



*Administrative
Summary of*

**EQUITY STAKEHOLDER
RECOMMENDATIONS**

*for the
Croton-Harmon Schools*

Where did these recommendations come from?

The following recommendations were originally developed by the CHUFSD Equity Stakeholder Team. This team began meeting during the 2020-21 school year with the explicit purpose of promoting community that shares a language and commitment to equity and racial justice; affording representative stakeholders a voice in school climate and district climate; serving as an accountability mechanism for monitoring and addressing disparities in attendance, achievement, discipline, access, opportunity, and lived experience in the district.

Croton-Harmon Equity Stakeholder Team Members (2020-21)

Andrea Furey

Iris Bugliosi

Joshua Diamond

Deborah O'Connell

John Griffiths

Deborah August

Kerri Bianchi

Laura Dubak

Michael Plotkin

Jackie Burton

Kira Herbert

Marlena Horton

Joseph Pascarelli

Johanna Mustacchi

Lisa Bogdan

Tom Faranda

Tully McGowan

Sherry Horowitz

Alyssa Gonzalez

Kendra Shedenhelm

Maria Modica-Snow

Adam Moore

Anamika Bhatnagar

Claire Hilbert

Dana Sunshine Moldovan

Deslyn Dyer

Jessica Dieckman

Kenna Weiner

Michael Mui

Benjamin Faber

Dana Dago-Clark

Elisa Rader

Elisha Simpson

Erica Adler

Karin Sansaricq

Leah O'Donnell

Liz Poling-Hiraldo

Sarah Deri Oshiro

Abigail Dixon

Aliyah Simpson

Kate Bretas

Michael Armati

Paige Jones

Rose Schupack-Dias

Valeria Montenegro

How were these recommendations developed?

The Equity Stakeholder Team engaged in critical self and collective reflection, capacity-building, shared narrative and experience, and reviewed best practices and research on promoting equity and racial justice from districts around the country.

Leveraging the brilliance of the community, the team settled on five top areas to design recommendations for the district. Over a number of months, the team fleshed out the ideas, and the team presented them to the Board of Education in June of 2021. Before Board discussion of each of these recommendations at their September 2021 Work Session, two occasions were developed where input could be gathered from faculty, staff, and community members so that their insights could be considered by our Board and administration for planning how best to move forward.

Administrative review

In the summer of 2021 the Croton-Harmon Administrative Team reviewed all recommendations to assure alignment with our district strategic coherence plans and all legal obligations. The recommendations also underwent a feasibility study where the implied workload of short term and long term goals were considered alongside our school calendars and professional development timelines.

The substantive work implied by each goal remains unchanged, but this administrative summary does include a level of revision and condensing of initial recommendations to better facilitate the successful implementation of this work.

RECOMMENDATION 1: *School Climate Consciousness*

In order to develop climate consciousness, students, parents, educators, and the community must feel safe, supported, and able to learn and grow together over time in CHUFSD. In order for this to happen, for this assessment of, and response to, the pulse of the lived experiences of district community members, individuals must feel heard and represented, and confident that their story matters.

School Climate Consciousness - goals

Short-term goals (1-2 years)

- The district will work collaboratively with each building to establish an Equity Team. This will include diverse, representative stakeholders including teachers, staff, administrators, community members, parents, and students (at the secondary level) and will work to develop a climate consciousness that attends to the varied and often unheard lived experiences of students, families, teachers, staff, and administrators.
- Each Equity Team will ensure that district community members know why assessing and addressing climate is essential and create staff meetings and professional development sessions as forums to embed awareness of and dialogue about school climate and benchmark relevant data through a climate survey.

Long-term goals (3-5 years)

- Stakeholders will be surveyed annually and more informal mechanisms for climate assessment will be used frequently. Community-building efforts through restorative practices will be embedded in the fabric of each building.

RECOMMENDATION 2: *Hiring and retention practices*

If we want our graduates to contribute to a world that is increasingly more equitable and diverse, we need the environments in which they learn to be a microcosm of that world. Our schools must be a place where all students can see themselves reflected in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, language, and ability, in the adult world around them. Every child should have adults with whom they can identify.

Hiring and retention practices - goals

Short-term goals (1-2 years)

- The district will strive to find qualified applicants of various races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, religions, abilities, and native languages for open positions so that our staff increasingly reflects our global community. ;
- We will onboard and support candidates as they move through the early years of their career by keeping central to our mission a commitment to ensuring that employees have a full opportunity to thrive.

