

The Northshore Story

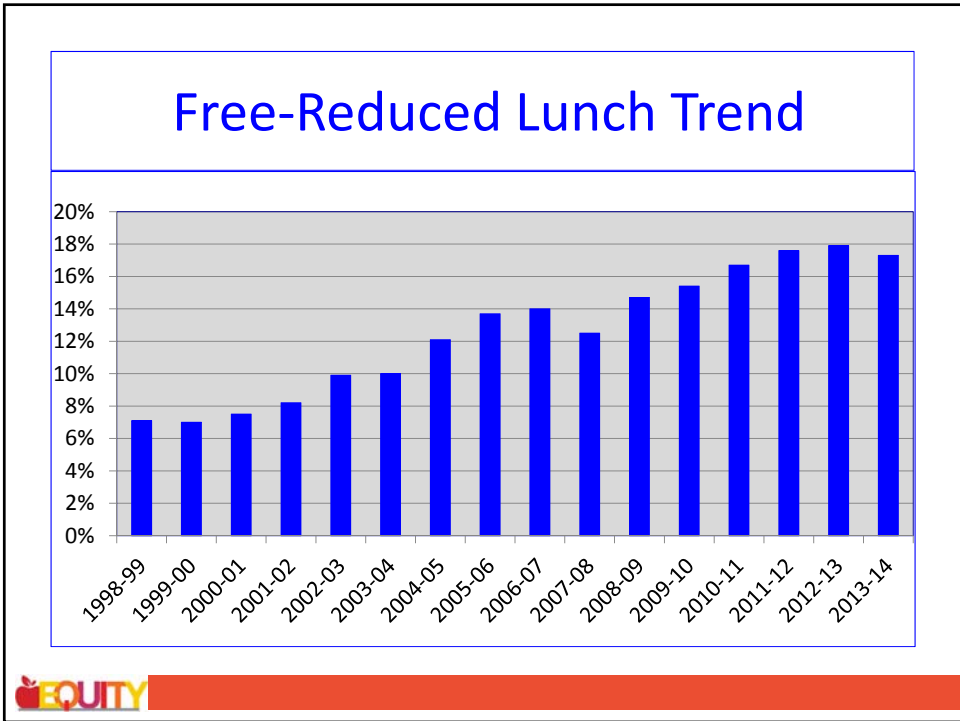
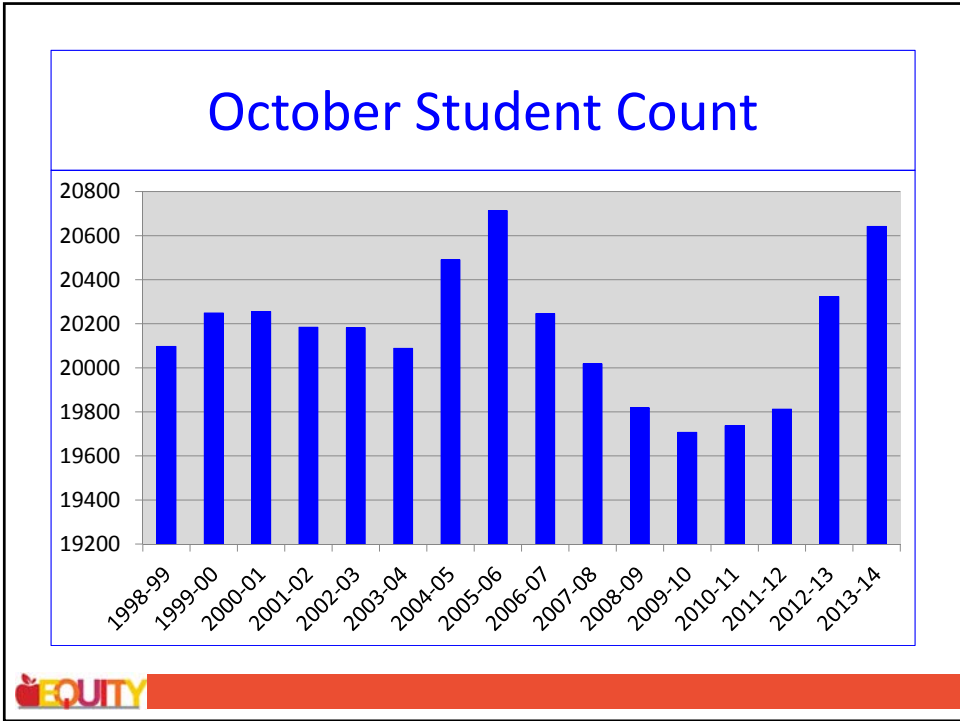
One district's journey to an equity and diversity initiative

