

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
Strategic Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

In line with its core value—counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion throughout the district, the East Lyme Board of Education (BOE), in collaboration with the school administration and staff members, adopted a strategic plan to address a two-pronged problem:

1. How can all activities, classroom-based and after-school included, within East Lyme Public Schools (ELPS) counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion throughout the district?
2. How can this task be accomplished in a way that develops students' capacity as independent thinkers who, through their actions, counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion?

Action Item 1: Public Declaration

As soon as appropriate, ELPS initiative to address this two-part problem will begin with a public declaration in which the superintendent, perhaps accompanied by a key public official, presents this detailed plan of action. The event would include staff and students discussing their perspectives on countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering inclusion in their respective schools.

Action Item 2: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, (DEI) Action Teams

A district-level DEI Action Team would include representatives from a broad range of ELPS staff members as well as parents and community members. The broad representation would enable the district team to obtain diverse perspectives on how to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion within ELPS. The district-level DEI Action Team would conjoin their efforts with school-level and grade-level DEI Action Teams in each school and at each grade level.

Each DEI Action Team will continuously follow an action cycle in which they gather information to identify possible DEI gaps, analyze the information, implement changes to address the gaps, and assess the effectiveness of the changes. In their respective public meetings, the DEI Action Teams would discuss their action plans and publish the results these plans achieved. Each team would complete several action cycles over the course of a school year.

Action Item 3: Institutional Audit

As quickly as it can be arranged, an external agency whose members understand organizational dimensions of racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion will conduct an institutional audit of the ELPS. This audit might explore questions such as: Have ELPS analyzed the extent to which current policies or practices might perpetuate racism? To what extent do curricula address topics that pertain to racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion? To what extent does the school climate affirm students of different racial, ethnic, religious backgrounds?

The results of the audit would help the various DEI Action Teams by providing data that assesses the effectiveness of current practices in countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering inclusion.

¹ Ideas in this plan represent an integration of prior discussions at BOE and existing ELPS Staff committees

Action Item 4: Curricular Revisions

Studies addressing African American, Puerto Rican, Latino(a), and Native American history as outlined by CT General Statute 10-16ss (2019) and Public Act 19-12 (2019) when woven into the East Lyme High School curriculum, represent a solid first step in expanding the diversity of ELPS's programs of study. One high school course will not suffice. Companion curricula refinements throughout all schools and at all grade levels would be necessary to target the dual nature of the problem the ELPS face. To this end, curricular revisions that add diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic perspectives to course content would best be accompanied by hands-on, problem-solving activities where students develop their capacity to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion.

Action Item 5: Hire Faculty and Administrators Committed to Countering Racism, Advancing Diversity, Promoting Equity, and Fostering Inclusion

The BOE and administration, following Connecticut State Department of Education's guidelines (CT_State_Department_of_Education 2018) and the ELPS district's recruitment, interviewing, and hiring plan (1998), will aspire to establish a professional staff (teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals included) who are committed to countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering Inclusion.

Action Item 6: Enduring Commitment

Research studies indicate that even with the best set of policies and procedures in place, institutions often fail to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion because they lack an enduring commitment to do the hard work required. To monitor and support this strategic plan, the BOE will include an agenda item for every regularly scheduled meeting to ensure that all elements of this plan are addressed with fidelity.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
Strategic Plan¹

Every member of the East Lyme Public Schools (ELPS) faces the daunting challenge of addressing negative “isms” related to the protected classes outlined in the Board of Education (BOE) Non-Discrimination Policy: race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, alienage, disability, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, or veteran status (2020). In turn, these isms (e.g., racism, sexism, anti-Semitism) may contribute to attitudes, actions, or institutional structures that subordinate (oppress) individuals within these groups (Institute for Democratic Renewal Anti-Racism Initiative, 1999).

To assist in discussing these issues clearly, a list of key terms, their definitions, and reference sources is included as Attachment 1. Drawing from this list, and for ease of presentation, the word “racism” will be used throughout this strategic plan as a term that collectively encompasses all of these negative isms. Racism stems from a socially constructed system of categorizing humans based on features such as skin color or ancestry. Racism is a belief system that has many facets (WKKelloggFoundation 2010).

