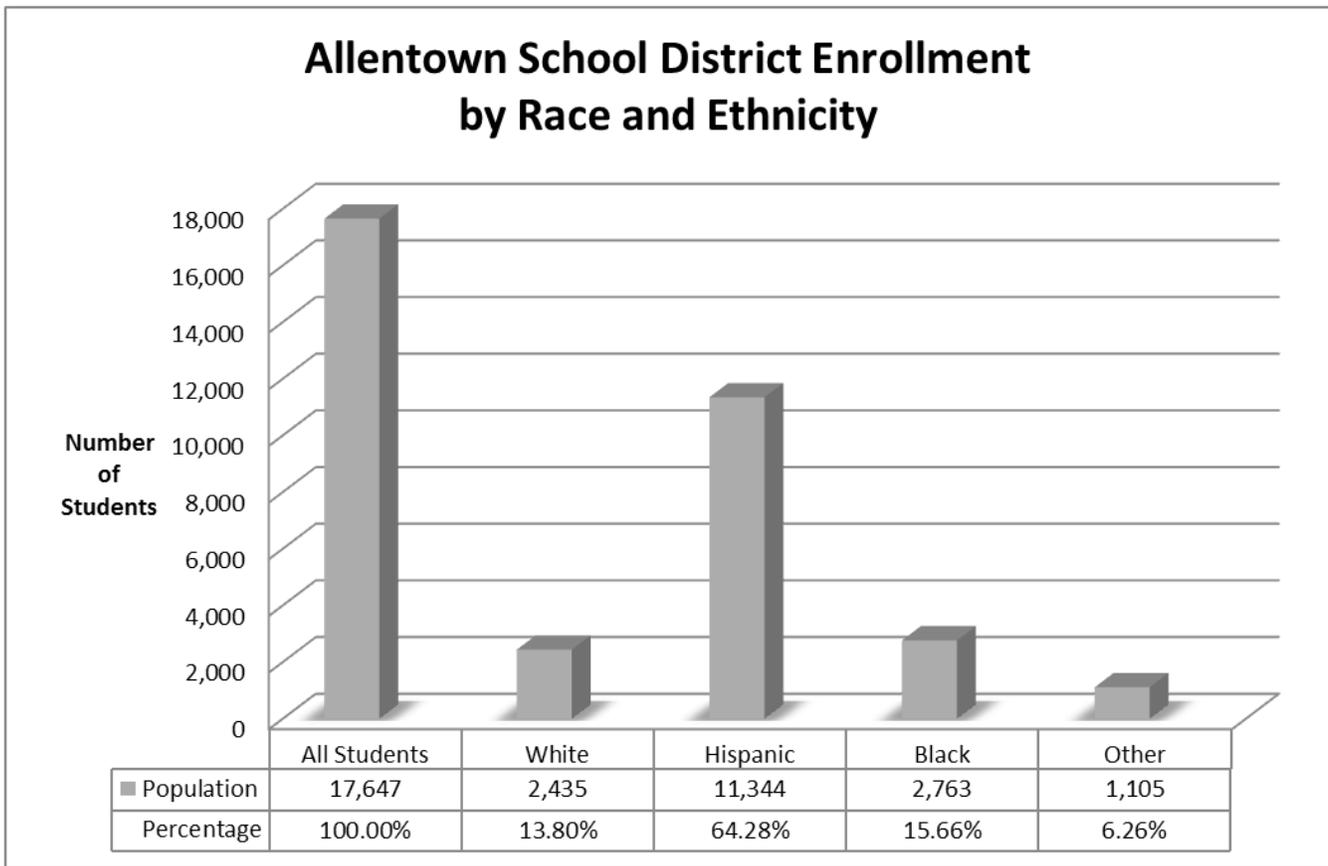


Education and the Allentown School District (ASD)

General Picture

The Allentown School District is the 4th largest school district and the 3rd largest urban school district in Pennsylvania. The school district enrollment at the start of the 2013 school year was at 17,647 students, there were approximately 1,456 teachers and 110 administrators at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. These numbers were in drastic flux due to cutbacks and budget constraints at the start of the 2013-2014 school year. The student population is approximately 14.1% White, 65.7% Hispanic, 16.0% Black. The chart below depicts the racial and ethnic breakdown of the ASD enrollment.



