

Milton Public Schools

Women's Month March, 2021

Behaving Equitably

Women's History Month

The fight for women's rights in America is also woven into the fabric of American History. Did you know that [Women's History Month](#) started off as a day, turned into a week and then the month of March?

There are some critical moments in the fight for women to be included in the phrase, "We the People". Here are some links that can get you started on your investigation:



- [International Women's Day](#) is celebrated on March 8, and was established as a holiday in 1911.
- **The first major march on [Washington by suffragists](#) happened on March 3, 1913.**
- [The National Women's Party was formed in March 1917](#). The group was dedicated to getting women the right to vote.
- [Title IX](#) was passed on March 1, 1972. In fact, the first-ever [Women's History Week was created in order to bolster support for Title IX](#), which prohibited discrimination due to sex in federally funded education programs.
- **The [Equal Rights Amendment](#) was passed** in the Senate on March 22, 1972.

Through the Lens of Equity

We must continually examine what it means to equitably serve ALL learners. We must also recognize that being equitable is a process that may yield different actions depending on the needs of who we are serving. However, the outcome we aim to achieve is to provide ALL learners (student and staff) a fair chance to thrive in our district.

Here are some things the equity department has been working on:

1. This month the equity department has been coaching and working **with** each school's leadership team to make decisions through an equity lens as the district plans for return to school. Here are some of the questions that the leadership team discussed and continue to work through:
 - How do we provide ALL families an equitable opportunity to choose their model, considering the model change of full return to school may have impacted the preference for both hybrid and remote families?
 - How do we ensure that ALL families can access the information around this state mandate so they can make an informed decision?

- How do we minimize the risk for ALL students and staff on ALL campuses?
 - How do we minimize the psychological, social-emotional, and academic impact for ALL students?
 - How do we ensure that ALL students will get the nutritional needs while minimizing exposure to the virus?
 - How do we ensure we protect and support the students who have food allergies?
2. The return to school initiative, the equity department has been working closely with the Athletic director around equitably serving ALL athletes and their support systems an inclusive experience. We will begin to work with the Athletic department to investigate and collaboratively develop a shared understanding of the mission, vision, and purpose of a sports experience in Milton Public Schools. A couple of questions that will lead this inquiry are:
 - Through the lens of equity, what should ALL athletes experience when they participate in a sport in the Milton Public Schools?
 - Through the lens of equity, what should ALL athletes' support systems experience when their child participates in a sport in the Milton Public Schools?
 - What does "provide equitable access" mean when recruiting and exposing students to sports?
 - What are the (community and district) barriers that impact accessibility for students and families?
 - Through an equity lens, what professional development should be conducted so ALL coaches work to demonstrate the shared mission, vision, and purpose of the department?
 3. Another collaboration that the equity department has engaged in is working with Milton's [Equity and Justice for All Advisory Committee](#). We have begun to have discussions around how to attack this five-century old system from multiple facets. What would it look like to align the town's equity work with the district's? Equity must be prioritized in the entire community, if we want this to work. **What happens when we (at the school district) equip our students to practice equity, be socially conscious, demonstrate anti-racist behaviors, and work to change the status quo, and they go home (or out into the community) to those who do not understand the work or equipped to support the student who is doing the work?** Hate, ignorance, civil unrest, race, brutality, violence and many other destructive things do not stop when a student leaves school. What is the impact of not doing the work to help the community support the students?
 4. The school committee is committed to working with the equity department to cultivate an anti-racist policy that will be the guide to how the Milton School District demonstrates anti-racist action. The conversation continues around how we develop systemic change that is sustainable and rigorous, and also attainable, collectively built, and tied to the district's strategic plan. Building a policy will not be the biggest challenge in this process; shifting mindsets, changing behaviors, and implementing the accountability protocols with fidelity will take the most effort and time. This is why the working group who has been building an anti-bias/harassment protocol has spent time thinking about how to approach building this protocol with fidelity. What work do we have to do so we can have the difficult conversations and be comfortable with being uncomfortable? Is it possible to do this work with fidelity without engaging in difficult conversations and/or being uncomfortable?
 5. The equity department has started conversation with MYAC to cultivate and unleash the power in our youth. The department was invited to sit and speak with the youth. We were so honored to finally get to sit directly across youth who are extremely eager to do this work. Further details of this partnership will be shared as the relationship continues to build. There is a strong possibility for developing a workshop series around "Wielding Your Power with Fidelity". We cannot do this

work in silo without the perspectives and experiences of the youth. We have to work WITH the youth to build spaces where ALL can THRIVE.

