

Overview of District-wide EQUITY Focus 2022 - 2027 Practices, Programs, and Professional Learning (continuing from 2017-2022 document)

Academic Achievement / Instruction:

Goal: To close achievement gaps, opportunity gaps, and readiness gaps

Increase Access to and Enrollment in Advanced Level Courses, 7 to 12:

- Expanded college level course offerings with a broader appeal
- Piloted the AP African American Studies Course (2022-2023) and full implementation for 2023-2024 school year.
- Partnered with *Equal Opportunity Schools* with the goal of implementing systems to increase enrollment of students of color in AP and other college level classes
- Supported "first time in AP" students with summer prep and year long tutoring opportunities
- Eliminated basic levels of Math in grades 5 to 8 to promote "Algebra for All"

Strengthen Intervention Practices

- PD for all teachers on using a strengths-based approach to accelerating achievement
- Piloted before and after school intervention models such as "Early Birds" that focused on skills, confidence, and identity development
- Implemented strategic tiered interventions to address students who are chronically absent, focusing on developing strong relationships with families

Refine Instructional Practices

- Revised the district *Framework for Teaching and Learning* to include indicators of culturally responsive instruction that are expected of all teachers
- PD for all teachers on the characteristics of a "Warm Demander" and the impact of "high trust, high engagement and high expectations" on achievement (from *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond)
- PD for all administrators on improving attendance and the impact of chronic absenteeism
- Author Peter Liljedahl spoke to all teachers about creating access and engaging every student in rigorous thinking tasks based on his book - *Building-Thinking Classrooms*
- Jal Mehta, author of *In Search of Deeper Learning* provided PD for all teachers on the characteristics of a deeper learning experience for students that includes the 3 components - Mastery, Creativity, and Identity
- Mandated training for all faculty/staff/administrators about unconscious bias and how it impacts student learning outcomes.
- Scenario based training for all paraprofessionals on common situations that impact student learning, and how to utilize restorative practices to empower students and diminish learned helplessness and disengagement.

Data Systems

- Conducted routine data protocols to examine achievement by race, gender, and other factors impacting opportunity, access and outcomes
- PD for teachers on utilizing data with an equity lens (from *Street Data: A Pathway Toward Equitable, Anti-Racist Schools*)

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Goal: To include diverse perspectives, voices, and texts in the curriculum to provide “windows and mirrors” for students to better understand themselves and others

Include explicit teaching about social justice in the curriculum:

- Revised and updated Social Justice K-4 Lessons
- Reworked units of study in American history courses
- PD to teachers on how to navigate complex conversations in a way that honors diversity, promotes being a changemaker, and affirms global citizen thinking.

Create a more inclusive curriculum that demands perspective taking:

- Continued audit of classroom and school libraries and required readings to include more diverse representation across the curriculum
- Partnered with Noah Webster’s Hidden History Grant to explore and highlight the contributions, and amplify the unheard voices of the revolution in social studies curriculum.
- Systematized the use of an Equity Audit tool when revising Social Studies curriculum units
- Curriculum Specialists and Department Leaders partner with E&I coordinator regularly to audit curriculum to ensure it includes diverse perspectives, voices, and texts to provide “windows and mirrors” for students to better understand themselves and others.

School Culture and Climate

Goal: To create an inclusive culture of respect, belonging, and high expectations

Engage faculty and staff in reflective conversations and training on anti-racism and implicit bias:

- E&I coordinator and school principal partner to facilitate school equity teams that work to support the goals of the equity framework.
- PD on learning allyship - Teachers as “warm demanders” who ensure high trust, high engagement, and high expectations for all learners
- PD for all School-based Equity Teams on the antidotes to normed thinking with strategies to cultivate “AND” culture thinking.
- Scenario training for teachers on how to combat meanspirited behavior, micro and macro aggressions, racialized and discriminatory language while encouraging and empowering students to be upstanders.

