

Racial Equity Environmental Assessment

Surrey School District



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We would like to acknowledge that Surrey Schools District (SSD), where you work, play, and learn, are on the shared, unceded traditional territory of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen, and other Coast Salish Peoples.

The Racing to Equity Consulting Group would like to express our extreme gratitude to Dr. Tinney, his senior leadership team, SSD's teachers, educators, students, their families and community members for their commitment to advance racial equity and educational justice at SSD and their collaboration and support in the completion of this report.

Each of your valuable contributions made this report possible. In the key findings and recommendations offered by this report to intentionally, meaningfully and strategically advance racial equity and educational justice at SSD, we hope you see yourself.

We are grateful for the fortitude, courage and exemplary leadership shown by everyone involved in the making of this report, especially the brilliance, strength and courage shown by the SSD students. This powerful team, we are confident, will guide and ensure the advancement of racial equity and educational justice at SSD.

Our goal is to help create an environment at SSD where each student, staff member and family are honored, valued and dignified for years to come.

Thank you!



Where common memory is lacking, where people do not share in the same past, there can be no real community. Where community is to be formed, common memory must be created.”

— Georges Erasmus, Aboriginal Leader, Canada

This quote gets to the heart of both nations' problem with race. Our citizens do not share a common memory. While people of White European ancestry remember a history of discovery, open lands, manifest destiny, endless opportunity and exceptionalism, communities of color, primarily those with African and Indigenous roots, have the lived experience of stolen lands, broken treaties, slavery, residential schools, segregation, cultural genocide, internment camps and mass incarceration.



Opening Letter

The Racing to Equity (R2E) Consulting Group supports individuals and institutions of all kinds to center racial equity, healing, liberation and structural transformation in their personal and professional lives. We have partnered with several community-based organizations, advocacy coalitions, local government agencies and philanthropic groups. Our multicultural, multi-disciplinary team brings more than 50 years of combined experience in leading and facilitating systems transformation, professional development and capacity building, all while centering adaptive leadership for racial equity. Our team has worked with over 55 organizations across the United States, Canada and Mexico in various sectors, including state/local governments, non-profit organizations, corporations, philosophy and health.

On behalf of the R2E Consulting Group, we are pleased to present the Racial Equity Environmental Assessment of Surrey Schools District in British Columbia, Canada. This process began as part of Dr. Tinney and his senior leadership team's unwavering commitment to advance educational justice and racial equity at the Surrey Schools.

Developing this report was a true collaborative process. It documented 39 listening circles, which included students, educators, school leaders, education association representatives, union representatives, families (Black, Indigenous, Southeast Asian, White) and support staff at all levels of the district. This extensive qualitative data collection aimed to deepen our understanding of SSD from the diverse perspectives of its internal and external stakeholders. This report captures those perspectives and translates them into a set of informed recommendations for SSD to advance racial equity and educational justice. SSD's students, families, community members and educators contributed insightful suggestions based on their lived experiences both within SSD and working with SSD. We hope that this report elevates the voices of SSD students, educators, leaders and community members who provided invaluable inputs and whose lived experiences are reflected in our findings and recommendations.

This report was created through the partnership of Bernardo Ruiz, Anita Garcia Morales, Tami Farber, Dr. Norma Zavala, Chery Vazquez Colon Fadumo Nurdin, Alex Chase, Laura Brown, Jeanne Teodoro, Tony Nabors, Jonathan Ruiz, Sandra Kim Ruiz and Dr. Yumiko Aratani.



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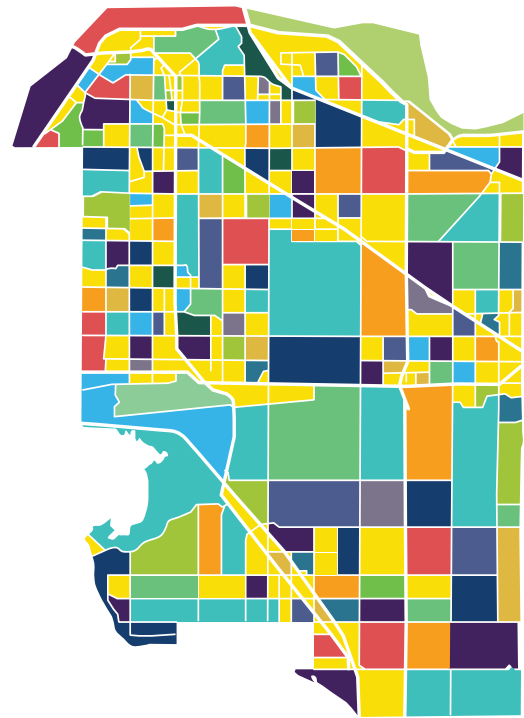
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Surrey School District 
 **British Columbia**

115 year-old school district 

 **74,263 STUDENTS** **+3,200 have
Aboriginal
ancestry** 

 **languages
150 spoken**

TOP 5 Punjabi
Tagalog
Mandarin
Hindi
Arabic

Executive Summary

Background

The Surrey Schools District (SSD) is a 115-year-old school district with the largest student enrolment in British Columbia. Governed by an elected board of seven trustees representing the cities of Surrey and White Rock, SSD's vision is "We prepare our learners to think creatively and critically, communicate skillfully, and demonstrate care for self and others." To conduct an independent assessment of their progress on this vision, Dr. Tinney partnered with Racing to Equity (R2E), aiming to identify the gaps between SSD's values and the experiences of its stakeholders and develop recommendations on how to align and realign SSD's commitment to ensure that every one of their 74,263 students receives high quality, culturally sustaining and socially just education. SSD's student body is racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse: over 3,200 students have Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, Métis and Inuit), and the majority speak languages other than English at home. Of the 150 languages spoken among the students, the top five are Punjabi, Tagalog, Mandarin, Hindi and Arabic.

Data and Methodology

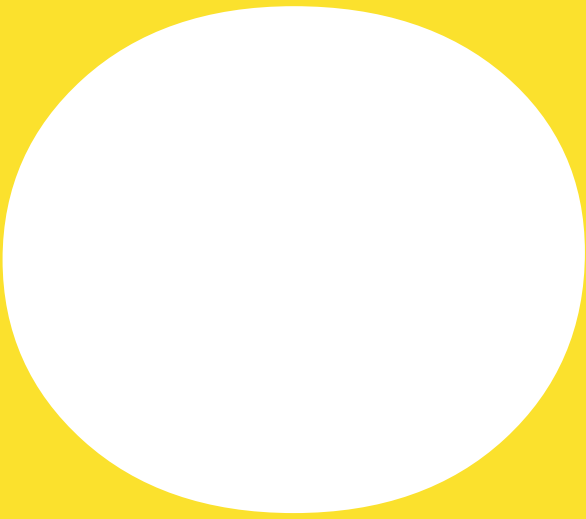
R2E's racial equity environmental assessment aimed to analyze SSD's current systemic efforts to advance racial equity and educational justice and offer recommendations. The R2E team conducted 39 listening circles of students, teachers, educators, leaders, families and community members and analyzed the collected information and identified the key themes. The team also reviewed SSD's historical documents, reports, policies, practices and procedures, which informed the interpretation of data and recommendations.

Findings

SSD has strong key players committed to advance racial equity and educational justice. These include not only the SSD leadership, teachers and school staff, who are invested in students' educational achievement and socio-emotional wellbeing, but also a diverse student population, family members and community leaders who are devoted to strengthening SSD for every student. Though such key players present many growth opportunities for SSD, it is not free of challenges, which include the leadership's lack of a coherent strategy for advancing racial equity and educational justice, its lack of proper communication regarding its commitment to its vision, its inability and discomfort to directly address issues of racism and microaggression faced by the stakeholders and its limited engagement with students, family and community members.

Recommendations

Based on analyzing the data from the listening circles, recommendations for advancing racial equity and educational justice are presented in the form of three pillars: systemic change, workforce development and stakeholder engagement. The key recommendations include the following: **(1)** establishing a racial equity and educational justice policy and an evidence-based implementation plan; **(2)** increasing SSD's organizational capacity by diversifying leadership and school staff and offering racial equity and justice training; **(3)** supporting anti-racist, culturally responsive and inclusive teaching; and **(4)** building effective and supportive partnerships with students, families and community leaders.





Introduction

The Surrey Schools District (SSD) is the largest school district in British Columbia. Its diverse student body of 74,263 students comprises many cultures, with more than 3,200 of them being from Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, Métis and Inuit). More than half of them are from households where a language other than English is spoken, and out of the over 150 languages spoken at home, the most frequently spoken ones are Punjabi, Tagalog (Filipino), Mandarin, Hindi and Arabic.

Racism has been a constant in Canada ever since the first settlers set foot on the land and declared it as their own, expunging the rights of the Aboriginal people who had lived here since time immemorial before the colonizers arrived. When enslaved Africans were brought to New France as a means of demonstrating wealth and status, it furthered a system of hierarchy of human value. This belief has persisted through the racial segregation of schools, the internment of Ukrainian Canadians and Japanese Canadians, the establishment of residential schools, immigration restrictions, and even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clearly, racism and its consequences are one of the most confounding issues Canadians have been grappling with for centuries.

To ensure a promising and productive future for the nation and its children, we must address racism that manifests in society at every level, especially the inequities perpetuated within the Canadian education system. In this context, this report aims to offer ways by which SSD can lean into the future with racial equity and educational justice at the forefront of its values, leadership, strategies and actions, thus empowering SSD to shift educational paradigms, promote equitable opportunities and outcomes and transform inequities that have, for decades, held many of our children back.

In British Columbia, demographics have been changing drastically, a reality collectively shared among the neighboring school districts. Though visible minority status (race) is not generally tracked in the Canadian educational system, there has been an upward shift in the number of students with Aboriginal heritage, with this number projected to increase in the future. According to the Aboriginal Report 2015/16-2019/20 How are we doing? there has been a consistent number of students who self-identify as Aboriginal accounting for 4.4% of the student body in the District and 11.3% in the Province/Public Schools since 2015 with slight increases throughout the years. This upward trend can also be found in the increased number of non-official language speakers, the increased proportion of recent immigrants and the number of people identifying as belonging to this visible minority group. This demographic shift predicts a minority-majority in British Columbia within the next 20 years. Given its status as one of the few growing districts in the province, these statistics have significant implications for Surrey schools.





