2.5 Determine Root Cause(s) Based on Data

Describe the identified Root Cause(s) of disproportionality and briefly reference the data that supports the root cause(s).

Note: Root causes of disproportionality include an intersection between beliefs and practices and should describe an identified LEA gap or deficiency that will be addressed by the LEA.

Root Cause	Describe the Data Source(s) that Supports the Root Cause
1. Lack of a district wide culturally-responsive Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to serve struggling students leading to a subjective pre-referral process and subsequent overidentification of Hispanic/Latino students as identified as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	MVWSD lacks a structured Multi-Tiered System of Support and therefore also lacks the concrete policy and/or handbooks related to such a system. The lack of district-wide structure around intervening when students are struggling academically makes the process vulnerable to subjective referrals for testing and interventions through Special Education. The Student Study Team (SST) procedures have not been translated into district-wide practice and are inconsistently disseminated and utilized throughout the district, according to interview data collected from the educational leaders at the district. Data related to current and past 504 plans is inconsistently recorded across the district. Most of the plans' records are created and solely housed at the school site that directly serves the student. This inconsistent data monitoring makes it hard to determine how 504 plans may be affecting the significant disproportionality in the district. Of all students with disabilities, 48% of students identified as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) were Hispanic/Latino even though they only make up approximately 35% of the district's population. We are currently in our second year of being found significantly disproportionate for Hispanic/Latino students identified as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). English Learner status along with the variables of being socioeconomically disadvantaged and/or a

student with disabilities seems to compound disadvantage as we consider gaps in student achievement. Nearly one in five students with disabilities are also English Learners (19%). Hispanic/Latino students comprise the largest percentage of students who are English Learners (73%) and are more likely than their White and Asian peers to suffer from socioeconomic disadvantage. Hispanic/Latino students are nearly five times as likely as their White and Asian peers to be considered 'At-Risk' (Tier 3) on the iReady Reading assessment according to data available from the 2020-2021 school year.

Data gathered from the leadership team over the past two years of disproportionality reveals several strong perceptions that persist amongst educational leaders:

"Teachers don't understand the current SST structure and there are inconsistencies across school sites."

"We don't have a structured MTSS system and we are not consistently using interventions across the district."

"Kid Talk/SST processes aren't streamlined district wide."

Qualitative data collected from parents and teachers during the 2020 school year also indicates a strong perception that the district has inadequate systems to effectively identify and serve students who struggle academically, but may not have a learning disability, leading to bias-based decisions and subsequent overidentification.

"Some kids come into school prepared but some are not."

"As a Kindergarten teacher, I am a juggler and a detective. When kids come in with little information, we are trying to figure out what is going on here."

	As stated in the updates given in the 2020 CCEIS plan, our LEA has made progress on finding and implementing a Social-emotional (SEL) curriculum, but very little. Since the plan's inception, the LEA brought aboard a Health and Wellness Director who formed a district committee to begin exploring and vetting an SEL curriculum. This work is also ongoing.
2. There is a lack of intentional professional learning around the impact of bias on teacher practice, which has allowed deficit ideologies to persist leading to negative effects on student learning and achievement for student groups	Disparities in student achievement on both local assessments (iReady Reading/Math) and historical CAASPP data between Hispanic/Latino students and their White and Asian peers is evident along with the overidentification of Hispanic/Latino students with a specific learning disability (SLD). Hispanic/Latino students are nearly five times as likely as their White and Asian peers to be considered 'At-Risk' (Tier 3) on the iReady Reading assessment according to data available from the 2020-2021 school year. The same is true in Math. Nearly one-third of all Hispanic students are 'At-Risk' and not meeting grade-level standards. Of all students with disabilities, 48% of students identified as having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) were Hispanic/Latino even though they only make up approximately 35% of the district's population. Disparities in recorded student offenses are also present for Hispanic/Latino students when compared with their White and Asian peers, though there are questions about if all sites are adequately logging all office referral data into the data collection system because the data also suggests that offenses are clustered at just a few school sites who report such data. Some school sites log very little student offense data, if any at all. During the 2019-20 school year, Hispanic/Latino students made up 46% of all student offenses despite being only 34.9% of the student population at that time. During the 2020-21 school year, documented student offenses were drastically reduced due to school closures. Even so, Hispanic/Latino students made up approximately 64% of the documented