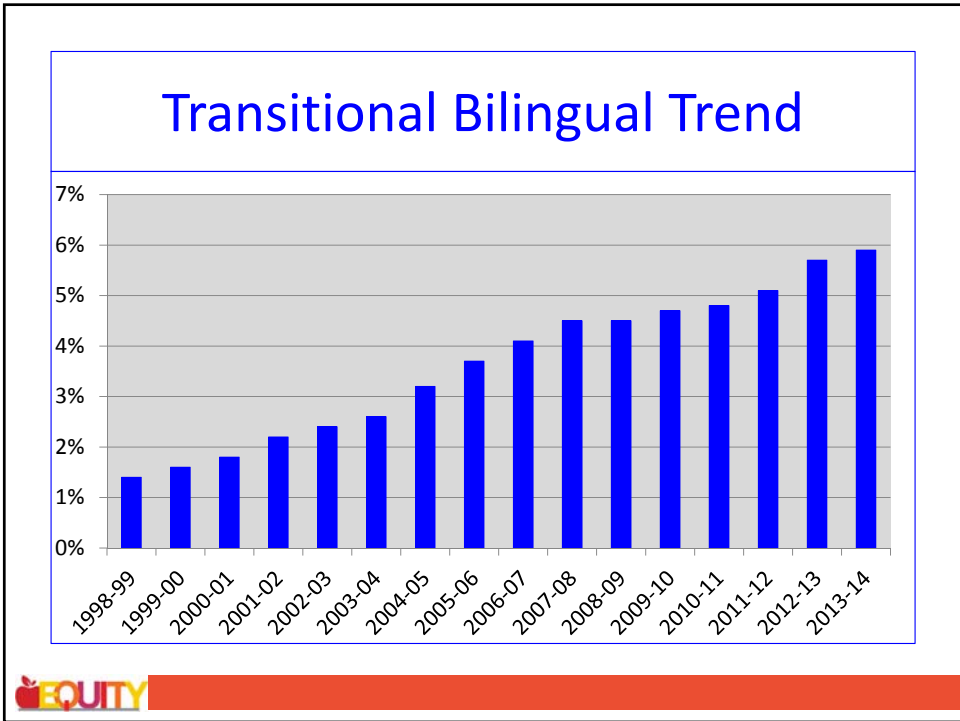
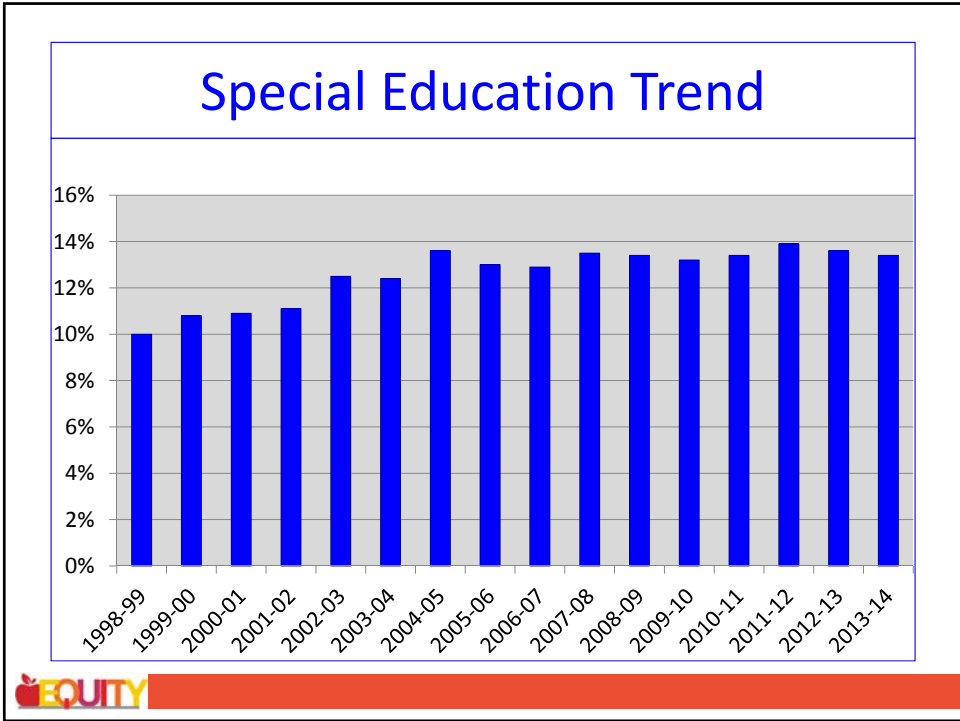


