

Manchester Public Schools Releases Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment to Evaluate School Culture and Climate

Two-year process included input from students, families, and staff

Manchester, Connecticut – April 22, 2019 – [Manchester Public Schools](#) (“MPS”) today released the results of the Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment (E.I.S.C.A.), the culmination of a two- year process to evaluate the culture and climate of the district through the lens of racial equity.

“While we have known for some time that there are institutional and systemic inequities that prevent all students from reaping the same social and educational benefits, the release of E.I.S.C.A. is an important step for the district as it provides us with the information – thanks largely to input from marginalized groups sharing their experiences – for continued progress and improvement,” said Manchester’s Superintendent of Schools, Matt Geary.

E.I.S.C.A., which MPS conducted in partnership with [RE-Center Race & Equity in Education](#), focuses on the confluence between school culture and climate, racial equity, and student achievement and provides a framework to understand and address inequities that exist. The process included assessing the experience of students, families and district staff through surveys, interviews, focus groups and ethnographic site visits.

“Equity means ensuring everyone has what they need when they need it, so that people will be able to achieve their destiny and desired success,” commented a member of the Youth Equity Squad, a student group that has been leading the district’s equity work. “It’s about empowering others and working together to level the playing field. We’re excited and proud to be part of this work.”

“EISCA provides us with the learnings to address inequity and build on the work we are doing -- and there are many things that are already going well for MPS,” added Latasha Easterling-Turnquest, Director of Family Partnerships, Office of Equity and Partnerships at MPS. “Our student body embodies multicultural diversity, and many students identified this as a positive and important aspect of their educational environment.”

Research shows that equity is essential to creating a school climate that effectively serves students, staff, and families and improves all student outcomes. Equity in education exists when students from marginalized groups reap the same social and educational benefits as their peers. Achieving an equitable educational environment requires institutions to transform their policies, practices, and cultural patterns to re-distribute access and opportunity to those who belong to currently and historically marginalized groups.

“As the first school district to undertake a district-wide equity-informed climate assessment, Manchester’s students, families, faculty and staff began the process of creating a healthier learning environment for everyone by institutionalizing equity in its schools,” commented Kate Busch Gervais, Executive Director of RE-Center Race & Equity in Education. “Manchester Public Schools has demonstrated national leadership by engaging in this critically important work and they should be proud. We look forward to learning more about the ways MPS will engage with the findings from the report and create positive changes in the years to come.”

MPS’ Youth Equity Squad will be leading conversations to engage all members of the community in this work. According to a member of the Squad, “There isn’t anything that should be off limits. We should be open to hearing from all sides. Race impacts us all, whether we realize it or not.”

“We believe strongly that when those with the most marginalized identities are served well, the school district creates a healthier learning environment for everyone,” added Superintendent Geary. “The E.I.S.C.A. report revealed that there are many great, inclusive, positive dimensions to our diverse district, but we also know there

is much more to be done. In the 2019-2020 school year we look forward to starting on our ‘next steps’ that can directly address the impacts of various forms of inequity within the district.”

The project was made possible with support from [EdChange](#) and funding from the [William Caspar Gruastein Memorial Fund](#). More information, including the executive summary and full E.I.S.C.A. report, can be found on MPS’ website, www.mpspride.org.