Analyze and Improve Behavior Management and Discipline Practices:

- Implemented restorative practices and educational to lessen recidivism when appropriate
- Restorative practice training for non-certified staff
- All new teachers studied the characteristics of self-managed classrooms and empowered learners as a part of new teacher induction

Elevate student voice in the development of positive culture and respectful climate:

- E&I coordinator publishes monthly guidance to all staff on cultural holidays, awareness days, and religious observances
- FHS Social Justice Council, promoting partnership, allyship, and action amongst all social groups
- Social Justice Week at FHS in February annually
- Black History celebrations and learning - K to 12

- Diversity Days and Equity Leadership Club at IAR Middle School
- Elementary Clubs in every school - K.I.D.Club - Kindness, Inclusion, Diversity in School
- Dylan's Wings of Change partnership with-IAR Middle School
- Annual 9th grade assembly with ADL
- GSA Clubs in grades 5 to 12
- Community outreach and partnerships in deepening cultural humility practices
- LGBTQ+ Celebrations, observances, and learning (Ex. Day of Silence)
- Global Citizen calendar of monthly recognitions of historically marginalized groups of people
- EL CREW implementation at WW and IAR to create small nurturing places of belonging
- Chartwells monthly celebration of culture and cuisine with learning opportunities for students

Recruitment and Hiring

Goal: To attract, hire, and retain administrators, teachers, and staff of color

Revise HR systems and practices to ensure an equity focus:

- Developed new promotional materials
- Mandated anti-bias training for anyone on a hiring committee
- Launched to practice of conducting "Stay Interviews" to retain effective faculty and staff

Expand recruitment strategies:

- Developed a long term strategic plan, "Increasing Educator Diversity"
- Participated in an HBCU recruitment fair on campus
- Participated in the CT Diversity Recruiting Consortium, attending bi-monthly meetings and participating in annual recruitment fair
- Annual HR Department virtual Open House for prospective teachers open house with a focus on the district's core beliefs, VoGC and Equity Framework

Commit to partnerships with Universities and Colleges to build a pipeline for aspiring teachers of color:

- Developed a Summer Learning Academy Internship opportunity to attract college juniors from HBCUs in order to build a pipeline of candidates
- Ensured regular outreach to Higher Ed (EPP) partners communicating interest in diverse candidates

Strengthen Pipeline to Certification

- Continued partnership with RELAY Graduate School of Ed Program for paraprofessionals to become teachers
- Launched "Educators Rising" - a curriculum to support students of color interested in becoming teachers

Community Engagement

Goal: To engage with families and the community to support welcoming school communities that value all voices and create a strong sense of belonging among all families and children

Open opportunities for community conversations:

- Ongoing *Community Council for Equity and Inclusion* with parents, teachers, students, administrators, and board members participating - six annual meetings
- Community Conversations: School-based family-focused virtual meetings
- Board member liaison on the Town of Farmington's Racial Equality Task-Force (Regularly

Reports out on FPS Equity and Inclusion Work)

Strengthen Family Engagement:

- Multiple events throughout the school year, K to 4, to welcome families, communicate academic expectations, create community, connect, empower, and honor families and students.
- F-E coordinator, E&I coordinator, school administrator partner to implement a check-point protocol to ensure Open Choice families are welcomed, informed, and empowered throughout the placement process.
- Parent-focus groups conducted at the school level
- Attendance at RSCO/Open Choice recruitment fairs
- Hosted multiple Open Choice social events coordinated by Family School Liaisons
- Hosted annual social events with Open Choice families
- Engaged in Welcoming Walkthroughs - a guided self-assessment of school practices and communication

Sustain equity-focused partnerships over time:

- Equal Opportunity Schools - completed partnership in 2024
- Partnership for Educational Leadership / EDIN Network
- Great Schools Partnership
- EL Education
- CREC Family Partnership
- RELAY Graduate School of Education
- Kathy Taylor, Consultant