Understanding Opportunity Gaps and Achievement Gaps

Contrary to popular belief, opportunity gaps and achievement gaps are not synonymous. To advance racial equity and educational justice, it is important to understand the difference between the two.

Achievement gaps are consequences of an educational system that consistently offers different and unequal educational opportunities to Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) students. The contextual framing of achievement gaps tends to focus on the underachievement of BIPOC students and their families rather than on the system designed to produce such gaps, often assigning blame and responsibility to students and their families instead of the failures of the educational system in providing equal educational opportunities for students to thrive.

In contrast, opportunity gaps acknowledge structural issues such as institutionalized racism, poverty and the differential treatment or discrimination meted out to BIPOC students. Opportunity gaps are often attributed to a student's poverty status. However, though poverty inevitably affects opportunities for BIPOC students, opportunity gaps persist among BIPOC students regardless of their poverty status.

To efficiently address these gaps, we must address their grassroots cause: institutional racism. We must emphasize that racial equity and educational justice would be achieved when students' racial/ethnic identity does not predict academic attainment. It is critical to identify racial equity as one part of educational justice, and opportunity gaps can be closed through the three pillars of advancing racial equity and social justice: systemic change, workforce development and stakeholder engagement (Aratani *et al.*, forthcoming),¹ and we identified and organized themes through the listening circles using this conceptual framework.

¹Aratani, Y., *et al.* Forthcoming. The Conceptual Framework for Advancing Racial Equity and Social Justice.





Data and Methodology

The R2E team conducted 39 listening circles of students, teachers, educators, leaders, families and community members and analyzed the collected data by identifying the key themes that emerged from the listening circles. Each listening circle lasted about 120 minutes. The team also reviewed SSD's historical documents, reports, policies, practices and procedures, which informed the interpretation of data and recommendations.

Analyzing the qualitative data collected from the listening circles, we identified the opportunities and challenges associated with advancing racial equity and educational justice at three levels that involve different stakeholders: **(1)** systemic change (district leadership); **(2)** workforce development (teachers and school staff); and **(3)** stakeholder engagement (youth, family and community). In the following chapters, the findings and recommendations will be presented for each level.

Three Pillars of Promoting Racial Equity and Educational Justice



1

Systemic Change

A. Findings from Listening Circles

Opportunities

Strong Commitment to Racial Equity among SSD Leadership.

Based on our assessment, we found that the central leadership is highly aware of district-wide needs and that it has made considerable efforts to prioritize and advance educational equity and equal access across SSD. Those efforts included the establishment of a district-wide policy for equity and reconciliation, and the creation of the Annual Anti-Racism and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy Symposium for SSD educators to ensure enhanced quality of teaching and learning for each student (more than 3,000 teachers and staff have participated so far). The leadership and staff not only focus on helping students improve their socio-emotional development and academic achievements but also commit to advancing racial equity. They have also formed strong community partnerships with the District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) and collaborative partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

SSD has Strong Players in Promoting Racial Equity and Educational Justice.

In addition to SSD leadership, there is an emerging racially and linguistically diverse population of brilliant, courageous and committed SSD students who are committed to improving SSD for everyone. SSD families and community members are also interested in being involved in the decision-making process; furthermore, there exists a strong education association committed to advancing racial equity and social justice in the context of educational union practice.

Challenges

Explicit Racism Exists.

The stakeholders expressed specific and personal instances of overt racism that were left unaddressed or inadequately addressed—in particular, the continuous and pervasive use of the most damaging slur for Black Canadians at SSD. To make students fully understand the negative historical and present ramifications of using the slur—which damages the mental health and sense of worth of not only Black students but also of every stakeholder—specific socio-emotional learning must be offered.

Lack of Communication by the Leadership regarding their Commitment.

Despite the leadership’s noted commitment, many of the leaders, as indicated by students and school staff, do not seem comfortable with addressing racial inequity and educational injustice coherently and systemically, and they felt that the leadership team is not comfortable with addressing existing racism and educational injustice at SSD. Many SSD students and educators found this “completely unacceptable.” Further, we found that the educators and staff are often unaware of the specific details of SSD’s efforts to develop a culture of inclusion and belonging. These initiatives may thus go unnoticed by the students and staff, and their potential impact may be perceived as disjointed and incomplete. This is not ideal especially since the participants of the listening circles within all stakeholder groups stressed that it is important for SSD to authentically engage in efforts to create substantial progress towards advancing racial equity.

Though the participants considered this organizational assessment an extremely strong foundation that could be utilized to edify educational justice, they expressed skepticism about this report being used to do more than “just checking a box.”

Lack of a Coherent Strategy for Advancing Racial Equity across SSD and Monitoring Progress.

Currently, the efforts toward creating a more equitable and just school system across the district are inconsistent and lack collaboration. Though most of the Surrey schools and communities agree on the need for formally establishing racial equity work, there is a concerning lack of clarity regarding how to realize this. The stakeholders found it quite difficult to name and articulate the district’s systemic strategies and goals toward advancing educational justice, with some of them going so far as to doubt that the district has a plan at all. Understandably, they had little knowledge about how, or if, the work was being implemented across districts. Overall, there was a sense that this work is voluntary for the leaders and staff rather than a formal expectation, and that follow-through is heavily dependent on the individual or team and that, sometimes, it is non-existent.

Lack of Diversity in the Leadership Team.

Advocating the advancement of educational justice and racial equity, educators, teachers and students stated, will be difficult when there is not enough diversity and cultural representation among the school administrators and District Education Centre (DEC) themselves. Both these groups expressed the desire for SSD to hire more BIPOC educators and administrators that better reflect the diverse student body.

B. Recommendations for Systemic Change and Theory of Change



Theory of Change

TYPE OF CHANGE	RECOMMENDATIONS	THEORY OF CHANGE
Policy	1. Establish a Racial Equity and Educational Justice Policy.	If SSD adopts and implements a comprehensive racial equity and educational justice policy, the SSD leadership can a) acknowledge the complex societal and historical factors that lead to opportunity and achievement gaps; b) confront institutional biases and create a strong sense collective urgency to right the historic and present wrongs that thwart students’ opportunities and supports academic excellence; and c) demonstrate its authentic commitment toward racial equity and educational justice policy.
Organizational	2. Strengthen Organizational Capacity using the Principles of Coherence and Alignment.	If the SSD leadership is committed to the breadth and depth of systemic and organizational transformation using the principles of coherence and alignment. Then racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse students can access more effective instructional strategies that will strengthen their sense of belonging.
Strategy	3. Create a District-wide Implementation Plan for Promoting Racial Equity and Educational Justice.	If the SSD leadership develops a clear, cohesive, coherent and comprehensive plan that holds both internal and external stakeholders accountable to educate every Surrey student—including BIPOC students—then every SSD student can have the access, support and opportunities for healthy social-emotional development and academic excellence.
	4. Develop School-based Plans to Eliminate Opportunity Gaps.	If every school develops a plan to meet the unique needs of its students and monitor their progress towards eliminating educational inequity, then not only student learning can be monitored at all levels with clear lines of accountability but also student academic achievement can be improved.

C. Action Plan for Each Recommendation

Recommendation 1: Establish a Racial Equity and Educational Justice Policy

- Using a nationally or internationally recognized racial equity and social justice framework, establish a racial equity and educational justice policy, one that will identify, acknowledge and address the historic and institutional racism in SSD that undermines the educational opportunities of BIPOC students. The policy should include the following:
 - Setting timely accountability mechanisms to address micro-aggressions and racism directed toward students, staff and/or families.
 - Normalizing conversations on racial equity and educational justice to create a common language and clear definitions of what racial equity and educational justice mean and discuss how to actively dismantle institutional racism and educational injustice. Dr. Ibram X Kendi,² one of the most prominent and respected international experts on dismantling racism, states that “Common definitions anchor us in principles. This is not a light point: If we don’t do the basic work of defining what kind of people, we want to be in language that is stable and consistent, we can’t work toward stable and consistent goals. Some of my most consequential steps toward being an antiracist have been moments when I arrived at basic definitions. To be antiracist is to set lucid and common definitions of racism, antiracism, racist, antiracist policies and ideas.”
 - Including not only schools, work sites, teachers and administration but also the school staff when crafting district-wide policies.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen Organizational Capacity using the Principles of Coherence and Alignment

- To strengthen SSD’s organizational capacity, utilize the principle of coherence and alignment to advance equity. As noted by stakeholders, current initiatives are fragmented and siloed across schools and departments, and incoherence and misalignment in educational initiatives and programs can lead to negative consequences. Aligned and coherent systems can better advance equity (Walrond & Romer, 2021).³ The specific recommendations include:
 - Developing culturally responsive and inclusive leadership by creating a Department of Racial Equity and Academic Excellence (DREAE), which will lead the racial equity and educational justice initiative, and creating a senior leader position, such as the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, to lead DREAE with adequate staff and financial resources;
 - Providing adaptive leadership professional development for central office and school leaders;
 - Building partnerships with city/governmental agencies and officials on EDI initiatives so that the district can be better resourced, supported and equipped to meet students’ socio-emotional and academic needs.

² Kendi, Ibram X. (2019) How to be an antiracist. One world.

³ Walrond, N., & Romer, N. (2021). An alignment and coherence guide for state Education agencies. Serving the whole person. WestEd. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED613595.pdf>

Recommendation 3: Create a District-wide Implementation Plan for Promoting Racial Equity and Educational Justice

- The Board of Education should develop and implement a district-wide racial equity and educational justice plan including:
 - A needs assessment consisting of (a) the implementation of a racial equity analysis tool; (b) the analysis of student demographic characteristics—such as race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status and language proficiency—to identify the disparities in access and outcomes among SSD students; and (c) the analysis of SSD teachers and staff demographic characteristics to measure representation and disproportionality. Racial Equity Tools are often used not only to analyze and change policies, programs and practices that advertently or inadvertently perpetuate educational inequities but also to develop new policies and programs that produce educationally just outcomes for every student. The SSD is recommended to develop key performance indicators for schools and central office leaders as part of the District Dashboard to identify the existing disparities and determinants of these disparities. Student characteristics should also be broken down by school and grade level and analyzed so that the SSD leadership team, principals, teachers and school staff can utilize the data, make data-driven decisions and more efficiently allocate resources based on student needs. Analyzing the school staff characteristics can also help determine the need for recruiting educators and school staff that reflect the diverse SSD student body.
 - An anti-racist, culturally responsive and inclusive school curriculum;
 - A plan for culturally responsive and inclusive staff recruitment and development;
 - A district-wide plan to strengthen family and community engagement. SSD should co-develop with its educators to develop the second component of the plan. The superintendent should also direct the Human Resources Department to include a component to measure culturally responsive leadership abilities during the screening and interview processes. This will ensure that the new leaders and staff hired by the Surrey Schools have strong backgrounds in culturally responsive leadership and instruction. Moreover, to effectively partner with ethnically and linguistically diverse families, SSD should utilize its current educators who can and are willing to co-facilitate culturally responsive family engagement.
 - Develop a strong collaborative partnership with the Surrey Teacher's Association, Principal and Vice Principal Association (SPVPA) and support staff union (CUPE728) and design and offer high-quality, culturally responsive, inclusive and anti-racist professional development.