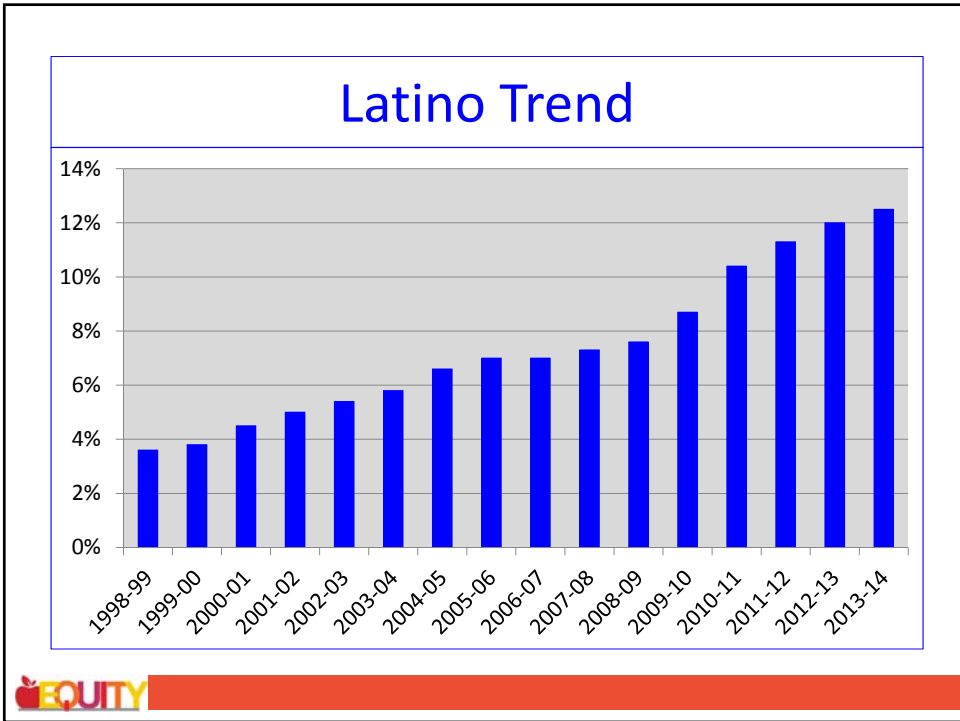
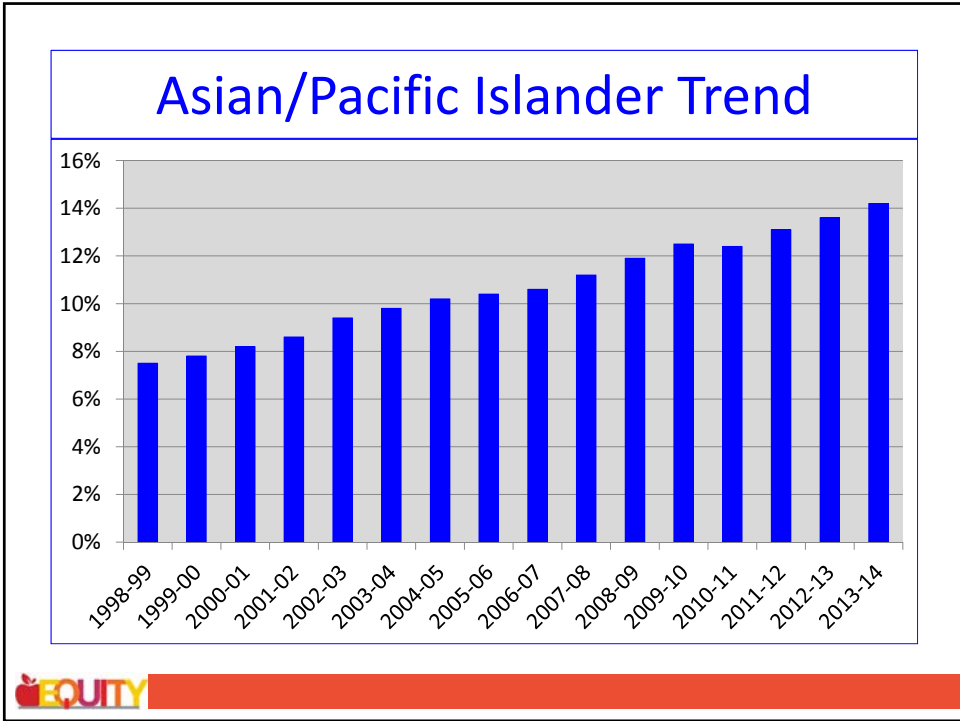
“It’s not your mama’s Northshore anymore...”

