

# WPS Equity Strategic Plan

## 2020 - 2025 School Years



## WELLESLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Learning • Caring • Innovating*

**Dr. David Lussier**, Superintendent

**Michael LaCava**, Int. Asst. Superintendent, Teaching & Learning

**Cindy Mahr**, Asst. Superintendent, Finance & Operations

**Dr. Charmie Curry**, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

# WPS EQUITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

## Our Core Values

*Academic Excellence*

*Commitment to Community*

*Respect for Human Differences*

*Cooperative and Caring Relationships*

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Mission:

We believe it is our moral responsibility to welcome, celebrate and affirm the full spectrum and intersections of human differences in, and beyond our community. We will create a culture that celebrates advocacy and pursues justice for all, especially those from historically marginalized communities. We will practice risk-taking, and challenge one another to continuously examine systems of privilege and bias, and work collectively to disrupt and dismantle inequity in all its forms.

The Equity plan is a written expression of the Wellesley Public Schools' commitment to equity as an anchor and strategic priority of our District's strategic plan. The commitments and ensuing goals reflect a cross-departmental effort through the work of the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Teaching & Learning, Human Resources, Business, Student Services, METCO, among others.

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## BRIGHT SPOTS

*Invested Faculty & Staff*

*"We accept all of our students no matter the background. We have built such a strong bond with students and families, that I hope we can all talk to each other about racism..."*

**80%**

**WPS Faculty and Staff often think about what students of different races, ethnicities, or cultures experience.**

*"I have seen teachers with Black Lives Matter signs outside their classrooms, equality posters inside classrooms, and I am so appreciative."*

**85%**

**WPS Faculty and Staff responded to first Panorama Survey on Educator/Staff experience**

*"I am grateful to be working in a district that helps us be better teachers and citizens..."*



## CHALLENGES

*Significant Disproportionality & Persistent Opportunity Gaps*

**WPS Black and Hispanic students are 3 to 4 times as likely as their peers to be identified with a communication disability, an emotional disability, or a specific learning disability.**

**30.8% of African American/Black, Hispanic or Latinx students have an IEP**



**16.7% of White students have an IEP**



**Upperclassmen Enrollment in Advanced Placement courses\***

**70% of Asian students  
51% of White students  
42% of Hispanic students  
16% of Black students**

*\*In SY 2018-19*

*How confident are you that colleagues can have honest conversations about race, even when uncomfortable?*

**22%**

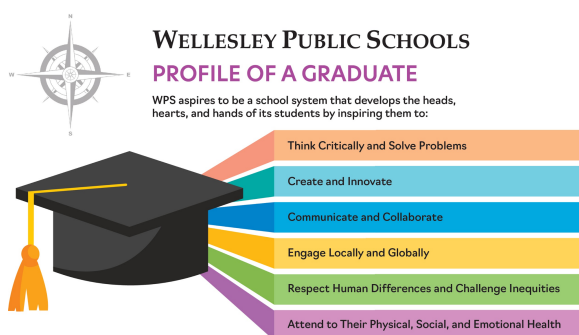
**Faculty and Staff responded favorably**

*\*Fall 2020 Panorama Survey Data*

## IMPACT OF COVID19

The onset of COVID19 provided both challenges and opportunities for the District's equity work. It created a heightened awareness of inequities, as observed nationally, and acted as an additional catalyst to spur our efforts. As national and local data show, the onset of COVID19 hit Black/African-American and Hispanic communities [particularly hard](#). Nationally, [Asian and Asian American communities experienced significant anti-Asian racism](#) as the result of the spread of the coronavirus. In WPS, these realities came to bear in how our families chose student placements - remote or hybrid - for the reopening of schools. The Remote Learning School (RLS) materialized as WPS' only majority-minority school, comprising more than 60 percent students of color at its opening.

The need for a hybrid/remote setting for health and safety concerns also complicated the launch of some of our key initiatives such as the roll out of equity facilitators across our schools. The process for hiring equity facilitators revealed significant skill gaps in educator capacity in leading equity-focused or race conversations among colleagues and students, which our fall 2020 Panorama educator and staff experience survey confirmed. While WPS educators report high investment in the district's DE&I efforts, they also report needing support in their practice to lead the work with confidence and fidelity.



## THEORY OF ACTION

**IF** we approach our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion with a mindset of “equity by design”; invest in systems and infrastructure that support equity and shed light on inequity; amplify the voices of students and the most marginalized in our community; invest in continuous learning about the impact of race on schooling; **THEN** we will become a

district that closes opportunity gaps, that is free of the manifestations of bias and racism, and that is [culturally sustaining](#).

## STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- #1 | District Equity by Design
- #2 | Invest in Culturally Sustaining Curriculum and Pedagogy
- #3 | Eliminate Significant Disproportionality & Opportunity Gaps
- #4 | Amplify Student Voices
- #5 | Diversify Our Staffing
- #6 | Invest in Community Education
- #7 | Wellesley METCO

## #1 | District Equity by Design

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**Goal:** Create and vet all district processes, policies, systems and structures to reflect an intentional commitment to equitable outcomes by design

1a. Cultivate community ownership of the District's equity vision by utilizing protocols and structures to invite shared leadership and implementation of mission, commitments and goals

1b. Adopt Equity Planning Tool<sup>1</sup> to guide decision-making and to ensure that all decisions are made with intent to advance equity

1c. Develop a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) district dashboard based on Equity Progress Assessment<sup>2</sup> to keep track of key markers of equity progress such as: student assignments, Special Education placement, access to and enrollment in rigorous coursework, SEL data, etc., all disaggregated by race/ethnicity and other identity markers

1d. Data are used strategically and frequently to plan, analyze district progress as it relates to achieving racial equity

## #2 | Invest in Culturally Sustaining Curriculum and Pedagogy

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**Goal:** All WPS schools will demonstrate use of pedagogy and curriculum materials that elevate the experiences of the historically marginalized, and increase the ability of students to engage in anti-bias, antiracist practices, to respect differences and challenge inequities

2a. Provide rigorous culturally sustaining, anti-bias, antiracist curriculum and instruction in all content areas that fully considers the intersectional nature of student identity

2b. Support educators and leaders by offering mentorship through peer leaders and district coaching to help educators deliver high-quality, equitable learning opportunities to all students; hire an FTE district Equity Coach

2c. Develop a unifying articulation of a WPS Vision for Effective, Equitable Instruction

2d. Align educator and administrator supervision and evaluation to all educators' understanding and application of culturally sustaining and equity-centered pedagogy and practice

2e. Ensure a unified scope and sequence for educator and leader learning on equity across WPS

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<sup>1</sup> Equity Planning Tool by [BlackPrint Education Consulting, LLC](#)

<sup>2</sup> Equity Progress Assessment by [Center for Understanding Equity](#)

### #3 | Eliminate Significant Disproportionality & Opportunity Gaps

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**Goal:** Reduce the number of Black/African-American and Latinx students who are inappropriately referred to and are receiving Special Education services; narrow performance gaps that are predictable by race/ethnicity

3a. Adopt rigorous Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) frameworks across all levels

3b. Ensure research-based curriculum is used in all content areas at every level

3c. Implement data-driven instructional practices for all students

3d. Achieve parity in the number of Black and Latinx students enrolled in Advanced Placement or leveled courses, as compared to white and Asian peers

### #4 | Amplify Student Voices

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**Goal:** Elevate the voices of students in district processes, systems, especially students who have experienced (and continue to experience) systematic marginalization, in order to cultivate student agency, advocacy and belonging.

4a. Develop and sustain a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Student Advisory Council to amplify student voice on diversity, equity and inclusion issues

4b. Implement Equity & Inclusion survey to assess student experience as it relates to equity and inclusion in the school setting; use survey to monitor student progress toward two competencies on WPS Profile of a Graduate: Respect Differences and Challenge Inequities

4c. Provide sustained opportunities for affinity spaces for students with shared identities

### #5 | Diversify Staffing

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**Goal:** Hire and retain faculty and staff who share our equity commitment, and who mirror our student population.

5a. Audit talent practices, including, but not limited to, processes for development of hiring committees, exit interview data, to address potential impacts of unconscious bias

5b. Develop a racial equity hiring plan that articulates a vision for talent management practices that prioritize equity and articulate specific strategies for retaining BIPOC faculty/staff

5c. Provide resources for affinity spaces for specialized populations within the wider Faculty/Staff (ie. ALANA, Admin Leaders of Color, LGBTQ+, White Educators for Antiracism, etc.)