Recommendation 4: Develop School-based Plans to Eliminate Opportunity Gaps

- Based on the district-wide implementation plan, each school should develop a yearly plan to set the goal of meeting unique student needs based on the disaggregated student data and monitor the progress of these goals through the data dashboard.

2.

Workforce Development

A. Summary of Findings from Listening Circles

Opportunities

Staff are Student-focused and Committed to Equity and Justice.

All the staff members responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” to the statement “The Surrey School District should focus on advancing educational equity and social justice for each and every student.” When elaborating their responses, five staff members related their answers to students and their experiences within the school district. Nearly all respondents referenced a sense of fairness, the idea that everyone should have equal opportunities. Furthermore, the staff members were able to share examples of how their particular role creates or has created a more equitable environment for students. All of them expressed the understanding that though their positions are not often student-facing, their decisions directly impact student experiences. Nearly all the interviewees expressed their desire for personal growth regarding racial equity and social justice. Rather than devoting time and energy to cultural celebration, the staff reported their preference to pursue strategies that might lead to better cultural understanding and connection with their students.

Stakeholders Acknowledged SSD’s Progress toward Equity and Inclusiveness among Students with Disabilities.

The staff members agreed on the district’s progress toward a more equitable experience for students with special needs:

“In the past 5 years, I’ve been very impressed; the school district has made an effort to be more inclusive.”

“I think Surrey has made a concerted and thoughtful effort in really being understanding of students’ needs, especially in the department for students with special needs; they really see the kids’ potential rather than seeing it as a disability.”

Staff Want to Know How to Communicate.

Despite their strong commitment to racial equity and social justice, the staff are often unsure as to how to proceed:

“How do I put myself out there and let people know that I want to have that dialogue, but I may not be able to do so without saying something wrong or unintentionally upsetting someone?”

“I want to talk about it, but I want to be sure that the words and language I’m using are appropriate.”

“We need more training, including clerical staff—anyone that interacts with families and students.”

Challenges

Indigenous Cultures are Celebrated, but is Largely Limited; the Treatment and History of Indigenous Peoples is Concerning.

Community members and families also expressed a preference for systemic changes over visual representations of cultural appreciation. Some BIPOC educators and staff indicated that tokenism is prevalent at SSD. The stakeholders pointed out the need for a representative curriculum and instruction that encourages genuine cultural understanding and appreciation.

In particular, the Aboriginal stakeholders felt that the schools are neither willing nor ready to have conversations about Canada's history, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous:

"[Educators and support staff need to] take the time to seek out and learn the history of Canada, which includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous because it's not our history it's not their history but it's all of our histories together."

Increased Representation is Critical.

BIPOC families emphasized that increased representation is critical for the cultural instruction of white students, referencing the need for greater representation, especially for BIPOC families. According to the respondents, representation is necessary in the curriculum, amongst staff, and in teaching programs. BIPOC focus groups all mentioned that the treatment and history of indigenous peoples as a reason for concern. Black and non-Indigenous families of color cited the injustices toward Indigenous groups as the reason for pessimism regarding how their own cultural or racial group is treated in Canada:

"When I was attending Surrey Schools, I wasn't taught about Chinese or Indigenous history. We only learned about the Canadian history of white settlers. Students should be taught more about the diverse history of Canada to show the consequences that were made."

"I don't see how they are going to be knowledgeable and respectful of Black culture because they can't even address Canada's past regarding the First people on the land."

Lack of Safe Space to Discuss the Experiences of Racism and Microaggressions faced by BIPOC Educators, Staff and Students.

BIPOC stakeholders reported that they are not comfortable talking about their experience because they do not believe that these complaints will be considered seriously or addressed appropriately. Many BIPOC educators and staff don't feel respected, honored or dignified as professionals, while others felt unequipped to initiate discussions on racism among stakeholders.

Different Perspectives of Leadership and Staff on the Available Resources for Teachers. The non-leadership group members referenced the need for district-provided resources and supports:

“The mentorship opportunities for educators aren’t there; I’ve never been offered mentorship or opportunities for career development.”

The leadership group did mention district supports:

“The resources are there, but it also depends on the education and awareness of the teachers presenting those resources where I think there is still a gap.”

There is evidence of a failure in communication regarding the resources and training available to teachers. The summer institute and the Coaching for Equity book club were mentioned by several respondents in both groups as positive examples of helpful training.

Training Efforts are Not Happening at the Systemic Level.

Even among the leadership group, members reported independently pursuing training and learning for equity—these efforts, it was noted, were individual and not systematically embedded:

“It seems like a number of us are involved in equity-based projects or learning groups, but we’re not...there isn’t really a connection between us.”

Further, regarding training, the BIPOC staff members expressed doubt regarding the efficacy of trainings in light of “performative allyship⁴” and emphasized that “having authentic outcomes is a huge part of the work.”



⁴ When an individual from a privileged or majority (e.g. white, straight, abled) shows their support of and/or solidarity with disadvantaged or marginalized group in a way that is not helpful to the group.

B. Recommendations for Workforce Development and Theory of Change

Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Anti-racist, Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Teaching Practices, Professional Development, and Culturally Responsive Lesson Planning.
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen and Expand Support for Staff and Teachers of BIPOC to Thrive as Members of the Surrey Schools Family.
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer Culturally Responsive Professional Development for Teachers that is Rewarded, Required and Co-Created and Professional Development on How to Partner with Families to Support Student Learning.

The Theory of Change

LEVEL OF CHANGE	RECOMMENDATIONS	THEORY OF CHANGE
Policy	Adopt Anti-racist, Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Teaching.	If anti-racist, culturally responsive and inclusive components are formally made part of the teaching curriculum and staff evaluations, SSD can enhance racial and cultural awareness and support its staff in honoring, valuing and dignifying the contributions of BIPOC students and their families.
Organizational	Strengthen and Expand Support for Staff and Teachers of BIPOC to Thrive as Members of the Surrey Schools Family.	If SSD supports BIPOC teachers and staff in improving their practice, it will promote staff retention and allow BIPOC students to have more role models that reflect the diverse student body.
Strategy	<p>Offer Culturally Responsive Professional Development for Teachers that is Rewarded, Required and Co-Created.</p> <p>Offer Professional Development on How to Partner with Families to Support Student Learning.</p>	<p>If SSD co-develops with its educators anti-racist, culturally responsive and inclusive professional development that is required and rewarded, every SSD teacher can be better positioned to meet the needs of their BIPOC students.</p> <p>If SSD provides family engagement professional development for the central office staff, principals, teachers and support staff, the internal stakeholders will be better equipped to work with families as equitable partners in the education of their students.</p>

C. Action Plan for Each Recommendation

Recommendation 1: Adopt Anti-racist, Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Teaching

- Ensure that every teacher, despite their professional experiences, participate in anti-racist, culturally responsive and inclusive professional development and continuous improvement strategies that offer them the opportunity to learn from each other, raise racial awareness, learn the tools and strategies that meet the needs of every SSD student, including BIPOC students, and thus thrive in their practice.
- Include cultural responsiveness and inclusiveness as part of staff evaluations.
- Provide professional development for the central office staff to develop culturally responsive standards on their evaluations.
- Develop a zero-tolerance policy on the use of racial slurs at SSD.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen and Expand Support for Staff and Teachers of BIPOC to Thrive as Members of the SSD Family

- Establish and provide support for Racial Equity teams⁵ in every school to lead a culturally responsive teaching curriculum, offer instructional strategies and practices where history is taught accurately, respectfully and in a dignifying manner, and ensure that every student, teacher and staff are living up to their commitments to truth and reconciliation. The teams should consist of various stakeholders from diverse backgrounds that reflect the diverse SSD student body.
- Conduct monthly meetings between the superintendent and the BIPOC school staff to listen to the staff's experiences, concerns, needs and suggestions for support.
- Recruit educators and school staff of BIPOC heritage to better reflect the diverse SSD student population.
- Increase the resources and scope of the Indigenous people's Learning Department to promote more cultural exchanges and motivate the learning of Indigenous history within Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and families.

⁵ A Racial Equity Team is a formal working committee whose charge is to provide leadership and momentum around implementing educational opportunities, policies and programs that will further racial equity in your school with a focus on reducing and eventually eliminating disproportionality in discipline. (Racing to Equity, Seattle Public Schools Report)

Recommendation 3: Offer Culturally Responsive Professional Development for Teachers that is Rewarded, Required and Co-Created

- Require all SSD educators and school staff to participate in anti-racist and culturally responsive and inclusive training.
- Offer the staff compensatory time for participating in the anti-racist and culturally responsive and inclusive training.
- Develop and implement anonymous staff surveys where the staff can safely provide their input and feedback on leadership, professional development and coaching in advancing racial equity and educational justice at SSD.

Recommendation 4: Offer Professional Development on How to Partner with Families to Support Student Learning

- Offer training on Dual Capacity Building Framework⁶ to strengthen family engagement in education.
- Offer culturally responsive family engagement training to central office staff, principals, teachers and support staff to help them better understand how to work with ethnically and linguistically diverse families and community members.
- Utilize the current educators who can and are willing to co-facilitate culturally responsive family engagement training to more effectively partner with ethnically and linguistically diverse families.
- Increase engagement with Indigenous families and communities, particularly with elders, to teach Indigenous histories through storytelling.
- Increase the overall BIPOC family and community engagement by inviting BIPOC parents, family members and community leaders as guest speakers to SSD events.