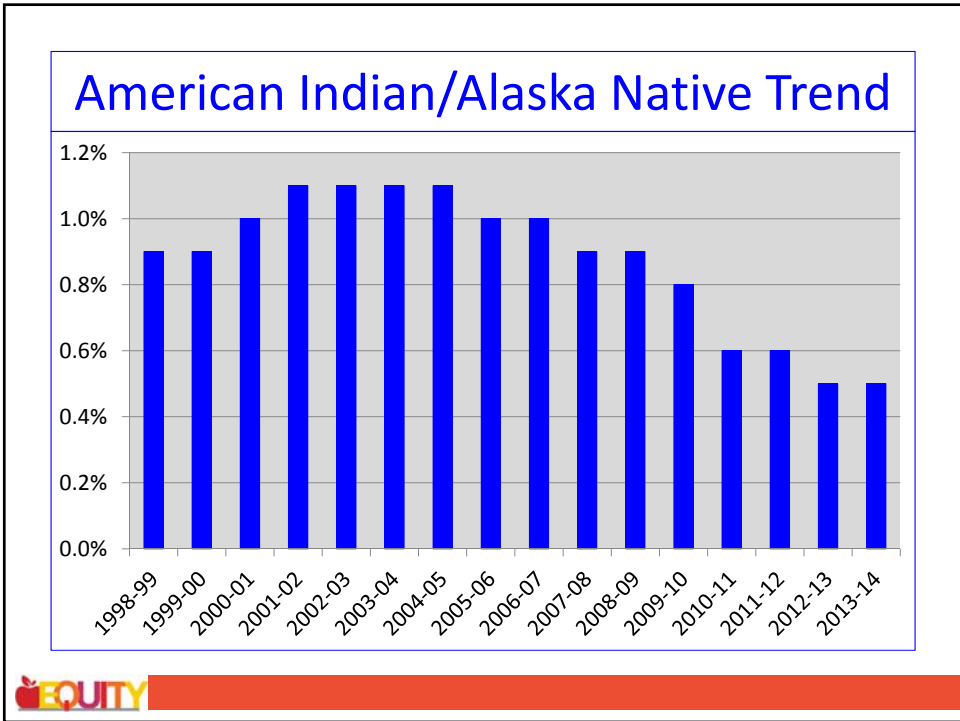
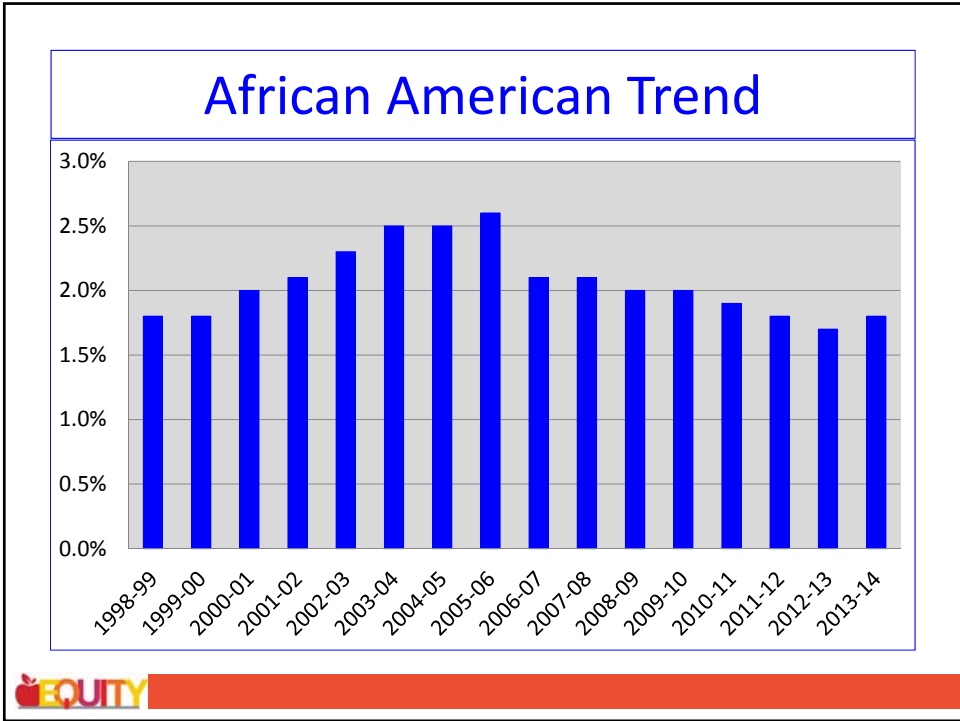
- Steadily changing demographics
- Influence of the Bothell Hindu Temple, Islamic Center of Bothell
- And still many multi-generational Northshore families within the larger community (strong sense of “tradition” and continuity)