Internalized racism describes the private racial beliefs held within individuals. *Interpersonal racism* refers to an individual’s private beliefs about race that play out in public, often biased, interactions with others. *Structural racism* is a set of processes occurring across institutions and throughout society generating disparities that privilege one group over another and that usually occur without any individual racist actors. *Systemic racialization* describes a dynamic, institutionalized pattern of discrimination – one cutting across all aspects of society – that produces and replicates racial inequities (Center_Urban_Education 2020).

Within the ELPS, failure to counter racism with actions that advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion is unacceptable. In addressing this matter, the ELPS face the challenge of a low level of racial diversity in its community. Among students in ELPS approximately 9% are listed as Asian, 8% as Hispanic/Latino(a), 5% as two or more races, and 2% Black. In addition, there may be, within ELPS, a negative racism rooted in non-conscious biases or insidious prejudices. To the extent biased or prejudicial practices exist in our schools, we cannot ignore them. Direct action is necessary. As Burkholder (2018) states emphatically, failing to counter racism, failing to advance diversity, failing to promote equity, and failing to foster inclusion in our schools is dangerous to American democracy.

Countering racism with deeds that advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion in our schools is one half of the challenge the ELPS face. The second half is to carry out these actions with a clear intention to advance students’ development. To this end—and in line with its core value to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion throughout the district, the East Lyme Board of Education (BOE), in collaboration with the school administration and staff committees, developed this strategic plan to address a two-pronged problem:

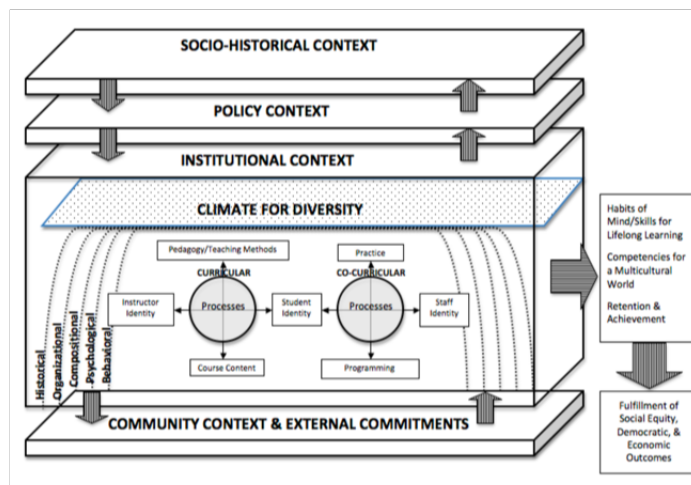
1. How can all activities, classroom-based and after-school included, within East Lyme Public Schools (ELPS) counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion throughout the district?
2. How can this task be accomplished in a way that develops students’ capacity as independent thinkers who, through their actions, counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion?

¹ Ideas in this plan represent an integration of prior discussions at BOE and existing ELPS Staff committees

In devising a strategy to address this dual problem, the BOE, administration, and staff committees drew on many resources including the Racial Equity Resource Guide published by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2010), Strategies for Advancing Racial Equality in Public Education (O’Bryant 2018), Steps for Liberating Public Education from Racial Bias from the National Equity Project (Route-Chatmon 2018, Vasquez 2020), University of Southern California Center for Urban Education (Center_Urban_Education 2020), the Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multi-Cultural Institution (Crossroads_Ministry 2020), and research studies addressing issues such as racial microaggressions in everyday life (Derald-Wing 2007), Latino/a experiences in academic settings (Alvarado 2012), and hate crimes directed against Asian-Americans (Chavez 2021).

As indicated in each of these resources, the process of simultaneously becoming a multi-cultural institution (Cox 1991) while also developing students’ capacity to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion is complex. As outlined in Figure 1, the process involves interactions between a district’s socio-historical context, policy context, institutional context, and community context (Hurtado 2012). Within the institutional context, the climate for diversity involves shared interactions between pedagogy, course content, instructor identities, and student identities. A climate for diversity also involves joint interactions occurring in co-curricular settings between practices, programming, student identities, and staff identities. Students who graduate from schools characterized by diverse learning environments often possess competencies (e.g., commitment to social equity) required to live successfully in a multicultural world.

