Black Gen Z Survey Results
June 2023

TO: Walton Family Foundation

FROM: HIT Strategies

METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by HIT Strategies and fielded from May 31st -June 14th via online panels among 1003 Black respondents between the ages of 13-20 (younger members of Generation Z) with an oversample of 100 Black girls in this age range for a weighted total N of 1103. The margin of error overall is ±3.76% among the entire sample.

PREPAREDNESS FOR LIFE AFTER K-12

For Black Gen-Zers, the sense of being prepared for life after exiting the K-12 school system is significantly conditioned by environmental factors. Some groups of Black youth, such as those with supportive environments (66%), students who live in racially mixed neighborhoods (64%), and those who report not being stressed or anxious (66%) all report stronger levels of feeling prepared for post-high school life. Majorities of other groups of young Black people, such as ones in mostly Black neighborhoods and learning environments (55%), LGBTQ+ students (55%), as well as those who are out of high school and are not attending post-secondary education (55%) report *not* being prepared for the future. A majority (65%) of students who feel prepared for life after school also say they had opportunities for cultural learning versus only 31% of students who report not feeling prepared.

When thinking about what that future looks like and what constitutes a successful life, Black youths lean towards individual achievements as the primary markers of success. 88% of Black youths say "being true to yourself" is important to how they would measure a successful life, including 74% who say this is a very important measure. Personal financial goals rank very highly as well, with "a job that pays well" and "being able to afford the things you want on your own" being considered important by 88% and 87% of Black youth, respectively. Despite financial stability being one of the top goals for Black students, just 45% say their school provides guidance about finances.

ADDRESSING SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENTS

Only 57% of Black youths report that they have adults in their lives who listen and try to understand them. The number who report having this is lower than the results for other markers of a good outside environment, like having WIFI to do homework outside of school hours (77%) or a quiet place to read or do work (73%). This lack of adult support is especially conspicuous across several subgroups, as less than half of 18-20-year-olds (48%), LGBTG+ students (48%), and students who live around/attend school in mostly Black environments (47%) report having supportive adults around them.

Only 44% of Black Gen-Zers report having a "very positive" environment which we defined as having access to WIFI outside of school hours, a quiet place to do their schoolwork, regular healthy meals, and adults who listen to them. One in four (26%) say they have a "very negative" outside environment where they have access to either just one or none of these things.

For students who are in mainly Black spaces at home and school, 57% report having support environments that are "mostly negative" or "very negative." Conversely, only 36% and 40% of students exposed to mainly white spaces and highly diverse spaces report being in negative environments indicating a significant disparity in experiences based on environment.

- Students on this scale's "very negative" end report feeling less prepared for the future. Just 43% of those on the "very negative" end feel prepared for college, and 46% feel prepared for life after graduation in general.
- The feeling of not being supported extends into school for these students, 33% don't feel like their voice is heard at school, and 40% feel their school is not offering quality academic support in the form of tutoring.

Cultural learning opportunities play a role in a supportive school environment as well. Of the Black students who say they are satisfied with their school experience, over half (59%) said they were given cultural learning opportunities. This is a big disparity as among those who said they were dissatisfied with their school experience, only 32% report being given cultural learning opportunities.

Those who rate themselves as feeling powerful in their ability to create change in their communities also report a high level of opportunity to learn about their culture (62%) compared to students who feel very little (45%), if any, power to make a change in their communities (47%).

Black LGBTQ+ youth report different experiences than their peers. Only 47% of Black LGBTQ+ youth rate their mental health positively compared to 76% of non-LGBTQ+. And just 39% of LGBTQ+ Black students feel like their school has the proper mental health resources.

LGBTQ+ respondents also express strong dissatisfaction with their schools at 43% saying they are dissatisfied and with their schools compared to the 30% of Black youth overall who express dissatisfaction.