

Equity Audit Proposal
Prepared for Livingston Public Schools

Submitted by
The Partnerships for Educational Equity and Research (PEER) Lab
dba a2z equity coaching inc.

Dr. Shelley Zion
Dr. Scott Oswald

March 14th, 2023

Project Overview

Livingston Public Schools has been engaged in a range of equity focused activities over the past several years, and seeks an external organization to conduct an equity audit of the district, to identify areas of success, and areas of focus. To do so, the PEER lab will conduct a mixed methods inquiry to include 1) a review of existing data, to be provided by the Livingston Public Schools administration, 2) collection of stakeholder perception of the district climate and culture, via a survey on the experiences and perceptions of students, faculty/staff, families, and the local community, 3) onsite visits for classroom and building level observations, 4) focus groups and interviews with selected stakeholders, and 5) presentation of a formal report and recommendations. Findings from this inquiry will be used to assist district leadership continue to meet equity goals, with data-driven decision-making.

Audit Plan and Procedure

Mixed-Methods Sequential Explanatory Design

Mixed Methods Research (MMR) will be used to explore experiences and perceptions of stakeholders in Livingston Public Schools. The process of this MMR project follows a sequential explanatory design where we first collect and analyze quantitative data, the findings from which, in part inform, the qualitative data collection and analysis (Ivankova et al., 2006). For this study, the quantitative phase will include an examination of existing data, and the collection of new survey data, followed by interviews and focus groups in the qualitative phase.

The PEER Lab, through its relationship with the Livingston Public Schools, will assess the impact of previous DEI work through surveys and interviews with district and building level administrators, teachers, support personnel, families, and community members with whom the district has partnerships. It is by utilizing these relationships with various stakeholder groups, combined with our own areas of expertise, that we can provide actionable information upon which the district can make informed decisions moving forward. The following table lays out a timeline and overview of the project plan, followed by a detailed narrative description of activities in each stage of the plan.

Stage 1: Upon award of the contract, the PEER Lab will plan an initial meeting with district leadership at Livingston Public Schools to review the proposal and develop an understanding of the activities to be carried out. This initial meeting will establish an ongoing pattern of communication with the planning team (to occur monthly), and ensure continuous feedback and improvement opportunities. At this time, the PEER team will obtain available and relevant

district data and administer the EDSCLS survey (see appendix B for detail) will be distributed to students, faculty/staff, and families. Results from the climate survey will be used, in part, to inform the protocols for the focus groups and interviews.

Stage 2: Activities constitute the bulk of the work related to the evaluation of school climate.

During this period, the PEER team will carry out the following research activities:

- Conduct focus groups (via zoom) at all 9 schools with representation of the student, family, and faculty/staff population
- Conduct interviews with district administration and key partners and families
- Conduct observations at all 9 buildings

Stage 3: Data analysis will include transcriptions, coding, and the analysis of all observations and interviews and focus groups. Findings will be written into a final evaluation report.

Stage 4: The PEER team will submit the final evaluation report to Livingston Public Schools and meet with district leadership/board to review the report.

Stage 5: As needed, the PEER team can provide coaching and other support services to implement recommendations.

Deliverables

Stage	Deliverables/Tasks	District Staff Needs	Budget	Timeline
	Monthly Planning Meetings with District Leadership	District ID team to meet for 2 hours, via zoom, to ensure data is provided, scheduling of interviews/site visits is occurring, project is meeting expectations	\$8,640	March-November
Stage 1	Review of existing data	Provided by district, see Appendix A	\$12,800	March-June
	Distribution and analysis of EDCLS survey	Coordinated by district, see appendix B	\$8,800	April-May
	Refinement of observation, focus group, and interview protocols based on initial review of data to drill down to issue and sub groups that are most relevant	District team to provide feedback	\$1,600	April-May

Stage 2	PEER team conducts zoom focus groups, and individual interviews: 10 focus groups of students (3 per middle school, 5 per high school) 12 focus groups with staff 10 total interviews with district administration 18 parents focus groups 6 community/district partner interviews	District team assists with identifying participants and scheduling	\$17,920	May-June
	PEER team conducts on site observations: 6 full days onsite (1/2 day at each elementary school, 1 day at each middle/high school)	District teams assists with coordination and scheduling	\$29,500	
Stage 3	Analysis of all qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, and observations, draft report	District team to answer questions or provide clarification	\$12,800	July-August
Stage 4	Meetings with district leadership to review, finalize report, craft executive summary, and present to BOE	District team to provide feedback and schedule appropriate presentations	\$3,900	September-November
Stage 5	Ongoing coaching and support as needed	To be determined by district team		September and ongoing

The total estimated budget is \$95,960 and is itemized by activity to assist in planning and modification as needed.

