

Granby Equity Team Committee Update Fall 2019



Contents:

Equity Team Overview	Page 1
Taskforce Improvement Process	Pages 2
Subgroup Focus Areas	Page 3-6
Taskforce Membership	Page 7
Program Partners	Page 7

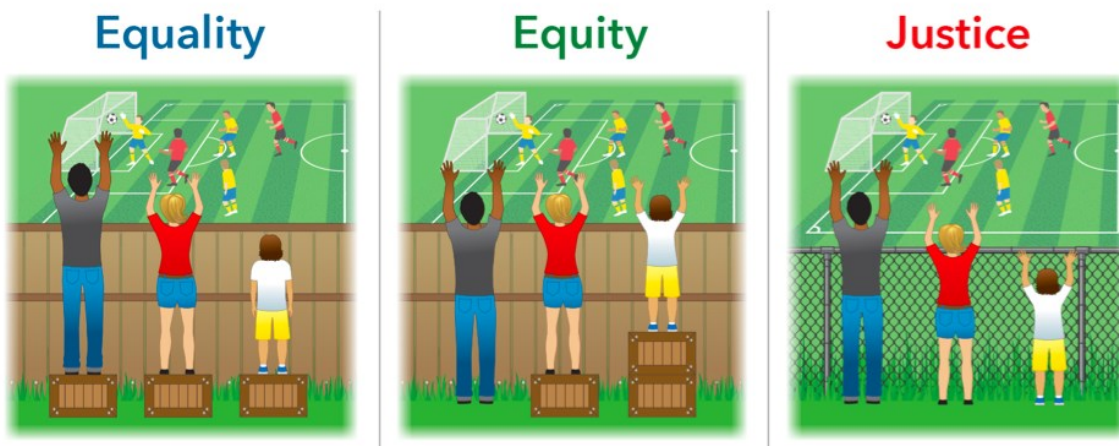
Granby Public Schools' Mission Statement:

All students will become powerful thinkers, effective collaborators, and compassionate contributors in preparation for success in a dynamic, interdependent world.

Granby Public Schools' Statement of Equitable Practices:

Equitable practices in the Granby Public Schools ensure that all students achieve at high levels when outcomes are not predicted by race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation; and barriers are removed to meet the needs of students of all abilities and backgrounds; thereby realizing the district mission for all students to become powerful thinkers, effective collaborators, and compassionate contributors.

Image 1: Get Real Science, removing barriers for justice.



Granby Equity Team Overview:

The Granby Equity Team (GET) commenced in the winter of 2017 as the Equity Taskforce. Launched through generous grant funding, *Moving to Action for Equitable Classrooms*, Granby participated in an equity-focused partnership with the Connecticut Center for School Change (the Center), and the Amistad Center for Culture & Change. The original partnership concentrated on uncovering and addressing the systemic inequities and disparities that contribute to the persisting achievement gaps amongst Granby's student population. Today, GET receives support through the Granby Board of Education operating budget allowing the strategic partnership with the Center to thrive and grow in order to address systemic inequities that exist in Granby.

Granby has exhibited a long-term district commitment to equity, inclusive of specific Board of Education goals and School Improvement Plan priorities. Despite a six-year equity focus, gaps in achievement between students of color and white students, and between students with IEPs and 504 plans and their peers, have remained consistent. The partnership between GET and the Center guides district efforts to surface the systemic causes of the gaps, recommend strategies for improvement, and monitor district progress to ultimately decrease persisting gaps in achievement and other areas.

GET develops leadership capacity across a variety of stakeholder groups in order to shift mindsets and implement equity-focused classroom, school and district practices. The Center provides expertise in coaching and facilitation, as well as technical assistance, to district leaders, building leaders and the guiding coalition of GET. The focus of the partnership includes:

1. Understanding the root causes of inequity, the organizational contributors to that inequity, ways educators may sometimes inadvertently reinforce those inequities, and recommending changes to policies and practices to address inequities;
2. Developing and embedding processes and structures for sustained cycles of planning, acting, monitoring, and adjusting;
3. Changing long-standing mindsets and practices of all the stakeholders to create deep cultural transformation within the district; and,
4. Establishing both relational and reciprocal professional accountability.

