

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



African-American Equity Task Force – June 2018

Recommendation: District and School Structures to Promote Equity

Implementation Team Leads: Allen Smith and Bill de la Cruz

Accomplishments

- The Opportunity Gap cohort completed its first year with 30 schools and will be continuing in the 2018-19 school year.
 - Though a partnership with Dr. Eddie Fergus, the Opportunity Gap cohort schools receive school-based support through personalized, differentiated activities based on their current problem of practice.
- Required culturally responsive and bias training for new teachers.
- The Culture, Equity and Leadership Team continues to offer values-based leadership programs to all employees to build knowledge, skills and abilities in communication, change management, building trust through relationships, bias-awareness and more.
- DPS Board of Education adopted changes to district discipline policy related to suspensions and expulsions in ECE – 3.

Progress

- Designing and developing equity plans to pilot for the 2018-19 school year.
- Developing a new Values-Based Leadership Program for DPS team members called DPS Leadership Equity, which will be offered three times during the 2018-19 school year.
- Developing required professional development focused on bias and equity for school and district personnel.
- Collaborating with the Culturally Responsive Instruction, Engagement and Communication team on the implementation of 2018-19 Opportunity Gap cohort schools.
- Working with the Student Equity and Opportunity team to infuse equity work into trauma-informed practices, increase student supports and interventions.

Problem of Practice for Community Meeting:

How do we make equity work accountable, sustainable and actionable?

2018-19 Focus:

1. Develop the Equity Indicator: Work with schools and academic teams to develop a tool that will provide internal leaders and the community a comprehensive demographic view of their school community. This will assist leaders in making more equitable decisions.
2. Create the process for developing Equity Plans: Develop equity plans in pilot schools with red or orange SPF. Create a cross-collaborative pilot team of four to six schools and one to two departments to create an organizational equity plan.

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.



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.

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African-American Equity Task Force – June 2018

Recommendation: Targeted Supports for Students

Implementation Team Leads: Rochanda Jackson and Danielle Johnson

Accomplishments

- The intersection between race and gender are now specifically called out in assessment data related to the READ Act. This data is important, as it disaggregates information to pinpoint the barriers African-American students encounter while trying to access high value and rigorous learning opportunities. This data also helps assist the development of supports for teachers to accelerate learning.

Progress

- Collaborating with the Gifted and Talented Team to evaluate how recent district and state changes to Gifted and Talented eligibility policies further impact African-American student access.
- Identifying opportunities to engage district leaders in strategies for ensuring African-American students are prepared to graduate under the new graduation requirements for the class of 2021.

Problem of Practice for Community Meeting:

Create awareness about the importance of the READ Act, and how to improve communication and supports.

2018-19 Focus:

1. Design and develop a draft equitable access plan for African-American students in high value learning opportunities.
2. Evaluate current state of program offerings by school.
3. Provide teachers with additional support to accelerate low performing students.

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African-American Equity Task Force – June 2018

Recommendation: Community and Family Resources

Implementation Team Leads: Dr. Sharon Bailey and Iesha Mitchell (interim)

Accomplishments

- More than 420 families have accessed the resources available at Mile High United Way Center for Family Opportunity (CFO) at McGlone Academy.
- The office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) has conducted five, Being Black at School (BBAS) sessions with a total of 34 participants engaging in these community driven sessions. These sessions are comprised of students, parents, educators and community partners with the overall objective of deepening engagement between African-American families and their school communities.
- Home Learning Workshops were held in the Far Northeast to empower families to support increased literacy development in the home. Over 150 parents participated in Home Learning Workshops and over 200 families have participated in Literacy Nights.

Progress

- Through the Summer Youth Employment programs, more than 300 Denver youth, ages 16-24, are in the process of being placed at over 60 local businesses and will receive job readiness training and summer work experiences.
- Over 280 youth received case management and wrap around services through a partnership with the City of Denver Office of Economic Development Workforce Services. These individuals are utilizing the employment pipelines and business partnerships solidified by FACE to expand the City of Denver's network of employers throughout Denver.
- Customer satisfaction surveys are being completed with all CFO participants.
- Continuing to develop employment pipelines and business partnerships with the City of Denver's network of employers that support and assist families in obtaining employment.
- Research is ongoing to identify best practices for engaging African-American families in the education of their students.

Problem of Practice for Community Meeting:

1. How can DPS best restore trust, inform and engage African-American families so they can more effectively support their students?
2. What kinds of programs would be most beneficial for the community as part of the Center for Family Opportunity (CFO)?
3. If a webpage is developed as a resource for African-American families, what content would be most helpful?

2018-19 Focus:

1. Design ongoing assessments to measure the effectiveness of CFOs.
2. Provide year-round academic opportunities and social supports for African-American students, families and community members.
3. Create school-level black family advisory council.

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African-American Equity Task Force – June 2018

Recommendation: Equitable Employment Practices and Work Environments

Implementation Team Leads: Moe Cantrell and Caleb Fields

Accomplishments

- Established an HR team to dig deeper into current processes and find where adjustments need to be made.
- Developed new structures to attract and retain African-American educators:
 - DPS Belong groups offer a place for team members with similar experiences and backgrounds to build relationships with others throughout the district.
 - Reach One Mentoring provides team members of color the space to build a greater level of trust, sense of belonging and support to grow and succeed within DPS.
- Stay Conversations provide leaders and team members the opportunity to connect through meaningful dialogue and discuss what's working well and what could be improved within their role.

Progress

- Continuing to explore efforts currently underway across DPS that align with recommendations to ensure we are pooling resources and collaborating for greater impact, rather than duplicating efforts.
- Assessing the entire employee lifecycle to determine where barriers exist and what components need to be strengthened.
- Gaining clarity on where candidates—specifically teachers—are interviewing to understand potential barriers.
- Developing exit interview process.
- Developed a draft value proposition for educators of color as a recruitment tool. As part of this work, the team is designing an infographic to illustrate how potential candidates can connect with DPS.
- Partnering with the EdConnect program and leveraging recent research from the Colorado School of Mines to build a pipeline of current students into future candidates. This effort also includes conversations to help address the misconceptions of teaching.

Problem of Practice for Community Meeting:

1. What are the opportunities to push the long-term pipeline strategy within our communities?
2. How can we engage our community members in more effective ways to become paraprofessionals—who may be able to become future teachers?

2018-19 Focus:

1. Continue to expand the Grow Your Own pipeline opportunities.
2. Establish a marketing campaign for career development within DPS.
3. Create opportunities to showcase CareerConnect and EdConnect, and dialogue with students and others about the misconceptions of teaching.

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