Figure 1: Multi-Contextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments (Hurtado 2012)



Addressing this complexity requires careful design of the settings—the curricular and co-curricular interactions involved—in which students learn because these settings exert a powerful influence. According to Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977, Bandura 1989) learning advances as a reciprocal interaction between a learner’s personal, self-generated actions and the influences within the environment where learning occurs. The role of the environment is critical. Students learn to counter implicit racial biases, not by classroom instruction alone, but by being immersed in a school environment that, throughout its activities, counters racism, advances diversity, promotes equity, and fosters inclusion (Paluck 2009, Green 2020).

According to Payne et. al. (2017), implicit racial biases are context-dependent. They are social constructs that come to mind in response to environmental cues. As such, they are more a factor of situations than of individual cognitions. Accordingly, efforts to enhance students’ multi-cultural views (Fitzsimmons 2019) would be most enduring if they focused on changes in school environments. From this perspective, a carefully designed school setting with environmental cues that actively counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion would not only enrich each school’s multi-cultural environment (Cox 1991) but would also have the double advantage of enhancing students’ capacity to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion in their own actions.

Action 1: Make a Public Declaration

O’Bryant (2018) suggests that an effective initiative to establish a multi-cultural school environment begins with a public declaration. As applied to the ELPS, to underscore the district’s commitment to countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering inclusion, the superintendent, perhaps accompanied by a key public official, could present this detailed plan of action with its specific steps and outcome measures. Ideally the presentation would take the form of a public event including staff, students, parents, community members, and the press. In these pandemic times, the event may have to take the form of a ZOOM session.

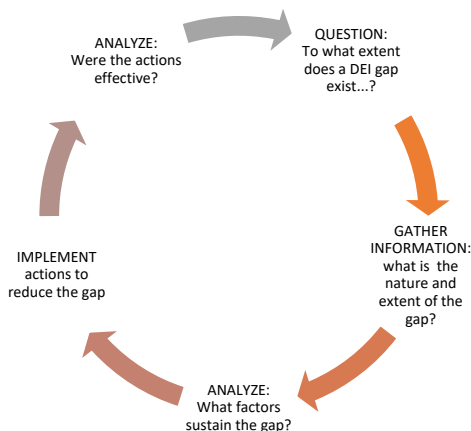
The event could be designed as an instructional experience for students that would enhance their capacity to embrace multi-culturalism (Fitzsimmons 2019). As such, students from each school, in partnership with staff members, could be included with active roles in designing and participating in the presentation. In their presentations they might discuss their perspectives on countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering inclusion in their respective schools.

Assessment: A short exit survey using a scale from 1 (the plan is lacking) to 5 (the plan is very solid) would gather information from participants about the degree to which they see the plan as a solid first step toward addressing the dual problem articulated by the BOE. The survey could also gather suggestions for improving the plan.

Action Item 2: Support Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Action Teams

To avoid the possibility of creating silos, to build strategic partnerships, and to build an environment that counters racism, advances diversity, promotes equity, and fosters inclusion, several resources recommend the formation of a district-wide DEI Action Team, school-level DEI Action Teams, and grade-level DEI Action Teams (Capper 2015, O’Bryant 2018, Center_Urban_Education 2020). As outlined in Figure 2, each team would follow an action cycle where they continuously identify DEI gaps, implement changes, and assess the impact of these changes.

Figure 2: The DEI Action Cycle (Center_Urban_Education 2020).



According to the Center for Urban Education, when using the process outlined in Figure 2, DEI Action Teams would follow two fundamental principles. The first principle, *changes are socially constructed*, means that through focused discussions DEI Action Teams define ideas and concepts related to desired changes using team members' existing cultural ideals and shared experiences. The second principle, *changes occur through participatory action*, suggests that in their work, each team, following the process outlined in Figure 2, would form a question about the extent a DEI gap of interest to the team exists, gather information on practices that may contribute to the gap, analyze data to identify factors that may sustain the gap, implement actions to reduce the gap, and assess the efficacy of these changes (Center_Urban_Education 2020).

