

Equity Goals and Recommendations

(gleaned by Ken Larsen from “Excellence with Equity: The Schools Our Children Deserve”)

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1.0 Goals

1	Access and Inclusion	All students have access and are included in rigorous and relevant coursework, Extracurricular, college & career prep, other social and leadership opportunities.
2	Personnel and Climate	District leadership builds consensus within the district and across the community that there is no excellence without equity, and that a racially just school system is in the best interest of all students and community members.
3	Racially Literate Curriculum and Instruction	Eliminate racial bias and promote racial literacy in expectations, curriculum, and teaching methods.
4	Disciplinary Policies and Practices	Discipline policies and practices are in the best interest of supporting the student’s educational experience and are applied equitably across race.
5	Resource Allocation and Distribution	Resource allocation and distribution is transparent to the citizens of the District and reflects values of excellence and equity.
6	Broad-based Community Participation in Equity Plans	The input and engagement of all family and community members is sought, valued and responded to with respect.
7	Clear Equity Plan with Explicit Thoughtful Racial Equity Goals	The district embraces and leads on an equity plan that includes an implementation timeline, specific goals and tasks for all school district personnel and accountability mechanisms.
8	Accountability	There is a clear mandate for accountability for equitable outcomes, as listed above, from the Board of Education, District leadership, faculty and staff

2.0 Recommendations

The column “WT” identifies the value/weight that Ken Larsen ascribes to that recommendation. 10 is the highest; 0 is the lowest. The column “\$” indicates the relative cost. 10 would be very expensive to implement; 0 would be the cheapest. The far right-hand column has an “R” in it, if the recommendation appears to place the underlying blame on racism.

#	Recommendation	WT	\$	
1-1	Establish a goal of achieving 10-15 percentage point improvement each year in the proportion of African American, Latino, and Economically Disadvantaged students who score at college/career levels on EOCs and EOGs.	5		
1-2	Develop a plan to detrack middle and high schools by Fall 2016.	?		
1-3	Expand gifted programming to include all students by Fall 2016.	0		
1-4	Investigate disproportionate access and participation in sports and other extracurricular activities and identify cultural, structural or socioeconomic barriers that can be reduced or eliminated by April 2016.	3		R
1-5	Investigate disproportionate access & participation in student government and other school-based activities and identify cultural, structural or socioeconomic barriers that can be reduced or eliminated by April 2016.	4		R
1-6	Develop a plan to ensure that every child has equal access to counseling for college and career planning such that students and their families get the help they need to have a viable plan for post-school education or employment that aligns with the student’s goals.	10		

