Minutes Town of Farmington, CT Racial Equality Taskforce Town Hall - Council Chambers/Online Webinar October 21, 2020 7:00 P.M.

Attendees

Joseph Capodiferro
Edward Giannaros
Kay Higgins
Sarah Smith
Yahmina Penn
Nieka Thompson
Jeremy McLaurin
Chris Cloud
Jessica Harrison
Isaac Varghese
Bill Beckert

<u>Staff</u> Nancy Parent

Kory Vincent Anna Savastano

A. Call to Order.

Nancy Parent called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

B. Public Comment.

None.

C. To appoint _____ as the Chair of the Racial Equality Taskforce.

Upon a motion made and seconded (Giannaros/McLaurin) Chris Cloud was unanimously voted Chair of the Racial Equality Taskforce.

D. A Presentation from the Farmington Public Schools.

Kathy Greider, Superintendent, Kim Wynne, Assistant Superintendent, Veronica Ruzek, Director of Curriculum, Scott Hurwitz, FHS Principal, Nilda Irizarry, IAR Principal, Katie Blore, WWUES Principal, Kelly Sanders, WD Principal, and Carrie Huber, NW Principal gave a presentation to the Racial Equality Taskforce. (See Attachment 1)

After the presentation, the Taskforce had the opportunity to ask the Schools questions.

Jessica Harrison said that she appreciated the presentation that the Schools gave, but was surprised to hear of some of the steps that were being taken by the Schools because she along with the other members of the "Parents of Black and Brown Students" made many attempts to contact the school with suggestions such as the ones expressed in the presentation but has not received any response from the Schools.

Yahmina Penn agreed that she was pleased to hear everything that the Schools were working on but the developments seemed bitter sweet because her and other parents have been suggesting many of these changes and have not received any

communication from the School notifying them, despite making several attempts to connect. She questioned when the schools would see the changes proposed in the presentation.

Sarah Smith echoed these concerns. She asked the Assistant Superintendent who was hired as the new Diversity and Inclusion Administrator and if parents were involved in the hiring (as they sometimes are for Superintendents and other high level positions) Assistant Superintendent Wynne said that this position was not in the same category of hires so it was not typical to involve parents. They did have a hiring committee that included one Black person. The person they hired for the position was Latino. Wynne stressed that the person that was hired was the most qualified for the position of the candidates who applied.

Sarah Smith also asked if the Schools planned to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. The Superintendent said that decision would have to be made in the upcoming months by the Board of Education but she believed they would support the change.

Nieka Thompson shared that she was disappointed with the books selected for the students in the curriculum and encouraged the School to purchase more diverse books and the School said they were committed to diversifying the book selection in the coming years.

Chris Cloud commented that he hoped that the Schools saw the frustration and pain that many parents of Black and Brown children have felt in Farmington. He also said that he would like to see more diversity in the School administration.

Superintendent Greider told the Taskforce that the school administration is extremely grateful for the Parents of Black and Brown Children. Their voices have shaped the recent efforts and she apologized if that was not conveyed properly. She explained that it has been a very stressful few months trying to reopen schools during the pandemic, but she will open the lines of communication. Chris responded that sometimes it's necessary to have a breakdown before there can be a breakthrough.

Isaac Varghese asked the Schools what their trackable goals are. For example, what percent of Black teachers would you like to hire by what time? Superintendent Greider shared that the Board of Education does have measurable goals that can be found on the school's website, but the recruitment of minority teachers is very challenging. Across all of Connecticut it has been very difficult to hire Black teachers. Wynne shared that the administrators did have a team that was planning to travel to different conferences across the country to recruit minority teachers, but plans have been put on hold because of COVID-19.

Sarah Smith asked about the administrators plans to curtail racist incidents within schools during a contentious election cycle. She asked how teachers were being trained to deal with potential issues. The FHS Principal, Scott Hurwitz agreed that the racist incidents were trending upward. He said that the High School had a "Why I Vote Campaign" and the political clubs in the school will be addressing the issues.

Several taskforce members spoke about personal issues and after one hour of questions and discussion, Chris Cloud thanked the Superintendent and asked if she would be

willing to return to the Taskforce and continue the discussion. Superintendent Greider agreed and the representative from Farmington Schools left.

E. Update and discussion on goals and timeline.

Due to the length of the School's presentation, the committee did not speak about additional goals and timeline.