## #6 | Invest in Community Education

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**Goal:** We will develop and implement a community engagement model that prioritizes building adult capacity to authentically understand the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, in order to be successful advocates and agents of change in the Wellesley Public Schools community

6a. Design and implement a scope and sequence of adult learning to support community understanding of prominent DE&I issues within the schools and broader community

6b. Create and sustain a DE&I subcommittee as part of each PTO/PTSO to build synergy between goals for parent organizations and the district's equity plan

6c. Develop a plan for affinity spaces for the parent/caregiver community

6d. Design and implement engagement surveys to understand parent/caregiver community experiences with equity and inclusion

## #7 | Wellesley METCO

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**Goal:** Wellesley METCO will nurture and affirm positive racial identity development and inspire academic excellence in all students to ensure a dynamic experience for Boston resident students attending the Wellesley Public Schools

7a. Hire and onboard a full-time high school academic coordinator to attend exclusively to the needs of the high school population

7b. Develop and implement student experience surveys to understand, track the experience of Boston-resident students at each of the levels

7c. Develop an exit survey for 8th and 12th grade METCO students to track experiences during grade transition and at the conclusion of WPS careers

7d. Invest in the Family Friends Program as a means of nurturing and promoting authentic, cross-racial friendships that equally benefit Wellesley and Boston-resident families

7e. Develop positive racial identity and belonging in all students by pursuing mentorship and student-focused affinity spaces

## **GOAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Commitment #1: District Equity By Design**

- ❑ Audit current district policies and trainings on equity/bias to ensure they reflect current best practices; amend where necessary (Spring/Summer 2021)
- ❑ Train district administrators on use of Equity Planning Tool (Fall 2021)
- ❑ Initiate RFP process for vendor to develop central district dashboard to track equity progress (Spring 2021)

### **Commitment #2: Invest in Culturally Sustaining Curriculum & Pedagogy**

- ❑ Use curriculum review tool to assess anti-bias, anti-racist standards across content areas (Spring 2021 and ongoing)
- ❑ Establish sequence for curriculum review, determining how and when to review curriculum in each content area and grade level (Spring, Summer 2021)
- ❑ Support administrator supervision and evaluation, using adapted Look Fors and DESE calibration tool, OPTIC (Summer 2021 and ongoing)
- ❑ Convene district stakeholder group to design Equity Learning Walk Tool (Spring 2022)
- ❑ Convene district stakeholder group to design WPS Vision for Effective, Equitable Classroom Instruction (Winter 2021)
- ❑ Convene district stakeholder group to select/draft look-fors to accompany standards on educator evaluation rubric (Fall 2021)
- ❑ Support supervisors' effective use of adapted look-fors in supervisor and educator evaluation (Fall 2021 and ongoing)

### **Commitment #3: Eliminate Significant Disproportionality & Opportunity Gaps**

- ❑ Convene disproportionality working group to attend DESE PLC (Winter 2020, Spring 2021 and ongoing)
- ❑ Review Special Education evaluation data (Spring 2021 and ongoing)
- ❑ Reconvene K-8 Math Achievement Gap Task Force (Spring 2022)

### **Commitment #4: Amplify Student Voices**

- ❑ Launch the DE&I Student Advisory Council (Winter 2021 and ongoing)
- ❑ Provide sustained opportunities for affinity spaces for students (SY20-21 and ongoing)
- ❑ Design equity and inclusion survey for administration in Fall 2021 (Spring 2021)



## **Commitment #5: Diversify Staffing**

- ❑ Design equity and bias training for all hiring managers and interview committees (Summer 2021 and ongoing)
- ❑ Implement new equity and bias training for all hiring managers and interview committees (Fall 2021)
- ❑ Convene joint labor and management group to design racial equity hiring plan (Fall 2021)

## **Commitment #6: Invest in Community Learning on Equity**

- ❑ Create Scope and Sequence for Family Engagement in DE&I (Summer, Fall 2020)
- ❑ Design Family Engagement survey for implementation in Fall 2021 (Spring 2021)

## **Commitment #7: Wellesley METCO**

- ❑ Design Equity and Inclusion survey (Spring 2021)
- ❑ Budget request for FTE WHS Coordinator (Fall 2021)

## PROGRESS MARKERS

As we work toward our equity commitments and goals, we will look to the following data points as markers of our progress. Each progress marker is directly aligned to each of our seven commitments.

### Commitment #1: District Equity by Design

- ❑ By 2025, district MTSS/equity progress dashboard is operational and available publicly
- ❑ By 2025, all district policies, procedures examined for full application of equity lens
- ❑ By 2025, the Equity Planning Tool is implemented and in use across the district

### Commitment #2: Invest in Culturally Sustaining Curriculum and Pedagogy

- ❑ By 2025, full adoption and implementation of anti-bias, antiracist curriculum framework across PreK-12 classrooms
- ❑ By 2025, WPS Vision for Effective, Equitable Classroom Instruction is operational and in use in tandem with Educator Evaluation Rubric across classrooms as a tool of feedback to educators
- ❑ By 2025, Equity Learning Walk Tool is designed and being implemented to inform use of equity practices
- ❑ By 2025, hire full-time District Equity Coach to oversee work of equity facilitators and provide direct, level-based coaching to faculty/staff via coaching cycles

### Commitment #3: Eliminate Significant Disproportionality & Opportunity Gaps

- ❑ By 2025, all students are equally likely to be identified for an IEP regardless of their racial/ethnic group membership.
- ❑ By 2025, Tier 1 practices *alone* (classroom instruction without in-class or out-of-class intervention aside from IEP supports) meet the needs of 80% of students in each racial/ethnic group.
- ❑ By 2025, parity in the number of Black and Latinx students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses when compared to white and Asian peers
- ❑ By 2025, Math MCAS results will show that the district has increased its ability to meet the needs of Black and Latinx students.