	student offenses, even though they represented only 35.64% of the population. Participants in all focus groups recognize that there is a lack of adequate training for staff (for both general education and special education teachers). This may allow explicit and implicit bias to go undetected or unchecked if not intentionally disrupted. For example, focus group facilitators recording participants saying: *"We need more in depth training on best practices, guide reading, phonics for English Language Learners. Grouped into one room with one teacher."* *"If we had a lot more support for our newcomers, a lot more could be done."* *"The district needs to spend the money on professional development for all teachers. This is a systemic problem. Have the teachers trained in teaching and coaching with compassion."* Data collected from teachers after an initial anti-bias educator workshop (50 min.) by the district's equity coach revealed that the teachers rated the 'Anti-Bias' seminar as the least applicable to their work with students. Under further analysis, this finding further underscores a damaging irony: more than any other topic, teachers think that talking about bias in the classroom is the least applicable to their everyday activities as teachers, which also reveals that more than ever, teachers need training on how easily and covertly bias can affect their decisions and interactions with students.
3. The elementary schools do not have a collectively defined structure for ELD and interventions specifically for literacy of bilingual students leading to negative impact on academic achievement for English learners (ELs)	Nearly one in five students with disabilities are also English Learners (19%). Hispanic/Latino students comprise the largest percentage of students who are English Learners (73%) and are more likely than their White and Asian peers to suffer from socioeconomic disadvantage. Also, 8% of all ELs in 2020-21 are considered LTELs (They've been in US schools for six or more years) As documented by the SBAC data on the California dashboard, English

	Learners in our district, of whom 73% are Hispanic/Latino, performed 87.4 points below the standard in Math, whereas English only students scored 67.8 points above the standard in Math. For ELA, English Learners in our district scored 74.4 points below the standard while the English only students scored 82.2 points above the standard. The performance gap between English learners and English only students in our district is persistent and significant. Qualitative data collected from parents and teachers during the 2020 school year also indicates a strong desire for teachers and parents to access social-emotional support, especially for all students, but especially for students who are underperforming. There is a recognized absence of social-emotional support and training in the LEA. *"There is nothing on SEL, district wide and we do not have a math intervention program."* *"How well are we dissecting the impact of trauma on learning?"*
4. Lack of understanding and intentionality when providing differentiation for students in general education classrooms leading to negative impact on student achievement for students who are struggling academically and needing extra support or remediation	Overall, MVWSD is a high-performing district. According to the most recent performance data from 2019, our district's students averaged a performance that was 50.3 points above the standard in ELA and 35.4 points above the standard in Math, which is dramatically higher than the state average for both subject areas. Approximately 57% of our EL students are making progress towards English Language proficiency, which puts us in the 'high' performance category for EL progress. Our district is also performing above state averages in the categories of chronic absenteeism and suspension rate. MVWSD suffers, however, from a persistent and marked gap in student achievement for students with disabilities (SWD) and students who are Hispanic and Latino. From 2015 to 2019 there has been a persistent gap in student

	achievement scores for students with disabilities compared to their peers. While both populations of students have increased their performance in ELA, 10.21 percentage points increased for standards met or exceeded for students with disabilities and 11.58 percentage points increased for standards met or exceeded for their peers, the gap between these populations has also increased by an additional 3% over the past five years (see graph below). Similar trends plague our district when it comes to the gap in student achievement between our Latino/Hispanic students and their White and Asian peers. Qualitative data collected from focus groups conducted with both parents and teachers from the district revealed a perception that teachers aren't sure how to provide differentiation in the classroom to adequately address the disparities they see between students. For example, teachers noted: *"Some kids come into school prepared but some are not."* *"Tutoring service is composed of volunteers and there is limited space. It would be beneficial for more students [to be served]."*