The Granby Equity Team in Action

GET consists of a variety of stakeholders including students, faculty, parents, administrators, Board of Education members, and community members. GET meets monthly in the evening to engage in equity-focused dialogue, decision making and progress monitoring. Meetings include three major components: use of data to understand root cause and monitor progress of newly implemented strategies, engage in experiences to explore equity, and utilize networks and data to diffuse practice.

Use of Data to Understand Root Cause and Monitor Progress

Through an annual equity audit, members of GET review data in the areas of climate, achievement, program participation, and professional capacity. Research regarding equitable instructional practices identifies these four areas as critical points of focus when addressing systemic inequities. Data are provided through internal data tracking systems. Subgroups of the equity team investigate data points from the equity audit that align with their particular area of focus. Continued work in small groups often results in the development of additional questions that help determine whether there is need to explore specific data points further. Deeper data dives include interviews, surveys or requests for more finite data points. Each group relies on data to progress monitor, focus questions and make recommendations to address its specific focus area.

Engage in Experiences to Explore Equity

Willingness to engage in courageous conversations in tandem with listening, reflecting and learning are attributes of GET members. In order to frame and focus difficult conversations, especially those that aim to address systemic racism, GET relies on visual art and equity-related current events to engage in Experiences to Explore Equity (E3). Art and current events allow equity team members to improve their own fluency having and facilitating anti-racism conversations and better understand systemic inequities. Additionally, the intrinsic value of art provides a pathway for conversations anchored in aesthetic discourse while current events bring relevance and a sense of urgency to the work. An E3 reflective journal provides a personal and confidential archive of written and drawn reflections that connect to the varied experiences.

“Begin with art, because art tries to take us outside ourselves. It is a matter of trying to create an atmosphere and context so conversation can flow back and forth and we can be influenced by each other.”

-W.E.B Du Bois

Utilize Networks to Diffuse Practice

The efforts of the equity team are only as powerful as the positive change reflected in our schools and community as a result of the team’s efforts to ignite change. In order to make strategic systemic improvements, GET employs a network model to educate stakeholders from administrators to the larger community. All members of the equity team collaborate with a network of at least four others. Members are tasked with engaging in predetermined equity-focused conversations to increase understanding of district equity goals and to make a transformation in their own community. As each stakeholder group fills with a critical mass of informed members, engagement in this work will expand and the likelihood of real systemic change and improvement will increase.

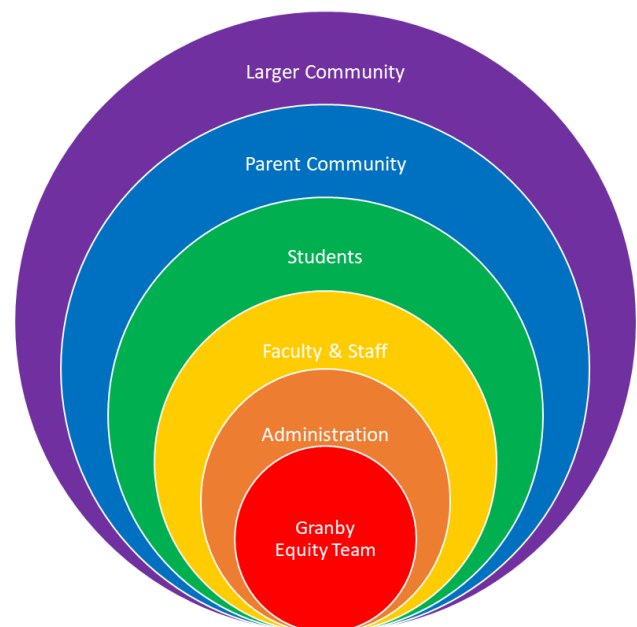


Image 2: Community Network Model

Focus Area 1: Climate

Focus Question: Why are office referrals and in-school suspensions of black males so much higher than that of white males?

Office Referrals		
2015 - 2016	62.50%	17.60%
2016 - 2017	70.40%	22.90%
2017 - 2018	63.30%	22.90%
2018 - 2019	57.40%	18.90%
In-School Suspensions		
2015 - 2016	21.40%	3.60%
2016 - 2017	22.20%	4.70%
2017 - 2018	14.30%	2.60%
2018 - 2019	16.70%	3.40%
School Year	Black Males	White Males

Table 1: Office Referral and In-School Suspension Data

2018 Taskforce Recommendations:

1. Identify administrators, teachers and staff currently trained in equitable practices and utilize them as resources throughout the district.
2. Train all administrators, faculty and support staff in a behavior system that addresses equitable practices. Consider PBIS, RULER (Yale), Restorative Justice, and Collaborative Proactive Solutions (Ross Greene).
3. Revisit data reporting practices and adopt one system, PK-12. This will better facilitate data collection and analysis and ability to utilize data to develop policies and practices that address identified inequities.