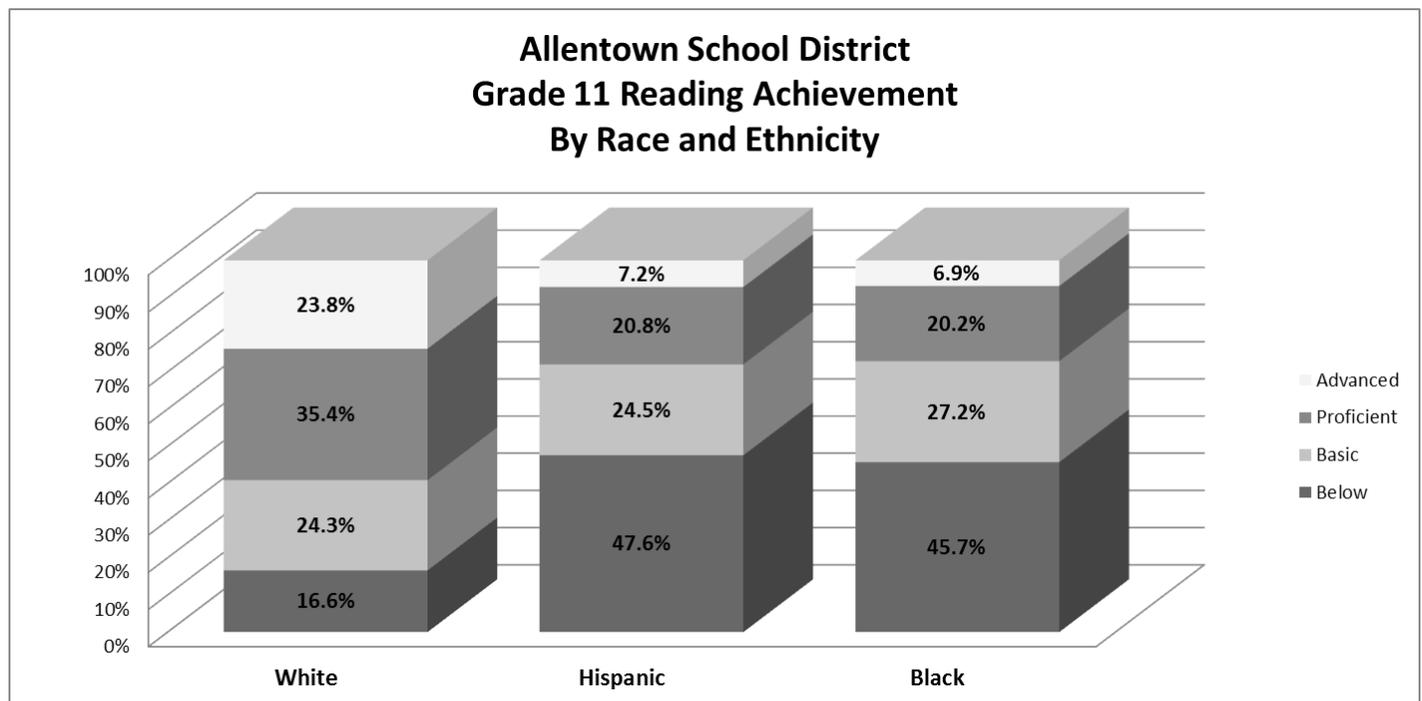
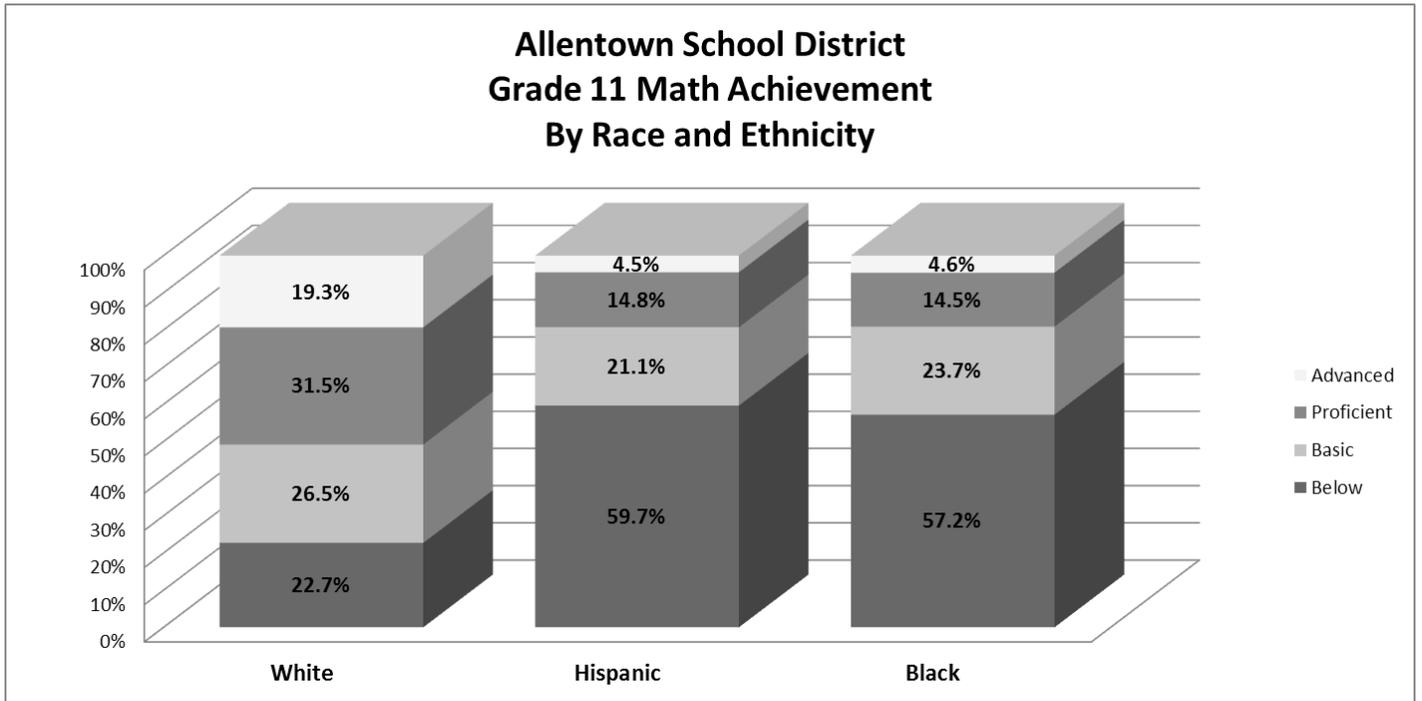
The city of Allentown serves a population of 118,032 with 2013 estimates at 58.5% White, 42.75% Hispanic (identified in 2 races or more), 12.5% Black, a major demographic shift over the past generation (30 yrs.) from a 1980 population of 103,572, 82% White, 4.5% Hispanic, 5.8% Black.

