



Equity and Excellence in SPS

School Committee Meeting | April 5

The vision for equity in the Somerville Public Schools is an educational environment where all students are **affirmed** and can **thrive** - **academically, emotionally, and socially.**



2020 - 2021 Priorities

- Establish systems and structures which advance equity in the district
- Create robust professional development opportunities at all levels
- Support each school community by meeting them where they are at with needs (materials, coaching, etc.)
- Responding with appropriate supports



District Wide Initiatives

District-Wide Initiatives:

- **Advancing Equity Task Force:** This is a team of 25 staff members (educators, administrators, instructional coaches, and family liaisons) who work together to identify systemic inequities within the district, and create solutions.
- **Affinity Group Working Group:** This is a working group of 10 educators and administrators who are planning the incorporation of affinity groups for students and staff in SPS. The student affinity groups will be piloted during the school day starting in quarter 3.
- **DESE Diversity Network:** The district is a member of the Diversity Network which is a partnership with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to support the diversification of our staff.
- **Educator Professional Goals:** All educator professional goals for this school year must be aligned with the district's priority on equity.

School-Based Initiatives

- **School-Based Equity Specialists:** Each school in the district has a school based equity specialist. This specialist works closely with the Director for Equity and Excellence and the School Administration to create a school-wide equity plan with concrete, measurable goals. They also support organizing professional development for each school community and provide thought-partnership to educators for how to make their practices and the school's systems more equitable.
- **Administrator Coaching at SHS:** Somerville High School Department Chairs are engaged in a year long equity coaching with The Leadership Academy.
- **Explicit Equity Focus at each school:** Each school has equity goals and has led school-based professional development with an explicit equity focus.

District PD for Admin and Educators

- **We have partnered with the following organizations for professional development:**
 - UnboundEd racial equity focused PD for Administrators
 - The SEED Project - equity focused PD for Administrators
 - BetterLesson will offer two PDs for schools and educators:
 - Anti-Racist Fundamentals: Building Understanding of Race in Mostly White Classrooms
 - Anti-Racist Instruction for PreK-8: Integrating Racism and other Critical Topics into Your Lessons
 - Dr. Daren Graves (of Simmons and Harvard Graduate School of Education) and Dr. Scott Seider - Critical Consciousness in Schools
 - Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition - Understanding and Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Identities

This space was safe. I never had to stop and say "what are they going to think about this comment I am about to make" I just spoke-- freely. It was freeing.

Thank you offering this space for educators of color. It was incredibly helpful to discuss these topics with other educators who have had similar experiences.

I really loved having two facilitators and having an affinity group of people of color. I hope that SPS continues in this direction with PD

Please keep offering PDs like this! This was hugely helpful, and I think pushed everyone involved to continue to be better and to hold true to the promises we made in June when antiracism was on the forefront of everyone's mind.

This is a process and it will take time, but we have the ability to create change and to influence others into becoming apart of this work.

This was the best PD I've taken in my 8 years in SPS. It pushed me to examine my thinking, racial biases, and teaching practices more than any other PD I've taken before.

This was great. It moved beyond the foundational type equity work into the next level of understanding and possible action. Not enough time!

Examples of PD offerings

- Anti-Racist Action Oriented Book Study for White Educators - How to Be Anti Racist
- Anti-Racist Action Oriented Book Study for Educators of Color - My Grandmother's Hands
- Investigating Equity and Inclusion in Our Schools: A Critical Participatory Action Research Project
- Shaping an Understanding of Trauma
- Simple Tips to help (Former) English Learners Succeed in the Mainstream Classroom
- Educator Book Club: #WeNeedDiverseBooks Series
- Inclusive Anti-Bias Curriculum PLC
- Supporting LGBTQ+ Students During Remote Learning
- Filling the Cup: Maintaining Self Care and Joy for Educators of Color
- Womxn of Color Collective - PLC for women of color
- Anti-Bias Education Resource Development for Early Childhood Educators
- Educator Book Study - Caste: The Origins of our Discontents
- Trauma of Racism in Public Education

Grants

- **We have received the following grants to advance our priority of equity:**
 - DESE Teacher Diversification Grant
 - Educators for Black Lives through the Nellie Mae Foundation
 - Equity in Action Dashboard through the Boston Foundation:
Creating a dashboard to visualize inequities and spark action from administrators and educators

Coming Soon

- First ever SPS Diversity Recruitment Fair on April 10 from 10:00am - 12:00pm (Recommendation from the Advancing Equity Task Force)



2021 - 2022 Priorities

- **Create systems which elevate and amplify student voice**
- Continue to build systems and structures
- Curricular work
- Programs across schools (for example RJ)
- Build Partnerships -- Call Me Mister, BAM
- Continue school support (Equity Specialists)
- Continue to build district initiatives (Advancing Equity Task Force)

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