⁶ Mapp, K.L. & Bergman, E. (2019). Dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnership (Version 2). Retrieved from: www.dualcapacity.or

3

Stakeholder Engagement

A. Summary of Findings from Listening Circles

Opportunities

Strong Desire to Work Closely with Schools and Teachers among Community Stakeholders.

The respondents frequently mentioned their desire to work closely with the schools and teachers to build community and plan their students' futures. Similar to other focus groups, the participants expressed frustration with negotiating different cultural norms and establishing a two-way communication with the school.

Students are Well-supported, Academically and Emotionally.

Families were overall positive about the academic achievement and support of their students:

"I really feel that you know in regard to emotional, social support in the journey with Surrey School district that if my granddaughters had any kind of barriers or blocks or any kind of experience, whether it's mental wellness, their own personal mental wellness or an experience that really affected them, that all the staff involved would act without any judgement, without any stigma."

"I feel quite satisfied that my two granddaughters receive good mentorship and teaching around their academic needs."

"Each of my boys have a one-to-one support worker to help them with their academics and social skill building, and when I have concerns academically, they address them. They don't ignore it."

Challenges

Partnership with School is Perceived as Challenging due to Cultural Differences, Language Barriers and Lack of Communication.

The stakeholders pointed out that it has been challenging for some people to engage and work with the school due to cultural differences and language barriers, and that some parents are unaware of the available resources:

"It's been a challenge for other people mainly related to expression or lack of that expression. Stems from those basic issues—language barrier or somehow a disconnect with the school or parents' lifestyles."

"There are also services that are available to parents that SSD doesn't communicate or make available to parents."

"There are a lot of great resources in place, I think it would be really helpful if we could improve communication so that families know about it."

Experiences of Language-based Inequity: Discrimination or Barriers due to English Fluency and Perceived English Fluency, Microaggression through Mispronunciation of Names and the Centering of White Western culture and Perspectives.

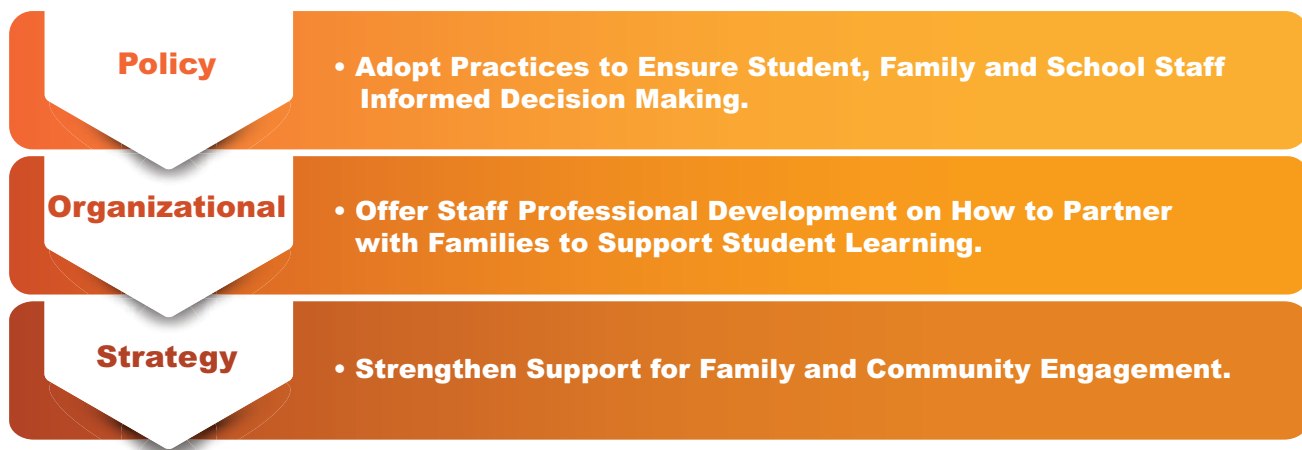
Given the cultural expectations regarding family relationships and responsibilities, the stakeholders expressed their distress about presenting to students the individualistic culture predominantly adopted in white Western culture as the default (and preferred) option.

“My older son has a really hard time with the teachers pronouncing his name. Kids would feel more connected to their teachers if the teacher takes the extra time to learn how to pronounce their names.”

A parent elaborated that her 18-year-old child “was told she doesn’t have to live with me. She could continue to go to school, and they can support her.”



B. Recommendations for Stakeholder Engagement and Theory of Change



The Theory of Change

LEVEL OF CHANGE	RECOMMENDATIONS	THEORY OF CHANGE
Policy	Adopt Practices to Ensure Student, Family, and School Staff Informed Decision Making.	If the SSD leadership engages students, families, and the school staff regularly by asking them for their inputs and feedback, the classroom, school and district decisions will be co-designed and students will be more invested in their learning.
Organizational	Professional Development on How to Partner with Families to Support Student Learning.	If SSD provides family engagement professional development for central office staff, principals, teachers and support staff, the internal stakeholders will be more equipped to work with families as equitable partners in the education of their students.
Strategy	Strengthen Support for Family and Community Engagement.	If SSD strengthens support to encourage family and community engagement, the families will be better equipped to support the healthy social-emotional development and educational attainment of their children.

C. Action Plan for Each Recommendation

Recommendation 1: Adopt Practices to Ensure Student, Family, and School Staff Informed Decision Making

- Improve student surveys to include responses regarding culturally responsive teaching and leadership.
- Host student forums for middle- and high-school students to actively participate in decision-making.
- Provide opportunities for the superintendent, central office staff and principals to engage with and learn from students to improve professional practice.
- Develop systems to ensure that families are involved in making decisions that impact students.
- Create regular opportunities to capture and respond to feedback provided by families (provide interpreters for non-English speaking parents).

Recommendation 2: Offer Professional Development on How to Partner with Families to Support Student Learning

- Offer training on the Dual Capacity Building Framework to strengthen family engagement in education.
- Offer culturally responsive family engagement training to central office staff, principals, teachers and support staff so that they better understand how to work with ethnically and linguistically diverse families and community members.
- Utilize the current educators who can and are willing to co-facilitate culturally responsive family engagement training to enable effective partnerships with ethnically and linguistically diverse families..
- Increase engagement with Indigenous families and communities, particularly with elders, who are highly regarded within their community, to teach Indigenous histories through storytelling.
- Increase the overall BIPOC family and community engagement by inviting BIPOC parents, family members and community leaders as cultural instructors (for both students and staff).

Recommendation 3: Strengthen Support for Family and Community Engagement

- Adopt the US Department of Education’s Dual Capacity Building framework that lays out a process to guide school and district staff to engage parents/families and to help parents/families work successfully with the schools to increase student achievement(Mapp and Kuttner, 2013).⁷
- Develop a Family Academy/University for families to meet at least four times per year to strengthen families’ ability to more effectively advocate for their children’s learning, schools and SSD. It should include the following classes: family engagement best practices, data analysis, grass-roots organizing, co-leading at district-sponsored committees, meeting facilitation, navigating the school district and engaging in effective meetings with district staff.
- Provide training for families of color to navigate application processes more effectively.
- Invite families and community members to provide instructions to parents unfamiliar with navigating the school system.
- Conduct proactive communication with families regarding the disciplinary issues of their children.
- Work with students’ families to plan for their future.



⁷ Mapp, Karen L., and Paul J. Kuttner. 2013. Partners Education in A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships. Washington, DC: Department of Education. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593896.pdf>





Conclusion

With Canada and other nations growing increasingly diverse, today's public discourse is approaching a tipping point, one that demands that we address racism and social justice in institutions through not only actions but also policy developments that prioritize the children we serve. In its 115-year-old history, SSD has taken an important step toward advancing racial equity and educational justice under Dr. Tinney's leadership to produce this racial equity environmental assessment report. This assessment, made possible by the partnership with R2E, identified the gaps between SSD's values and the school experiences of stakeholders and developed recommendations on how to align and realign SSD's commitment to ensure that every student receives high quality, culturally sustaining, and socially just education. The making of this report was truly collaborative: the R2E team organized 39 listening circles involving diverse stakeholders such as students, teachers, support staff, educators, community leaders, families and other community members, and collected data from them, which was then analyzed to identify key themes and develop recommendations.

The identified challenges faced by SSD include the leadership's lack of a coherent strategy for advancing racial equity and educational justice, its lack of proper communication regarding its commitment to its vision, its inability and discomfort in directly addressing institutional racism and microaggression among the stakeholders, and its limited engagement with students, family and community members.

Many institutions face such challenges, and SSD is not alone in this. However, because of the courage and commitment demonstrated by all the stakeholders in creating an anti-racist, culturally responsive and inclusive school district, we are confident that SSD will be a trailblazer for racial equity and social justice in Canada. The lifelong journey has just begun.

In closing, we would like to revisit the quote from George Erasmus at the beginning of this report:

“Where common memory is lacking, where people do not share in the same past, there can be no real community. Where community is to be formed, common memory must be created.”

This racial equity and educational justice organizational assessment serves as the foundation from which to form a common memory as a district.







Appendix: Summary of Themes and Group and Recommendations from Listening Circles



Black Families and Community Members

Responses within this group generally addressed systematic and institution concerns, with occasional references to larger societal and historical problems. Overall, participants seem to have positive experiences with the district, but want changes to move from “great so far” towards a system which helps all students thrive.



