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Diversity Audit

I conducted a diversity audit in the South Huntington School District on Long Island at Henry Stimson Middle School. I selected Stimson because it is a diverse school with a higher population of English Language Learners (ELLs) than other schools in surrounding districts. Stimson serves 837 7th and 8th-grade students, 158 (18.9%) of whom are ELLs.

During my time at Stimson, as a student teacher, I observed that Muslim students frequently visited the library during lunch while fasting for Ramadan. Since religious demographics are not classified separately in school data, I became curious about whether the library collection included books featuring Muslim or Middle Eastern representation. Additionally, given that 52% of the student population is Latinx and 19% of all students are ELLs, I wanted to see if this population reflected in the collection.

I collaborated with the school librarian, Ms. Susan Teeter, to conduct the audit. Although Ms. Teeter has extensive experience as a librarian, she transitioned from an elementary to a middle school library last year. She has been weeding and updating the collection to serve her new school community better. Given the popularity of graphic novels among middle school students, we decided to focus on the Graphic Novel section of the fiction collection to assess its diversity.

To gather demographic data, I used the New York State Education Department's database

(<https://data.nysed.gov/>). According to the most recent statistics, Stimson's student population is:

- **8%** Black/African American
- **52%** Latinx
- **5%** Asian/Pacific Islander (API)
- **31%** White/Caucasian
- **4%** Multiracial

In addition to these ethnic categories, I audited specifically for underrepresented populations of Black, LatinX, API, Indigenous people and I created additional classifications for the audit: Middle Eastern Representation – since Middle Eastern students are often classified as White in demographic data, it is unclear how many students make up this population at Stimson, however, I wanted to identify books featuring Middle Eastern protagonists. I also audited for how many books were available in another language to see if multilingual options were present in the collection. Additionally I recorded unknown representation – Books in which I could not determine the protagonist's ethnicity and non-human or other representation – Books featuring animals, aliens, or other characters whose race is not identifiable.

I decided to create a Google Spreadsheet modeled after the diversity audit conducted by Pittsford Central School District, as seen in the assigned video, "*Library Diversity*" [HH:MM:SS]).

1. I created a spreadsheet with the designated protagonist populations I was auditing for.
2. I searched the school's OPAC for all graphic novels.
3. I entered key book data, including call number, author, and title, into the Google Sheet.

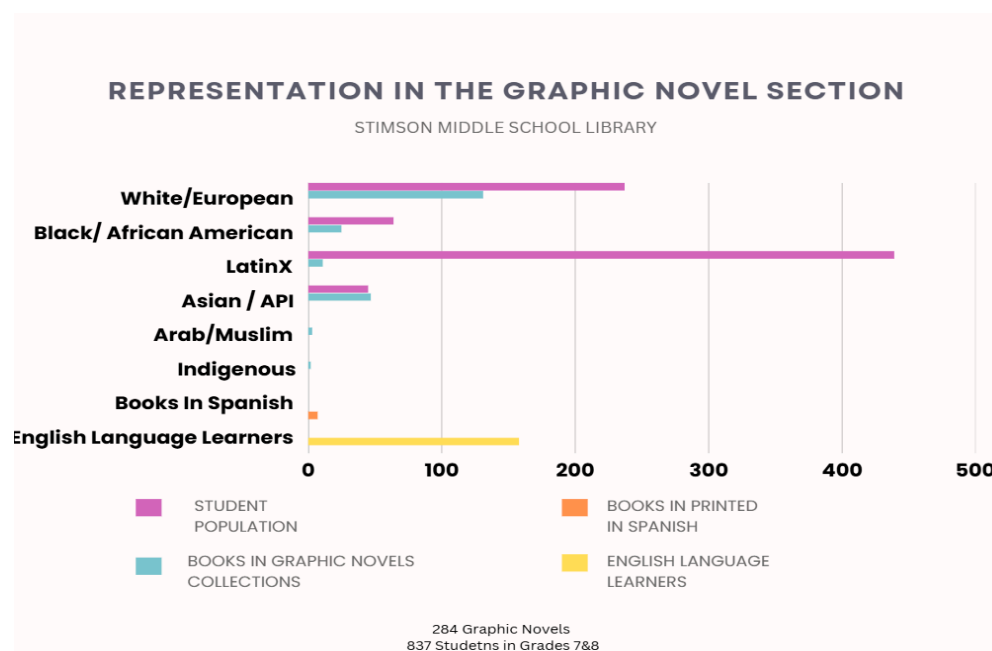
4. I, remotely, researched the protagonist's ethnicity using Destiny information and online resources.
5. If I could not determine a character's ethnicity online, I highlighted the title and examined the book in person to make a final decision.
6. While conducting the audit, I reorganized the graphic novel section and identified several books that did not belong in this category. I gave these to Ms. Teeter for possible weeding or reorganization.

The diversity audit revealed both strengths and weaknesses in the graphic novel collection at Henry Stimson Middle School. The collection's strengths were a range of genres within the Graphic Novel collection, including realistic fiction, fantasy, and historical fiction. The collection also included an adequate amount of Asian/Pacific Islander (API) representation, with 16.5% of the graphic novels featuring API protagonists, exceeding the 5% API student population at the school. This higher representation may be influenced by the popularity of anime and manga, which originate from Asian cultures and dominate the graphic novel genre.

The audit also highlighted gaps in representation. There was the lack of Muslim and Middle Eastern protagonists. Similarly, Black representation was limited, with only a handful of titles featuring protagonists from these backgrounds. While books like *New Kid* by Jerry Craft provided valuable perspectives, they were insufficient to adequately reflect the school's Black population. Another significant gap was the lack of bilingual or multilingual graphic novels, 2.46%, which could better support the 18.9% of students who are ELLs. Perhaps the most glaring weakness was that only 3.87% of the graphic novel collection featured Latinx protagonists, a striking contrast to the 52% Latinx student population at the school. This

significant disparity highlights a need for more books that authentically represent Latinx experiences to better reflect the majority of the student body.

To create a more inclusive and representative collection, several steps should be taken. First, expanding the number of graphic novels featuring Latinx protagonists should be a priority, as this is the most underrepresented group in comparison to the student population. Additionally, increasing the selection of books featuring Black, Muslim/Middle Eastern protagonists will help ensure that all students can find stories that reflect their identities and experiences. Another key recommendation is to incorporate more bilingual and multilingual graphic novels, to better serve ELL students. By addressing these gaps, the library can create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive collection that better serves the needs of all students.



https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13JxjeGTLT-Y7uZGYgrDnytwXD3OdlgO_T_c4cbT4eE/edit?usp=sharing

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