The city has a median family income of \$37,356 and a per capita income of \$16,282 while, statistically, 86% of the school population qualifies for Free/Reduced Lunch and 88% for Total Low Income, the entire school district (100%) is funded for Free/Reduced Lunch. 48% of the graduates require remediation in Math and Reading according to Pennsylvania Department of Education.

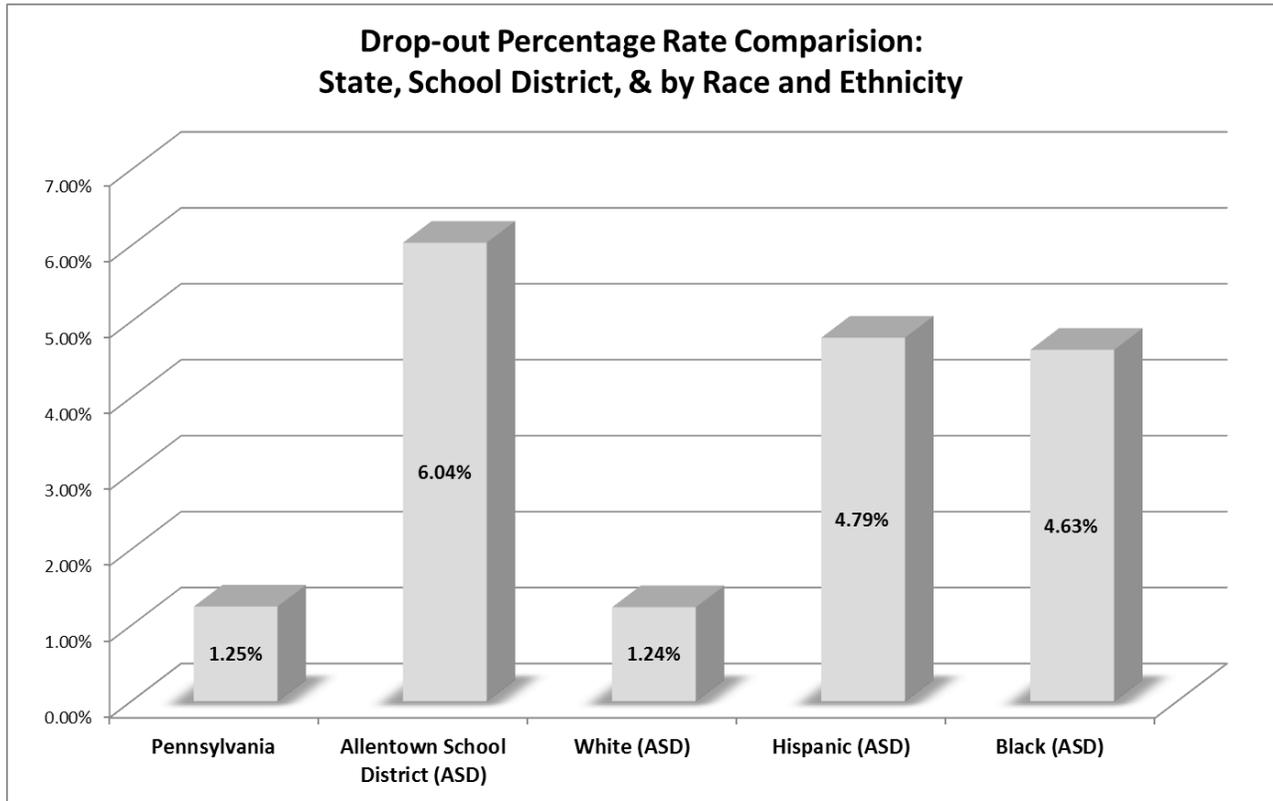
The Allentown School District has a 2013/2014 budget of \$238,981,032 with a stated fund balance of \$17,852,272. The district ranks 483 of 498 school districts in Pennsylvania and, has the lowest per pupil expenditure at \$5,881.

Academic Achievement

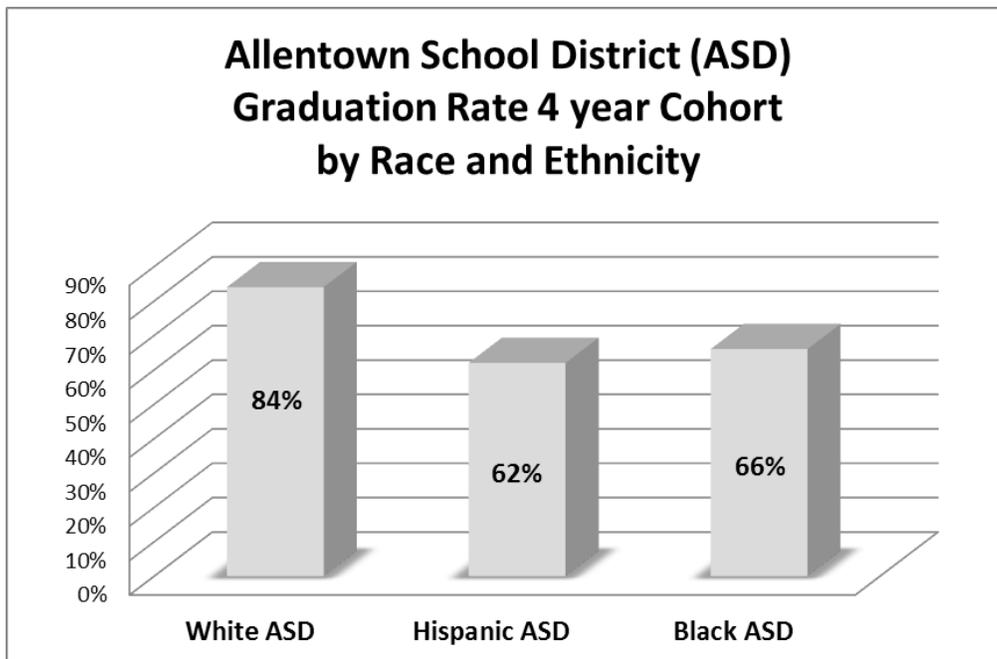
To understand the Allentown School District requires a critical analysis of how well its youth are educated. Where the assessment tool is not ideal, we looked at the Grade 11 Math and Reading Achievement Levels garnered from the Standardized Testing process called the PSSA's. Below are two charts that depict the Math and Reading Achievement levels. The columns divide students by racial and ethnic group. Each column is then divided into achievement levels ("Advanced", "Proficient", "Basic", "Below Basic"). The trends are similar for Reading and Math, Hispanics and Blacks follow a similar pattern of achievement where their White peers follow a starkly different pattern.