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	EXAMPLES
<p>Surrey District is doing well, but can do better.</p>	<p>“It has been great so far, but there have been a few things that have happened regarding the N word, but there is more room for improvement.”</p> <p>“I feel the Surrey district is doing a good job, but the staff, especially the teachers need to focus on ensuring that every kid has a feeling of belonging</p> <p>“Surrey School District has evolved for the better and continues to improve, thanks to many diverse talented individuals that have been employed.”</p> <p>“I am very proud to live and work in Surrey --it’s very diverse and multicultural.”</p>
<p>Black students are not encouraged to excel.</p>	<p>Stakeholders discussed low academic expectations for Black students where Black students are not supported when they excel and lack of access to higher education opportunities such as being encouraged to apply for scholarships or go to colleges.</p>
<p>Schools are unwilling or unprepared to address race and Culture.</p>	<p>When asked “Are school staff knowledgeable and respectful of ethnically and linguistically diverse cultures”, there were no positive responses, one potentially neutral response, and five negative responses.</p> <p>“The answer is a simple NO.”</p>

CONTINUES 



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	EXAMPLES
<p>Ignorance and avoidance among staff.</p>	<p>“I think the staff have good intentions, they want to be respectful of our ethnicity and languages, but most of them are ignorant.”</p> <p>“I don’t see how they can break this mold of social conditioning when they’re still denying that they didn’t do this, or they didn’t do that.”</p> <p>“They try to be respectful, but they don’t know how to so there is a need for more education.”</p> <p>“I think school personnel are not willing to deal with anything racial.”</p> <p>“More work needs to be done by district to educate staff to not downplay the concerns and feelings of students and treat all cases of racially abusive language/racism seriously rather than tagging them “very sensitive” and avoiding to talk about them.”</p>
<p>Students need more representation.</p>	<p>“Surrey School District has evolved for the better and continues to improve thanks to many diverse talented individuals that have been employed. As for curriculum additions African History education will be welcomed by many within this diverse community we live in.”</p> <p>“I think we can do better in terms of representation...Representation is not only important for our kids to have a sense of belonging, but the white kids also need to be educated.”</p> <p>“Surrey school district should involve more Africans to take roles in Teaching, support system, and many additional support curriculums.”</p> <p>“We need representation and encouragement to be actively involved in the school.”</p>
<p>Black culture as a monolith.</p>	<p>“Difficult to allow a specific African language to be honored, respected, or adapted since we have 54 nations that speak different languages (more or less) and different dialects. It’s not like we have one universal language in Africa.”</p> <p>“Black culture is diverse – if we want to see it represented in the curriculum the questions may still be which culture should be represented.”</p> <p>“The media continues to educate and culturally condition white and other cultures on Black Community.”</p> <p>“White kids are walking around with their pants below their butts, subscribing to an ignorant sense of “blackness” learned in the media.”</p>

Group Suggestions

GROUP SUGGESTIONS	EXAMPLES
<p>Increase representation through community partnership.</p>	<p>“Have black professionals give presentations and seminars at the schools.”</p> <p>“Get Black students to be their OWN story-tellers!”</p> <p>“Black people and guest invitees to do presentation of our diverse stories and rich history.” “The school district needs to focus on the media and get black kids excited to tell their stories so they can get black students to be a part of [the media] industry.”</p>
<p>Prepare staff to confront racial issues.</p>	<p>“They respect people speaking different languages, but it’s different with my accent because it isn’t Canadian. So, the entire staff should be educated on what to do, they have to be informed more and they lack empathy so it’s hard to acknowledge and respect humanity in the person.”</p> <p>“They try to be respectful, but they don’t know how to, so there is need for more education. As a black teacher I can speak on this situation because I go through it every day.”</p>
<p>Encourage academic excellence and achievement for all students.</p>	<p>“The focus should be on providing a quality education woven with examples that advance educational equity and social justice.”</p> <p>“Our children will thrive and achieve the best they can achieve as long as they see/feel/experience educational and social equity in the schools.”</p> <p>“The staff especially the teachers need to focus on ensuring that every kid has feeling of belonging.”</p> <p>“Dreams and expectations we have is the end result of children’s education to be a success.”</p>





South Asian Families and Community Members

Though participants are hopeful about the possibility of change, SSD must first address several issues rooted in cultural and linguistic differences. Respondents frequently referenced language (specifically the condition of being multi-lingual or having a home language other than English) when describing concerns. Group members generally spoke of interactions between families and schools rather than with individual teachers, and problems are framed more frequently at the school level than an institutional level.



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	EXAMPLES
Educational equity and social justice are not (yet) served for all students.	<p>All respondents indicated Strongly Agree or Agree to the following statement: The Surrey School District should focus on advancing educational equity and social justice for each and every student.”</p> <p>“People from different cultures feel like they are being looked down on. For example, a girl was having problems at school and she could not speak English well.”</p> <p>“I am proud of being part of Surrey School district but there is a lot to be done.”</p>
Stakeholders are hopeful.	<p>In a one-word check-out closing ritual included “hopeful, grateful, honored, humbled, co- creation.”</p>
Discrimination or barriers due to English fluency and perceived English fluency.	<p>“I feel like you have to prove yourself to be a smart parent who cares. If not, then you are seen as someone who doesn’t know the system or the language. You are nothing. The best service the school can offer is a translator and there might be some families that are new to translators.”</p> <p>“The learning circles itself can be a barrier for other non-English speakers who are parents and are experiencing much more difficult problems.”</p> <p>Respondents observed that interpretation and translation services do not guarantee access to the school system.</p> <p>While these services seemed appreciated, group members were frank about their limitations. Parents also noted that simply providing information does not equate to family engagement.</p>

CONTINUES



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	EXAMPLES
Microaggression in the mispronunciation of names.	<p>“My older son has a really hard time with the teachers pronouncing his name. Kids would feel more connected to their teachers if the teacher takes the extra time to learn how to pronounce their names.”</p> <p>“My child kept mispronouncing another South Asian’s name wrong because the teacher has been pronouncing it wrong and that is not right.”</p>
Families are fighting to honor cultural identity: Assimilation-only expectations.	<p>“When immigrants come here, we hear things like “If you want to be Canadian, you do this.” It’s like someone is trying to rip me off of my identity. I want to be part of a new community but I don’t want to give up my identity or assimilate.”</p> <p>“My son takes cultural food at school and he is told it smells. They do not accept who we are and we have the mindset about what a perfect Canadian is. And we try to mold people to be like Canadians.”</p>
Centering white culture and perspectives.	<p>When speaking about the school system, respondents expressed frustration at the presumption of white culture and values. One parent stated, “I see the school system as an extension of the residential school system. You are stripped from your culture, reality, the parents are separated from the kid. They are non-inclusive at the school...The schools and certain principals have been completely dismissive. They excluded me from the school events and things that were happening with her. They are removing the parents from parenting and how they are raising their kids.”</p> <p>The parent elaborated that her 18-year-old child “was told she doesn’t have to live with me. She could continue to go to school, and they can support her.” Given cultural expectations regarding family relationships and responsibilities, there was distress when the individualistic culture predominantly adopted in white Western culture is presented to students as the default (and preferred) option.</p>
Families want better school community.	<p>Many participants expressed the distrust regarding the school and its interest in their students and families.</p>
Lack of proactive communication.	<p>“You don’t have an open door at the school.”</p> <p>“It takes years to learn the system and information. We don’t know what choices there are to get the service we want for our children.”</p>

CONTINUES



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	EXAMPLES
<p>Communication problems between school staff and parents regarding disciplinary issues.</p>	<p>“Parents are feeling defensive. One of the factors could be their lack of trust. I feel that trust is definitely missing in the school.”</p> <p>“I found out that in the community when their son or daughter gets suspended, they always think that the school district is doing something wrong.”</p>
<p>Negative past experiences with the schools and staff.</p>	<p>Participants also mentioned segregation several times, citing issues of class, race, and culture:</p> <p>“Classism is a huge issue in the Surrey School District. The school can do better.” “If you need help, you have to look for someone in your own community to help you. This is still segregation. We don’t interact with other races or classes.” “The school system has allowed grouping of kids of the same culture, and they are not teaching kids to interact with other cultures.”</p> <p>“We are seeing people switching to different schools based on racial representation. For example, this school is mostly South Asian students, or this school is mostly White students.”</p> <p>The general perception is that both the schools and their respective communities are not cohesive and welcoming.</p>



Group Suggestions

GROUP SUGGESTIONS	EXAMPLES
<p>Develop trust and through communication.</p>	<p>“I think the school district can do better in terms of communicating with the parents and letting us know what they have to offer.”</p> <p>“A lot of our discussion has been about lack of empowerment today and we need to empower parents and give opportunities to parents to show them that the district cares.”</p> <p>“The district needs to do better advertising about [the Strong Start Program] because it helps a lot of students in the future.”</p>
<p>Partner with families to create community.</p>	<p>“Maybe having a program for new parents in decision making.”</p> <p>“Try to include parents no matter what or how.”</p> <p>“If the school could set up a blog for parents to talk to each other, we can do so much more for our community and reduce barriers for parents.”</p>

CONTINUES



Group Suggestions

GROUP SUGGESTIONS	EXAMPLES
<p>Move beyond cultural celebrations.</p>	<p>“The approach should be “this is how we do it, how do you do it?”</p> <p>“Take pride in the beauty of our culture. Maybe showcasing specific cultures.”</p> <p>“Our focus needs to shift from talking about diversity to talk about being a helping hand and supporting all cultures who are struggling.”</p> <p>“Morals and values of the school to be based on morals of (sic) values of the world, not just English standards.”</p> <p>“The district needs to put more emphasis on not just the type of food we eat but also why we do it and the culture around it.”</p>
<p>Train staff regarding diversity and cultural differences.</p>	<p>“If there is a student from a unique background, school staff need to ask folks to come and educate them about this culture that they aren’t familiar with.”</p> <p>“Kids would feel more connected to their teachers if the teacher takes the extra time to learn how to pronounce the name...This makes them feel seen.”</p>
<p>Consider the new generation’s needs.</p>	<p>“The education system has to be adapting with the changes in society and differences. We need to teach kids inclusiveness from a young age.”</p> <p>“We need to start teaching people how to be themselves, but just learn a few new things.”</p> <p>Parents commented especially on the need for schools to consider technology and to partner with families regarding the role of technology in their students’ lives:</p> <p>“We need to include education for parents on parental control, apps, and other stuff. Educate parents about how their kids need to be safe on the internet.”</p> <p>“Stop kids from bringing phones to school.”</p> <p>“Teaching parents about parental control and how to use the internet. A lot of things are happening online including racism, so we need to teach parents how to address this.”</p>





Aboriginal Families and Community Members

Respondents in this community group alluded to personal interactions with the district, recalling positive experiences with individual schools while raising concerns about systemic issues. These issues include lack of opportunity and resources given for the learning of Indigenous history and culture. Group members also spent some time negotiating their own stances on how to reconcile Aboriginal culture and history with the public school system.



