The Education Trust-Midwest is proud to announce the 2021 Building the Hope Award Recipients. At the Building the Hope Schools, the majority of students are students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. These public schools are in the top 25% for academic proficiency or above average student growth for all Michigan students. Moreover, their subgroups of students — Black, Latino/a, low-income and English Learner students in particular — also are performing in the top 30% among Michigan’s high-growth public schools where data is available. They also engage in culturally and linguistically-responsive school-wide practices — including instructional practices — that facilitate students’ outstanding academic progress and growth, making them true outliers in the state of Michigan.

The only way that you can effectively help a kid is to know what their needs are. That’s simply where we start. When a kid comes in, [we check] ‘how’s your reading, how’s your writing, how’s your math? What is your math fluency? What is your reading fluency?’ For a little one, [we check] your letters, numbers, can you write your name? We start from the very basics of what they need. When we say individualized, we really mean it.”

— Dr. Alvin Ward
Principal
Hamtramck Academy was selected as a BTH school because multiple student groups including Asian students and students from low-income backgrounds showed exceptional academic progress as demonstrated by exceeding the statewide proficiency rate in both ELA and Math for 3 consecutive years.

Hamtramck Academy effectively uses data on an ongoing basis to track student progress and inform individualized instruction. Teachers pay special attention to the differences between state assessment performance and day-to-day performance, and utilize daily “exit tickets” to determine needs for further intervention and focused, small group instruction. Students at Hamtramck benefit from a robust team of specialists, interventionists and paraprofessionals, and intervention groups are varied to reduce stigma and promote an inclusive class environment. Finally, Hamtramck Academy faculty and staff demonstrate a commitment to engaging families and honoring the many cultures represented in their school community by providing Arabic and Bengali translators, engaging in diverse reading materials, and using culturally-responsive communication.

Economically Disadvantaged Students’ 2019 Proficiency Rates

- **ELA**: 47.8%
- **Math**: 53%
- **Economically Disadvantaged Students at Hamtramck**: 44.3%
- **Statewide Rate for all MI Students**: 38.7%

[The] teacher paid enough attention to the students to acknowledge that my child needed help with certain things. They did testing on her, they identified that she was behind, but it wasn’t because she wasn’t trying, it was just how she learned. So, since then, every grade she’s been in, she’s had great teachers that take their time and make sure she understands even if the rest of the class does.”

— Hamtramck Academy parent

(buildingthehopeschools.org)