

# Culturally Responsive Education and Equity Practices Update

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## *Executive Summary*

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Last fall Vibetta Sanders, Principal on Special Assignment for Culturally Responsive Education and Equity Practices, presented an action plan for CRE and Equity Practices to the Board of Education. This report serves as a summary update on the progress of the action plan and next steps.

The original plan included 5 areas of focus: Professional Development, Equity Policy, Equity Teams, Youth Empowerment, and Human Resources and Community Outreach. Each area of focus included a Smart Goal, aligned indicators and activities. I have included the original action plan for your reference.

Our action plan is a living document that is adjusted as we encounter the realities of implementation. We were able to accomplish the goals for Professional Develop and the Equity Policy, Human Resources and Community Outreach and made solid progress with the Equity Teams. However, the Student Empowerment area of focus was the least complete. This task posed challenges due to the varying states of and responsibilities already assigned to student leadership teams at each building. While some research and data collection was done, this is an area that will require the most work going forward.

The CRE co-facilitators have been and will continue to be instrumental to the continuation of CRE professional development, equity teams and will be a resource to support the integration of CRE in the Student Leadership Team. They will continue to support this work and as you will see below we have plans to increase the number of trained co-facilitators. The Human Resources Department will continue to embed the work identified in the Human Resources and Community Outreach section into their ongoing recruitment and retention efforts.

Although the Principal on Special Assignment for CRE and Equity Practices has retired, we have established and or refined systems that will help us continue the key CRE efforts and embed them in our ongoing work. The Superintendent and Cabinet are committed to continuing the CRE and Equity practices in all aspects of the organization in alignment with the Equity Policy.

# Culturally Responsive Education and Equity Practices Report 2018-2019

**SUMMARY OF SMART GOAL OUTCOMES**

1. Professional Development	
<b>SMART Goal 1</b>	<p><b>By June 2019, CRE facilitators will provide professional development on Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) and Equity practices to 60 administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and support staff to ensure that these pivotal stakeholders have the capacity to support children and families equitably. All staff who attend the training will be able to implement at least one of the three pre-identified CRE Walkthrough “look-fors” and decrease their CoBRAS scores.</b></p>
<b>Outcome</b>	<p><b>Fifty-three staff members were trained during the 2018-19 school year. This included staff from Management Confidential and all three bargaining units: APSUE, APSTA and APSAA. As a part of the training, all participants were asked to bring back artifacts that exemplified their application of their learning from the session.</b></p> <p><b>Color-Blind Racial Attitude Scale (CoBRAS)</b> pre, mid and post CRE sessions results indicated that participants increased their awareness of racial privilege between CRE session 1 and CRE session 5. There was also an increase in awareness in institutional discrimination between CRE session 1 and CRE session 5. Participants increased their awareness of Blatant Racial Issues between CRE session 1 and CRE session 5.</p> <p>Specifically, there was a significant difference in unawareness of racial privilege between CRE 1 (M=20.70, SD=7.437) and CRE 5 (M=15.95, SD=6.704). There was a significant difference in Institutional discrimination issues between CRE 1 (M=17.35, SD=6.198) and CRE 5(M=12.58, SD=5.728).</p> <p><b>Reduction in suspension data for black male students and Students with Disabilities.</b> There has been an overall decrease in suspensions and a decrease in the percentage suspension of Black Males and a slight increase in the percentage of suspension of Students with Disabilities.</p>