F. To schedule the next meeting. (Please bring your calendar.)

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 7:00 PM. Due to Tammy Exum not being able to attend on November 18, 2020, the Taskforce agreed to reschedule the November 18th meeting with the legislators to a date when all legislators can attend.

G. Public Comment.

Lisa Arenivaz-Humbarger, Farmington Lisa asked the Committee if members of the Republican party would be attending the upcoming legislative meeting.

H. Adjournment.

Upon a motion made and seconded (McLaurin/Higgins) the meeting adjourned at 9:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anna Savastano Management Analyst

Clerk

Equity Framework 2020

Farmington Public Schools October 21, 2020



Presenters

- Kathleen C. Greider, Superintendent
- Kim Wynne, Assistant Superintendent
- Veronica Ruzek, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Scott Hurwitz, FHS Principal
- Russ Crist, FHS Assistant Principal
- Nilda Irizarry, IAR Principal
- Katie Blore, WWUES Principal
- Carrie Huber, NW Principal
- Kelly Sanders, WD Principal

Introduction

Farmington's Commitment to Equity, Inclusivity and Social Justice

Equity Matters in Farmington

We recognize that students come to us with diverse experiences, interests, strengths, and needs. It is therefore essential that all students have access to challenging and personally meaningful curriculum and instruction. Teachers, administrators and staff are committed to the pursuit of excellence for all students, meeting them where they are, and providing resources, flexible pathways, and targeted support to remove barriers to opportunity. We believe that equity is a fundamental value of a high quality education and that diversity is an asset to our school community.

Adopted in 2018

Farmington Public Schools:

As a school district community, we stand united against any form of racism, racial violence or social injustice.

"When we along with all of you and our students, openly and authentically share our feelings, stories and perspectives with one another, our empathy grows and our understanding of one another deepens. Kindness, care and unity prevail when we know and understand one another more deeply."

"To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin." Bell Hooks

Improvement Science

The Farmington Public Schools is an innovative learning organization focused upon continuous improvement in all aspects of our work.

Our improvement work is iterative and continuous.

As a learning organization, we acknowledge our shortcomings and the urgency to improve in the areas of equity and inclusivity.

We have engaged in focused work over several years as a district committed to equity, inclusivity, anti-racism and social justice.

We have developed an Equity Core Belief, Equity Framework for strategic improvement and engaged in ongoing and focused professional development for several years. As a result, our Program and School Development Plans as well as educator annual goals include a strong commitment and focus on equity and inclusivity focus.

Although this important work has progressed and incremental progress has been made, opportunity, achievement and readiness gaps persist which ultimately impact college and career readiness and access. There is much work ahead of us as a learning organization if we are to fully realize Farmington's VOGC for all of the children we are so privileged to serve.



Strategic and Continuous Improvement in Farmington: A Systems and Iterative Approach to Improvemen t

Example	Improvement Routines	Short and Long Term Impact
Opportunity Gaps that Impact Achievement	Data Decision Making Routines (School and District Levels): Ongoing analysis of assessments, participation in rigorous courses, suspension data, report card data, etc. Ongoing analysis occurs through case studies, data teams, instructional rounds and weekly team time	 Establish specific tiered interventions, challenge and support blocks, student goal setting, student -led conferences, etc. Program and School Development Plans as well as Administrator and Faculty Goals Include priorities that reflect a need for improvement The cost of new strategic priorities are placed in the budget to ensure adequate financial support

By the Numbers: Profile and Performance Report

Student Demographics: 2019 -2020		
Hispanic or Latino of any race	8.5% (357)	
American Indian	1% (6)	
Asian	22% (933)	
Black or Africian American	5 % (195)	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0% (0)	
Two or More Races	12% (172)	
White 60%	(2495)	

Total: 4,159

English Language Learners 3.8%* Special Education 11.7%* 2018-2019 PPR

The Last 10 Years:

Transformational Shifts with an Equity Focus

- Vision of the Graduate
- Framework for Teaching and Learning
- Core Beliefs
- Theory of Action





- From content only to transferable thinking and learning skills
- From teacher -directed to student -centered learning
- From passive compliance to active engagement
- From fixed to growth mindset
- Assessment OF to assessment FOR learning

EQUITY FRAMEWORK

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

RECRUITMENT AND HIRING

CURRICULUM, TEACHING
AND LEARNING

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Vision of the Global Citizen 2020

"We pay a terrible price for inequity. As educators, we recognize that our education system is entrenched in institutional racism, and that schools have the potential to be a powerful force for change. When young people experience injustice and discrimination in our public institutions, it matters for every one of us: we simply can't have a productive economy, or more importantly a fully functioning democracy without honoring and encouraging the genius in every child."