The DEI Action Teams would be most successful in completing each DEI action cycle if they worked to avoid common pitfalls in collecting and analyzing data (Education_Elements 2020). To avoid an interviewer bias, the DEI teams could work to remain neutral and avoid leading questions when gathering information from stakeholders. To avoid a design bias, the DEI teams could use open-ended questions. DEI Action Teams could avoid sampling biases by including a wide range of individuals in their data collection web. To avoid confirmation biases, the DEI teams could maintain an open mind—avoid expecting certain outcomes—when analyzing information. Finally, DEI Action Teams could avoid analytical biases by having several different members check and cross check information before acting on the team's analyses.

The district-level DEI Action Team would be a participatory body that included representatives from a broad-range of ELPS staff members, students, parents, and representatives from the community—especially members from community organizations that include individuals from groups underrepresented in the ELPS. This committee would hold and publicize regularly scheduled meetings. In these meetings the committee would make every effort to obtain input from all members to help the team carry out DEI action cycles effectively.

As a starting point for their work, the district-level DEI Action Team could collect district-wide baseline information using the Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey (Moulton 2020). The survey would provide valuable information about items such as students' sense of belonging, perspectives on diversity and inclusion, and perceptions of supportive relationships. Teachers' responses would contribute perspectives on items such as school climate, efforts to expand cultural awareness, and curriculum emphases on different cultures. Results from this survey could also provide a solid baseline of formative information to guide and monitor the district's efforts to address the dual problem this plan addresses.

Members of the district-level DEI Action Team could partner with members of the school-level and grade-level DEI Action Teams. Through this collaboration, the work of the district-level team could be complemented by the work of the school-level and grade-level DEI Action Teams as they too followed the process outlined in Figure 2 to design and implement activities that counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion.

Including students as active members of these respective district-level, school-level, and grade-level DEI Action Teams would have at least two advantages. First, students would maximize the DEI Action Team's effectiveness through the on-the-ground insights they would bring to the DEI team's discussions about activities within each school. Second, students' cognitive flexibility in solving problems as well as their overall academic achievement would likely increase as a result of using the five-step process outlined in Figure 2 to address genuine problems (Denham 1987, Okafor 2019). The school-level and grade-level DEI Action Teams might follow a process similar to the grassroots movement organized by students at Standley Lake High School in Colorado, *Day Without Hate*, that promotes unity and respect throughout schools with the challenge "What are you going to do to change the world?" (Daywithouthate 2020).

These respective teams would perform a high priority task for the ELPS. Their work would not be sidelined as a marginal activity. Instead, the teams would receive adequate support within each school to meet

regularly, have access to resources needed to gather information, and implement actions that counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion successfully.

Assessment: Each DEI Action Team – district-level, school-level, grade-level – would complete several DEI action cycles each year. As they complete each action cycle, they would publish the DEI gaps they identified, the changes they implemented to address these gaps, and the results achieved by the strategies they implemented.

Action Item 3: Initiate an Institutional Audit

Latta (2020) emphasized that the journey to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion begins with a strong commitment to institutional self-reflection coupled with a solid dose of institutional humility. This commitment is important because, as explained by Capper (2015), individuals often conclude that racism and its counterparts—lack of diversity, equity, or inclusion—only results from overt acts (e.g., name calling, hate crimes). This perspective ignores the deeper, often invisible, and more insidious forms of racism that may occur on a daily basis. Capper encourages organizations to explore the enormity and pervasiveness of exclusion due to the structural, political, and economic embeddedness of racism. He argues that lack of diversity, equity, or inclusion due to racism is pervasive. It occurs all the time at individual, institutional, societal, and epistemological levels.