Experience and Qualifications

Our Background

In the Partnerships for Educational Equity and Research (PEER) lab, our goal is to engage in research practice partnerships that support school districts in understanding and implementing policies and practices that promote equity and contribute to our larger understanding of the practice of systemic change in educational systems. We have been working with districts in New Jersey for the past six years.

PEER is a diverse group of researchers with a range of expertise that makes the arc of our work possible in several ways. First, our focus on the social context of education and racial equity shapes our understanding of macro and micro level issues inside and outside of schools. Second, we incorporate our knowledge of research-practice partnerships to address school culture reform, supported by our individual expertise in teacher learning, school reform, student voice, curriculum, pedagogy, and climate support specific district needs and interests. In this process, we maintain that to impact change at the school level, a critical stance is necessary. Third, we prioritize critical frameworks to examine and reshape the school curriculum- these critical frameworks help us to analyze data at multiple levels, identify patterns of racial inequity and determine what data is missing. Finally, to advance equity in schools, PEER includes the voices and experiences of students, families, and community members.

Our Leadership Team

Dr. Shelley Zion is a Professor of Urban Education in the Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Education Department at Rowan University, and the founding Executive Director of the PEER (Partnerships for Educational Equity & Research) Lab. In this role, she leads research and community partnerships focused on issues of access, success, and equity. Shelley's team seeks to understand how institutions, social systems, and individual experiences create and sustain systems of power and privilege that ensure access for some while excluding others. The PEER lab builds on her work as the Director (2001–2009) of the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCREsT) and the National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI).

Her research is situated within a framework of sociopolitical development, informed by a range of critical theoretical perspectives, and advanced by an understanding of the nature of both individual and systemic change. This framework requires that to impact a transformation of the current public education and other social systems towards goals of equity and social justice, we must work to disrupt dominant ideologies by creating spaces in which people begin to develop a critical understanding of the cultural, political, economic, and other institutional forces that

perpetuate systems of privilege and oppression; by developing a critical consciousness, reflective practice, and commitment to action in relation to institutional structures, policies, and practices; and transforming those systems towards healing historical wounds, dismantling oppressive systems, and creating equitable access to opportunity. This work evolves at three levels, with leaders, educators; and students.

At the systems level, with state, district, and school leaders to improve and inform the ways that schools are constructed to provide access and equitable opportunities for all students and explicitly address areas of inequity in outcomes for our most marginalized students. As an educator, with community members, education leaders, in-service, and pre-service teachers to develop a critical understanding of the cultural, political, economic, and other systemic forces that create and perpetuate systems of privilege and oppression and to develop critical consciousness, reflective practice, and commitment to action in relation to the policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and practices they employ. Finally, with secondary school students to develop civic engagement, collective agency, empowerment and activism through youth participatory action research, critical civic inquiry, transformative student voice, and quality policy arguments.

Since 2002, her research work has focused on issues of school and community reform, locating the voices of students as key informants in systems change approaches. She is co-PI of a series of student voice research projects- Critical Civic Inquiry, funded by the Spencer Foundation, which included a quasi-experimental research design focused on exploring the impact of including students in school reform decisions in 10 secondary schools, Measuring Youth Policy Arguments project, funded by Spencer and the Hewlett Foundation, which is charged with developing reliable and valid measures of the quality of youth policy arguments, Student Voice Leadership Project, which examines the impact and scalability of student voice initiatives on School and District policy and practices, funded by the Hewlett Foundation, Critical Civic Inquiry 2.0, funded by Jobs for the Future, which examines contextual factors and the impact of participation in student voice projects on student outcomes, and the Utilization of Evidence from Youth Participatory Research (YPAR) in School and District Decision Making funded by the WT Grant Foundation. She also leads the Centering Students in School Climate Transformation Grant, which supports four districts in South Jersey, funded by the US Department of Education.

