

# We Need You!

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The Community Focus Team's strength lies in the community members who step forward to support the education of our youth from backgrounds that have been traditionally marginalized in public systems like schools.

Our School Board supports this work and appreciates advice from the Community Focus Team on keeping equity at the center of its decision making.

Members of the Community Focus Team have worked on the foundational structure of the group. Now, we are focused on recruiting others to help accomplish the mission.

We need students, parents, and other community members who care about the experience of our youth.

A central email list keeps members of the Community Focus Team connected with the work between meetings. We typically meet once per month to connect and decide on next steps.

To join the list, send an email to Amy Eich in Community Education [ameich@rochester.k12.mn.us](mailto:ameich@rochester.k12.mn.us).



The Community Focus Team was approved as a task force of the School Board of Rochester Public Schools, under the Board's Community Engagement Committee, on February 20, 2018.

The Community Focus Team works in partnership with the School Board's Community Engagement Committee. Any public representations of the Board by CFT require approval by this committee.

A graphic consisting of several overlapping, curved, grey rectangular shapes that form a stylized, upward-curving arrow or swoosh.

# Community Focus Team

The Community Focus Team will dedicate itself to engaging all school district stakeholders in conversations of racism and its effects regarding equity and disparity of marginalized student populations and provide advice/counsel and recommendations to the School Board to foster student success.



Adopted by vote of the Community Focus Team and Approved by the School Board

## What We Do

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## Sub-Committees

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### Our History

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Formally, the Community Focus Team exists to achieve this result: *improve awareness and understanding of racism and its effect on our students in order to empower community stakeholders to help the District close the achievement gap, improve graduation rates, and eliminate discipline disparities.*

In September 2015, Rochester Public Schools entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, regarding several changes the district needed to make, to prevent racial disparity in its discipline practices.

The Community Focus Team was formed in 2016 to process the feedback from community input sessions and provide counsel for the district on best ways to proceed. Several of these suggestions were implemented in 2016-17.

In 2017, a small group of CFT members reported to the Board that they were interested in continuing the work. The Board agreed to facilitate Phase II.

In 2017-18, members of the CFT worked with the Board's Community Engagement Committee on becoming a task force of the Board, formally approved Feb. 2018.

Our board-approved scope of responsibility reads like this:

*Our responsibility is to students affected by racism as well as to the community. CFT promises to be fully informed about this important work and aware of the district's efforts, raising awareness in the Rochester community, and will advocate to improve environments that will serve to reduce discipline disparities and inequities.*

So, what does that mean? It means we are learners as well as doers.

As learners, we have a responsibility to **be aware** and **raise awareness** of what the school district is doing to make progress on equitable discipline.

As doers, we have a responsibility to **make suggestions** to the School Board about ways the school district can do better in its efforts to eliminate inequity in its discipline practices.

This work occurs in various ways – group discussion, subcommittee work, listening sessions, educational events.

We seek to be a task force that fully represents the population in Rochester Public Schools. To that end, we are actively recruiting members who represent groups who have been typically marginalized.

In its February 2018 meeting, we developed three working sub-committees aligned with top focus areas for our work. These sub-committees meet outside the full Community Focus Team for the purpose of research, brainstorming, and work design, and they bring proposals for action back to the full team.

#### **Outreach & Conversation**

This sub-committee works on ways to engage with stakeholders on issues related to the work of the Community Focus Team.

#### **Data Analysis & District Information**

This sub-committee conducts research on types of data that is useful to the work of the Community Focus Team and analyzes available data.

#### **Staff Support & Training**

This sub-committee considers the preparation of district staff members to provide culturally responsive instructional environments and brings proposals to the full Community Focus team.

The full Community Focus Team considers the work of each of these sub-committees in order to determine the recommendations it makes to the School Board for changes in the district.

Members of the Community Focus Team may serve on any number of these sub-committees.