Scott Hartl,

President and CEO, EL Education



Self-Aware Individual

I know myself and how to care for my own well

-being.

I can assess my own personal strengths and needs, persist in overcoming obstacles to reach my own goals, make wise choices and informed decisions and adapt to new challenges and opportunities by regulating my emotions and adjusting my behavior to positively impact myself and others.

- Well-being
- Identity
- Confidence
- Integrity
- Gratitude

Empowered Learner

I am a knowledgeable, reflective and resourceful learner.

I can explore interests, take initiative, ask questions and conduct research. I can use technology and media tools skillfully and learn from my successes and failures by engaging in feedback and self-assessment protocols.

- Agency
- Resilience
- Curiosity
- Initiative
- Resourcefulness

Disciplined Thinker

I can apply strategic thinking to develop ideas and solve problems.

I am a critical consumer of information recognizing point of view and bias. I can reason with evidence, synthesize and evaluate data, and connect concepts and ideas while thinking creatively and flexibly to design and develop innovative solutions, strategies, and outcomes.

- Focus
- Creativity
- Logical Reasoning
- Flexibility
- Persistence

Engaged Collaborator

I can work effectively and respectfully with diverse groups of people

I am a critical consumer of information recognizing point of view and bias. I can reason with evidence, synthesize and evaluate data, and connect concepts and ideas while thinking creatively and flexibly to design and develop innovative solutions, strategies, and outcomes.

- Empathy
- Open-Mindedness
- Perspective
- Adaptability
- Personal Accountability

Civic-Minded Contributor

I can actively contribute to a civilized society.

I understand complex interdependent systems and their impact on people and the environment. I question prevailing assumptions, develop my cultural competence, and seek solutions through negotiation and compromise in order to contribute to the betterment of my local/global communities through service and civic participation.

- Compassion
- Global fluency
- Cultural competence
- Service
- Stewardship

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Equity & Inclusion Webpage



Equity & Inclusion in Farmington Public Schools

Welcome to the Farmington Public Schools!

We are very happy to have you join our learning community. Our schools are places where families, children, and young adults feel connected to a community that celebrates diversity as we work together to achieve our goals.

This website is a place where you can find information, resources, and new ideas that will help you learn more about how we are working to create an inclusive culture of respect, belonging, and high expectations.

<u>FPS Community Council on Equity and Inclusion:</u> As a next step in the district's focus on anti-racism, social justice and equity, we will be establishing a district-wide *Community Council on Equity and Inclusion* for the fall of 2020. The council will include students, parents, and faculty representatives, as well as outside experts, to engage in an ongoing dialogue about dismantling systemic racism and working toward school communities with inclusion, social justice and equity goals at the center of school improvement work. Each school has an established equity-focused team, and these groups will now work in partnership with the district-level Community Council.

FEATURED READ



Relationships matter. Farmington Public Schools are committed to preparing young people to thrive as contributors and citizens of a rapidly changing global society. We recognize a need to be more intentional and