CHUFSD should:

- Expand searches beyond the Putnam | Northern Westchester BOCES “Online Application System” (OLAS).
- Update interview questions to elicit candidates’ understanding of our commitment to promoting equity.
- Redefine mentorship and foster professional spaces where people can interact and share their lived experiences.

Long-term goals (3-5 years)

- Examine our approaches to hiring to deconstruct how our efforts to diversify can be more impactful. Specifically, note how community, regional, and global connections and networks can support future efforts.
- Begin a practice of collecting feedback from recent hires on their experience with the hiring process and onboarding in the district.
- Develop ways to foster an environment attractive to educators from underrepresented populations.

RECOMMENDATION 3: *Curriculum*

We must strive for a representative, responsive curriculum that attends to the race, ethnicity, language, country of origin, gender, sexuality, ability, culture, and religion of Croton-Harmon students and the community at large, while supporting teachers to use anti-bias, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive pedagogy. This approach must include a welcoming and affirming environment, high expectations through rigorous instruction, inclusive curriculum and assessments, and ongoing professional learning aligned with the New York State Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework (2019).

Curriculum - goals

Short-term goals (1-2 years)

- District teams representing all three schools will identify a scalable and iterative strategy for auditing curricular materials. This work will unfold with the support of the Equity Team during the 2021-22 school years.
- The district team will develop:
 - ✓ A process for evaluating assessments at every grade level with respect to equity and inclusion;
 - ✓ A pilot project with early adopters to use a self-assessment tool to evaluate if books and classroom resources represent accurate history, current experience, and the global community.
 - ✓ A published index of tools and avenues for student participation in matters related to equity and inclusion.

Long-term goals (3-5 years)

- All three schools will utilize a scalable and iterative strategy for auditing curricular materials into their building level action plans. This work will unfold with the support of the Equity Team during the 22-23 and 23-24 school years.

RECOMMENDATION 4: *Professional development*

Embed professional development opportunities for all district staff to develop an equity lens that they employ daily to identify and address the impact of race and bias, ethnicity, language, country of origin, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, and socioeconomics in all spaces in the district. There is a need to be slow and thoughtful in our work and process while at the same time acknowledging that there is an urgency to the work for our students. Through professional development and coaching, our staff will develop shared language, practices, understanding, and tools and grow as teachers and learners as we learn to educate through an equity lens.

Professional development - goals

Short-term goals (1-2 years)

- *Phase 1:* Identify key priorities at buildings that need to be addressed immediately.
- *Phase 2:* Assure that part of our yearly professional development plan is centered on the work of establishing spaces dedicated to ongoing discussions on equity learning.

Long-term goals (3-5 years)

- Every faculty/staff member will participate in coaching with a small specific group with a trained facilitator.
- Conduct the curriculum audit through an asset-based lens to develop recommendations for change and allocate resources to support the recommendations.
- After the self assessment/curriculum audit, there should be opportunities for summer curriculum work projects.
- Build capacity for staff leaders to be “equity leaders” to continue to develop and turnkey over time.
- Ultimately, we will see the work in the classroom and curriculum maps (post curriculum audit).

RECOMMENDATION 5: *Parent, guardian, & community engagement*

We want our children, parents, and community to have access to the full and diverse perspectives that exist within our growing community to learn from each other, and to feel and be included in their education through active engagement.

The BOE should create a policy that clearly states how we intend to (a) listen, (b) communicate, and (c) co-design an engagement strategy for the benefit of students, parents/guardians, and community members at large. The policy should include but not be limited to:

- Offering multiple forms of listening (town halls, emails, posters, multiple languages);*
- Varied events and timing with responsive communication; and*
- Periodic review of the policy based on student, parent, community feedback.*

Parent, guardian, and community engagement - goals

Short-term goals (1-2 years)

- Send a communication to reiterate the **why** of our efforts to the full Croton community, **when** they can expect us to reach out to get their perspective, and **how** they'll be able to do that;
- Develop parent-specific communication format and timing for 2021/2022; and
- Share the *NYS Board of Regents Call to Action on DEI & Policy Statement* with parents consistently and ensure they are aware of the *NYSED Culturally Responsive- Sustaining Education Framework*.

Long-term goals (3-5 years)

- Prepare students who are well-equipped to live and lead in a diverse world.



*We look forward
to how the implementation of
these recommendations
will benefit each and every student
in the Croton-Harmon
Schools!*