2018-2019 Progress:

The district has made progress in identifying administrators, teachers and staff currently trained in equitable practices and utilizing them as resources throughout the district. Trained teachers and administrators supported the planning and implementation of professional learning and embedded equity-focused conversations as a standing agenda item for faculty meetings. Annual attendance at the Leading for Equity Conference and membership in GET reflect this recommendation. Additionally, all staff participated in district-provided professional development on implicit bias and Collaborative Proactive Solutions (CPS). Core CPS teams are now established at all schools. Additional work regarding data reporting practices is needed.

2019-2020 Recommendations:

1. Survey all staff to gain a deeper understanding of professional learning needs related to equity.
2. Continue thoughtful implementation and monitoring of Collaborative Proactive Solutions:
 - a. Establish leadership for developing and monitoring Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems (ALSUPs).
 - b. Assess the effectiveness of ALSUPs by communicating with students.
 - c. Identify number of students without an ALSUP who are being referred to the office and at what frequency.
 - d. Monitor number of special education and minority students with ALSUP.
 - e. Determine success criteria for CPS implementation.
 - f. Expand Core CPS teams for each school in 2019-2020.
3. Calibrate practices for office referrals and in-school suspensions across the district utilizing a common data-entry process.

Focus Area 2: Professional Capacity

Focus Question: How can we increase and retain the number of minority teachers in the Granby Public Schools?

2018 Taskforce Recommendations :

1. Engage as leaders in the Minority Teacher Recruitment consortium through CREC.
2. Develop and implement an onboarding plan for minority teachers.
3. Provide ongoing equity-focused professional learning experiences for all as a model of commitment to equity.

2018-2019 Progress:

As a district, Granby made progress in building professional capacity of staff and increasing the number of minority teachers from the time of the original equity audit in the spring of 2017. Over a period of two hiring seasons, the number of certified minority staff increased from 5 to 8. Additionally, Granby participated in all events sponsored by CREC's Minority Teacher Recruitment Consortium and had the opportunity to present district work and strategic planning efforts. Other districts utilized Granby's strategic plan as a model to set clear goals intended to increase the number of minority teachers in their respective districts. Annually, Granby creates a brochure to announce certified staff vacancies. This year's brochure included Granby's statement of equitable practices. Furthermore, updated district policies emphasized the value of the recruitment and retention of minority staff.

Equity-focused professional development was embedded system-wide during 2018-2019. The November professional development day offered teachers the opportunity to choose from a variety of workshops connecting with a theme of equity. All staff participated in a performance designed to uncover implicit and explicit biases that students face on a daily basis. Staff reviewed this day favorably and there are plans to continue offering learning experiences that develop teachers' abilities to meet the needs of all learners. Additionally, several principals now infuse equity as a regular part of their work through faculty meetings, book clubs and school improvement planning. Granby's partnership with the Center provides principals with one-on-one coaching with a goal to address equitable instructional practices while supporting the operationalizing of school improvement plans.

2019 Recommendations:

1. Work with minority teachers and leaders across the district to address specific needs/strategies to support minority teacher recruitment and retention.
2. Continue developing Granby's leadership role in the CREC Minority Teacher Recruitment Consortium.
3. Embed equity-focused professional learning experiences for staff with consistency and clarity at the school and district levels.
4. Continue to grow and build the Granby Equity Team with members who can commit to regular meetings and action between meetings.

Focus Area 3: Special Education

Focus Question: Why are black students identified for special education at twice the percentage of white students?

Special Education Representation				
2015 - 2016	33.90%	16.70%	12.70%	8.10%
2016 - 2017	29.60%	27.30%	13.30%	8.80%
2017 - 2018	24.50%	32.40%	14.70%	8.70%
2018 - 2019	29.60%	24.30%	15.80%	10.00%
School Year	Black Males	Black Females	White Males	White Females

Table 3: Special Education Representation

2018 Taskforce Recommendations:

1. Provide clarity that behavioral and academic performance are not mutually exclusive. Develop curriculum and course offerings that are diverse and culturally responsive in order to engage all learners at high levels.
2. Provide professional learning experiences that build a culture of growth mindset and high expectations for all students. This will require acknowledging and moving beyond implicit bias.

