

# **Education Team**

## **2019 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report**

**Eliminate Racism Education Action Team Mission: To be passionate advocates of equity-driven policies and practices in the Rockford Public Schools (RPS 205) so that all students will be prepared for social and academic success.**

**The Education Team has been very busy since it completed its report, based on research completed between July and December. The Team spent January revising the report.**

**Because its action plan calls for community presentations of this plan, the first meetings have been held, with good discussion during each.**

**The first meeting presented to Dr. Jarrett, superintendent of RPS205, and some of his cabinet members. The second meeting was a presentation to Mayor Tom McNamara. The third meeting was a follow-up with RPS205 administration, at their request. It is anticipated that there will be ongoing dialogue with RPS205.**

**During the meeting with the Mayor, the Team requested that he convene all groups working to support and promote People of Color in the Rockford area to ask for their help in recruiting PoC teachers and administrators to RPS205 and to provide support to Students of Color enrolled in Advanced Placement classes.**

**We are now compiling a list of community groups to whom we would like to make presentations and will then begin scheduling these meetings.**

**Presentations/Meetings of the Education Team:**

- Met twice with RPS20: Dr. Jarrett, his cabinet, two school Board members and the REA representatives and the Education Team.**
- Met with Mayor Tom McNamara**
- Met with Transform Rockford**
- Presented to Emmanuel Episcopal Church**
- Presented to Zion Lutheran Church**
- Presented to Unitarian Universalist Church**

We will meet on Wednesday, March 13, 2019 with the Editorial Board of the Rockford Register Star.

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Below are our recommendations that result from our research as well as the request presented to the Mayor.

## **Eliminate Racism Education Action Teams Recommendations to RPS205 2019**

**Goal 1: To increase to 20% People of Color - especially African-American and Hispanic - in all levels of RPS205: administration, faculty, staff, and board members by the 2020-2021 school year. By the 2025-2026 school year, have percentages of African- American and Hispanic administration, staff, and board members match the percentage of African-American and Hispanic students within the system.**

### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Develop a **proactive, focused and persistent RPS recruitment and retention policy** for People of Color, including necessary incentives/needs, housing, mentoring, 11-month contracts and appropriate liaisons with other people of color, teachers, administration and community leaders. This policy must be personal as well as web and social-media based. Establish Rockford as a desirable place to live and teach for African-American and Hispanic teachers. Develop a social/emotional support system for teachers of color.
2. Expand all available **Grow Your Own/Pathway Programs**, forming an **elementary, middle school and high school mentoring/training** program for students, especially African-American and Latino, who express interest in becoming teachers. **Paraprofessionals** or other non-certified staff of color already working in the district and recommended by their administrator should be prime candidates for **scholarships, internships and paid student teaching experience**. A cohort for **parents of color** could also be developed.

3. RPS Human Resources Department works closely with the **National Equity Project** to develop a recruiting and support strategy including preparation for the states required teachers' exam. Re-develop the **Diversity Council** and include recruiting and support strategies of people of color as part of their mission.
4. Develop and execute a **REA Teachers' Union Agreement** that addresses the overwhelming need to increase the percentages of People of Color across RPS205.
5. Recognize an immediate need for **persistence** in developing strong relationships with **local and regional colleges and universities, and HBCUs (Historical Black Colleges and Universities) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)** with "**connectors**" who can assist RPS205 in locating and recruiting People of Color, most especially as teachers and administrative staff. This should include **paid internships and scholarships**.
6. Form relationships/partnerships with **local service organizations and churches** who have primarily people of color as their membership. Develop a **social/emotional support system** for teachers of color. Establish Rockford as a **desirable place to live and teach for African-Americans and Hispanic teachers**.

**Goal 2: To ensure that RPS205 policies and resources, including teachers, counselors, supplies, and technology, are equitable, based on the needs of students in the school and measured by the state required assessment data and the district discipline data. This goal shall be met by 2020-2021 school year.**

### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Develop a **new Funding Formula** for RPS that targets lowest performing students and include grant \$\$ in the formula.
2. Implement **Community Schools** based on the specific needs of each of our lowest-performing schools
3. Put more financial resources into **multi-classroom leaders**.
4. Conduct an **internal Equity Audit** to inform financial/policy decisions.
5. The **Discipline code** and the culture of the school focus **reflects positive behavior interventions** and support, social/emotional strategies and **restorative justice**

**policies and resources** that provide ways for students to learn to become contributing members of our community. The community should create **advocacy groups** to support children and parents who need assistance.

6. Create a **trauma-sensitive school improvement** initiative. Provide more social/emotional support to students through counselors and social workers and behavior specialists.
7. Provide a sufficient amount of **job-embedded professional development** in implicit/unintentional bias, positive behavior interventions and support, social and emotional learning strategies, and restorative justice practices for administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and other staff members in order that we address the challenges of equity facing public education in Rockford.

**Goal 3: Students of Color– especially African-American and Hispanic - will be encouraged to enroll in and be enrolled AP (Advanced Placement) classes and will receive the support they need to be academically successful. By 2020-2021 school year, Students Of Color enrollment will have increased by 25% within these advanced curricular programs; these students will have received a final grade of “C” or better.**

#### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. There must be a **district-wide Students of Color AP recruitment strategy**.
2. There must be a **district-wide strategy for helping parents of Students of Color understand the benefits of AP classes for their children**.
3. There must be a **district-wide AP teacher recruitment strategy** that establishes **criteria for teachers most likely to succeed in AP classes with a diverse student population**, most importantly including Students of Color. This strategy should identify teachers who are culturally-sensitive and have strong relationship-building skills and then support these teachers through a variety of methods, including professional development opportunities.
4. There must be a **district-wide AP support strategy for Students of Color** that acknowledges and meets the **unique constraints the students face**, including academic and socio-economic.
5. RPS205 will develop **community-based involvement/support** for Students of Color AP enrollment.

Rockford Eliminate Racism Education Team's  
Request of/Recommendation for Mayor Thomas McNamara

Mayor McNamara,

To become the strong foundation of an educated workforce and empowered citizenry, the Rockford Public School District (RPS205) must prepare all of its students for social and economic success. We believe that this foundation is critical to the City of Rockford as it seeks to grow economically and expand residentially.

To this end, we believe that the City of Rockford plays a unique role to help RPS205 in its recruitment of People of Color for positions within the district - both administrative and teaching, especially within the current highly competitive national environment of recruiting Teachers of Color. In addition, we believe that the City of Rockford can help support Students of Color within RPS205, particularly those enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) programs, so that they achieve the success so important to the strength and future of the City.

We respectfully ask you to convene a group of organizations already working to support People of Color within the City. This group is especially well-suited to recruit People of Color for positions within RPS205, establishing Rockford as a desirable place to live and teach for African-American and Hispanic teachers and administrations. This group is also uniquely qualified to develop a community-based support system for Students of Color, especially those enrolled in AP classes, offering them academic, social, and employment support.

Using the following list of organizations, with contact information included, we ask that you use the power and honor of your office to invite people to join you for an initial meeting to discuss this need for recruitment and mentorship within the People of Color leadership of the City. We will support your efforts to this end in whatever way you need us to be helpful.

Thank you, in advance, for your action and support.

Rockford Eliminate Racism Education Team

The next meetings of the Education Action Team will be Thursdays, March 14 and March 21 at 4:30 at Pilgrim Baptist Church.