

What is PPE?

Participatory evaluation empowers the people who are closest to the issue to take the lead in the evaluation -- gathering input from others in the community, figuring out what's working and what's not working, and making recommendations about what needs to change. We believe students and parents have experiences and expertise about their communities that needs to be heard. Through cultural humility, change happens *with the community, not to or for the community*. MPS has two participatory evaluation programs: [Parent Participatory Evaluation](#) (PPE) and [Youth Participatory Evaluation](#) (YPE).

In 2018-2019, parents representing our American Indian, African American, Hmong, LatinX, and Somali communities designed a culturally-relevant data collection process to engage parents in their communities in identifying: "How can a school **value and respect** your child for who they are?" Parent Evaluators were trained on three data collection methods—surveys, focus groups, and participatory methods (such as sticker voting or a graffiti wall). Parents analyzed the data they collected and presented their [preliminary findings and recommendations](#) to MPS leadership in the fall. Parent Evaluators brought cultural innovations to the research process and were able to reach many more parents from these communities than previous efforts by the Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (REA) department. By the end of the school year, parents connected with 2,272 other parents and presented the District with eleven areas to address.



Project Themes & Findings

HOW CAN A SCHOOL VALUE AND RESPECT YOUR CHILD FOR WHO THEY ARE?



Pedagogy of Equity: Parents want MPS to create an educational experience that honors the **cultural and linguistic diversity** of the student population.

- [Parents feel the MPS academic experience does not reflect and value the languages, cultures, and histories of MPS students.](#)
- [Parents expect staff to create safe learning environments by addressing issues of bullying and student conflict.](#)
- [Parents need better communication about schools' expectations for behavior, as well as equitable treatment in response to behavior.](#)
- [Parents of students in Special Education programming want to better understand Special Education services and the progress their child is making.](#)



Families as Education Partners: Parents of color need schools to break down barriers so they can be **partners in their child's education**.

- [Parents want to be partners in their child's education, but need schoolwide structures to support them in this role.](#)
- [Parents seek more positive communication from the District and their child's school.](#)
- [Parents want to be able to communicate with school staff, but often do not find multilingual staff or interpreters at MPS schools.](#)
- [Parents find it essential that schools make their cultures visible by creating and displaying culturally-specific works and languages, and acknowledging important cultural holidays.](#)



Equity in Operations: Parents want to be sure their child has a **safe and equitable school experience**.

- [MPS must prioritize hiring staff who represent the students who attend schools in the District.](#)
- [Parents want MPS staff to know more about their students' cultural histories, values, and practices.](#)
- [It is important to many parents that MPS provide transportation to all students.](#)

Systems Change Framework

While some technical solutions arose from the parents' research, the most pervasive theme is a need to **focus on systems change**, which is defined as “**shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place** (Kania, Kramer, Senge 2018).” Systems change requires MPS to address mindsets, build relationships, and empower parents in order to create equitable and effective solutions.



Advocate for Community-Driven Solutions Most respondents in PPE projects have advocated for changes in practices or resources at their child's school. Through their research, Parent Evaluators have identified common themes that suggest significant changes in policies, practices, and resource allocations. These changes, however, cannot be made without an ongoing and intentional partnership with the diverse Minneapolis community.

Build Relationships & Redistribute Power Parents want authentic and respectful relationships with the District and their child's school. They want more proactive, transparent, and accessible communication that will allow them to partner with MPS. When they have questions or concerns, they want staff to demonstrate they care through their actions, not false promises.

Shift Mindsets Parents want to be valued as educational partners and for their expertise in language, culture, and race.

Accountability Grounded in Trust & Cultural Humility

Cultural Humility is a **lifelong process** of **self-reflection, self-critique** and commitment to **understanding and respecting different points of view**, and **engaging with others humbly, authentically** and from a place of **learning**.
(Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).

Systems change takes time and shifting mindsets can take even longer. To honor and keep parent trust, the PPE **accountability model** must rely on continued progress monitoring and ongoing communication with participants and their community connections.

Shared power, and intentional time and investment by MPS senior leadership, are critical factors that serve as catalysts in the continuous cycle of systems change.

To create buy-in, strengthen trust, and celebrate authentic relationships within Minneapolis Public Schools, collaboration and responsibility are key determinates of success.