### Commitment #4: Amplify Student Voices

- ❑ By 2025, the DE&I Student Advisory Council will be a lead agent for positive change in student beliefs and experience around Belonging, Cultural Awareness and Action, as measured on equity and inclusion survey

- ❑ By 2025, Panorama survey data will reflect student experiences that tell a story of belonging, agency in understanding issues of differences and ability to challenge inequities

- ❑ By 2025, DEI subcommittee on each district school's PTO/PTSO
- ❑ By 2025, scope and sequence for equity learning established and implemented yearly

### **Commitment #5: Diversify Staffing**

- ❑ By 2025, 70% or more BIPOC faculty/staff report favorable sense of belonging on educator/staff experience survey
- ❑ By 2025, 30% of faculty/staff in WPS identify as people of color, or BIPOC faculty/staff percentage mirrors percentage of BIPOC students

### **Commitment #6: Invest in Community**

- ❑ By 2025, parent/caregiver affinity groups are established

### **Commitment #7: Wellesley METCO**

- ❑ By 2025, full-time WHS coordinator added to METCO staffing model
- ❑ By 2025, METCO students at all surveyed levels report favorable sense of belonging on equity and inclusion survey
- ❑ By 2025, academic performance of METCO students, as measured by internal and state assessments, will indicate that the district has increased its ability to meet the needs of METCO students

## **DEFINITIONS**

1. **Anti-bias** - an approach to teaching and learning designed to increase understanding of differences and their value to a respectful and civil society and to actively challenge bias, stereotyping and all forms of discrimination in schools and communities (*from ADL*)
2. **Anti-racism** - the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably (*from NAC International Perspectives*)
3. **BIPOC** - Umbrella term used to describe Black, Indigenous and people of color groups.
4. **Culturally Proficient** - Behaving in ways and enacting policies that lead to bias-free environments that are respectful of diverse backgrounds, strengths and challenges.
5. **Culturally Relevant** - prioritizes student learning, the students' intellectual growth and moral development, but also their ability to problem-solve and reason; Cultural Competence: Skills that support students to affirm and appreciate their culture of origin while developing fluency in at least one other culture; Critical Consciousness: The ability to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems, especially those that result in societal inequalities.
6. **Culturally Responsive** - Drawing on diverse backgrounds, strengths and challenges to deepen learning; adapting instruction to incorporate strategies that appeal to each student.
7. **Culturally Responsive Practices** - Observable, measurable behaviors that demonstrate cultural awareness and sociopolitical consciousness in a way that influences the opportunities, access, experiences and outcomes achieved by students and adults in a learning community.
8. **Culturally Sustaining** - Seeking to foster and explicitly support students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, challenges; Connecting present learning to histories of racial, ethnic, and linguistic communities and to the histories of neighborhoods and cities they are a part of.
9. **Culturally Sustaining Practices** - Observable, measurable behaviors that demonstrate valuing diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, challenges; Connecting present learning to histories of racial, ethnic, and linguistic communities and to the histories of neighborhoods and cities they are a part of.



10. **Disproportionality** - the over (or under) representation of a particular population or demographic group in special education programs relative to the presence of this group in the overall student population.
11. **Equity** - Fairness and justice, not sameness; Identifying and eliminating racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, and other forms of bias and discrimination; Fairly distributing (and sometimes redistributing) access, opportunity, and participation (*definition furnished by Dr. Paul Gorski, and the Equity Literacy Institute*)
12. **Latinx** - Gender neutral term used to describe persons of Latin American heritage, used as gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina
13. **Race** - A power construct of collected or merged difference that lives socially (*Ibram X. Kendi*)
14. **Racism** - A marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities (*Ibram X. Kendi*)
15. **Systemic Racism** - overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society that produces inequitable outcomes and experiences in housing, education, healthcare, employment, life expectancy, wealth gap, etc., defined by race.

# MA DEPT. OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

To learn more about the Cultural Responsiveness Continuum, click [here](#).

## CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS CONTINUUM