Academic achievement includes whether or not the School District is successful in graduating its students. Historically we have been conditioned to use language of “Drop-out” rate and “Graduation” rate to describe this. The charts below use that same language because this is how the data is collected. The rates are again assessed by race and ethnicity.

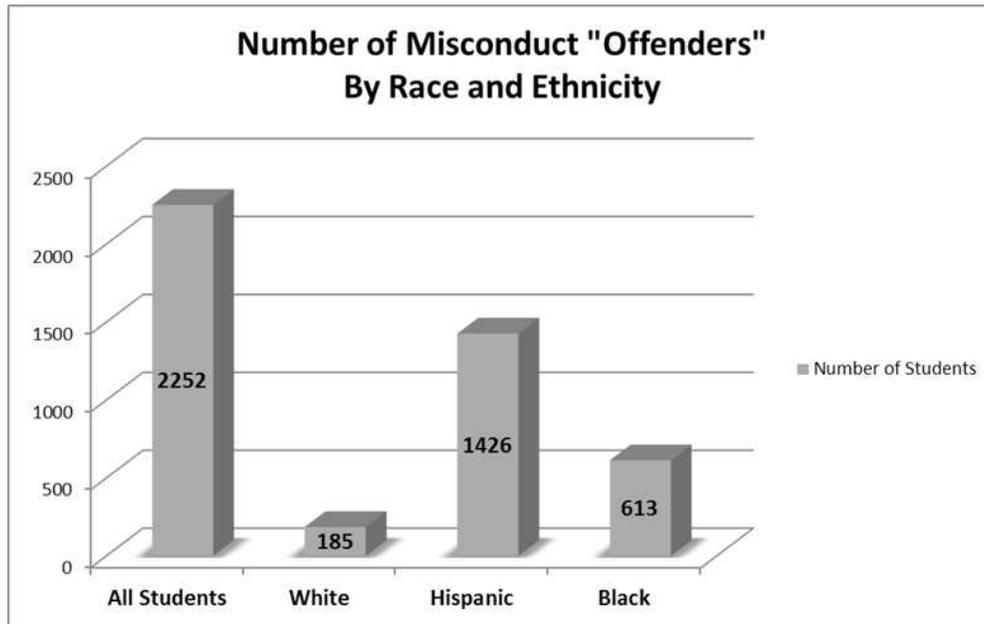


What stands out to us in the chart above is how the “drop-out” rate for Caucasians is actually below the State percentage, but the rates for Hispanic and Black students are dramatically different. This is a similar trend as seen with academic achievement in Reading and Math. A trend that is quite consistent although, graphically less dramatic in the Graduation Rate graph below.

