

## Partnership Proposal for Rye CSD

---



Metropolitan Center for Research on  
Equity and the Transformation of Schools

July 6, 2020

---

New York University's (NYU) Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools ([Metro Center](#)) in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development provides a variety of services. These include an array of facilitated dialogues to support embedding a commitment to racial equity in policy and practice, a climate assessment of an educational space or workplace, and ongoing support with strategic planning. This proposal outlines a sample of these services, which are tailored and responsive to the needs of Rye CSD.

## Who We Are

Metro Center believes that change in equitable practices is not just possible, it is probable. The question we confront is not *why* does equity matter but *why* doesn't it matter, *more*? To transform systems we must peer deeply into the conditions upon which structures were created, and interlocked by policies, beliefs, and behaviors related to power, privilege, and identity. For change to *really* occur, we have to shift conditions that continue to maintain structural inequities. This work matters deeply.

Changes cannot occur though without shifting mindsets, policies, practice, and relationships and we know from past practices that changes in policies don't guarantee mindsets will shift. So, to do this work, we put into motion a research-based framework around what impacts dispositions to changes. Our framework is informed by equity, and is based in socially-just, culturally relevant, and anti-oppressive practices. Metro Center's Center for Strategic Solutions (CSS) has developed national expertise in supporting folx to consider the impact of race, power, and privilege on the work they do. By offering support that delves into the deep historical entanglements of racial inequity, CSS centers the dialogue in developing a shared understanding of the systems that impact our cross racial, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural understandings. Support is designed to offer multiple points of entry for participants of all backgrounds.

## Foundations in Research

An equitable and just society loves and invites its members to be their authentic selves and openly reflects how disparities and historical inequities contradict the principles of racial justice. Our team promotes this by building the capacity of stakeholders to challenge assumptions and embedded bias, building relationships that create pathways toward equity. Our focus is to draw from the local context, provide tailored technical assistance and/or professional development to advance stakeholder capacities by:

1. Building intentional relationships;
2. Leveraging the assets of communities; and
3. Developing critical consciousness to confront and challenge the existing social order of the intersections between race, gender, sexuality, power and privilege in society.

## Organizations and Stakeholders We Have Served/Do Serve

- K12 districts, in New York and nationally
- K12 public, private, parochial, and charter schools
- Early childhood programs and pre-Ks
- Colleges and Universities
- Teacher preparation programs

- City and government agencies
- Non-profit organizations
- Libraries, historical societies, and museums
- Community-based organizations
- Food justice organizations
- Advocacy organizations
- National organizing collaboratives
- Assessment organizations

### Topics of Engagement

- Race, power, and privilege in the workplace
- Developing and operationalizing an anti-racist mission and vision
- Implicit bias in the context of systemic inequity
- Workplace climate assessments
- Leadership development training and coaching
- Executive coaching
- Company retreats and community-building forums

#### *For educators*

- Implementing a system-wide equity intervention
- Developing and operationalizing an anti-racist mission and vision
- How to be an anti-racist educator
- Culturally responsive-sustaining education
- Culturally responsive-sustaining leadership
- Developing critical consciousness
- Equity audits/School climate assessments/CR-SE audits of materials, resources, policies, and practices
- Coaching for BOE members, district and school leaders, educators and staff
- Student equity leader development
- Facilitating community conversations
- Training and consultation for family organizations, PTAs, and community partners
- Restorative practices and racial justice
- Developing an equity policy
- Healing centered, humanizing education (trauma-responsive, SEL focused)

## Rye CSD Framework

What is most unique about the CSS service delivery model is that it is tailored to the specific needs of our individual partners. While CSS focuses explicitly on race, the Center's work is not exclusively about addressing racial inequity. CSS believes that for all stakeholders to be best served, included, and honored by their office, department, school, or organization, an intersectional approach to addressing disparities related to race, ethnicity, language, culture, gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability, religion, and socioeconomic status is required.

#### *Proposed stakeholder engagements*

Based on a preliminary consultation, CSS proposes to work with the district administrative team, Board of Education, and support the development and facilitation of the Race, Inclusivity, and Community Task Force (Task Force), conduct an equity audit and

foundational professional development, and facilitate student equity leader work. During year one the goals of this partnership are to: (1) build exposure to and awareness of issues of equity/inequity within the district, (2) develop shared language and coherent strategies to address inequity, (3) develop a set of recommendations to do that system-wide and (4) take informed steps to operationalize the goals for equity and inclusivity. For this type of partnership, CSS implements a system-wide equity intervention (EQI) that engages stakeholders to:

- ❑ Examine how *who they are* impacts the lens through which they view the promotion of equity;
- ❑ Interrogate narratives and counter-narratives of experience among students and families as they align or misalign with the district mission;
- ❑ Investigate complex data points that reflect multiple narratives of inequitable experiences, particularly of marginalized members of the community; and
- ❑ Collaborate to strategically plan for system-wide equity interventions to address findings as outlined in below.

#### BOE retreat, admin retreat and ongoing capacity building

As the gatekeepers who influence policy and funding decisions, engage regularly with the community, and make decisions impacting teaching and learning in the district, Board members wield exceptional power in either confirming or confronting inequities. CSS proposes to engage these members on the best practices for promoting equity and racial justice across a system and serve in ongoing consultation to offer coherence and support to their efforts.

This work begins with a leadership retreat for all district leadership, focused on laying the foundation for exploring the question, *How can I disrupt and dismantle inequity within my sphere of influence?* This leadership retreat will be scaffolded by at least 2-4 more learning sessions hosted throughout the year to interrogate racial inequity in policies, practices, and beliefs. These sessions will center the question, *What about my individual leadership confirms or confronts the inequities I see in my sphere of influence?* In order to develop the capacity of leadership who can then be leverage-pullers in promoting equity within their spheres of influence, CSS believes in developing responsive-sustaining practices.