	<b>Suspensions</b>	<b>2017-18</b>		<b>2018-19</b>													
	<b>Total Suspensions</b>	373		286													
	<b>Black Males</b>	261	70%	189	66%												
	<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	65	17%	54	18%												
	<p><b>CRE Walkthrough Data</b> – CRE indicators (Student Voice, Culturally Relevant Learning Materials, Culturally Relevant Learning Environment, and Multiple Culturally Relevant Entry Points) were added to the building classroom walkthrough tool in January. The data below indicates that Student Voice was the CRE indicator that buildings focused on the most during their walkthrough observations.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"><b>CRE Walkthrough Data 2018-2019</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th><b>CRE Indicator</b></th> <th><b>Percent of Area of Focus</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Culturally Relevant Learning Environment</b></td> <td><b>14.78%</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Culturally Relevant Learning Materials</b></td> <td><b>17.39%</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Multiple Culturally Relevant Entry Points</b></td> <td><b>12.17%</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Student Voice</b></td> <td><b>55.65%</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					<b>CRE Walkthrough Data 2018-2019</b>		<b>CRE Indicator</b>	<b>Percent of Area of Focus</b>	<b>Culturally Relevant Learning Environment</b>	<b>14.78%</b>	<b>Culturally Relevant Learning Materials</b>	<b>17.39%</b>	<b>Multiple Culturally Relevant Entry Points</b>	<b>12.17%</b>	<b>Student Voice</b>	<b>55.65%</b>
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<b>Next Steps</b>	<p>Our next steps are to train 120 staff representing Management Confidential and all three bargaining units. We will run concurrent training sessions in the fall beginning in November and again in the spring beginning in February.</p> <p>Additionally, we intend to train 10 additional co-facilitators to support the CRE training work and to support CRE in buildings.</p> <p><b>We will continue to monitor the impact on student suspensions, classroom walkthroughs and will see if we are still able to use the CoBRAS survey to determine shifts in staff perspectives.</b></p>																

2. Equity Policy	
<b>SMART Goal</b>	<p>By February 2019, the district will create and implement a district wide Equity Policy that is rooted in Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) and equity practices among administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and support staff. As a result of this policy there will be a 10% increase from the baseline results of</p>

**Equity Assessment of programs by schools and departments and in NYU survey results.**

**Outcome**

The district equity policy was created by a team of stakeholders led by the Superintendent, Kaweeda G. Adams, in the Fall of 2018 and adopted by the Board of Education on January 2019.

The NYU TACD School Staff survey has questions that measure demographics, teacher efficacy, perceptions of teachers around home environment and the referral process along with an analysis of perspectives on race and culture of staff members of a school district with which TACD worked. It was administered in 2016 and again in the Fall of 2018. In 2016, 298 staff completed the survey and in 2019 434 staff completed the survey. In each survey administration, 76% of the respondents were white, over 65% had worked in the district for more than 10 years and over 55% of them were teachers.

Overall, there is a clear shift in the district’s beliefs and also there is an overall increase in cultural responsiveness. There is a decrease in colorblind beliefs and deficit thinking. The district also witnessed an increase in racial awareness and knowledge.

<b>Perspectives on Culture and Race (PCR)</b>				
<b>Likert Scale ( 1=Strongly Agree to 6=Strongly Agree)</b>				
<b>PCR Indicator</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Overall Shift</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Ensuring Student Success	5.6	5.6	Investigate The degree to which school staff can be responsive to students and their own biases.	Overwhelming majority of survey respondents agreed with a high number.
Color-Blindness	4.3	4.0	Explore the extent to which school staff silence, ignore, or neglect students’ salient cultural and racial identities.	Decrease in color blind beliefs
Racial Awareness and Knowledge	3.3	3.5	Explore school staff’s awareness of race culture.	Overall increase in racial awareness
Professional Responsibility	5.1	5.2	Explore the extent to which school staff	Increased professional responsibility

				take responsibility for students' success regardless of students' race and culture or home challenges.	
	Deficit Thinking About Students	4.5	4.9	Higher Score = lesser agreement with deficit statements.	Overall decrease in deficit thinking
<b>Next Steps</b>	The next steps are to reconvene a smaller segment of the stakeholder group to establish protocols for reviewing and providing feedback on the alignment of our policies and practices to the Equity Policy.				

3. Building and Department Equity Teams	
<b>SMART Goal</b>	<b>By January 2019 School Building Equity Teams and District Equity Teams will be identified and formed to build Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) and Equity practices among administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and support staff. There will be a 10% increase from baseline results of Equity Assessment of programs and NYU survey. All buildings will demonstrate at least one of the three pre-identified CRE Walkthrough look-fors.</b>
<b>Outcome</b>	<p><b>Building Equity Teams:</b> Each building has building equity team members identified that have been through the CRE cohort training and who began their Guardian of Equity training last year with NYU. NYU TAC-D has since become a fee-based contractor and we have not contracted with them at this juncture to continue the training.</p> <p>Equity teams in some schools began cross-walking the work of CRE with their PBIS team creating CRE-PBIS team's. Others have been cross-walking the Building Equity Team work with what is embedded in the School Comprehensive Education Plans.</p> <p><b>Department Equity Teams:</b> Originally the idea was to replicate the BET model at the department level. However, in practice it was found to make more sense to use an existing monthly meeting of district level administrators (directors, instructional supervisors etc.) to develop the CRE lens as many of our administrators are new and some had not received any CRE training.</p> <p><b>NYU Survey data provided in Goal 2 above. CRE Walkthrough data provided above.</b></p>

