



African-American Equity Task Force – June 2018

Recommendation: Culturally Responsive Instruction, Engagement and Communication

Implementation Team Leads: Dr. Danielle Harris and Dr. Laura Summers

Accomplishments

- Collaborated with the Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) working team and steering committee to create a draft working definition of what culturally responsive education is in DPS, as well as the mindsets, practices and key actions.
- Hosted a Performance Dialogue session with the DPS Senior Leadership Team and the Extended Leadership Team to share the progress of work and solicit feedback.
- Offering culturally responsive education workshops as part of the DPS Skills program to give central school-support team members opportunities to increase knowledge about this body of work.
- Engaged three schools (George Washington High School, Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy, and Northfield High School) in a pilot program for Equity-Based Practices in Mathematics in partnership with the DPS Curriculum and Instruction Team. Math partners and school leaders attended our national “Learning Forward Community of Practice” to work with other districts to close the academic gap in mathematics.

- In addition to the two CRE Professional Development Units (PDUs) currently offered, two more classes were offered within the first quarter of 2018.

Progress

- Finalizing a 3 to 5-year plan for implementing culturally responsive education (CRE) within DPS.
- Engaging members of CRE working team and steering committee to identify the measures of success that will impact student achievement.
- Collaborating with the Growth and Performance Teams to examine how the dominant culture’s way of measuring success impact African-American students and educators, and make adjustments where needed.
- Connecting with other school districts across the country to determine what lessons we can learn while incorporating CRE within DPS.
- The recruitment process has begun to hire a learning specialist and a project manager to join the team.
- Including the voices of students and teachers on the draft definition of CRE.
- Examining the challenge of having the capacity/critical mass of individuals to evaluate the impact of CRE work.

Problem of Practice for Community Meeting:

Increase the understanding of what students and families expect in regards to culturally responsive curricular materials and incorporate the feedback into the design of a rubric to evaluate.

2018-19 Focus:

1. Pilot the Culturally Responsive Teaching mindsets, practices and key actions with select teachers in 45 schools.
2. Offer a culturally responsive leadership institute to develop the mindsets and practices in school leaders, so they are able to support their teachers engaged in the pilots.

Stay Informed:

Visit <http://celt.dpsk12.org> and go to the African-American Equity Task Force page for the latest progress updates and news.

Tip: Set a reminder on your calendar to check the webpage on the 15th of each month—this will ensure you stay updated on all African-American Equity Task Force work.

The Wisdom Team advises and works side-by-side with the implementation teams to ensure the recommendations are effectively implemented and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Wisdom Team

- William Anderson
- Michael Atkins
- Trevon Brandhorst
- Kimberly Desmond
- Kinyata Jackson
- Trena A. Marsal (Deane)
- Sharikia Towers-Fulcher
- Unsuk Zucker

Senior Program Manager, Equity Initiatives
Leslie L. Juniel

Leads the ongoing work and implementation of the recommendations.

Implementation Teams

Five implementation teams are tasked with driving results toward each of the recommendations. These teams collaborate with multiple departments and organizations to develop and prioritize actions.

District and School Structures to Promote Equity

Team Leads:

- Allen Smith
- Bill de la Cruz

Culturally Responsive Instruction, Engagement and Communication

Team Leads:

- Dr. Danielle Harris
- Dr. Laura Summers

Targeted Supports for Students

Team Leads:

- Rochanda Jackson
- Danielle Johnson

Community and Family Resources

Team Leads:

- Dr. Sharon Bailey
- Iesha Mitchell (interim)

Equitable Employment Practices and Work Environment

Team Leads:

- Moe Cantrell
- Caleb Fields

African-American Equity Task Force Recommendations

Over a period of seven months, Denver Public School (DPS) staff and community members developed specific recommendations for defined levers of impact that will enable DPS to improve the experiences for African-American students, staff and families.

African-American Equity Task Force Working Groups