

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS 2018-19 Report



## WHAT ARE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS?

Inspired by the work of the Harwood Institute, community conversations consist of 90-minute, “kitchen table”-style discussions where groups of no more than 12 participants share their opinions about the community. Groups are comprised of community members from various ages, backgrounds, ethnicities and experiences.

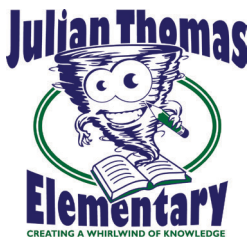
For the 2018-19 conversation cycle, United Way of Racine County spoke with staff, parents, students, and other members of the Julian Thomas Elementary community to guide United Way and RUSD’s work of transforming Julian Thomas into a community school beginning in the 2019-20 school year.

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

A community school is a neighborhood hub that unites families, educators, and community partners. Community schools increase opportunities for children and families to succeed by reducing barriers to learning.

A community school can offer:

- increased parent and family engagement in children’s education.
- extra learning opportunities through educational enrichment.
- consistent access to adult guidance and support.
- ready access to physical, dental and mental health services.

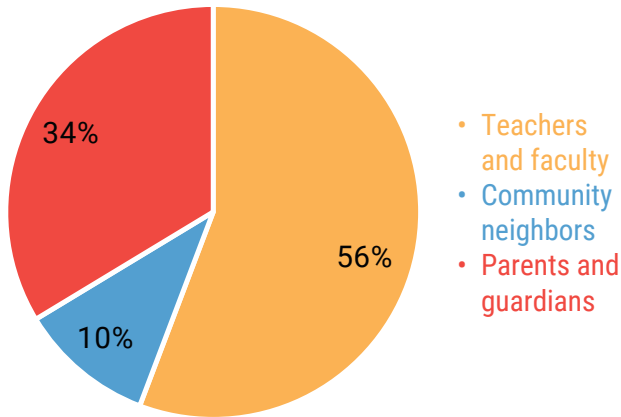


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# PARTICIPANTS

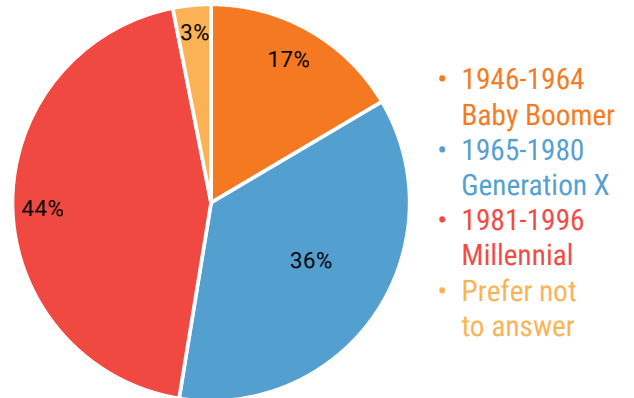
A total of 97 participants participated in community conversations and Turn Out Talks (a short survey version of a community conversation) regarding Julian Thomas' transformation into a community school.

## Relationship to Julian Thomas\*



- Teachers and faculty
- Community neighbors
- Parents and guardians

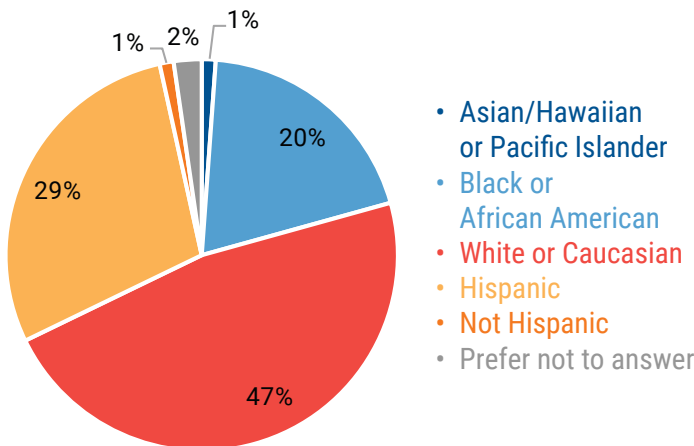
## Generation



- 1946-1964 Baby Boomer
- 1965-1980 Generation X
- 1981-1996 Millennial
- Prefer not to answer

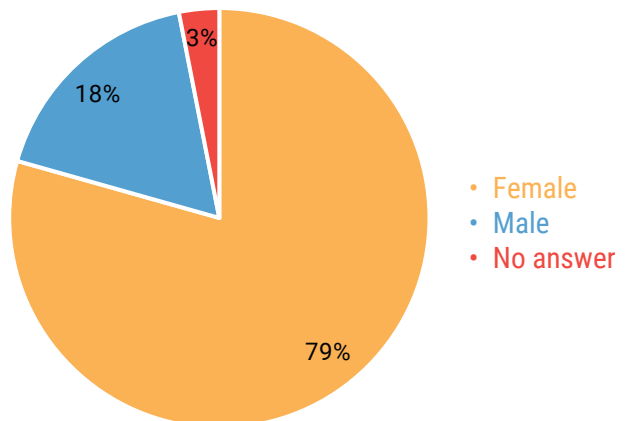
\*Categories are not mutually exclusive.

## Race/Ethnicity



- Asian/Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White or Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Not Hispanic
- Prefer not to answer

## Gender



- Female
- Male
- No answer

In addition, about 20 students participated in community conversations but did not participate in the demographic survey.

# FINDINGS

## Aspirations:

### Neighborhood

1. A feeling of outdoor safety for every member of the family
2. Access to and knowledge of resources available to community
3. A community center to which residents feel comfortable bringing kids for family programming
4. Safe, family-friendly neighborhood activities
5. A clean community

### School

1. Diverse, accessible staff
2. Up-to-date technology
3. A feeling of safety for every member of the family
4. Parents supportive of and engaged in kids' education

## Challenges:

### Neighborhood

1. High poverty rate and sub-par housing stock
2. Fear of neighborhood violence and crime
3. Concern for relationships with local law enforcement

### School

1. Multiple jobs and fear of deportation prevents parents from active participation
2. Parents don't trust education system
3. Few resources for bilingual students and families
4. Families and children experience high rates of trauma
5. Unmet basic needs detract from instruction

## Solutions:

### Neighborhood

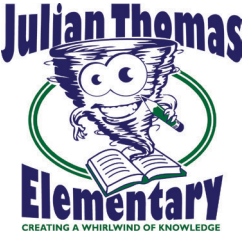
1. (Re)build trust and relationships with Racine Police Department
2. A center for undocumented and ESL families
3. Mobile resources like books and medical units
4. Safe parks and recreation programming

### School

1. Resources to support families' basic needs
2. Home visits for kids entering kindergarten and pre-kindergarten
3. Support for families and children with trauma
4. Diversity training for staff
5. New technology
6. Access to adult education courses

# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- Opportunities and after-school activities to develop academic and non-academic competencies
- Resources to mitigate causes for absence and facilitate student success by connecting home, school, and community:
  - Nutrition programs
  - Income support programs
  - Employment programs
- Information and referral services
- Volunteer opportunities
- Intergenerational activities
- Family empowerment programs



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