<b>Next Steps</b>	<p><b>Building Equity Teams:</b> We are currently working with building principals to determine if their Building Equity Teams will be stand-alone teams or teams that are a part of PBIS or Building Leadership Teams. Regardless of the configuration, each Equity Team will be expected to provide 2 small professional development sessions that link to the building CRE focus (Student Voice, Multiple CRE entry points to grade level Standards, etc.).</p> <p><b>Department Equity Teams:</b> The model has been shifted to department leads conducting a self-assessment of each department using the Cultural Competency Rubric. The Rubric addresses Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Accountability and Parent and Community Communication and Outreach. Then Department heads will develop a small targeted action plan to increase their performance to the next level in the three key areas.</p>
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4. Youth Empowerment	
<b>SMART Goal</b>	<p><b>By June 2019, The Principal on Special Assignment for CRE and Equity Practices will organize a group of CSDA students (Youth Equity Stewardship) who will be a voice for equity and systematic transformation. They will create a vision and supporting activities of what education can be from the lens of our students. This will result in an increase of student-led activities that increase both student and adult awareness of CRE and Equity as measured by a 10% increase in the NYU survey.</b></p>
<b>Outcome</b>	<p>Preliminary work was done to research other Student Leadership Teams in Schenectady and the NYU Student Leadership module. These models have staff person dedicated to the Student Leadership teams.</p> <p>CRE principal met with the Theater Director at Albany High due to the intensive work the theater students have done around student voice. However, it was not something the students could take on at the time considering all the production preparation.</p> <p>So it was decided to assess where the buildings were with student leadership teams in general to determine if a model could be embedded into existing leadership teams. Secondary schools were more likely to have student leadership teams through their Student Government model, but elementary schools were less consistent.</p> <p><b>Indicators are the same as listed above and were really not impacted by the activities in this goal as they were not completed.</b></p>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<p>We are in discussion on the next best step for Youth Empowerment. We may start smaller with a District Student Advisory Team with representatives from each building.</p>

**5. Human Resources and Community Engagement**

<b>SMART Goal</b>	<b>By September 2019, a plan to recruit a diverse workforce that includes administrators, teachers, paraprofessional and support staff that are open to and aware of culturally responsive education and equity practices will be implemented and we will have a 10% increase in the diversity and retention of our employees.</b>
<b>Outcome</b>	<p>The Principal on Special Assignment for CRE and Equity Practices worked closely with the Human Resources department to develop recruitment materials, attend job fairs and develop community partnerships.</p> <p>Some specific tasks that were completed as partnerships with the Human Resources are described below.</p> <p><b>Job Fairs:</b> Members of the Human Resources department, the District's recruiting cohorts and the Principal on Special Assignment for CRE and Equity participated in job fairs in Boston March 3<sup>rd</sup>, UMES Education Job Fair (3/28), Morgan State Spring Fair (4/10), MERC 45th Annual Career Fair (4/18), Teacher Job Fairs NYC (5/9).</p> <p><b>Recruitment Materials:</b> Human Resources partnered with Communications to expand the recruitment folder to include additional photos of diverse students and created a rolling banner that displays what CSDA has to offer.</p> <p>The Principal on Special Assignment for CRE and Human Resources developed a diversity resource guide with a variety of resources, this is still being finalized.</p> <p><b>Community Partnerships:</b> The Principal on Special Assignment for CRE and Equity provided contact information for community resources to the <b>Human Resources Administrator - Schenectady, Patrick; Kingston, Ebony</b> - so he may further connect with community partners. The Human Resources Administrator has connected with Chief Diversity Officer at the City and Chief Human Resources Officer at Syracuse City Schools to begin conversations about best practices/partnerships.</p> <p><b>Hiring Practices:</b> The Principal on Special Assignment for CRE and Equity practices worked with Human Resources to provide a hiring and retention practices presentation to administrators. Administrators were given resources to begin the work for their next hires. Copies of structured interview forms were shared and demonstration lesson rating forms were shared.</p>
<b>Next Steps</b>	This is the one goal that will be taken over by the Human Resources Department. They will provide next steps in their upcoming presentation to the Board of Education.