Equity Framework

Professional Learning

Faculty Reads

School Clubs

Books for children

Books for young adults

News & Events

Chronology of FPS Faculty & Staff Professional Learning

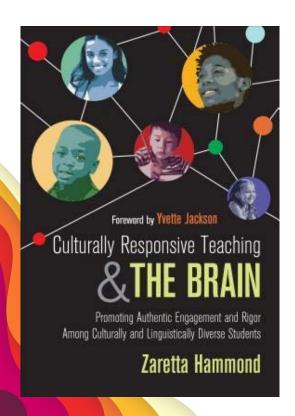


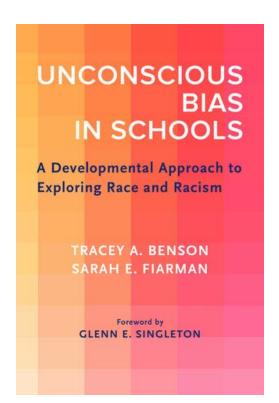
2016 - 2017	
Equity Institute: Leading for Equitable Classrooms (5 day series) Facilitated by Center for School Change	Administrative Team
2017 - 2018	
Administrative Retreat - "Equity Matters - Developing a Theory of Action" Facilitated by Harvard RIDES Program to launch partnership in the Equity Collaborative at the Harvard Graduate School of Education	District Leadership Council
Examining the Racial Achievement Gap - Case Study Method using data to uncover systemic barriers to achievement and find opportunities for improvement facilitated by Principals and District Leaders at each school	District Level and School-based Teams
Equity and Diversity Faculty Training Workshops in every school - Color Blind vs. Color Brave, Equity vs. Equality, Implicit Bias Facilitated by The RE-Center: Race and Equity in Education	All Faculty K to 12
Established and Communicated Core Belief: EQUITY MATTERS Faculty meetings focused on considering implications	All Faculty K to 12
Equity Intensive - 3 Day Workshop Facilitated by The RE-Center: Race and Equity in Education	Approx. 15 Teacher Leaders and Administrators
Faculty Book Clubs - Topics included: Partnering With Parents, Cultural Competence, Engagement Strategies Sponsored by CREC Open Choice Program	Various faculty member volunteers
2018 - 2019	
Teaching in Multi-Cultural Classrooms Facilitated by The RE-Center: Race and Equity in Education	All Faculty K to 12

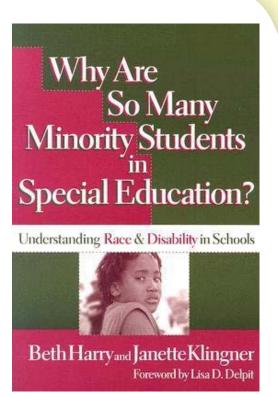
IAR hosted CREC's Dine and Discuss Event focused on Cross District Sharing of Equity-related strategies	Attended by voluntary FPS teachers and administrators
Equity Intensive - 3 Day Workshop Facilitated by The RE-Center: Race and Equity in Education	Approx. 20 Teacher Leaders and Administrators
Developing Faculty Capacity to Implement and Facilitate Proactive and Restorative Circles Facilitated by Carol Kerkin, CREC	IAR, EF, NW, WD Teachers
Faculty Book Clubs - Topics Included: Trauma-Informed Practices, Confronting Bias in Education Sponsored by CREC Open Choice Program	Various faculty member volunteers
2019 - 2020	
Seedlings Institute - Leading for Social and Emotional Intelligence using the RULER Approach Facilitated by Dr. Marc Brackett, Yale School of Emotional Intelligence	Administrative Team
The RULER Approach - Recognizing, Understanding, and Regulating Emotions Facilitated by Dr. Marc Brackett, Yale School of Emotional Intelligence Follow-up Training with all faculty and staff in these schools	Leadership Teams from IAR, WD, UN, NW, and EF
Administrative Retreat - "Social and Emotional Learning to Create an Inclusive Sense of Belonging" Facilitated by Admins who attended RULER Institute	District Leadership Council
PLX (Farmington's Professional Learning Exchange) Multiple Sessions on Social and Emotional Learning, Courageous Conversations, Social Justice, Confronting Bias, and other related topics. Teachers self-selected sessions to attend. Some teacher to teacher sharing, others presented by experts in their fields	K to 12 Faculty
Developing Faculty Capacity to Implement and Facilitate Proactive and Restorative Circles (all faculty, + advanced training for leadership group) Facilitated by Dr. Joseph Brummer	FHS, WW All Teachers + 35 Teacher Leaders
Dismantling Systemic Racism: 2019 Conference on Race, Education & Success	FHS Teacher Leaders attended

