1a. How could ELPS improve in terms of encouraging diversity among its employees?

The Marble Equity Team advocates strongly for a diverse body of ELPS employees that represents proportionally the make-up of the ELPS student body, and that this includes hiring more people of color for teaching and leadership roles within our schools. We support deliberate, equity-driven hiring practices that intentionally seek out diverse candidates, including posting open positions widely and in venues likely to reach a diverse audience and creating hiring committees that include diverse members and employ equitable and culturally relevant systems for evaluating job candidates. We further believe that we need to have a support system in place in our schools to make the environment a place where new teachers, especially those of color, feel welcome and can thrive.

We firmly believe that creating a more diverse and inclusive teaching staff in our school district is essential.

1b. What actions do you think administrators of the board of education should take?

Increasing the number of teachers of color is going to require progressive, mindful and targeted hiring practices, intentional preparation, and ongoing support by the Board of Education and superintendent.

Some promising practices that have had positive results across the country include:

- **Increased Diversity and Opportunity in Hiring:**
  - Post all district positions on a large number of job search websites, many of which include search functions to allow hiring committees to focus on diversity criteria.
  - Seek to attract candidates from HBCU’s (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) with strong programs in education including developing relationships with key faculty in those programs and posting ELPS positions at those schools.
  - Send ELPS representatives to recruit at job fairs and in Education Departments at Michigan schools other than MSU, including Eastern Michigan University, Wayne State University, etc.
  - Hire earlier in the year to attract and secure strong candidates. Districts can offer incentives for teachers to announce their resignation, retirement, and transfer intentions in early spring so that they can recruit new hires earlier in the season.
Create diverse hiring committees including community stakeholders.
Include teachers of color in the hiring process in meaningful ways.
Compensate teachers for attending recruitment fairs and participating on hiring committees.
Develop clear and transparent hiring criteria that recognizes and rewards a variety of candidate assets in order to ensure hiring practices that are culturally relevant and minimize implicit biases of hiring committee members.

- **Supportive Systems for Teacher Retention:**
  - Establish mentoring and support programs that promote collaboration and peer feedback among teachers.
  - Support teacher’s access to educational seminars, webinars, and other professional development that furthers their advancement as effective educators equipped to teach in this diverse and inclusive environment.
  - Provide ongoing professional development for principals to hone the leadership skills necessary to create a collaborative and supportive work environment for a diverse teaching faculty.

- **Advocating for Systemic Change at the Local, State, and Federal Level:**
  - In addition to the above-mentioned local actions, we believe that the ELPS School Board should advocate for the following changes at the local, state, and federal level that promote greater diversity and inclusion in the field of education:
  - Reexamination and the amelioration of the teacher licensing system.
  - The creation of service scholarships and loan forgiveness programs that promote diversity in teaching.
  - Fund teacher residencies with partnerships between districts and universities that subsidize and improve teachers’ training, tutoring, exam stipends, job placement services, etc.
  - Create local and state data systems that monitor and reward the racial diversity of enrollees in preparation programs.
  - Support improved principal preparation at the local and state level by strengthening program accreditation and licensure standards to ensure that principals have experience in schools with diverse students and staff.
  - Take advantage of Title II’s optional 3% leadership set-aside funds that can enable states to strengthen the quality of school leaders.

2. **What are the benefits of a diverse faculty for ELPS students?**
Research shows that teachers of color help close achievement gaps for students of color, improve academic performance of students, especially students of color, improve graduation rates, increase aspirations to attend college, increase positive perceptions of people of color, increase resources for students, mitigate feelings of isolation and frustration, and reduce chronic absenteeism. Children of color need to see themselves in the role models and
authority figures they encounter in school in order to promote pride, feelings of being understood, and combat the very real and consequential implicit biases of those with privilege and power. Furthermore, white children need to grow up in schools where leadership and authority are shared by people of color, and where white privilege is not the unquestioned norm. The experience young children have of authority and leadership in schools not only impacts their view of education in general and their own educational success, but it influences the views they carry out into the world with them about how things should be and what they can achieve.

3. Do you see the MET playing a role in this situation?

The Marble Equity Team is committed to advocating for an equitable, inclusive and respectful educational experience for students, families, and staff members of all races, genders, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, abilities, home or first languages, religions, national origins and ages. One critical step toward achieving this mission is to recognize the importance of diversity in the educational leadership of our schools. On January 23, 2019, we penned a letter to the Board of Education, specifically addressing teacher diversity within East Lansing Public Schools. We felt that despite the diversity in the student population at our school and throughout our district, the teacher population did not represent the diversity of the students they teach.

We outlined many of the actions described above that the district could take to promote and ensure greater diversity among the educational faculty. In addition, we met with Superintendent Dori Leyko to discuss hiring practices and ideas for change. We on the Marble Equity Team would welcome the opportunity to be involved in future collaborations moving these goals forward.