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	WHAT FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS SAID
<p>Celebration of Indigenous cultures exists... but largely symbolic.</p>	<p>“I feel like they’re trying. I noticed that in school assemblies before COVID and now with video updates that go out, they try to acknowledge the lands that they’re on.”</p> <p>“I feel that there is a strong like promotion of Indigenous ways of learning, because my granddaughter asked me to speak at her school.”</p> <p>“We used to raise money and add to the school’s budget for presentations and have at least every other year an Aboriginal presentation.”</p> <p>“My granddaughter made me a necklace and I was happy to see that she was creating cultural items.”</p>
<p>Students are well- supported, academically, and emotionally</p>	<p>Families were overall positive about the academic achievement and support of their students.</p> <p>“I really feel that you know in regard to emotional, social support in the journey with Surrey School district that if my granddaughters had any kind of barriers or blocks or any kind of experience, whether it’s mental wellness, their own personal mental wellness or an experience that really affected them, that all the staff involved would act without any judgement, without any stigma.”</p> <p>“I feel quite satisfied that my two granddaughters receive good mentorship and teaching around their academic needs.”</p> <p>“Each of my boys have a one-to-one support worker to help them with their academics and social skill building and when I have concerns academically, they address them they don’t ignore it.”</p> <p>One family member, however, noted that these aspects are considered separately from issues of culture and identity:</p> <p>“I don’t know how much of that is due to the fact that they’re just because they’re special needs, I don’t think that it has anything to do necessarily with their Aboriginal ancestry.”</p>

CONTINUES



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	WHAT FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS SAID
<p>Limited frequency, resources and scope of providing culturally responsible and inclusive services for Indigenous stakeholders.</p>	<p>“I have two elementary children, the one in Grade 6, he’s had a lot more time with the Aboriginal childcare workers over the years so he’s actually gotten to learn more about the cultures and such, but my youngest one doesn’t really have a lot of contact, because they’re also special needs so they have pullouts for other reasons.”</p> <p>As meetings with the Aboriginal staff were scheduled out of regular instructional time, they sometimes conflicted with the pull-out support programs. Given the limited frequency of these visits, some students missed out on critical opportunities for cultural connection.</p> <p>“I know that there’s not nearly enough support workers in the schools, but I think if they could do smaller group pull outs, especially if they’re teaching about Aboriginal history and cultural traditions.”</p> <p>“Even [the educators] don’t know where the [Indigenous cultural training] resources are.”</p> <p>“I think we need to focus more on bringing more of that into the classroom for all the kids, not just those who are from the Aboriginal communities.”</p> <p>“I think they do the best they can, but there could be more coming in not just for our children but for the entire classroom.”</p> <p>I think smaller groups for more intensive learning on cultural traditions would be more helpful.”</p>
<p>Schools need to discuss Indigenous history.</p>	<p>“I don’t feel like we’ve done enough to really address what has come before, we’ve covered up so much and ignored so much history that I don’t know where to begin.”</p> <p>“[Educators and support staff need to] take the time to seek out and learn the history of Canada, which includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous because it’s not our history it’s not their history but it’s all of our histories together.”</p>

Group Suggestions

GROUP SUGGESTIONS	EXAMPLES
<p>Increase resources for Indigenous cultural learning.</p>	<p>“I think our school would be welcoming. We just don’t get enough time with exposure to it.”</p> <p>“I don’t feel like we have enough connection with our Aboriginal Child Support Worker because he only gets to be there one day a week or two days a week at the best of times, he’s spread between too many schools.”</p>
<p>Increase scope of Indigenous cultural learning.</p>	<p>“Work on their own.... they take that time and dedicate to learning...just start that journey of learning so it can create a better understanding of who’s standing in front of you or who’s sitting in front of you in the class.”</p>
<p>Increase number of Indigenous staff.</p>	<p>“They should decolonize the hiring practices of folks coming into the district and bring more people with Indigenous heritage into the district as a whole.”</p>
<p>Invite families as valued educators.</p>	<p>“Welcome more elders and residents in the school system. In many areas, all the children benefit from the storytelling supporting both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.”</p>





Families and Community Members (General)⁴

Responses from this group were focused on the relationship between the family and the school, and answers in general conflate experiences at an individual school as the experience with the district. That is, answers seem to consider the terms “school” and “district” interchangeable.

Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	NOTABLE QUOTES
<p>The SSD/ school’s proactive and frequent communication with families.</p>	<p>“In the [Learning Center, the principal] meets with the students and family if anything is going on. Engages everyone as much as he can. If the counselor is busy, he’ll do it.”</p> <p>“I’ve had meetings with them every year about academic goals and my kid’s challenges.”</p> <p>“My daughter has friends at the regular schools who need help and support and it’s taken forever for her family to be able to advocate for her and get to a point where she has any level of support.”</p> <p>“I have a relationship with teachers, the principal.”</p>
<p>Individualized support necessary for students in alternative pathways.</p>	<p>“The principal is quite amazing with everyone’s different needs.”</p> <p>“They tailor things specifically to the kids and support them in their dreams.”</p> <p>“The learning center is more adaptive to kids who have mental health challenges or even social development between the teens.”</p>
<p>Parental advocacy required for receiving full support for their students.</p>	<p>“I don’t think regular school would pay much attention unless I was advocating as much.”</p> <p>“I got quite frustrated with having to wait so long for services--having to wait years.”</p> <p>“I had to refer my child-to-child mental health and then they were the ones that told me about the learning centers where I probably should have heard about it from the counselor at the school.”</p> <p>“The parent has to put in a bit of time and effort.”</p>

⁴ This focus group was open to all families and community members, regardless of racial or cultural identification. Focus group members had students attending the district’s Learning Center.

Group Suggestions

SUGGESTIONS	EXAMPLES
Provide opportunities for school community.	“I’d love to see a path for some other parent-involved things. I wish it could be more of a family-based school.”
Communicate with and inform families.	“[The transition from post-secondary to the learning center] was abrupt and stigmatizing. [It will be helpful for parents] to connect with other parents who had gone through it to walk [them] through the process.” “I found that the traditional schools didn’t actually let us know about the learning centers.”
Connect students with the larger community.	“My daughter was involved with the Y group for a long time... and so incorporating more of that kind of stuff would be great just to give them that feeling of you’re not an island, there is a world around you. “ “The school kids got paid one time to do clean up after a parade-cool to be paid to take care of their community. They are looking at what they can do in your direct community.”





Family and Community Members (DPAC)⁵

Focus group members discussed personal experiences as a framework for perspectives on district progress towards equity. Members of these groups echoed thoughts discussed in other family and community member focus groups.



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	NOTABLE QUOTES
<p>Moving beyond cultural celebrations.</p>	<p>“I wish they taught more about different cultures...I wish that there was more inclusivity, more effort in acknowledging who you are and celebrating that... I wish that we could all celebrate all of the differences that we have.”</p> <p>“I want the regalia to be viewed as a part of who we are and not as a costume, and that needs to be taught.”</p> <p>“To a certain degree, our school has started to focus on the larger cultures, and the cultures that make up the school.”</p>
<p>Parental advocacy required.</p>	<p>“I’m very connected to the school due to my son’s needs. The teachers have been supportive. My administrator, on the other hand, is a little bit more challenging to work with, but I just don’t back down. In general, when you reach out, you can get that support.”</p> <p>“I as a parent don’t know what’s actually happening at the school level. It makes it very frustrating, and it makes it difficult to get the needs of the kids met.”</p> <p>“Unless you know specifically what you’re looking for and ask about it yourself, as a parent you don’t know what’s out there.”</p>

CONTINUES

⁵ Members of this focus groups are active participants in a district advisory committee.



Group Discussion Summary

Explicit racism is not being addressed.

“There was an instance of racism where a group of white boys made a club called KKK and sent messages to a SA boy...in this particular instance, the SA family did not feel that they were heard and left the district.”

“In my school, the N word was being thrown around. Older kids were using it, and younger students started to use it not knowing what it means. The school said this is a home situation and needs to be dealt with at home.”

“My child only speaks English, but we got an ESL letter sent home because her last name was [redacted]. All the kids of color were sent home with ESL letters.”

Parents expressed confidence in individual school staff but condemned the Systemic issues which allowed racist actions to continue: “School staff try very hard to be respectful. It doesn’t always come across that way, and it doesn’t always get dealt within a way that one would want it to be dealt with.”

Portables are problematic.

Participants commented upon the difficulties posed by portables and modulars.

“These portables do not have running water or bathrooms in any of them. We don’t want our kids outside in portables.”

“The portable comes with this assumption that it’s degraded for lower socio-economic people, it’s not beautiful. Absolutely it’s derogatory. But for Surrey, it’s a temporary fix until they can build more schools.”

Partnership with the school is difficult, but desired.

“It’s been a challenge for other people mainly related to expression or lack of that expression. Stems from those basic issues--language barrier or somehow a disconnect with the school or parents’ lifestyles.” “Teachers need to have more education around different learning styles and wraparound understanding. We need to actually collaborate.”

“What we find in the school district is that they have all these different committees and working groups, and I don’t know if enough parents are invited to those.”

“There’s also services that “are available to parents’ that the district doesn’t communicate or make available to parents.”

“There are a lot of great resources in place, I think it would be really helpful if we could improve communication so that families know about it.”



