet with the leadership team to review our success indicators and determine if we need to make any modifications. This has allowed us to assess if we are on the right track and measuring the right things, ensuring the plan remains relevant.”

Vanessa Weatherington  
Director of Strategic Planning & Resource Management

---