2-1	Develop a mandatory professional development for all district personnel in racial literacy and cultural competency including: a. The science of implicit bias and how implicit bias can undermine our highest values and goals unless strategies are in place to check and reduce bias. b. Historical, cultural, institutional and structural racism and how it impacts educational outcomes. c. Consider the Racial Equity Institute or similar 2-day trainings, followed by school-based opportunities to debrief, deepen and apply training concepts on an on-going regular basis.	6		R
2-2	Develop and sustain a district culture that allows for and fosters productive conversations about race.	4		R
2-3	Recruit, employ, support and retain racially literate, culturally competent and linguistically diverse administrative, instructional and support personnel.	4		R
2-4	Ensure that the teacher and administrator workforce in all schools and units reflect the diversity of our student body, striving for over-representation of groups that have been marginalized (i.e., African American and Latino students).	3		R
2-5	Encourage Human Resources to recruit in markets with diverse candidates, but show caution in recruitment of international candidates who rarely have the racial context necessary to further equity goals.	1		R
2-6	Offer a caucus or support group for teachers and staff of color that is not overseen and managed by district administrators	3		R
2-7	Train principals on how to be intentional in all decisions regarding their school's equity team--from the people they choose to become part of the team to the training they offer staff.			R
2-8	Ensure that the school environment reflects diverse cultures - including texts, music, learning materials, wall displays, and physical environment.	8		
2-9	Continue to develop, implement, and evaluate the use of Student Six as an equity training strategy.	10		
2-10	Embed accountability to the district's equity plan in all levels for career advancement in Project ADVANCE .	5		R
2-11	Develop and implement a reporting process for students and staff around the issue of inequitable processes, practices, and incidents.			R
2-12	Develop and implement strategies to engage students in the development of policies and practices that impact school climate.			
3-1	Develop or adopt race-conscious curriculum (that acknowledges US history, policy and practices of white advantage and the concomitant oppressions of people of color) across grade levels.	3		R
3-2	Develop and implement culturally integrated curriculum across grade levels that offers counter narratives to dominant white normalcy and superiority.			R
3-3	Assure the use of instructional methods that are known to be equally effective across racial and socioeconomic groups.	10		R
4-1	Continue data collection, analysis and examination of discipline data at the school level.			
4-2	Continue conflict resolution/restorative justice (Restorative Circles) training and implementation across all schools. Document and evaluate implementation and outcome of restorative practices.			
4-3	Adopt objective criteria for office referrals, to decrease the chance that racial bias can influence discretionary decisions regarding student behavior.			R
4-4	Complete the revisions discussed by the School Board and adopt immediately the Memorandum of Understanding between the District and local police departments regarding the role of School Resource Officers (SROs) that has been under development and consideration for the last 18 months.	?		
4-5	Develop a plan to replace SROs with school-based programs that have been shown to increase safety and security			
5-1	Tie district and school leaders performance incentives to achievement of district and school equity goals			R
5-2	Use a racial equity analysis to examine and shape economic policies and practices of the district (related to wages, contracts, and student and family access and opportunity) in such a way that they help create, rather than inhibit racial equity.			R
5-3	Modify budget development and reporting practices so that they are more inclusive and transparent.			
5-4	Create online dashboard making enrollment, financials and academic performance for each school by race and income readily available. Update mid-year and end of year.	3	10	R

5-5	Correct online enrollment information to include current data for every school, and add reporting that highlights trends (total enrollment, enrollment by race over time). a. Separate individual school and district budgets and financial statements and include in online reports. Include demographics and EOG performance by race and income for each school. b. Clarify how resources are allocated to classrooms, programs, and overheads. c. Report enrollment, costs and outcomes by program.	3	10	R
6-1	Include two or more community-based equity advocates in the extensive review of the Gifted Program that began this school year.			R
6-2	Develop and implement a plan that ensures the participation of community-based equity advocates (e.g., Campaign for Racial Equity, NAACP, Organizing Against Racism, Justice United) in the development of race-conscious curriculum, including the selection of texts.	5		R
6-3	Use PTA, community partners and other mechanisms to educate all parents about white privilege and how it relates to historical, institutional and cultural racism. Include an analysis of how continued inequities harm us all economically, socially and spiritually.	3		R
6-4	Create and share vision – in partnership with community – of what an excellent equitable school district would look like, and what the students would look like who were products of such schools.	4		R
7-1	Ensure that the district equity plan that is under development gives careful consideration to the report and each recommendation developed by the Community Campaign for Racial Equity (CCRE). The CCRE would like an opportunity to hear feedback from the district equity program on each recommendation and the likelihood of its implementation.	4		R
7-2	Ensure that the plan includes clear, explicit and aligned goals at every functional level of the district. In other words, the School Board needs clear, explicit, and thoughtful equity goals. The Superintendent needs clear equity goals. The maintenance staff, the afterschool caregivers, the principals and assistant principals, the teachers, the teacher assistants, the counselors, the social workers – everyone who plays a role in providing a public education to our children needs to know what race equity looks like in their specific role.	4		R
7-3	Ensure that racial equity plan includes implementation strategies and accountability mechanisms to ensure consistent, continuous, and faithful implementation of plans.	4		R
7-4	Designate a timeline for implementation and identify who is accountable for consistent, continuous and faithful implementation.	4		R
8-1	Adopt or develop equity assessment tools to guide and assess progress toward equity goals. Progress will be reported on a quarterly basis and if progress is lacking, new strategies will be developed, implemented and documented.			R
8-2	Develop clear accountability mechanisms for classroom, school, and district equity goals, providing necessary training and support for the achievement of goals. Performance measures and consequences (e.g, promotion, advancement, supervision, probation and termination) should be tied to personnel effort and achievement of equity goals.	2		R
8-3	Hold administration personnel accountable for equity outcomes in their area of responsibility.	2		R
8-4	Hold the superintendent accountable for equity outcomes in the district.	2		R
8-5	Board of Education is also held accountable for outcomes in the district and for assessing the success of the superintendent in making significant gains in racial equity.	2		R
8-6	Host an annual state of the district meeting and openly discuss progress toward closing the achievement gap.	6		

