

M.A.S.S. Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: overview

Why?

We are called to action NOW! The pandemic has laid bare deep racial inequities in jobs, housing, health and schools that must be addressed. So, too, have the assaults on George Floyd, Breanna Taylor and countless other men and women of color. We face, too, coarse and disrespectful public discourse, deep polarization, and assaults on democracy. As educators, we see these challenges through the lens of students and families. We know we must be guided by our own moral compass. We know there are no easy answers. And we know that we need the support and guidance of trusted colleagues to navigate the struggle for racial equity, diversity and inclusion in our districts.

Every student has the right to know that they belong in our schools and will have equitable opportunity to excel and thrive in life. We know now that it is not enough to recognize and address achievement and opportunity gaps with only extra support. These gaps are symptoms with a deeper root cause. When it comes to racial achievement gaps, the root cause is all around us - in schools and beyond. Their root cause is the combination of unconscious bias and structural racism. We must challenge the root cause directly. We cannot graduate another generation of students who perpetuate racism - whether intentionally or not. Adults (and students) of every race in every school need to develop their racial literacy: the ability to name and examine the effects of implicit bias and structural racism on society, institutions, people – and themselves. Together, we must examine our own beliefs and behaviors and then uncover the ways certain policies, structures and practices reflect bias and structural racism and serve to perpetuate achievement and opportunity gaps in schools and out. The work is as important in districts serving mostly white students as it is in districts serving mostly students of color. The work will look different in every district because the context in every district is different. That said, the work is urgent in every district.

The will and skill we hone to become more effective anti-racist leaders will be the foundation for each of us to address our district's other important issues of equity, diversity and inclusion - those arising from differences in gender, ability, sexual orientation, language, and gender identification.

What?

M.A.S.S. will develop and implement a long-term, state-wide, superintendent-driven strategy to address the systemic and cultural barriers in our schools that prevent so many students and adults from knowing they, too, belong and will thrive. The goal is to support every school to model anti-racist practice, diversity, and inclusion so that all of our students will learn and thrive. M.A.S.S. is us: we will start with an equity audit of M.A.S.S. itself – our structures, programs and practices. See [HERE](#) for the complete document describing the M.A.S.S. R.E.D.I. Strategy.

How?

Three Simultaneous, Mutually Reinforcing Tracks of Work



Development and Implementation of the *M.A.S.S. Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy* is guided by a 25-member Standing Committee and 15-member Planning Committee appointed in November 2020 by the M.A.S.S. Executive Committee May

Track # 1 M.A.S.S. Internal Audit and Strategy

M.A.S.S. will:

- Conduct a transparent, organization-wide equity audit guided by an external consultant
- With help from the consultant, develop a strategic plan to drive the three tracks of work
- Monitor progress and make revisions as we learn (“Build the airplane as we fly it”)

First Steps:

1. Engage an external provider to support an organization-wide equity audit and strategy development process - by 9/21
2. Develop and administer a research-based, Association-wide survey(s) of members’ experiences and perceptions of M.A.S.S. policies, programs and practices as they relate to equity, diversity and inclusion - by 11/21



Track # 2 District Leaders’ Reflection & Learning

M.A.S.S. assumptions:

- Each zone is characterized by certain behaviors and beliefs
- Everyone’s journey is on-going and iterative, requiring us to revisit behaviors and beliefs, reflect on them, and learn more
 - Every person, every team and every community begin their “Journey to Anti-Racist Leadership” in a different place
- We owe it to our students and communities to be on this journey

M.A.S.S. will identify leadership strategies and professional development resources that help educators and teams move through the three zones

First Steps:

1. Provide on-going opportunities for members to reflect and learn with and from colleagues
2. Publish an initial resource guide on leadership strategies - by 10/21
3. Publish an initial guidebook describing professional development resources and providers recommended by members and demonstrated to have had a positive impact - by 10/21

Track # 3 M.A.S.S. Guidance & Support for District Leaders

M.A.S.S. will :

- Research best practice to identify and recommend common frameworks and resources
- Support development of district strategies built on district core values and integrated with district improvement plans
- Customize supports for implementation depending on stage of work and community context – with emphasis on facilitated peer networks of support for superintendents and assistant superintendents

First Steps:

1. Determine the recommended framework – by 9/21
2. Develop the process by which M.A.S.S. will identify potential customized resources – by 10/21
3. Choose a limited set to recommend and support - by 1/22
4. In collaboration with DESE, identify quantitative measures of success - by 12/22