6. The High School Principal Search has been a hot topic in our community. We all agree that this position will serve as a critical part of this equity equation. The equity department has been working with the HR department to design, construct, and implement a more equitable hiring practice. Our work has led to developing tools such as rubrics and bias training to minimize bias. The HR department launched their first ever Bias in Hiring Training last week. There were two sessions offered and a total of 36 participants took the training. We know that this is just the beginning as we will further collect and analyze data, progress monitor or impact, and iterate on our process as we learn more.
7. The Anti-Racist Action Team has been defining their role within the district. We are a fairly new group and have had 4 one-hour meetings since I joined the group. The group has been working diligently to create a shared understanding of the team's mission, vision, and purpose. This step is critical as it will help the team focus and move the anti-racist work in an action orientated way. Once these things are solidified, the team will begin identifying how the group can support the strategic plan and play a key role in the district's anti-racist policy work.

The equity department has been busy working with individuals and teams to approach their work through an equity lens. It has only been three months since this department existed and the department currently only has one member, but one person can be a catalyst to change when the person works with those who want to make change. The district leaders have demonstrated openness to shifting and working tirelessly to do better and be better.

Quality Review from an Equity Lens

PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR SURVEY!

The Quality Review Survey is a project commissioned by Milton PS district leadership and facilitated by Cambridge Education. The purpose of the study is to conduct a Quality Review through an Equity Lens that examines the instructional, social-emotional, and cultural assets across the district to determine what things are working well and where there are opportunities to grow as the district develops the vision for the next strategic plan. Milton Public Schools is committed to creating a school district where the achievement of excellent equitable outcomes is a reality for all stakeholders. Thus far, we have identified a partner, Cambridge Education, and together we have finalized a framework and rubric for our audit, and have identified data-gathering tools to answer the following essential questions:

- To what extent is the district supporting a diverse and inclusive environment?
- To what extent do the district's administrative and fiscal policies and practices ensure an equitable work and learning environment?
- To what extent do the district's resource practices and policies establish an equitable and inclusive work and learning environment?
- To what extent do the district's curriculum and instruction policies and practices cultivate an equitable work and learning environment?
- In what ways can the district improve equity and opportunity in school and classroom curricula and practices?

As part of this effort, we invite all community members to participate in an online survey and/or focus groups to share your experiences. Please keep a look out for the survey link that was sent directly to the email address we have on file. If you do not have an email address and would like to fill in the survey and/or participate in the focus group please reach out to the Senior Director of Education Equity at [sprak-](#)

martins@miltonps.org.

Your individual answers are entirely confidential. No one at the school or the district will be able to tell how you responded to any of the questions. But, when we look at the responses, we will learn a lot about what the community needs to ensure an equitable community for all students and their support systems.

ALL CALL!

The implementation for the Quality Review from an Equity Lens has been underway. The number of interests from the community is promising. However, due to the recent announcement made by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, the focus of the entire school district has shifted to ensure a safe and equitable return to school for ALL (students and staff). There are a lot of logistics, planning and negotiating taking place in order to abide by the CDC guidelines as well as meeting learning targets.

The Quality Review through an equity lens will continue as planned but we are extending our recruitment timeframe for both the Selection Task Force as well as the Steering Committee. [Click here](#) to apply and/or learn more about the Selection Task Force and Steering Committee.

The new deadline are as follows:

ALL CALL	Selection Task force 2/8/21 - 4/16/21 Steering Committee 2/8/21 - 5/7/21
Application review	5/10/21 - 5/14/21
Interviews	5/17/21 - 5/21/21
Call Backs	5/24/21 - 5/28/21
Orientation	TBD
Work begins	6/7/21

Somaly Prak-Martins
Senior Director of Education Equity