3.0 Ken's thoughts

1	<p>The document "Excellence with Equity: The Schools Our Children Deserve" appears to place the whole blame for the achievement gap on racism and enumerates steps to eliminate racism. Steps are needed to curb racism, but there are many other factors. Eliminating racism will certainly improve a minority child's motivation, but it won't directly improve their test scores. Hard work at studying course material is needed to do that.</p> <p>Interestingly, Asian families deal with racism in an entirely different way. They buckle down on learning in an effort to elevate the child's grades even further. That's their way of coping with racism.</p>
2	<p>The equity document assigns none of blame for the achievement gap on flawed parenting. This is a huge omission, because studies have shown that half of the achievement gap is evident on the day a child begins kindergarten. The NAACP should hold parenting classes. Instead they hold equity classes to teach whites how to curb racism. They charge \$ 275 for this class. To me, they're the ones who are guilty of racism ... blaming whites for the failures of their children. They repeatedly cite racial injustices that were perpetrated hundreds of years ago to explain why their third graders are failing. When I voiced this objection to an NAACP member, they were insulted by my insinuation. This is why I believe that the achievement gap will continue for decades more. The black community must take responsibility for the parenting side of the problem. It's like a boat that has three holes. Fixing one hole won't keep the boat from sinking. You have to fix all three holes.</p>
3	<p>Standardized test results demonstrate that low scoring students haven't mastered the material. This can be caused by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate studying (student's fault) 2. Poor study technique (which can be overcome by teachers, guidance counselors, and parents) 3. Deficient teaching 4. Deficient test taking skills <p>Standardized tests are vital, because they provide an independent unbiased way of measuring achievement gaps. I'd be vehemently against removing them.</p>
4	<p>Counting minorities can be difficult. Some children have multi-racial parents. A child might be 1/8 black and 7/8 white. Some children might be Muslim. Where do they go in the stats? Keeping accurate stats could become enormously complicated as more people intermarry. I think it's best to be color-blind and focus on helping children who aren't doing well on tests</p>
5	<p>Survey the children to learn more about what is really causing the achievement gap and what can be done to close it. Potential questions to ask of both the lowest and highest achievers are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do they have a desk and a quiet place at home to study? 2. Do they have a computer at home and a high speed internet connection? 3. Do their parents live together? 4. Are their parents supportive and capable of helping them with homework? 5. How long is their commute to school? 6. What do they like and dislike about school?
6	<p>(reference 3-3) Math problems should be made to appeal to the interests of low scoring students. For example, I would expect that most have an interest in sports, so have math problems be like "Calculate batting averages".</p>
7	<p>I'm against placing people in various classes based strictly on race. AP classes should only be for people who qualify based on test scores. If some students don't qualify, tutor them. If you put a poor student in an AP class, that likely will drag down the class, and the student will have trouble keeping up ... and may perform worse than they would in a non-AP class.</p>
8	<p>I worry that the achievement gap will become much worse – because affluent families can provide computers and high speed internet access while poor families cannot.</p>
9	<p>Regarding the stats, I'd like to see white children broken into Jewish and non-Jewish categories. I think that you would find a large gap between the Jewish and non-Jewish segments, because Jewish parents place huge value on education, and you'll never find Jewish children bullying other Jewish children because they were "nerds" and studied too much. In my freshman year at MIT there were 22 freshmen in my dormitory. 21 were Jewish. I was the only one who wasn't.</p>
10	<p>The 80 page document doesn't place any of the achievement gap blame on black parents and negative peer pressure from black children. Parents should be counseled to help them get their children to value education. Asian parents are real taskmasters when it comes to the education of their children. If a child comes home with an A minus, the child will be grilled on why they didn't attain an A.</p>
11	<p>What are the racial stats for basketball, football, and track? I would expect that black children outperform whites and Asians in all three of those sports. I would be adamantly against rebalancing those teams based on racial makeup. Skill should dictate who makes up the teams. What would UNC coach Roy Williams say if you went to him and told him his basketball team had to have 80% white players ... because that was the makeup of the local population? He'd throw you out. His 2015-2016 team is 75% black (12 blacks and 4 whites).</p>