Equity Intensive - 2 Day Workshop Facilitated by The RE-Center: Race and Equity in Education	Approx. 25 Teacher Leaders and Administrators
Trauma Sensitivity Training: Historical Trauma and its Impact on Learning	NW Faculty
2020 - 2021 - Currently developing plans for these and other learning expe	eriences
Summer Book Club Readings - 10 Titles (see Padlet webpage) Focused on Anti-Racism, Stereotypes, Systemic Oppression, and Cultural Competence	Teachers and Administrator volunteers
Summer Online Learning Modules: Systemic Oppression and Institutional Racism in the United States - past, present, and future goals Video content, readings, journaling, and discussion groups	Teachers and Administrator over 130 participants
Responding to Bias and Racism in School: Strategies for Teachers August Return to School Mandated Training Facilitated by Family School Liaisons and Principals	All Faculty K to 12
Social Justice Student Leaders from FHS - Faculty Presentations at each school	TBD
Ongoing - Building Faculty Capacity to Implement and Facilitate Proactive and Restorative Circles Facilitated by Trained Teacher Leaders	ALL Schools
Closing Achievement and Opportunity Gaps Partnership and Facilitation by Equal Opportunity Schools	Aug - June Ongoing Training
The RULER Approach - Recognizing, Understanding, and Regulating Emotions Facilitated by Dr. Marc Brackett, Yale School of Emotional Intelligence Follow-up Training with all faculty and staff in these schools	Leadership Teams from FHS and WW
Community Council for Equity and Inclusion - The council will include students, parents, and faculty representatives, as well as outside experts, to engage in an ongoing dialogue about dismantling systemic racism and working toward school communities with inclusion, social justice and equity goals at the center of school improvement work.	Launch - Fall of 2020

Equity Focused Book Reads:Continuous Learning







FPS Equity Framework:

Equity goals are part of our core work. Each year, District-wide Program Development Plans and School Development Plans include specific action steps to address these goals. Because equity beliefs impact all aspects of schooling, we adhere to a systems-thinking approach to improvement. This approach ensures long-lasting, meaningful, and positive change over time.



Academic Achievement

Close achievement gaps, opportunity gaps, and readiness gaps.

Maintain high expectations for ALL learners.



Overview: Data Highlights*

- Overall, achievement of Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino of other races remains lower than the achievement of other subgroups in Farmington in ELA, Math and Science
- The achievement gap between non-high needs students and high needs students is within one standard deviation
- The average index scores of each subgroup has increased since the initial SBA in 2015
- 2018-2019 Four Year Graduation Rate for FPS was 99.3
- FPS has the 4th highest percentage of Free and Reduced Lunch in DRG B (17%)

- 15/21 DRG B districts have achievement data for the Black or African American subgroup in ELA and Math: FPS ranks 8th in ELA and 8th in Math in DRG B
- 20/21 DRG B districts have achievement data for *Hispanic or Latino of any race* subgroup in ELA and Math: FPS ranks 3rd in ELA and 6th in Math in DRG B
- Science scores are favorable among all subgroups in Farmington and as compared to DRG B achievement.

*Source: District Performance Index, 2018-2019 (EdSight) and PPR 2018-2019

^{*}There are 21 DRG B (District Reference Group) Districts in Connecticut

Academic Achievement

We are engaged in.....

- Student-Centered Learning
- Mastery-Based Learning
- Data Decision-Making Structures and Routines
- Systems of Challenge and Support Across the Grades (Academic Acceleration and Social Emotional Well-Being)
- Current Committees:
 - Early Childhood Committee
 - Community Council for Equity and Inclusion

We will be engaging in....

- Equal Opportunity Schools Partnership (link on next page)
- Early Childhood Committee Recommendations
- Community Council for Equity and Inclusion Recommendations

Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) Video





School Culture and Climate

Create an inclusive culture of respect, belonging, and high expectations.



Overview: Data Highlights

- On average, Black or African American students are suspended at higher rate than other subgroups in Farmington.
- FPS trend data shows fewer student exclusions from school (suspensions and expulsions) than other districts and much lower rates of suspensions among subgroups than the State of Connecticut suspension data.
- Annual student survey results, 7-12 show an overall strength in students' sense of belonging, including across subgroups. Ex: "How strong is your school's culture in ensuring that all students feel valued and respected?"
 Overall: 87% Favorable Response, Black Students 82% Favorable Response.

Sources: District Performance Index, 2018-2019 (EdSight) and PPR 2018-2019, Panorama Education Survey data, 2019

School Culture and Climate

We are engaged in...

- Faculty participation in Social Justice Learning Modules
- Student Leadership FHS, IAR and WW Equity Clubs and Activities
- Social Justice Focus at FHS--Student Led
- PreK-12 Inclusive Classrooms and Schools (RULER and Restorative Practices)
- Student Surveys and Focus Groups
- Family Support Liaisons
- High Academic Standards by grade level/course

We will be engaging in.....