2018-2019 Progress:

As a district, Granby made progress providing clarity regarding the reciprocal relationship of academic and behavioral performance. Among the strongest examples of this effort is the district-wide engagement in Ross Greene's Collaborative Proactive Solutions CPS. Through a full day of professional development led by Dr. Ross Greene, and subsequent job-embedded learning through building-based core teams and leaders, practice is beginning to shift. During Dr. Greene's visit, staff looked closely at disruptive behaviors and the importance of building relationships and gathering evidence to deeply understand the lagging skills within a student. This shift in mindset provides an opportunity to plan and implement targeted interventions that will positively impact student learning and growth.

CPS learning was supported further through professional development sessions led by district personnel who echoed the need to look within the student to more appropriately target the behavior that is serving as a barrier to their growth. Barriers to learning are often trauma-based at their core, but the educational focus often remains at the surface level of changing behaviors. Teachers are now working to identify strategies and programs that are adaptable to suit the unique circumstances of the students in their classrooms. As a result of this new learning, the district has worked to develop a district level core team that will support the building-based CPS teams already in place at each school. Staff participation in professional learning related to implicit bias also connects to this area of focus.

Additionally, principals are working at the building-based level to engage staff in conversations around equity during faculty meetings, book club discussions, PLC meetings, and through their school improvement plans. Granby's ongoing partnership with the Center has created avenues for principals to receive support and coaching in how to best move this work forward.

2019 Recommendations:

1. Audit and analyze identification rates and revisit tiered intervention practices prior to identification.
2. Review and update district SRBI practices with an equity lens.
3. Research trends and effective practices for addressing high special education participation of students of color.
4. Develop curricula that are culturally responsive and require high-quality differentiated instruction.

Focus Area 4: Achievement

Focus Question: Why is there a difference between black students and all other groups enrolled in AP courses? Why are our black male and female PSAT and SAT scores lower than that of any other students?

AP Enrollment				
2015 - 2016	11.10%	8.30%	33.00%	39.60%
2016 - 2017	6.70%	9.10%	31.40%	41.20%
2017 - 2018	6.20%	14.30%	29.90%	42.40%
2018 - 2019	15.80%	33.30%	27.70%	46.10%
PSAT Grade 11				
2015 - 2016	765	783	1096	1094
2016 - 2017	983	863	1131	1126
2017 - 2018	825	963	1078	1092
2018 - 2019	897	980	1040	1120
School Year	Black Males	Black Females	White Males	White Females

Table 4: AP Enrollment and PSAT Performance Data

2018 Taskforce Recommendations:

1. Invite new members to the Taskforce. Include representation from special education, classroom teachers and administration so necessary stakeholders have a voice in the conversation, charge and leadership in addressing inequities related to student achievement.
2. Revisit guidance/school counseling practices to target gaps and provide differentiated developmental programming and course planning for students. Address policies and practices that are barriers for students in accessing the highest-level classes.
3. Address the achievement gap through direct and targeted instruction. Include 1:1 tutoring, direct/explicit instruction (such as precision teaching), tiered intervention, and student support centers as part of the solution.
4. Increase Open Choice participation and reestablish a program for host families to provide additional support to students outside the school day.

2018-2019 Progress:

GET invited several new members to join the group, including students, community members, parents, classroom teachers, and a special education teacher; however, at the end of this school year, the majority of student participants will graduate requiring additional student membership.

Across the district, all students have access to a school psychologist and/or social worker with middle and high school students also having access to a school counselor. Each school has made clear attempts to target gaps by differentiating strategies based on specific grade-level needs. At the secondary level, course planning for all students has been prioritized. Some specific strategies implemented include: assigning staff to address the social/emotional needs of students through CPS; mandating meetings for Open Choice students with the school social worker/Open Choice liaison; offering school-wide enrichment during the school year and over the summer; shifting the intervention model to increase teachers' capacity to address students' needs within their classrooms at the Tier I level; shifting teacher mindsets around CPS training; having school counselors and Open Choice liaisons share goals related to post-secondary planning; implementing Pre-AP English, Pre-AP Algebra I, and Pre-AP Visual Arts to delay stratification of learning by level; and, revisiting lunch duty assignments at the high school to increase school counselor access to students.