Dr. Scott Oswald is a former teacher, assistant principal, counseling supervisor, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. Dr. Oswald has been involved in equity initiatives at the school and district levels for many years, focusing on school culture, systems and systems change, curriculum development, resource allocation, professional learning, and student voice. Dr. Oswald also serves on the New Jersey Department of Education Diverse and Learner Ready Teacher workgroup, focusing on diversifying the teacher workforce and better

preparing current teachers for New Jersey's increasingly diverse student population. Dr. Oswald has worked with teachers and staff, school- and district-based leaders, and members of Boards of Education and communities to increase awareness of diversity issues and develop strategic plans to address those issues systemically.

In the PEER lab, Dr. Oswald works with district administrative teams and equity councils to understand the issues that impact educational equity - identity, culture, privilege, implicit bias, microaggressions, and systems. Dr. Oswald has also designed multi-year equity plans that lead districts closer to the ideal of realizing equitable systems in schools.

Dr. Eshe Price is a former educator and recent graduate of Rowan University. Her dissertation examines the schooling experiences of Black girls in predominantly White, suburban and rural communities through mixed-methods research. Through her research, Dr. Price aims to position Black girls as the experts to guide support for Black girls in schools. Additionally, Dr. Price is interested in the use of critical quantitative methods as a tool for social justice research. In 2021, her dissertation received funding from the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division G - Social Context of Education.

In the PEER lab, Dr. Price is the Data Manager for the School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG). The SCTG supports the commitment to equity and success for students, staff, and families across 4 school districts. As the Data Manager, Dr. Price leads data collection and analysis activities with a commitment to conducting culturally relevant research. Dr. Price holds a BS in elementary education from Towson University and MA in bilingual special education from George Washington University. She is certified in elementary education, ESL, special education, and supervision in New Jersey and Maryland. Dr. Price has over 10 years of experience teaching and leading in urban schools.

Additional PEER Team biographies can be found [here](#).

Appendix A

Academic Data/Opportunity and Access

District / School Level

- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Summative assessment scores (state testing)
 - College readiness assessment scores ((P)SAT, ACT, AP)
 - Promotion, retention, graduation rates
 - Students identified for special education or intervention programs
- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Interview - how are students identified for Gifted, honors, AP, and similar advanced programs (tracking and gatekeeping systems)
 - Interview - what steps are being taken to increase participation of traditionally underrepresented students in these programs?

Classroom Level

- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Climate survey data
- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Interviews/Document Review - are students assessed and reassessed regularly to determine growth and needed supports
 - Visitations (sample) - classroom environment (physical and culture)
 - Visitations (sample) / Interviews - integration of students in classroom

Curriculum and Instruction

- QUANTITATIVE DATA
 - Climate survey data
- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Interviews/Document Review re: curriculum materials reflective of diverse student population
 - Interviews re: curriculum and instruction both rigorous and culturally sustaining

School Climate and Culture

- QUANTITATIVE DATA
 - Discipline data
 - Attendance data
 - Students reporting favorable school climate ratings
 - Students engaged in co-curricular activities

- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Student interviews re: climate, culture, and belonging

Student Supports

- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Interview/Document Review - what academic supports are available to students?
 - Interview/Document Review - what social-emotional supports are available to students?

Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

- QUANTITATIVE DATA
 - Staff v student diversity
- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Interviews - efforts to diversify staff (recruitment)
 - Interviews/Document Review - Interview protocols and questions (hiring)
 - Interviews/Document Review - support for new and existing staff (retention)
 - Interviews/Document Review - leadership development programs for teaching, administrative, and support staff (retention)

Professional Learning and Development

- QUANTITATIVE DATA
 - Staff survey re: quality and applicability of professional development offerings
 - Staff survey re: attitude (mindset) toward equity-based professional growth opportunities
 - Staff participation in equity-based professional growth opportunities
- QUALITATIVE DATA
 - Interviews - staff attitude (mindset) toward equity-based professional growth opportunities
 - Interviews/Document Review - availability of equity-based professional growth opportunities

School, Family, and Community Partnerships

- QUANTITATIVE DATA
 - Climate survey parent
- QUALITATIVE
 - Interviews - family engagement, communication, and relationships
 - Interviews/Document Review - community partnerships

Appendix B

Measurement Tool

The ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) are a suite of survey instruments being developed for schools, school districts, and states by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Through the EDSCLS, schools nationwide have access to survey instruments that will allow for the collection and reporting of school climate data across stakeholders at the local level. The surveys can be used to produce school-, district-, and state-level scores on various indicators of school climate from the perspectives of students, teachers and staff, principals, and parents and guardians.