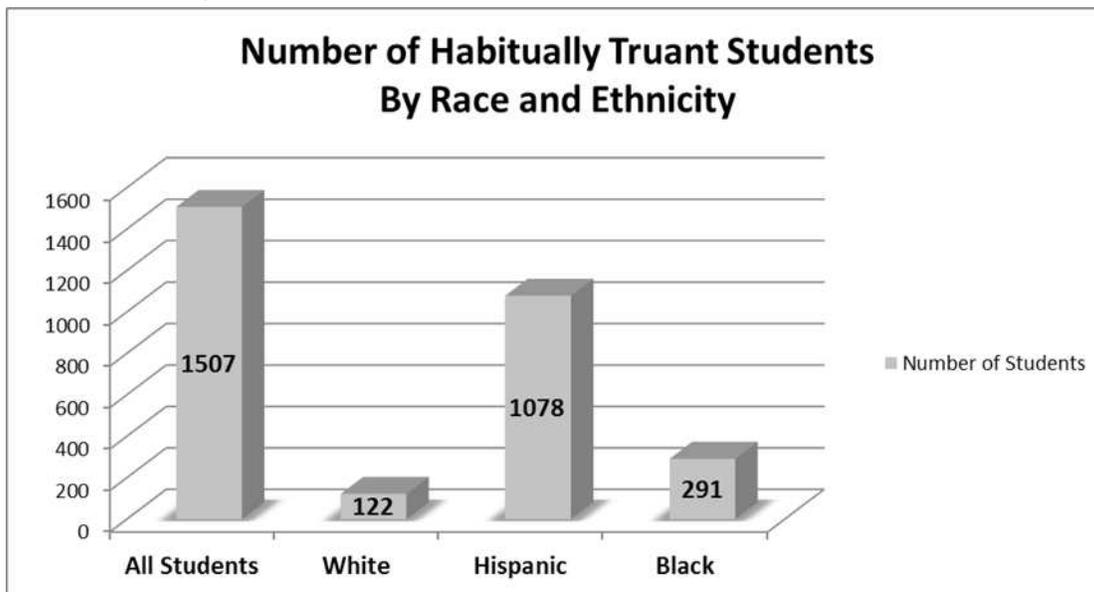


SCHOOL SAFETY

We offer the school safety data for empirical purposes only, as we find it somewhat offensive and morbid to offer a comparative study. There are numerous misconduct categories ranging from assault, harassment, fighting, sexual impropriety, theft, controlled substance offenses, weapons possession etc. This data pertains to the 2011-2012 school year, only. There were 3,618 incidents by 2,252 offenders, 343 of these involved law enforcement, 21 were arrests and, 12 were assigned to Alternative Education. There were 15 citations, 1 fine, 4 probations and 79 are unknown.



The overall habitual truancy rate was at 8.58% with a total of 1,507 in the compulsory grades from 1st to 11th. The sanctions include 184 detentions, 106 expulsions, and 1,558 in school suspensions and, 1,673 out of school suspensions. The out-of-school suspensions were primarily for conduct but, include drug/alcohol, tobacco, violence, and weapon infractions. Expulsions occurred from grades 5-12, also for weapons, violence and drug/alcohol infractions. The expulsion data is buffered by the high Hispanic student population but, the narrative speaks to a punitive environment for peoples of color, who are starkly underrepresented in the oversight capacities. The image this presents should be of concern and, offensive to every fair minded observer.



DIVERSITY

The school district has been plagued by its lack of diversity due to a combination of factors including, a burgeoning Hispanic population and a lethargic or resistant response from the administration. The school district formed a Diversity Task Force in 2005 to increase diversity and retention. It was comprised of community leaders, educators, administrators and civic groups. The group was headed by then Deputy Superintendent C. Russell Mayo who now serves as the Superintendent.

The 2010 Allentown School District Diversity, Recruiting and Retention Report - 2010, states "The Allentown School District is committed to actively seeking employees with diverse backgrounds similar to the diverse backgrounds of our students. The Allentown School District Diversity Committee developed a workforce diversity plan which includes the goal of increasing the diversity of its full-time workforce to a minimum of 16% within each employee group..." The 2005 level of diversity stood at 7.7% with a goal of 16% by 2010.

The group spent 1980 person hours and concluded with a survey and a single recommendation. The survey was conducted by the Muhlenberg Polling Institute under Chris Borick- Ph.D. to determine the cultural sensitivity and awareness of the teaching staff and administration. The single recommendation was to hire a full time assistant Human Resources Manager to recruit teachers and administrators from culturally diverse Organizations and neighboring urban school districts. The plan was to partner with local businesses, shopping clubs, gymnasiums and utility providers to provide incentives for recruits to relocate and teach in Allentown. The plan was submitted in 2006 by Deputy Superintendent C. Russell Mayo, Ethel Drayton-Craig Ph.D.-Dean of Multicultural Studies at Muhlenberg College and longtime educational activist Ed De Grace. It was endorsed unanimously and, hailed as a commitment to diversity by Superintendent Karen Angello Ph.D., Allentown School Board of Directors and the Allentown School District.

RESULTS

The survey conducted by the Muhlenberg Polling Institute generated results suggesting that the teaching staff and the administration were, at least culturally insensitive and at worst hostile to the concept of increasing diversity.

The assistant Human Resources Manager position was never created and there were questions as to whether increased diversity would actually lead to improved student performance. Unfortunately, we will never know as the plan was never implemented. When confronted at a School Board meeting in 2007, Karen Angello Ph. D., Superintendent of Schools until 2010, stated that "We have lots of committees. We don't have to accept all their recommendations." That obviously includes this solitary recommendation of the Diversity Task Force approved unanimously and roundly hailed by herself and the Board of Directors.

