

Milton Public Schools

January 13th, 2021

Behaving Equitably!

MPS VISION STATEMENT!

We, the Milton Public Schools, envision a district with excellent instruction in every classroom, where learning experiences are aligned with students' individual strengths and needs, and where attention to academic and social emotional growth are balanced so that every child achieves at high levels and develops a strong sense of self. We see a district of intellectual discourse and professional learning at all levels- students, faculty, and administration- in which there are structures and processes for continual reflection, innovation, and data driven decision-making. We know that such a district is achievable if: we facilitate instruction that instills a passion for learning, curiosity, and critical thinking skills; we are committed to cultural competency; we foster a positive approach to the behavioral health of children; and we build strong partnerships with families and the community.

What does this Systems Quality Review through the Lens of Equity Mean?

The town of Milton is a diverse community with a public-school system that is among the top performers in the Commonwealth. Although many learners go on to be successful in college and career, this experience is not shared by ALL. To better provide ALL learners with the same high-quality opportunities, we need to assess whether our systems, policies, pedagogies, practices, and behaviors are aligned to living our mission. Is our "how" aligned to our "why"? Is our "how" helping us reach our "what"?

The Milton Public Schools will engage in a quality review that will provide us with a baseline understanding of what MPS does well and what we struggle with. It will help us celebrate our successes and build a targeted intervention plan to overcome our challenges. Think about this as the MCAS assessment for your child. It is a way to gauge your child's academic progress. The Systems Quality Review will help gauge our efforts in serving ALL Learners.

The review is being facilitated by Cambridge Education, an independent consulting company, to examine the instructional, social-emotional and cultural assets across the district and determine what things are working well and where we still have opportunities to grow. MPS is committed to creating a school district where opportunities for all stakeholders are more equitable and attainable as we grow and move forward.

It's a Journey!



MPS recognizes the need to better understand the extent to which its policies, practices, and behaviors are impacting ALL Learners. While this Systems Quality Review through an Equity Lens provides a current picture of MPS' equitable practices, it is important to realize that equity is an ongoing journey for an indeterminate time that will require the engagement of all Learners (staff and students), families and community members.

The Quality Review is intended to guide the development of a meaningful district plan and suggests benchmarks for evaluation. Research shows us that districts that undergo a careful analysis of data and information make better decisions about what to change and how to institutionalize systemic change.

The District Quality Review has been designed to analyze district-level information framed by four over-arching domains. Each domain includes clusters of criteria.

Domain 1	Student Learning and Development Outcomes
Domain 2	Leadership, Management, and Accountability
Domain 3	Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Domain 4	Engagement of Families, the Community, and Other Stakeholders

In assessing the domains, the team will use the following constructive three-point scale, which is based on the level of support required by the school:

1. Initiating
2. Developing
3. Established

Initiating (1) is characterized by some strengths but also some important areas for improvement that are having a negative impact on the quality of learning experienced by all students. Initiating identifies a level that is below the minimum acceptable standard; it also implies the need for specific interventions and adjustments on the part of the district. Areas characterized as initiating should be supported by the district to ensure consistent and embedded improvement in student learning.

Developing (2) is characterized by a number of strengths which are consistent and embedded. While there are some minor weaknesses, they do not have an adverse impact on students' learning experiences to a significant degree. Areas characterized as developing should address their minor weaknesses and continue to take advantage of opportunities to improve.

Established (3) is characterized by major strengths that have a significant and positive impact on student learning. The few minor weaknesses that may exist do not diminish the students' learning experiences. While established represents a high standard, this should be achievable in all schools. It implies that a district should continue to review and revise its priorities and take advantage of opportunities to continuously improve.

Current Event!

The events that unfolded in our nation's capital have shaken many of us to the core. MPS responded to this event from a restorative stance. Our purpose in our response was to create a safe, non-judgmental, and inquiry space for the students in our community to process their emotions, thoughts, and responses. The leadership team provided many resources to support our educators and parents. If you are curious about why the district took the stance of this event displaying clear racial inequities in our country, I highly recommend conducting research on a few documented historical events such as: The [Tulsa Race Massacre](#), [Blacks Boys Burning \(book about the tragedy in Wrightsville\)](#), [Dr. J. Miriam Sims](#), Sharecropping, Jim Crow, [Compensated Emancipation Act](#), and Emmitt Till just to start.

Although we responded in real time, the district realizes that we have many more structures and systems to evaluate and protocols to build. We are partnering with Citizens for Diverse Milton (CDM), Milton Anti-Racist Coalition, Learners (students and staff), and families to create a Racial/Civil Unrest protocol. The purpose of such a protocol is to ensure that ALL learners are equitably provided support in real time. The protocol will also help others understand procedures that will take place as the district responds to racial/civil unrest matters. In addition to building a Racial/Civil Unrest protocol, we are evaluating our systems and structures around collecting and addressing (through the lens of restoration) incidents around bias and racial inequities. We are in the beginning phases and will be providing updates as the work continues to progress. If you are interested in being part of the conversation please reach out to sprak-martins@miltonps.org.

With warm regards,

Somaly Prak-Martins
Senior Director of Education Equity for Milton Public Schools