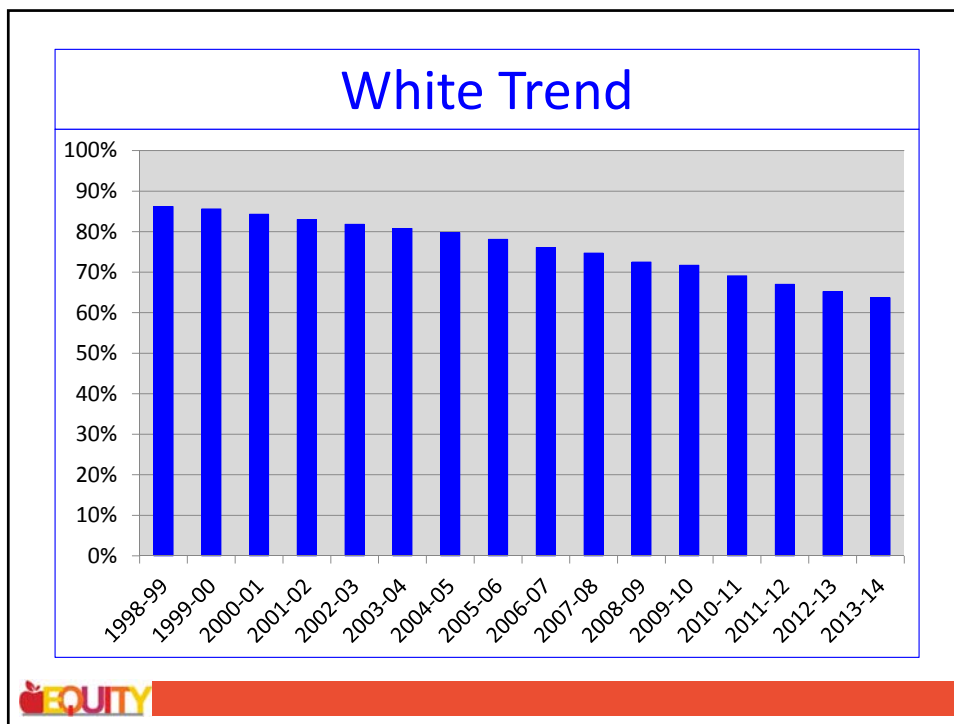












NSD Employee Demographics

Employee Group	Asian	African American	Native American Alaskan Native	Pacific Islander	Hispanic Latino	White	Total % White
Food Service	15			2	10	76	74%
Bus Mechanic	1	1			1	4	57%
Principals	3	1			1	48	91%
Asst Supt/Exec Dir	1					5	83%
Office Professionals	5	1	1	1	3	133	92%
Paraeducators	19	5	12	3	22	439	88%
Professional Tech	4		2		2	47	85%
Central Office Directors	3	1				28	88%
Teachers	79	14	16	3	32	1164	89%
Grounds Employees			1			8	89%
Trades	3				2	12	71%
Warehouse Drivers						8	100%
Custodians	18	4	2	2	17	41	49%
Bus Drivers	3	2	5	1	1	101	89%
Grand Total	154	29	39	12	91	2114	87%

EQUITY

Recognizing the changes...

- Primary district agenda focused on enrollment growth, a new high school, grade re-configuration and boundary adjustments
- Yet were still having growing discussions and recognition of the need to focus greater time and attention around equity/diversity and our changing demographics



And then life gets in the way...

- Spray painted hate messages on the Hindu Temple and adjacent junior high
- On-line threats and racially charged comments by a white junior high student towards 3 African-American students
 - Occurred in the most affluent and least diverse region of the district
 - Many complicating dynamics...most of which we could not discuss publicly



Failing the 5 o'clock news test...

- <http://legacy.king5.com/story/news/local/2015/05/27/northshore-school-district-timbercrest-junior-high-racist-threats/27998455/>



Reaction...

- Viral – Facebook, social media, Overlake Church
- Became a “district” issue; quickly bypassed the school
- Unsuccessfully playing catch up to the spread of (mis)information
- Could not share information most desired, creating a further downward spiral



Rage...

- Portrayed in a broader context of district-wide institutional racism
- Other stories and examples surfaced, further fueling the fire
- All occurring in the midst of nightly “Black Lives Matters” news coverage



Respect...

- 2 hours + of public comment in a packed board room with news cameras rolling
- Knew we needed to listen to the story of each person who felt the need to share
- Knew we needed to listen respectfully, openly and authentically, no matter how hard to hear



Response...

- Message from the Board president
- Message from the Superintendent
- Posted as far and wide as possible