12	There is a plan for the authors of the 80 document to present it at the January 14 th meeting of the Carrboro/Chapel Hill School Board. I don't think that's adequate, because there's a tremendous volume of material in it. That's why I listed the recommendations in tabular format. The rows of a table can be assigned weights, and the weights can be used to sort the table ... so that the important stuff can be focused on. It might take several school board meetings to do this.
13	Khan Academy has short videos for a large number of K-12 subjects. See https://www.khanacademy.org/library Students should be persuaded to view them to improve their scores in subjects they are deficient in. Khan Academy should be persuaded to provide videos for subjects which they don't currently cover. I claim that video viewing is a lot more effective than classroom lectures. I learned that in my second year at MIT. My grades shot up when I began audiotaping my classes and listening to them at my own pace. I found it hard to take notes during live classes, because while I was writing my notes, my mind wouldn't be listening to what the teacher said. Videos are great, because you can pause the video to jot down notes. You don't miss anything.
14	There's a tool called istation which looks like a good replacement for traditional classroom education. See their website, http://www.istation.com/ I think traditional classroom education is anachronistic. Technology gives us better ways of educating children, and we should embrace it.
15	I did a Google search on "achievement gap" and found this interesting article . It advocates using "cooperative learning" as a way to lower discipline problems and close the achievement gap. I'd like to see the School Board and the local NAACP endorse it.
16	I worry that the 80 page Equity document will result in the opposite of its intended goal. Readers may be inclined to place the whole blame for their low scores on racism and cease doing what they need to do ... which is study more. Also, their cries of racism may alienate white people and cause more racism.
17	Section IV (pages 18-34) of the 80 page equity documents uses checkmarks to flag which recommendations were endorsed by various racial groups. It would have been better if numerical weights were assigned.
18	Here's a section IV comment that I agree with, but didn't make the final cut: "Students are expected to complete assignments online. There is an unreasonable assumption that all students have a device they can work on at home and access to the internet. Many families do not and these students will have to struggle to complete assignments, sitting on the porches of neighbors or friends who might have internet or trying to complete an assignment on a cell phone."
19	Here's another section IV comment that I agree with: "Homework: send homework home that a student can always do independently to practice already taught skills. We shouldn't be widening the achievement gap by sending work home that requires parent involvement, language skills of the parents or particular resources that all families don't have. Make sure every student has the resources needed to do the assignment at home."
20	Section V (pages 35-42) of the 80 page equity document lists a bunch of programs which are trying to close the achievement gap, but no internet links are given. They should be added so that the reader can learn more about each.
21	I recommend that concerned citizens read the book, " Blended – Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools ". It advocates the use of online learning to improve learning and reduce discipline issues.
22	On one level, the 80 page equity document gives me optimism that the achievement gap can be closed. Reflect on all the work by all the people who created it. They care about closing the achievement gap. Having a large number of people working hard to fix a problem is a vital component of problem solving. Cheers to them.
23	(February 12, 2006) The local NAACP should embark on the writing of a second document – one that focuses on closing the academic side of the achievement gap. They should interview students who score high on achievement tests ask what they do to attain such high scores ... in other words, "what works"? They should similarly interview low scoring students to hear their views and learn why they have not been successful. The 87 page equity documents focuses mostly on the racial side of the equation. That's important, but there's an academic side. You can't close the achievement gap all the way by just focusing on racial issues.