Staff (District Operations)

Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	NOTABLE QUOTES
<p>Staff are student-focused.</p>	<p>All staff members responded Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement “The Surrey School District should focus on advancing educational equity and social justice for each and every student.”</p> <p>When elaborating, five of the staff members related their answer to students and their experiences within the school district. Nearly all respondents referenced a sense of fairness—the idea that everyone should have equal opportunities.</p> <p>Furthermore, all members were able to share examples of how their particular role creates or has created a more equitable environment for students. All members expressed the understanding that though their positions are not often student-facing, their decisions have a direct impact on student experiences.</p> <p>“Our way of supporting schools is making sure that they have what they need.”</p> <p>“The Long-range facility plan...Sometimes students come to these schools and this is the only place where they’re acknowledged for who they are, no matter what that means.”</p>
<p>Things get complicated when dealing with adults.</p>	<p>Whereas respondents were confident about positive equity impact with students, they immediately faltered when presented with similar questions regarding colleagues.</p> <p>When asked to express their comfort level in discussing issues of institutional racism, educational justice, and racial equity, three responded with their discomfort (for various reasons), and another three expressed that regardless of comfort level, these discussions simply did not happen.</p> <p>Inexperience: “I can sometimes feel very uncomfortable in bringing up these topics, just for the fact that I haven’t had the ability to share and develop a baseline of understanding.”</p> <p>Fear: “We don’t know if it’s the right time or with the right group to have this conversation.... If you look at the makeup of different departments, it’s telling in that you can see where these conversations are more regular.”</p> <p>“As adults, we overthink it.”</p> <p>“I have apprehension to speak out. I don’t want to be looked at as so sensitive, or my cultural upbringing of just letting it slide.”</p> <p>“I don’t know what to say, I don’t want to say the wrong thing.”</p>

CONTINUES



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	NOTABLE QUOTES
<p>Awareness as a want and need.</p>	<p>When discussing competence levels, staff members all alluded to the need for or lack of awareness. However, group members defined this awareness differently.</p> <p>1). <u>Awareness of inequity</u> “Don’t just be standing by and maybe bringing this awareness to us will help us see more of the little things that might happen around us that we might not realize could really hurt somebody else.”</p> <p>“We need to remember to keep an awareness of what’s happening around us. Inequity, racism often happens very quietly and it’s easy to miss.”</p> <p>2). <u>Awareness of others</u> “Whatever is within my focus of control, I’m mindful of it.”</p> <p>“I really don’t know if being a woman in a man’s world is equitable. I don’t know how to effectively have those conversations or encourage others to have them.”</p> <p>“I see great diversity. But I just don’t know what their experience is.”</p> <p>3). <u>Awareness of opportunities to dismantle systemic inequities</u> At several points during the focus group, clarifying questions revealed that it is not habitual to self-reflect on processes and policies in order to account for systemic injustice.</p> <p>(A follow-up to a statement regarding diversity and discussion) “This is great, to see are we truly accessible? I’m guessing probably not.”</p> <p>(In response to a question regarding the protocol for gathering student voice) “It depends--sometimes we hold events, sometimes students reach out to themselves.”</p> <p>“It’s a matter of whether people are asked the question. Who is informing the leadership team in developing these [equity] workshops?”</p>
<p>Staff do not know about the district strategy for addressing systemic inequity.</p>	<p>Of the responses, one group member addressed an outside consultant with guidelines. Another three responses referred to evidence towards the existence of a strategy (such as inclusive design, diverse hiring, and personal experiences in the district). Three responses expressed skepticism about the existence of a strategy at all.</p> <p>“I don’t even know what this question entails or means.”</p> <p>“If there is a strategy for addressing these issues, we would like to know it. The fact that, if a strategy exists, this group doesn’t know about it, that’s a red flag right there.”</p>

CONTINUES



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	NOTABLE QUOTES
Generational differences in confidence, but not outcome.	<p>Several participants referenced age when speaking about comfort levels and confidence. Participants who were older were more likely to express doubt or difficulties in discussing or addressing inequity. Younger generations were perceived as more capable in discussing race and equity.</p> <p>Examples: Personally, I am of the millennial demographic, so vocalizing and voicing our opinions is a norm to us.”</p> <p>“I don’t talk about it as much. I do have four kids in the system and they are comfortable talking about [anything out of comfort zones].” “When I talk with my daughter who is very progressive, I feel like I’m speaking a whole different language.”</p> <p>Despite these attitudes, all participants quoted above expressed that they are either uncomfortable discussing racial equity or simply do not discuss racial equity. This suggests that staff may have different barriers to meaningful discussion. Whereas the millennial staff member may feel comfortable talking about race and equity given a clearly defined space, older staff members may need additional supports or time before they are ready to share.</p>



Group Suggestions

SUGGESTIONS	EXAMPLES
Space to learn from one another.	<p>“Leadership can proactively have these discussions. This has never been brought to my attention, and as a POC I have never been asked about my experience within the organization.”</p> <p>“I don’t want to upset people, but I want to have that dialogue.”</p> <p>“If we go to a workshop, it’s about our job or our title, not who we are as a person. I think we miss that connection of people because if I could understand who they are and what type of background that they derive from, we all see things from a different light.”</p>
Staff training on terminology and microaggressions.	<p>“I think that the district could proactively support us in sharing what experiences others are having, what the terminologies are...the district can be proactive in exposing us to those things that we may not have experience with.”</p> <p>“How do I put myself out there and let people know that I want to have that dialogue, but I may not be able to do so without saying something wrong or unintentionally upsetting someone?”</p> <p>“I want to talk about it, but I want to be sure that the words and language I’m using are appropriate.”</p>



Staff (DEC Teaching and Learning)

Participants met in two groups: one group contained senior leadership and was majority white; the other group was comprised of non-leadership staff members who largely identified as BIPOC. The results of both groups have been combined in this analysis, with differences noted. Respondents addressed the school system as a whole, often comparing schools and individual roles to larger district trends. Answers also framed the district as an interrelated system--problems in one area reflecting upon flaws within the system as a whole.



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	WHAT LEADERSHIP AND STAFF SAID
<p>Strong emphasis on the idea of fairness for all.</p>	<p>All non-leadership staff indicated they Strongly Agree with the statement “The Surrey School District should focus on advancing educational equity and social justice for each and every student.” For leadership, eight members indicated Strongly Agree and two indicated Agree.</p> <p>“Equity for all means a strong society built up of individuals achieving their full potential and being contributing members.”</p> <p>“The school district has a moral purpose to provide learning opportunities for EVERY student. This is the purpose of our existence.”</p> <p>“Our work really is to reach all learners, so if we start from a place where our goal is not to advance equity for all, then we fail before we even begin.”</p> <p>“There is so much diversity in our district and focusing on explicitly addressing and advancing educational equity and social justice is crucial to include all staff and students and to create a safe environment to learn, grow.”</p> <p>“We have a responsibility to remove barriers for all learners so they have access to opportunities for success.”</p> <p>“Building an inclusive and just society is fundamental to what we do. Surrey is incredibly diverse and we should be prioritizing the task.”</p>
<p>Data collection as an aid to equity.</p>	<p>“Part of the issue is that we don’t collect data--to understand how parents, students, teachers are perceiving that environment and how equitable it is and if we are acknowledging their culture.”</p> <p>“We’re not disaggregating our data and we don’t know where we’re starting from... we need to know where we’re starting so having the data would be important.”</p> <p>“The only time I have come across data like that was probably 15 years ago...I didn’t see the data, it was just a conversation about this.”</p>

CONTINUES



Group Discussion Summary

THEMES	WHAT LEADERSHIP AND STAFF SAID
<p>Dissatisfaction among BIPOC staff with regard to the current SSD's leadership effort.</p>	<p>Staff members expressed frustration with the disconnect between supporting performative measures (such as “different days for specific shirt colors”) and supporting meaningful action (lack of support for proposals related to the Black Lives Matter movement).</p> <p>“We’re building translations so parents can access forms; the family may be able to read it, but not necessarily make meaning of it.”</p> <p>“Surface, token, checkbox” to describe current district efforts in terms of equity for BIPOC students, students identifying as LGBTQ+, and students with disabilities.</p> <p>“The honoring seems to be on a surface level; we can be encouraged and it’s part of the conversation, but it does feel that it’s surface.”</p> <p>“The first thing that popped into my head was that it pops up on the website--different celebrations of different communities, attempt to celebrate diversity, technology to translate pages, it looks like we’re all trying really hard.”</p> <p>“I think a piece that Surrey is working on is including queer and gender diverse curriculum; there is the SOGI curriculum but it’s mostly checking a box and is focused on teacher training.”</p> <p>“I feel that there is not enough representation of any group, BIPOC or otherwise in our central office...it feels a bit like tokenism.”</p> <p>“There are genuine attempts...attempts...to celebrate cultures.”</p> <p>“There are actions behind the commitment. It is visible. But there is still a long way to go. It is somewhat surface.”</p>





Group Suggestions

SUGGESTIONS	EXAMPLES
Training for all staff.	<p>“It’s not just teachers, it’s staff in the front office, everyone in schools. We don’t talk about this enough and how integral it is to everyone in the school; we need assistants and front staff there as well, modeling as well.”</p>
Equity has to be achieved at all schools.	<p>“[Perspective and equity] happen in pockets, but not in all schools; really depends on the support that teachers get. Even in schools it happens in pockets...some are experiencing this and others aren’t; it’s a layered and inconsistent process.”</p> <p>“Some schools have great welcoming staff that know how to work with a diverse range of people but other schools do not have this.”</p>
All the students should be included.	<p>“An Indigenous student at a school with a low Indigenous population, the student didn’t have access to an Aboriginal support worker and it isolated him.” “Bathroom access; I know trans students who have a history of repeated UTIs because they don’t have access to restrooms that they feel safe using.”</p> <p>“There is a lot of need for a queer support worker in the same way there is an Aboriginal support worker.”</p> <p>“(Referring to the term “hearing loss”), we need to be careful and clear about the language we use; the term loss implies something is missing...language is extremely important, and we need to be careful about how we use it.</p>
The district needs strong leadership for meaningful change to occur.	<p>Participants in the non-leadership group mentioned the need for stronger district leadership regarding racial equity and social justice issues. Primarily, the district must develop and then enact policies to ensure equitability amongst schools.</p> <p>“I’ve been here for over 30 years, and I’ve never seen any kind of genuine desire to deal with systemic racism and microaggressions.”</p> <p>“We don’t have a clear vision and it doesn’t stick...it would be nice to see a clear vision that lasts 3-5 years.”</p> <p>“Yes, we have the summer institute but from a systems piece, it’s leaving too much up to individual teachers to figure it out themselves; it seems kind of crossing fingers and hoping it will materialize.”</p>





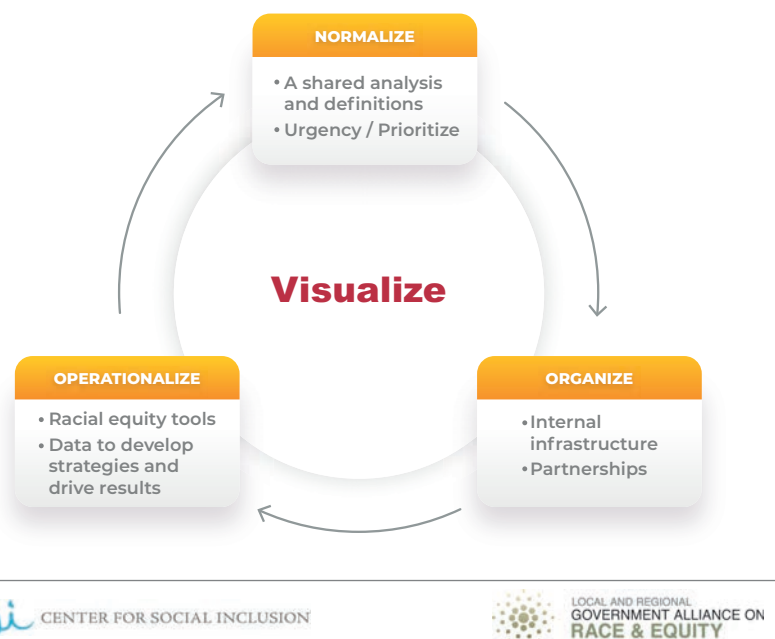


The Wake, to Woke, to Work Framework: Building a Race Equity Culture

Visualize

Visualize a school district and community where racial equity and educational justice are the norm.