- Response to each individual to assure their story had been heard
- Beginnings of a corner turning (in hindsight)



Resilience...

- Recognition that response would occur in multiple stages over multiple years
- Meetings with parents of threatened students
- Continued listening
- Easily occupied half or more of supt and deputy supt attention for two months straight



Re-Focus...

- District team and external advisers collaborated on an action plan
- Had to address granular and global issues and concerns
- Move the conversation from reaction to response



3-Prong Action Plan...

1. Community Engagement
2. Data Analysis
3. Professional Development



Community Engagement...

- ✓ Focus groups to assess stakeholder perceptions and experiences
- ✓ Broaden the conversation through a larger community convening and invitation
- ✓ Strengthen outreach and leverage content experts within and outside our community



Data Analysis...

- ✓ Discipline, attendance, academics
- ✓ Revise threat assessment process
- ✓ Clarify law enforcement procedures
- ✓ Implement anonymous reporting mechanism
- Strengthen interim alternative education setting options
- ✓ Revise our Rights & Responsibilities
- Utilize available resources (ESD, EdNW, etc.)



Professional Development...

- ✓ Cultural competency training for district leadership
- Implement state-mandated bias training
- ✓ Expand PBIS/MTSS (currently 17 of 32 schools)
- ✓ Further training on Manifest Determinations and SpEd disciplinary procedures
- Develop a multi-year plan



Education Northwest...

- Partnered and facilitated community engagement and data analysis
- Knew we needed external validation and recognized expertise for this work
- Knew we needed both qualitative and quantitative data



Current Status

- Very much a work in progress
- Growing leadership capacity to engage in difficult and uncomfortable conversations
- Slowly overcoming defensiveness
- Energized our small number of administrators of color
- Beginning to challenge the notion of “fit”



Learnings and Advice

- Be proactive...don't be led by a crisis
- Approach with curiosity despite the pull to rationalize or justify
- Think about short-term “wins” (technical)
- And long term aims (adaptive; changing hearts and minds)
- Begin with self
- Expect discomfort and non-closure



Thank You for Listening!

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Reflections?