- Mandated Anti-Bias Training for all faculty and staff
- Expand Equity Student Leadership Clubs and Activities K-4

School Culture and Climate

Engagement with Equity Goals:

- Student Clubs on the FPS website
- A Message to Students
- A Explanation of Equity Work at IAR









Social and Emotional Learning

Help all students understand, express, and manage emotions, navigate conflict, and develop healthy relationships.



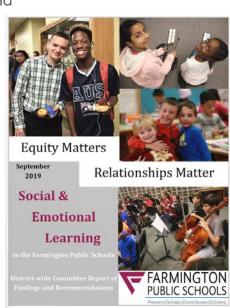
Social and Emotional Learning

We are engaged in....

- RULER training and implementation at all seven schools focused on emotionally intelligent communities of learning
- Restorative practices and traumainformed instruction partnership
- Health curriculum competencies for healthy and balanced living
- Developmental counseling program and social thinking groups
- Advisory, morning meetings, etc.

We will be engaging in....

- Social and emotional learning goals for school development
- RULER training for all WWUES & FHS faculty and staff
- Parent engagement using RULER practices
- Innovative & inclusive community practices
- Community coaching structures



Recruitment and Hiring

Attract and hire more teachers and staff who reflect the diversity of our student population.



Recruitment and Hiring

We have engaged in.....

- Recruitment connections at HBCUs
- Active participant in statewide efforts to attract and retain teachers and staff of color
- Targeted outreach to CT Teacher Prep Programs
- Participant in out-of-state Career Fairs
- Development of new communications tools

We will be engaging in.....

- UConn partnership
- Revision of all recruiting and hiring materials
- Bias training for all participants in hiring
- Stronger connections with promising HBCUs
- Hired K-12 Equity and Inclusion Coordinator

Over 40% of CT's students are people of color and 8.7% of CT's teachers are people of color

FPS: Black / Hispanic/Latino Students = 13.5% Teachers = 3.6% Overall 5.5% Non-White Faculty

FPS Ranks 4th in DRG B for percentage of Black or African American Teache rs

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Include diverse perspectives, voices, and texts in the curriculum to provide "windows and mirrors" for students to better understand themselves and others.



Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

We have engaged in...

- K-6 Social Justice Lessons
- Audit and purchasing of classroom and school libraries to diversify texts (K-12--Year 3)
- Revisions to ELA units of study
- Revisions to existing units of study in Social Studies / History
- Elevated student voice and choice through the Framework for Teaching and Learning (student-centered learning)
- Deleveled FHS Humanities Courses
- New PreK-12 Equity and Inclusion Coordinator
- New Course at FHS 2020-2021: Equity, Advocacy and Social Justice

We will be engaging in...

- Further revisions to units of study in Social Studies/History and ELA
- Training in culturally-responsive teaching practices
- Continue to focus on systemic and institutional inequities that contribute to opportunity, achievement and readiness gaps
- New FHS Course(s) in the future:
 African American, Puerto Rican and Latino History

Community Engagement

Develop deeper understanding of biases and beliefs in an effort to dismantle racism and other forms of oppression or discrimination.



Community Engagement

We have engaged in....

- DLC (Administrator) Shared Readings
- Community Conversations schoolbased events
- CAPSS statewide leadership work
- FPS Student Leadership in schools and at conferences and other events

We will be engaging in.....

- Community Council for Equity and Inclusion
- NCCJ Training (Faculty, Staff and Students)
- GHIAA leadership work in the region
- FHS Ad Hoc Committee Addressing the Mascot
- Partnerships: NCCJ, Equal Opportunity Schools, GHIAA, Center for School Change

How Can the Racial Equality Task Force Support FPS?

- Rolling year to year account (like Capital) for mandated anti-bias training for all FPS administrators, faculty and staff
- Rolling year to year account (like Capital) for expanded FPS student equity clubs and activities to elevate student voice and leadership in the areas of equity, inclusivity and social justice
- Funding for annual Summer Programming (Possible AP Readiness Session in August of each year)

- Funding for culturally enriching activities in FPS and within the greater Farmington community
- Additional support for sustainability of partnerships (outside experts) to support FPS in our equity improvement efforts
- Support an annual scholarship specifically for students of color
- Create a Town-wide Equity fund to support families of color to increase access and opportunities in and outside of school

"Never a checklist, always complexity. There is no step-by-step shortcut to transformation."

Michael Fullan