Additional steps taken to address gaps in PSAT and SAT achievement included, but were not limited to: revising the process for meeting with teachers and interventionists every six weeks to monitor and revise student action plans; focusing on behavioral referrals by embracing the CPS model and relying on building-based core teams who are trained to support teachers work with student behaviors as lagging skills; working with strategic partners at the Center to review discipline data; including a goal in the Granby Memorial High School Improvement Plan focused on identifying and progress monitoring students at risk of falling behind their peers during PLC and SIT team meetings; implementation of academic centers, learning centers and math interventions; departmental work on PSAT skills and standards; and, utilizing the teacher evaluation plan as a tool of accountability in addressing equity goals.

While a formal host family program between Granby resident and Hartford resident students is not in place, informal hosting occurs in the areas of athletics and performing arts. Granby did open additional seats this year for the Open Choice program and continues to support Hartford resident students through providing transportation to students and parents whenever possible. Finally, the high school Student Government is working to open a food pantry program to support students and families without access to food.

2019 Recommendations:

1. Provide additional supports for Open Choice students and families, including, but not limited to, additional individual school counseling planning meetings, planning nights in Hartford, extended Freshman Orientation, the establishment of local host families, and surveying parents about what would be helpful in supporting their children with academic requirements and preparing for success after high school.
2. Examine course recommendation processes for objectivity at the middle school and high school and enlist counselors, teachers and support staff to recruit and support students to enroll in and stay in college-level courses.
3. Re-examine and maximize academic and social/emotional supports for students, including departmental learning centers, peer tutoring, mentoring, and tiered interventions.

Granby's Ongoing Commitment to Equity

Over a short period of time, GET has made great strides toward addressing inequities within our community. During a time of administrative transition at the district level, the Board of Education continues to demonstrate a relentless commitment to this work. While there is much work to do, the following bright spots illuminate a path forward:

1. GET is a well-established team with a membership representing a variety of stakeholder groups. There is strong support for the group to continue and serve as a catalyst for positive change in the Granby community.
2. Through professional learning, application of an equity lens to district work grows as a pervasive part of practice. The district continues to reflect upon indicators of inequity and will make language adjustments to expand focus from implicit bias and residency to the barriers related to systemic racism.
3. The Board of Education continues to allocate funding to support district equity efforts through professional development for all faculty and administrators, staffing, supporting GET, and providing needed instructional resources.
4. The good work of Granby has quickly become a model of best practice across the state. Through presentations with various audiences including: Capital Region Education Council Open Choice, CABE/CAPSS and Connecticut Association of School Personnel Administrators, Granby's leaders are engaging others in collaborative learning to improve practice.
5. Granby's initial work in creating a more diverse workforce has yielded positive results. While minority teacher population in comparison to the student minority population remains disparate, a move in a positive direction with recruiting, hiring and retaining a more diverse workforce is evident.

Program Partner: The Connecticut Center for School Change

The Center's core practice is partnering with districts and other organizations to strengthen their leadership, systems, and improvement strategies in service of improved outcomes and equity for each and every student. The Center does this through coaching, consulting, and capacity building. Founded in 1994 with generous initial support from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, the Center continues to enhance the capacity of schools and districts to improve outcomes for all students. (cts.schoolchange.org)

Granby Equity Team Leadership

Jacky Paton

GMHS Science Department Chair / Co-Chair GET

Kerry Lord

Connecticut Center for School Change

Christopher Tranberg

Assistant Superintendent / Co-Chair GET

Patrice Nelson

Connecticut Center for School Change

Granby Equity Team Members

Sarah Amara

Teacher

Sophie Austin

Student

Margaret Bastiaanse

Teacher

Ann Belding

Teacher

Anne Zummo-Malone

Community Member

Kim Dessert

Principal

Mike Dunn

Principal

Pauline Greer

Principal

Lynn Guelzow

Board Member

Kelly Hayden

Teacher

Sue Henneberry

Principal

Ursula Jackson

Social Worker / Choice Liaison

Cathryn Kibby

Teacher

Caroline Martin

Teacher

Melissa Migliaccio

Board Member

Kim Narciso

Teacher

Rich Neal

Social Worker / Choice Liaison

Laurie Smith

Teacher

Cheryl Page

Social Worker / Choice Liaison

Harlem Van Cole

Student

Kathy Waddington

Teacher

Betsy Wilken

Teacher