National effective practice



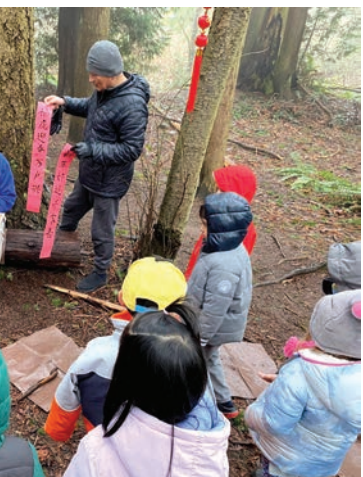
The Wake, to Woke, to Work Framework from the Equity in the Center in the United States focuses on shifting mindsets, practices and systems within the social sector to advance racial equity and social justice. It comprises the following three stages:

At the AWAKE stage, the school districts' primary goal is to focus on supporting people to build workforces and boards with individuals from different linguistic, ethnic, racial backgrounds and lived experiences.

At the WOKE stage, the school districts are focused on building/strengthening a culture of racial equity and social justice and creating a welcoming environment where everyone is comfortable with sharing their lived experiences and equipped to talk about race equity and inequities in a way that advances the work on building a culture of racial equity and social justice in a powerful manner. The primary goals are inclusion, belonging and internal change in behaviors, policies and practices.

At the WORK stage, the school districts are focused on transforming their systems to improve race equity and educational justice. The primary goal is the integration of a race equity and educational justice into all aspects of the organization. This involves changes in internal and external systems and the regular administration of a race equity assessment to evaluate organizational processes, programs and operation.







Bernardo Ruiz

Co-founder, CEO,
and Co-Principal Consultant.

Bernardo is the former Director of the School Family Partnerships, Equity & Race Relations, and Native American Education Departments for Seattle Public Schools (SPS), providing vision, leadership, and hands-on work to systemically advance racial equity.

During his tenure at SPS, Bernardo was an integral part of the Superintendent's Executive & Leadership Team. He also served as the Co-Principal Investigator for Family Engagement & Academic Success projects with Johns Hopkins University & the US Department of Education.

In addition, Bernardo directed the development of SPS's Policy No. 0030: Ensuring Educational & Racial Equity, as well as the systemic implementation of Family Engagement National Best Practices to increase student academic achievement. During this time, the District was awarded three National Partnerships District Awards from the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

Bernardo has received professional certificates focused on Family Engagement & Eliminating Opportunity Gaps from Harvard's Graduate School of Education.

Bernardo brings to Racing to Equity over 20+ years of experience working on issues of race and social justice—working with community groups, foundations, private companies, and government agencies dedicated to building a more just and democratic society. A prolific speaker and trainer, Bernardo has supported numerous organizations across the country in advancing leadership and racial equity in their work.

Bernardo Lives in Seattle, Duwamish and Coast Salish People's Land, with his wife Lisa Ruiz. Lisa also supports the Racing to Equity Consulting Group as an Admin Assistant and Tax Clerk as her contribution to a People of Color owned and operated business.



Fadumo Nurdin

Research Associate

I am a current graduate student pursuing a Master's of Social Work at the University of Washington with a concentration in Administration and Public Policy. I also received a Bachelor of Art in Public Health at the University of Washington. I have over 6 years of experience working directly with marginalized youth and families navigating medical, educational, and social services in Washington state. My experience working in social services has fueled my passion to evaluate and learn how to create equitable and anti-oppressive policies and practices within organizations, government entities, and communities.



Anita Garcia Morales

Co-founder, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Co-Principal Consultant.

Anita Garcia Morales brings a variety of experiences and expertise to her dynamic position at Racing to Equity.

For the first 21 years of her life, Anita's experience as a migrant farm worker took her across the United States. Living in depressing conditions in labor camps, doing all manner of field work, being the perpetual immigrant student in class and sensing the "otherness" to which her family and ethnic group were subjected to were what shaped Anita's racial, class, and cultural lens.

Anita received her B.A. and Teaching degree from the University of Washington. She lived out her dream and taught in Seattle Public Schools for 22 years. She was persuaded to move to the District level, first as a social studies coach, and then as a racial equity strategist with the Department of Equity & Race Relations.

Anita is also a **Courage & Renewal Facilitator**, a Lead Instructor for the **Seattle Teacher Residency** program, a Lead Trainer for **Class Action**, and a Certified **Positive Discipline Associate** for Educators and Parent/Guardians. The common thread that runs through all that Anita does is her focus on Social Justice and Racial Equity.



Yumiko Aratani, PhD.

Dr. Aratani is the Founder and Principal Consultant of EQTYIA Consulting. Dr. Aratani holds a doctorate in sociology from Columbia University and has more than 20 years of experience in research and evaluation. Her areas of expertise include racial/ethnic disparities, housing, trauma, and mental health services research. Her previous work includes the analysis of racial/ethnic and linguistic difference in accessing mental health services. She has previously worked with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Fresno Housing Authority, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and Carter Center. She recently contributed to R2E's racial equity environmental assessment report for Surrey Schools District in British Columbia, Canada. She came to the United States as an immigrant and has deep understanding of racial prejudices and discrimination within Asian immigrant community from her personal experience, and she is strongly committed to advancing racial equity and social justice in the United States through her work.



Cheryl A. Vázquez-Colón, MS

Project Manager

Cheryl is a Puerto Rican researcher, social worker, activist, and learner. She holds a Master’s degree in Psychology from Western Washington University and has several published academic research papers. She also has over 5 years of experience working with those most impacted by oppressive systems, primarily those experiencing homelessness and incarceration. She believes in centering those most impacted by the harm caused by racism, colonialism, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and ableism. Her practice is centered in anti-racist harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and collective and interdependent systems of change. Often you can find her reading or taking care of her indoor plants. She enjoys sunsets, the ocean, and family.

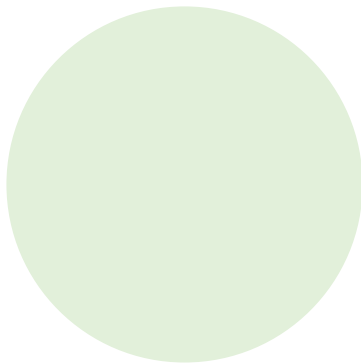


Tony Nabors

Tony Nabors is the Founder and Principal Consultant of Tony Nabors Consulting as well as the first person to hold the title of “Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” in the state of Washington for a public housing authority. With over 16 years of experience working in equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI), justice, and advocacy work, Tony is passionate about moving people from hesitation and trepidation to confidence and effectiveness concerning the subjects of race, diversity, and equity.

Tony’s skills include anti-racism training, consulting, strategy development, public speaking, team leadership, group facilitation, and program management. He also holds a passion for audio/visual media and incorporates video and photography to amplify the effectiveness and reach of his anti-racism work.

As an American Ethnic Studies major at the University of Washington, he realized early on that his unique set of life experiences, alongside his gifts for public speaking, strategy, and persuasion, made EDI consulting a natural fit. In the last year, Tony has provided services for healthcare providers and insurers, housing nonprofits, colleges, a significant local music organization, an international fundraising/outreach nonprofit, a mental health support organization, and even a small Montessori school in the Midwest. Tony is passionate about advocating for a world where all people have equal access to thriving and success and he champions the voices and needs of the disenfranchised.



Dr. Norma Zavala

Dr. Zavala was a School Principal at several Seattle Public Schools . During her tenure as Principal she helped create, develop and sustain the school environment of trust, collaboration, and enthusiasm among students, families, teachers, staff, volunteers and community members. Her classrooms were filled with joyous kids, none of whom are strangers to Dr. Zavala. She knows their names, their family member's names, their personal histories, their strengths, and their needs.

Norma Zavala is a Mexican-American woman, who has dedicated her life to education, especially of Latin@ and Hispanic students. She has an undergraduate degree in Physiological Psychology from the University of Washington, a Masters in Education from the University of Washington's Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the College of Education at the University of Washington. She serves the students with passion and creativity, two very important qualifications when you work with elementary school children! Dr. Zavala has been an advocate for Hispanic and Latin@ kids for decades, and continues to show us that you can use the resources at your disposal as an Associate for the Racing to Equity Consulting Group as a consultant and researcher.



Tami Farber

Leader, Organizer, Educator, Facilitator, Coach, Change Agent and Truth Seeker, Tami Farber brings over 25 years of experience in the fields of Child and Youth Development, Education, Organizational Development and Leadership, Community Organizing, and Systems Change work for the non-profit/non-governmental, public, and private sectors globally.

Most recently, Tami served as the Senior Director of Equity, Training, and Development for Leadership Snohomish County with a primary focus of ensuring the integration of equity principles and practices across key operational areas for organizations and institutions across sectors within the county and beyond.

Tami earned her Bachelor's degree from Long Island University Global College and her Master of Social Work from Columbia University. She received her anti-racist training through the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond and her Coaching Certification through Seattle Life Coach Training. Tami truly loves her work and exemplifies a person devoted to a transformed world.



Racial Equity Environmental Assessment
Surrey School District

April 2022