As schools begin their efforts to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion, Knaus (2014) recommends that school leaders, in partnership with an audit team, seek perspectives from staff, students, and parents in groups underrepresented in the schools to bring to light the ways schools are, or are not, working for them. In gathering these perspectives, school leaders, in partnership with an audit team, could study the historical, political, economic, and social contexts of the schools using informal interviews and written surveys (Hurtado 2012). These data gathering tools could capture the experiential knowledge of students who may have been marginalized or underserved (Horsford 2010). In the case of ELPS, this information can be used by the DEI Action Teams as a baseline to monitor ELPS's progress in countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering inclusion.

Capper (2015) suggests that the audit might include questions such as: Do ELPS conduct equity audits that include disaggregation of race data, and establish concrete measurable goals, action plans, effective measures of progress, and follow-up as a result of the audit? Have ELPS analyzed and critiqued new policies or practices to determine if or how they could perpetuate racism in their implementation?

The audit could also adopt items from the Survey of Diverse Learning Environments (Hurtado 2012) both to assess the current situation and to establish a baseline to monitor future progress.

- Climate for diversity: Frequency of student's experiences with subtle forms of discrimination; frequency students experience threats or harassment; students' perceptions of their schools' commitment to diversity; measure of positive and negative interactions with diverse peers; satisfaction with climate for diversity.
- General climate: Students' perception of faculty actions that reflect concern for their academic success; measures of students' possible biases about race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, alienage, disability, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, or veteran status.
- Diversity Practices: Students' involvement in institutional programs focused on diversity; number of courses students have taken that include materials and pedagogy addressing diversity.
- Multicultural competencies: Importance to students of engaging in social activism in support of underrepresented groups; how often students critically examine and challenge their own and others' biases; students' skills for living in a diverse society; students' awareness of their many social identities and the power these identities afford them in society.

- Classroom climate: Students' interest in applying concepts from class to challenges facing society; students' perception of the extent to which they discuss racial, ethnic, and cultural differences in class.

This audit could inform the various DEI Action Teams by providing data that assesses the effectiveness of current practices in countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering inclusion. If practices do exist that inadvertently enable racism or inhibit inclusion, diversity, or equity, the analysis could help DEI Action Teams develop concrete goals, implement plans to address these areas, design effective measures of progress, and make these plans transparent and easily accessible to the ELPS.

To make the audit an instructional experience for students, with assistance from staff members and the auditing agency, students could be included in the audit process as agents who assist staff members and the auditors in collecting information about their schools, contributing ideas for areas the auditors might explore, and assisting the audit team to develop recommendations that involve their respective schools.

Assessment: To what extent did the audit provide information to the various DEI Action Teams that informed actions to address the dual problem the ELPS face?

Action Item 4: Initiate Curricular Revisions

As part of their on-going work to reduce DEI gaps, as appropriate, each DEI Action Team—district-level, school-level, grade-level—might partner with other staff members in the initiation, design, and assessment of curricular revisions.

One task high on each DEI Action Team's agenda will be supporting the implementation of Connecticut General Statute 10-16ss (2019) and Public Act 19-12 (2019) to include an African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino(a) course(s) in the high school curriculum. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is assisting schools in this effort by providing course syllabi that will not only address racial histories untold but will also show how the absence of these histories has perpetuated the stratification of power and social construction of race and racism. The course materials will also emphasize the positive contributions of African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino(a) people and how they worked together to create change (Canady 2020).

The DEI Action Teams, partnering with staff, will most likely find that the CSDE course represents a solid start at diversifying the curriculum. The DEI Action Teams may also find that more curricular emphases are required to fully address the dual problem that challenges the ELPS.

Efforts to develop students' capacity to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion will have limited success if these efforts depend solely on direct, classroom instruction (Paluck 2009). Students learn to counter implicit racial biases, not by classroom instruction alone, but by being immersed in a school environment that, in its every activity, counters racism, advances diversity, promotes equity, and fosters inclusion (Green 2020). According to Payne et. al. (2017), implicit racial biases are context-dependent—they are social constructs that come to mind in response to environmental cues.

