

## Overview of District-wide EQUITY Focus 2017 - 2022 Priority Practices, Programs, and Professional Learning

### 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:

- Transformed grading practices to a mastery-based system that increased equitable academic opportunity to ALL students
- De-leveled 9th and 10th grade core classes - all students in honors
- Implemented AVID Programming - grades 7 to 12
- 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
- Developed summer AP prep course
- Conducted Math Pathways Program review and implemented recommendations eliminating bottom levels of Math in grades 5 to 8

#### Strengthen SRBI practices

- Implemented “Challenge and Support Blocks” into daily schedule, K-12
- Provided PD for elementary teachers on executive functioning and its impact on achievement

#### Improve culturally responsive instruction

- Facilitated PD aligned with whole district book read - *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*
- Hired a Family Engagement Specialist - focus on achievement
- Add a district-wide Equity Coordinator position that impacts all areas of the Equity Framework K-12

### Social and Emotional Learning

Goal: To help all students understand, express, and manage their emotions, navigate conflict, and develop healthy relationships

#### Address increasing needs for mental health support:

- Convened SEL Committee - year long study of the research, produced report of findings
- Adopted *Management in the Active Classroom* to frame New Teacher induction on equitable classroom management strategies
- Trained and implemented the RULER Approach to SEL, K-12 - Yale School of Emotional Intelligence (Classroom and School Mood Meters and Charters)
- Shared “RULER at home” strategies with families
- Restorative Practices: Faculty/Staff training and implementation K-12
- Strengthened the use of Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) to assess lagging skills and implement targeted interventions (Special Education) to address disproportionality
- Used student survey results disaggregated by subgroups, to set goals for improvement
- Student Focus Groups K-12

## 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:

- Developed and implemented K - 6 Social Justice Lessons - Identity, Diversity, Justice, Action
- Revised units in Social Studies that teach black history
- Added courses to high school curriculum - Capstone, “Equity, Advocacy and Social Justice” and African American, Puerto Rican and Latino History

### Create a more inclusive curriculum that demands perspective taking:

- Audited library and ELA book selections and purchased more diverse texts
- Created a tool for review and critique of Social Studies curriculum
- Developed instructional tools for teachers to promote civic discourse in the classroom

### Professional development aligned to Equity Framework:

- Mandated training for all faculty/staff/administrators about anti-bias
- School-based professional development related to equity topics (outlined in School Development Plans)
- Program and School Development Plans all include Equity Goals and Action Steps (Continuous Strategic Improvement directly aligned to data trends and priorities)

## 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:

- Implemented ongoing training from outside experts in Leading for Equitable Classrooms, Examining the Racial Achievement Gap, Unconscious Bias in Schools, Social Justice Education, White Privilege, Courageous Conversations, Restorative Practices, Trauma-Informed Practices, Deepening the Understanding of LGBTQIA+ Student Experience
- Worked with external organizations to develop and implement mandatory training for all faculty and staff - RE-Center, Kathy Taylor, New Haven Pride, etc.
- Facilitated multiple faculty and staff book studies across K-12

### Revisit approaches to behavior management and discipline practices through an equity lens:

- Provided a copy of Management in the Active Classroom to all new hires and discuss at new teacher orientation
- Monitored and analyze discipline data by subgroups
- Developed and shared information to families about the district’s steps when there is a bias-related incident - how to report, how we investigate, how we support students
- Training and implementation of RULER K-12

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

- Social Justice Week at FHS in February
- Black History celebrations and learning - K to 12
- Diversity Days and Equity Leadership Club at IAR Middle School
- Elementary Clubs in every school - KIDS - Kindness, Inclusion, Diversity in School

- Annual 9th grade assembly with ADL
- GSA Clubs in grades 5 to 12
- Global Citizen calendar of monthly recognitions of historically marginalized groups of people

## Recruitment and Hiring

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

### Conduct a review of HR systems and practices with an equity focus:

- Revised recruiting strategies and materials
- Mandated anti-bias training for anyone on a hiring committee
- Included Social Justice and anti-bias training in onboarding employees
- Revised HR forms as recommended by consultant
- Revised faculty and staff handbooks

### Expand recruitment strategies:

- Engaged in an intentional outreach to HBCUs, participated in recruitment fairs
- Attended national conference on Diversity Recruitment sponsored by AASPA
- Created an Open House event early in the recruiting season and marketed it strategically
- Participated in virtual meetings with college and university Deans of Ed to better understand how to reach more diverse teacher candidates
- Participated in the CT Diversity Recruiting Consortium, attending bi-monthly meetings and participating in annual recruitment fair

### Commit to a long-term partnership with UConn to build a pipeline for aspiring teachers of color:

- Developed a junior year internship experience
- Added ECE courses in education and special education career pathways
- Prioritized student teachers of color for FPS
- Recruited early and often during college candidate's senior year

### Strengthen Pipeline to Certification

- Launched a RELAY Graduate School of Ed Program for paraprofessionals to become teachers
- Expand high school "grow your own" aspiring teacher program

## Community Engagement

Goal: To develop deeper understanding of biases and beliefs in an effort to dismantle racism and other forms of oppression or discrimination

### Open opportunities for community conversations:

- Launched a *Community Council for Equity and Inclusion* with parents, teachers, students, administrators, and board members participating - six annual meetings
- Community Conversations: Created school-based evening opportunities for families to learn about school priorities and engage in dialogue to strengthen belonging, empathy, and cultural competence
- Board member liaison on the Town of Farmington's Racial Equality Task-Force (Regularly Reports Out on FPS Equity and Inclusion Work)

### Enhance family engagement:

- Hired a Family Engagement Specialist
- Funded a Family School Liaison in every school

- Hosted annual social events with Open Choice families

Sustain equity-focused partnerships over time:

- Concerned Parents of Color in Farmington
- RE-Center
- Equal Opportunity Schools
- Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance
- Partnership for Educational Leadership
- Great Schools Partnership
- EL Education
- RELAY Graduate School of Education
- Kathy Taylor, Consultant