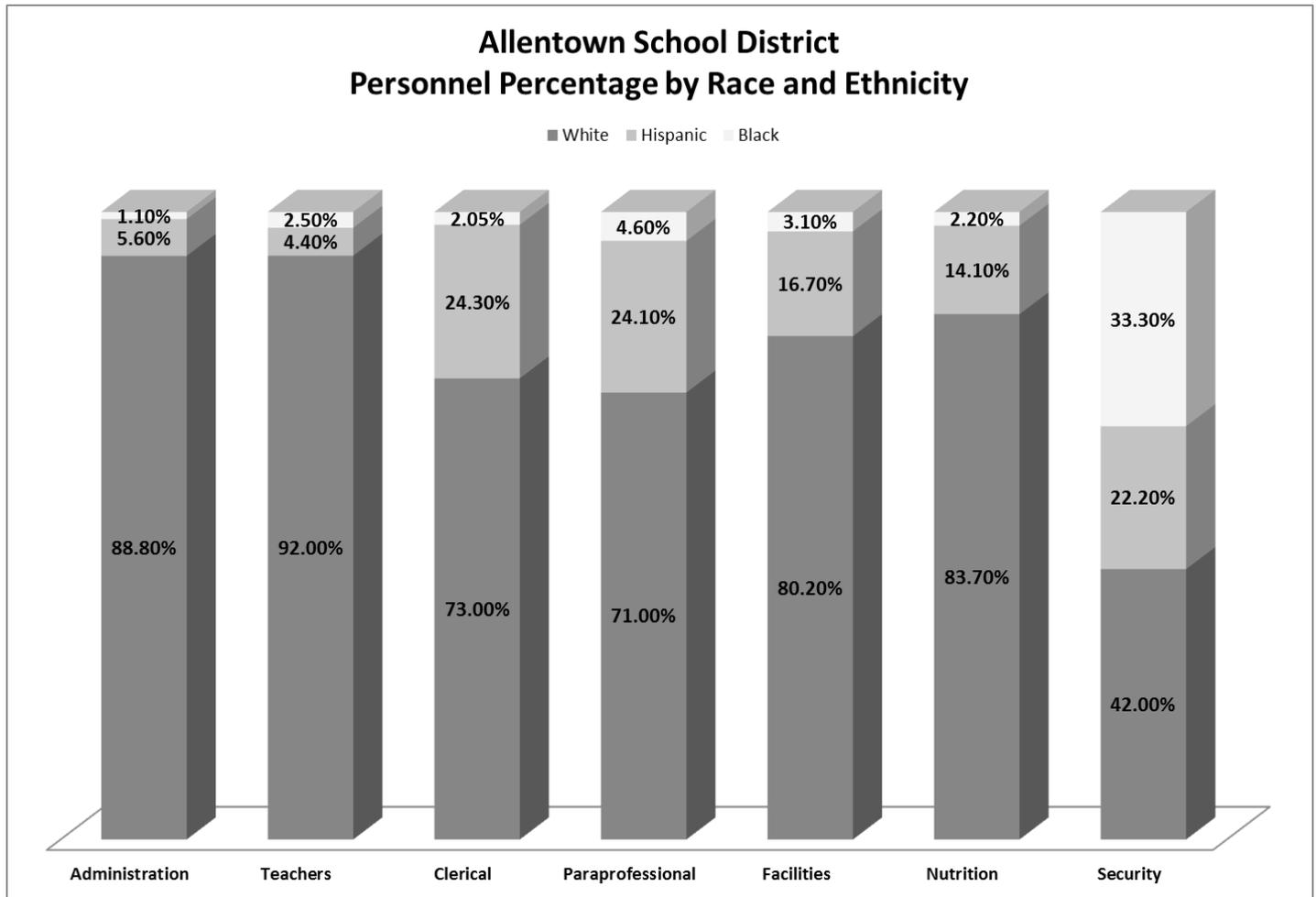
CONCLUSION

There was an abrupt replacement of Allen High School principal Mike Rodriguez in 2012 after only 1 year of service, followed by the abrupt replacement of his successor Shannon Mayfield in 2013 again, after only 1 year of service. This was accompanied by the sudden resignation of Susan Lozada, Executive Director of Community & Student Services also in 2013. The total diversity of The Allentown School District after roundly hailing but not implementing the plan and the solitary recommendation was at 6.94% in 2010. A drop in diversity of 0.76% and, far below the 16% goal, in a school district confronted with a lack of cultural sensitivity and diversity. At this time there are no plans to address the School Districts lack of diversity, nor any attempt to remove that stigma of exclusion. There are no structured, formal efforts to improve the School District's performance and delivery of services to the still burgeoning Hispanic and Black student populations. The Board of Directors and the Administration by action and inaction do not recognize their lack of diversity

The Campaign for Change; Education, Economics, Engagement
 Preliminary Education and Employment Analysis

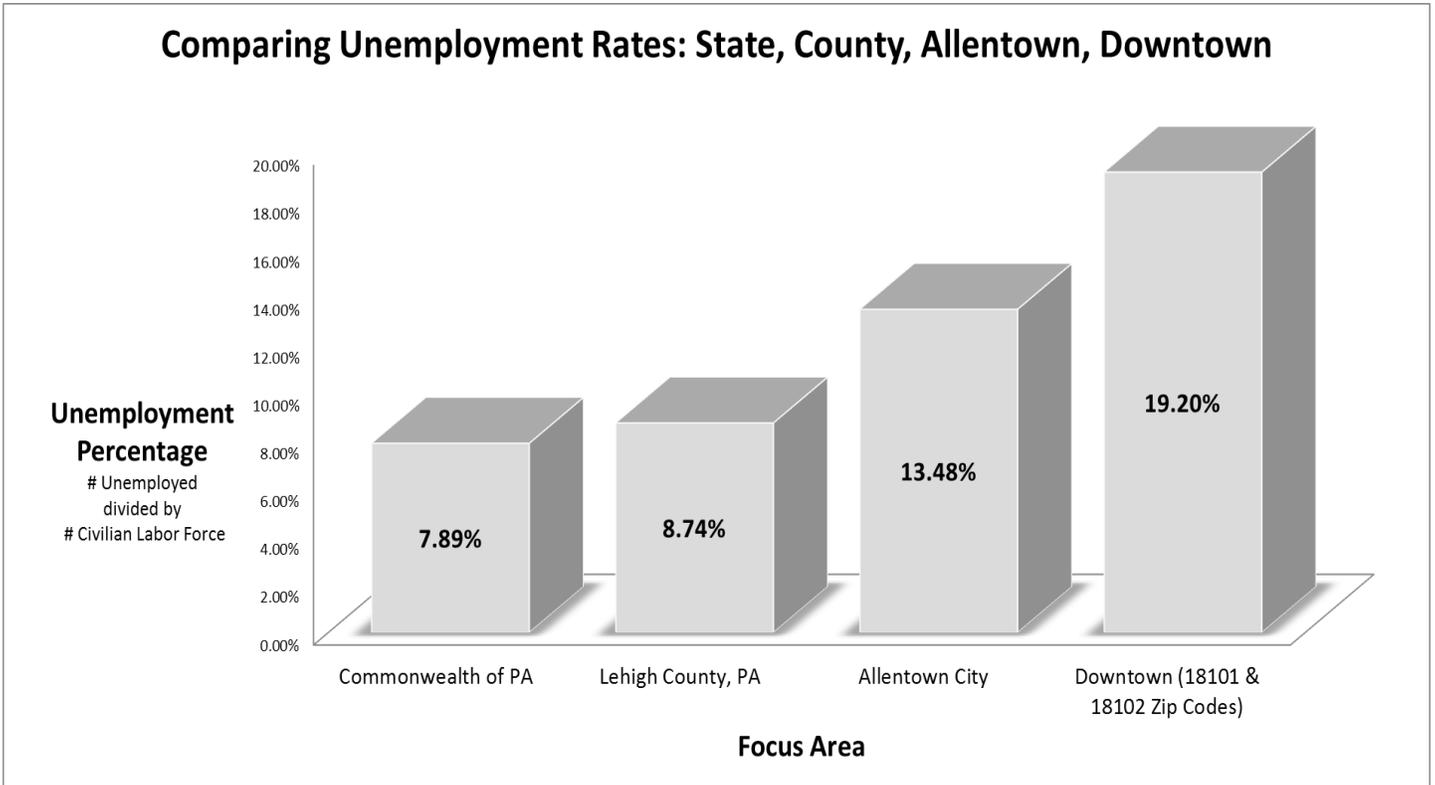
as a problem therefore, they have no active plans to address the issue of diversity after, having formed a committee, expending 1980 person hours in 2005-2006 to address these very same issues. The system can be as successful for students of color as it is for their white counterparts as evidenced by 2012 Allen High School valedictorian Gina Echevarria but alas, the school district does not have any formal plans to address the education gap.