In a meta-analysis involving 20,457 non-Black college students in which researchers studied the effects of 17 common approaches to changing implicit racial biases (e.g., classroom sessions that provided evidence to counter racial stereotypes), Calanchini et al (2020) found that 16 of the approaches had no lasting effect. The results suggested that the social stability of biases in a mostly White social environment prevailed. These social influences, more so than individual cognitive processes, influenced the resistance to changing racial biases among individuals in that environment. Only one intervention—shifting group boundaries through direct experience—had a statistically significant effect on changing participants' implicit racial biases. In a team competition, White individuals who teamed directly with Black peers to win a contest against an all-White adversary, showed a significant reduction in their negative, racist attitudes toward Blacks (Calanchini 2020). As applied to ELPS, this research suggests that an effective approach to developing students' capacity to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion, lies not in

classroom instruction alone but, rather, in complementary activities where students experience their capacity to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion directly. Accordingly, ELPS efforts would be most enduring if instructional practices at all levels could be expanded to engage students in school-based activities where they experienced directly ways to expand their capacity to counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion in all their actions.

As faculty, in partnership with the DEI Action Teams, review their lesson plans and course syllabi, they might reference many of the excellent resources available (e.g., course review guides) published by the University of Southern California Center for Urban Education (Center_Urban_Education 2020). This USC guide can help faculty to:

- Become aware of their own racial identity,
- Use quantitative and qualitative data to identify racialized patterns of practices and outcomes in their courses,
- Reflect on racial consequences of taken-for-granted practices,
- Exercise agency to produce racial equality, and
- Self-monitor interactions with racially minoritized students.

Assessment: To enhance curriculum revisions, the DEI Action Teams might assess questions such as: To what extent was the legislated African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino(a) course (2019) initiated with fidelity? To what extent do current courses address issues of racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion? Over the school year, to what extent did curricular revisions expand the depth and breadth of issues related to racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion? To what extent are students developing the capacity as independent thinkers to initiate actions that counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion?

Action Item 5: Hire Faculty and Administrators Committed to Countering Racism, Advancing Diversity, Promoting Equity, and Fostering Inclusion

Research studies cited in this section suggest that when students engage in positive experiences with teachers and administrators who are committed to countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering Inclusion, these educators can advance students' capacity as independent thinkers who, through their actions, can counter racism, advance diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion. Related research studies cited in this section also document a long-term impact of same-race teachers on academic achievement. Black students assigned to a Black teacher in grades K-3 are 13% more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college than their peers who were not assigned a Black teacher (Gershenson 2018).

Through their positive interactions with students, teachers of color can also have a positive influence on changing White students' implicit racial biases. Sparks (2017) showed that negative information (e.g., racial biases) individuals may hold is resistant to change when information designed to change these negative racial biases is presented in settings where beliefs about racial biases are supported by the social context. A school setting, for example, with an all-White staff may unintentionally reinforce a student's implicit bias that only Whites are qualified to fill professional positions. These studies (Sparks 2017, Gershenson 2018, Calanchini 2020) also suggest that in situations where White students might harbor implicit racial biases these biases may shift from negative beliefs to more positive views when these students engage in positive experiences with teachers, administrators, and staff members of color.

In addition, Connecticut state law defines the educational interests of the state to include, among other things, "the concern of the state that...in order to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, each school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and may provide such opportunities with students from

other communities”(2015). State law further requires boards of education to develop and implement a written plan for minority educator recruitment for the purpose of serving this educational interest (2018).

In order to achieve these educational interests and promote a more diverse workforce, the ELPS will develop and implement a minority educator recruitment plan that aspires to establish a professional staff (teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals included) who are committed to countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering Inclusion.

Assessment: The BOE and administration, following Connecticut State Department of Education’s guidelines (CT_State_Department_of_Education 2018, CT_State_Department_Talent_Office 2021) and the ELPS’s Policy 4111.3 that outlines the districts recruitment, interviewing, and hiring plan (1998), will aspire to establish a professional staff (teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals included) who are committed to countering racism, advancing diversity, promoting equity, and fostering Inclusion.

Action Item 6: Enduring Commitment

According to Post et. al. (2010) the success of any in-depth organizational initiative (e.g., countering racism) requires an enduring commitment from every key decision maker. In making this commitment, key decision makers pledge to support the initiative over the long-term with a full allocation of institutional resources.

