

Call to Eliminate Racism in Rockford

Vision: Rockford is a community where everyone feels valued.

Mission: Eliminate Racism in Rockford

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.

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.