The EDSCLS consists of 66 items measuring 12 topics in the 3 domains of Engagement, Safety, and Environment. All 66 topical items used a 4-point Likert response option scale. The number of items in each topic is shown in Table 1. Our climate surveys are adapted from the EDSCLS and include additional questions focused on equity.

Table 1
EDSCLS by Domain, Topic, and Item

Domain	Topic	Items
Engagement	Cultural and linguistic Competence	5
	Relationships	8
	School participation	5
Safety	Emotional Safety	7
	Physical Safety	8
	Bullying/cyberbullying	6
	Substance Abuse	5
	Emergency readiness/management	2
Environment	Physical environment	5
	Instructional environment	5
	Mental health	5
	Discipline	5

PURCHASE ORDER

VENDOR NO. 13779

LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

11 FOXCROFT DRIVE • LIVINGSTON, N.J. 07039

TEL (973) 535-8000 • FAX (844) 833-6208

BUDGET YEAR

2022->2023

**THIS SCHOOL DISTRICT IS EXEMPT FROM ALL FEDERAL, STATE AND
MUNICIPAL TAXES, FEDERAL TAX ID #22-6002041****PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER**

23-002970

THIS NUMBER MUST APPEAR ON
ALL PACKAGES, INVOICES AND
CORRESPONDENCE.

DATE: 05/16/2023

VENDOR:

EQUITY, EXCELLENCE, EDUCATION INC.
1247 E. LUZERNE STREET]
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19124

SHIP TO:

LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
11 FOXCROFT DRIVE
LIVINGSTON, NJ 07039

CONTRCL NUMBER		ORDER DESCRIPTION		
QUANTITY ORDERED	CATALOG / UNIT	ITEM DESCRIPTION / ACCOUNT NUMBER	UNIT PRICE	EXTENSION
1	Each	BOARD APPROVED APRIL 25, 2023 EQUITY AUDIT AS PER ATTACHMENT 7227/11-000-230-339-8085-20- (\$95,960.00)	95,960.00	95,960.00 \$95,960.00
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER				

CLAIMANT'S CERTIFICATION & DECLARATION

I do solemnly declare and certify under the penalties of the law that the within bill is correct in all its particulars; that the articles have been furnished or services rendered as stated therein; that no bonus has been given or received by any person or persons within the knowledge of this claimant in connection with the above claim; that the amount therein stated is justly due and owing; and that the amount charged is a reasonable one.

↓
X

SIGNATURE

(INDIVIDUAL AUTHORIZED TO MAKE DECLARATION)

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE DEPARTMENT VERIFICATIONCLAIM CHECKED FOR CONFORMITY TO PURCHASE ORDER, RECEIPT OF MERCHANDISE OR
SERVICES, AND CLERICAL ACCURACY.

BY

LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR**SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATION**

CLAIM EXAMINED, AUDITED AND CERTIFIED TO THE BOARD

BY

SECRETARY

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VENDOR DECLARATION COPY - SIGN AND RETURN FOR PAYMENT

MGL PRINTING SOLUTIONS 1055-06 0

Equity, Excellence, Education, Inc

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Philadelphia, PA 19124 US
SZion@A2ZEquityCoaching.com

INVOICE

BILL TO
Livingston Board of Education
11 Foxcroft Drive
Livingston, NJ 07039
PO # 23-002970

INVOICE 1050
DATE 06/06/2023
TERMS Net 30
DUE DATE 07/06/2023

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
Services	Monthly Planning Meetings	1	2,180.00	2,180.00
Services	Survey Distribution & Analysis	1	8,800.00	8,800.00
Services	Protocol Development	1	1,600.00	1,600.00
Services	Site Visits	1	29,500.00	29,500.00

BALANCE DUE \$42,080.00

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BILL TO
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11 Foxcroft Drive
Livingston, NJ 07039
PO # 23-002970

INVOICE 1053
DATE 07/06/2023
TERMS Due on receipt
DUE DATE 07/06/2023

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
Services	Monthly Planning Meetings	1	2,180.00	2,180.00
Services	Stakeholder focus groups	1	17,920.00	17,920.00
BALANCE DUE				\$20,100.00

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INVOICE 1053
DATE 07/06/2023
TERMS Due on receipt
DUE DATE 07/06/2023

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
Services	Monthly Planning Meetings	1	2,100.00	2,100.00
Services	Review of existing data	1	12,800.00	12,800.00
Services	Qualitative data analysis	1	12,800.00	12,800.00

BALANCE DUE \$27,700.00