In a comprehensive analysis of the school policies that address the daunting issue of reducing achievement gaps, Valant and Newark (2016) found that reducing achievement gaps—and addressing the related issues of equity—came down to key decision makers enacting district wide, enduring commitments. They found that districts had more success in addressing wealth-based achievement gaps (e.g., Free-reduced lunch students vs. non-free reduced lunch students) than they did in addressing gaps between White-Black or White-Latino(a) students. These authors found that the different outcomes were related to differences in the district’s commitment. Oftentimes key stakeholders exercised a greater commitment to reducing wealth-based achievement gaps than they did to reducing gaps between White-Black or White-Latino(a) students. In doing so, when key stakeholders addressed wealth-based gaps they often brought more resources to bear on the situation—and worked more diligently to overcome obstacles—then they did when faced with White-Black or White-Latino/a gaps. As applied to ELPS, an enduring commitment means that all members of ELPS will summon the determination to bring resources to bear on—and will work to overcome obstacles to addressing—the dual problem that the ELPS face.

In their role to support implementation of this strategic DEI plan, the BOE will add its own enduring commitment to adjust policies and to allocate resources, as required and in accordance with applicable law, to address the dual problem the ELPS face.

Assessment: To monitor and support this strategic plan, the BOE will include an agenda item for every regularly scheduled meeting to ensure that all elements of this plan are addressed with fidelity.

Attachment 1: Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Culture	A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.	Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit.
Diversity	The wide range of national, ethnic, racial and other backgrounds of U.S. residents and immigrants as social groupings, co-existing in American culture. The term is often used to include aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and much more.	Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit.
Equity in education	Equity in education means that all students in a district have the resources necessary for pursuing a high-quality education (e.g., students with cerebral palsy have access to additional, adaptive resources necessary to advance their learning).	The Education Trust. https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/equity-and-equality-are-not-equal/
Equality in education	Equality in education means that all students in a district have access to the same, equal educational resources (e.g., all schools in a district provide students with the same, equal access to school libraries stocked with equal, high-quality reference materials).	The Education Trust. https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/equity-and-equality-are-not-equal/
Inclusion	Inclusion authentically brings traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making.	Crossroads Charlotte Individual Initiative Scorecard for Organizations Scorecard Overview, revised 3/12/07.
"ISMs"	A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobia), etc.	Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit. Claremont, Calif.: Claremont Graduate University.
Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism within individuals is the degree to which they know, identify with, and internalize more than one culture.	Fitzsimmons, S., Vora, D., Martin, L., Rhaeem, S., Pekerti, A., Lakshman, C. . (2019). What Makes You "Multicultural". <i>Harvard Business Review</i> .
Prejudice	A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.	Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit. Claremont, Calif.: Claremont Graduate University.
Race	A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.	Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. <i>Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook</i> . New York: Routledge.
Racial and Ethnic Identity	An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization and personal experience.	Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. <i>Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook</i> . New York: Routledge.
Racism	Racism is a complex system of beliefs and behaviors, grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviors are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group, whites. A simpler definition is racial prejudice + power = racism.	National Conference for Community and Justice—St. Louis Region. Unpublished handout used in the Dismantling Racism Institute program.
Structural Racism	"The structural racism lens allows us to see that, as a society, we more or less take for granted a context of white leadership, dominance and privilege. This dominant consensus on race is the frame that shapes our attitudes and judgments about social issues. It has come about as a result of the way that historically accumulated white privilege, national values and contemporary culture have interacted so as to preserve the gaps between white Americans and Americans of color." For example, we can see structural racism in the many institutional, cultural and structural factors that contribute to lower life expectancy for African American and Native American men, compared to white men. These include higher exposure to environmental toxins, dangerous jobs and unhealthy housing stock, higher exposure to and more lethal consequences for reacting to violence, stress and racism, lower rates of healthcare coverage, access and quality of care, and systematic refusal by the nation to fix these things.	Karen Fulbright- Anderson, Keith Lawrence, Stacey Sutton, Gretchen Susi and Anne Kubisch, <i>Structural Racism and Community Building</i> . New York: The Aspen Institute. (1st part) Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. <i>Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building</i> . (2nd part)

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