The chart below depicts the current racial and ethnic breakdown of all employment fields in the Allentown School District. Each column presents an employment field that is respectively divided into its racial and ethnic percentages. The trends are obvious, leadership positions and teaching are predominantly held by Caucasians while, Communities of color hold more service level and support staff positions.



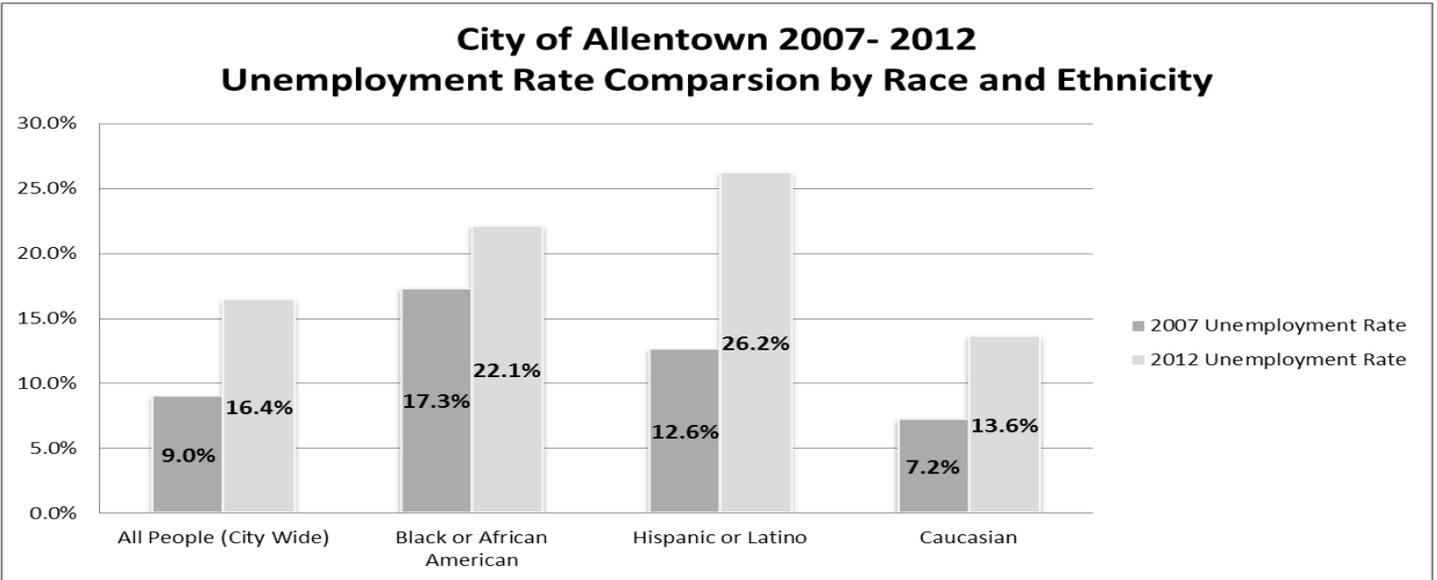
Allentown Employment – A snapshot

To understand the unemployment picture in Allentown, you need to do a comparison study of unemployment rates to put Allentown’s numbers in context. Using the U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey we conducted a regional unemployment analysis where the unemployment rates of the Commonwealth, Lehigh County, Allentown City Wide, and Downtown Allentown (18101 & 18102 Zip Codes) are compared.