CSS approaches culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy (CR-S) as “grounded in a cultural view of learning + human development in which multiple expressions of diversity (e.g. race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, dis/ability) are recognized + regarded as assets for learning. CR-S education shifts from a focus of historical conditions of inequality to ideas that shape access, participation, + outcomes of learners.” ([NYSED CR-S Framework, 2019](#)). This approach requires leadership to drive the work forward, ensuring they foster the conditions to promote CR-S practices by modeling them with staff. CR-S leaders are consistently (1) engaging in critical self-awareness and seeking to grow in their cultural competence; (2) promoting + working to sustain culturally responsive curricula + teacher preparation, and (3) enacting practices and policies that reach beyond just the classroom.

#### Race, Inclusivity, and Community Task Force (Task Force)

The task force should include district and school leaders, BOE members, educators and staff, students, families, alumni and community members. CSS facilitates task forces and committees nationwide to leverage stakeholder experience and voice to inform the specific actionable steps that must be implemented across the system to foster equity and inclusivity, assess impact, and continuously strive to improve in these efforts. The task force, which initially takes only the district-wide view, should eventually lead to satellite

committees in each building where efforts can be tailored and localized. The task force can powerfully serve to:

- Promote community that shares a language and commitment to equity;
- Afford representative stakeholders a voice in school/district climate;
- Serve as an accountability mechanism for monitoring and addressing disparities in attendance, achievement, discipline, access, opportunity, and lived experience in the school/district; and
- Audit current curriculum, resources, policies, and practices for bias.

Building equity committees generally engage in activities such as:

- Offering professional development for staff,
- Processing feedback from professional development sessions related to equity;
- Applying more of what they heard in the professional development sessions specifically to disparities they see at their own school;
- Hosting equity-related book study groups; and
- Looking at school-specific data in order to identify root causes of inequity.

### Equity audit

CSS proposes to conduct an equity audit of the districts' policies and practices including the following data points:

- (1) District strategic plan,
- (2) Survey administered during COVID-19, Panorama climate survey, or other available survey data,
- (3) Comprehensive data review: School-level data on achievement, discipline (suspensions, expulsions + behavioral incident referrals), special education identification + classification, academic + behavioral interventions, usage of PBIS and/or restorative practices, demographic data, parent/guardian engagements/programming, AP/college course enrollment, etc).
- (4) District policies and practices (i.e. review of procedures for responding to the community around expressed harm, practices for welcoming new students, supports for multilingual students, code of conduct and all school discipline practices and procedures)

CSS will facilitate 2-3 virtual community conversations bringing together leadership, staff, + parents/guardians to discuss a series of topics related to school climate + culture. CSS will also offer virtual focus groups of students + staff + parents/guardians + alumni around a co-developed set of research questions. The narrative behind and across these data will be summarized in a report and offered with a set of recommendations to the district.

### Foundational professional development

As the district expands and deepens its efforts to develop cultural and racial literacy, all stakeholders will need some exposure and awareness building around the concepts of systemic racism, implicit bias, cultural responsiveness and humanizing education. CSS proposes to offer this foundational content to staff in cohorts or as a train-the-trainer model for in-district personnel who will turnkey content to others. In this case, CSS provides curriculum development for professional learning, shares resources, and coaches facilitators throughout their implementation of professional development modules. Training related to culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy may center on the following objectives:

- Investigating how our individual race, ethnicity, language ability, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, religion, dis/ability, and culture impact how we teach, engage, and relate to our colleagues and students,
- Fostering anti-bias, anti-racist (ABAR) strategies in the workplace + classroom,
- Identifying culturally responsive materials and resources,

- Using disaggregated data points to identify and address disproportionalities in discipline, achievement, special education identification and classification categories, attendance, access and opportunity to advanced programs, etc.,
- Defining our individual roles in an equitable workplace + school environment, and
- Navigating clashes of diverse identities in the workplace + classroom.

Student equity leader work

Elevating student voice is an essential component of a district-wide commitment to addressing racism and inequity. CSS proposes to offer a 4-part series to work with a cohort of students at the middle school and a cohort at the high school. Student equity leaders can serve as models for adults (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Gregory et al., 2016). The goal of student engagement sessions is to capture students' lived experiences across schools by affording students an opportunity to share how they might improve school climate for racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. Participation for this type of engagement would ideally be a representative sample of students (demographically) from across the school/district. Sample objectives for a student equity leader series could include the following:

- Develop racial literacy skills and strategies for breaking the habit of bias.
- Explore the interconnectedness of race, power, and privilege.
- Grow as advocates and activists who will stand up against injustice.
- Develop skills as peer mediators and facilitators of intergroup dialogues and keepers of restorative circles.
- Conduct a curriculum audit with staff.
- Co-design topics to be covered in a school/district-wide climate survey.
- Host drop-in spaces for peers and staff to come and engage around topics related to identity.
- Facilitate teach-ins for staff, administrators, and the community on what they have learned, know, and experience.

Pricing Structure (July/August 2020 will be virtual)

	Rate	Suggested	Total
Admin training	\$2100* each	2	\$4200
Admin consultations	\$600 each (1hr)	2	\$1200
BOE engagement	<i>Included</i>	1-2	<i>Included</i>
Equity audit	\$7500	n/a	\$7500
Task force meetings	\$2100* each	4	\$8400
Student equity leaders	\$2100* each	2 meetings	\$4200
Professional development for staff	\$1125 each (2 hrs or less)	5 sessions	\$5625
			\$31,125

\*Maximum 4 hours, but can be broken into shorter segments on Zoom