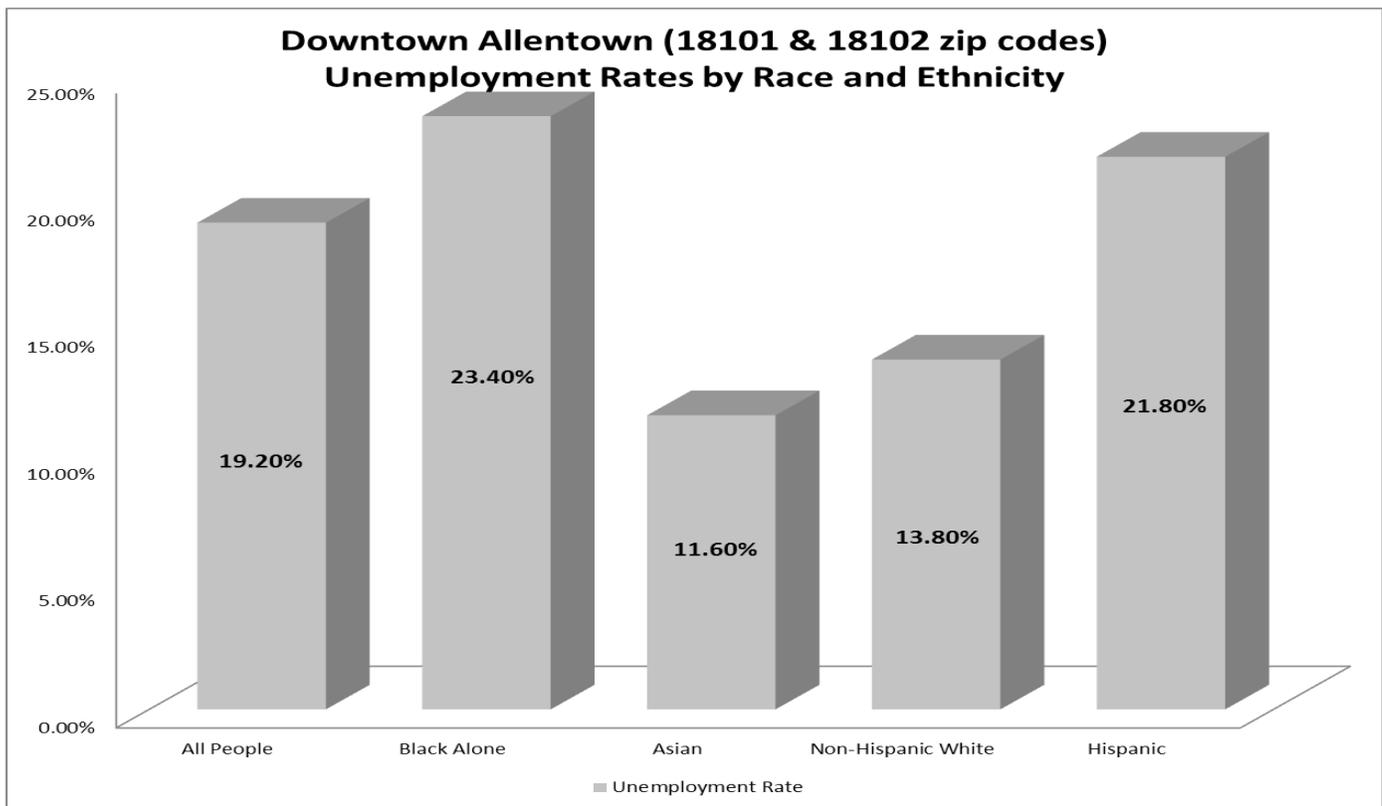


As the third largest municipality in the Commonwealth it is striking to see the dramatic difference between the unemployment rates of the City of Allentown and the State of Pennsylvania, especially when Lehigh County has an unemployment rate so similar to the rate of the Commonwealth. This difference begins to make sense when you look closer at Allentown and the unemployment rate of its population core in Downtown. Center City Allentown includes two major zip codes (18101 and 18102) and the unemployment rate in this area is 19.20% which is more than double the rates of the State and Lehigh County.

The picture of Allentown’s unemployment begins to take shape with the comparison above, however for complete understanding the racialization of unemployment needs to be unpacked. Again using the U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey we looked at how unemployment is felt by different populations of different races and ethnicities within Allentown. To get a sense of perspective we compared the unemployment rates between 2007 and 2012.



Initially it is clear how the Nation’s economic challenges impacted the local employment scene where all the major populations in Allentown experienced significant increases in unemployment as a result of the weaker economy. In addition to a universal increase of unemployment, you can see in the chart above how this increase is disproportionately felt by communities of color in Allentown, in particular African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos. Taking this analysis one step further, we looked at City Center Allentown’s unemployment by race and ethnicity.



The narrative here becomes clear, unemployment is bad in Allentown and it is felt worse by communities of color. This preliminary analysis points to the need that whatever plans or policies that are enacted moving forward, they must factor in the situation of communities of color and low income populations. Employment can’t be addressed with a universal program that treats all the different populations in Allentown as though they are situated similarly.

The Campaign for Change; Education, Economics, Engagement Preliminary Education and Employment Analysis

Resource List

- Wikipedia- Allentown School District
- Allentown School District Demographics 2012-2013
- Allentown School District- Diversity, Recruiting and Retention Report 2009-2010
- Allentown School District 2011-2012 Annual Report
- www.allentownsd.org
- www.allentownpl.orgonline resources-newsbank-morning call
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey
- “Post-Racialism or Targeted Universalism” by john a. powell is the Williams Chair in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Moritz College of Law, the Ohio State University and Executive Director, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, the Ohio State University. john powell does not capitalize his name.