

Recommendations From Summer Racial Justice Academy 2021

1. Revamp discipline processes within our schools to produce equitable outcomes

- a. Analyze and limit the students teachers are kicking out of class
- b. White people not recognizing their bias has forced many BIPOC students into a position where they are disengaged and stripped of their education
- c. Attending white affinity spaces to learn about their privilege and how bias shows up in the classroom and school
- d. Eliminate suspension as a standard form of discipline
 - i. Prioritize student's education. We should not be jeopardizing our student's learning because we are not properly equipped to deal with issues or able to create the environment needed.
- e. Involve more students in charge of disciplinary action (to help interrupt bias and inequitable results)
 - i. Create restorative student panel at the high school to allow students to participate and have influence over disciplinary action
- f. Identify and dismantle the ways in which our systems of discipline are funneling students into the school-to-prison pipeline
- g. Examine what students are being put out of the classroom for bias using behavior data that is available and address issues that arise with racist outcomes at the classroom level

2. Overhaul the student handbook

- a. Revise existing handbook and make it more accessible. Some ideas to get started:
 - i. Handbook should be given to students in the beginning of school year
 - ii. Translate updated version to other languages
 - iii. Make it clearly presented on the school website
 - iv. Use more understandable language - the target audience is high school students
 - v. Condense contents, make it shorter
 - vi. Create one single handbook for the district
 - vii. Include mental health resources for students
 - viii. Include students in making these changes
- b. Reexamine dress code policy and limit what students can be "dress coded" for.
 - i. How can we keep the updated policy from disproportionately impacting students of color?
 - ii. Interrupt the ways in which bias shows up in how the dress code is enforced by staff
 - iii. Collect data on who is being dress coded

- iv. Ensure that all students and staff are informed of the updated dress code.
Currently students are getting dress coded for things not in the policy; staff are able to make their own decisions on what they consider is “appropriate”.

3. Hold the Burlington School District accountable for high quality teaching and learning

- a. We demand teachers unpack their bias and practice having conversations about race with each other so they are more competent when they have them with students
- b. Hold adults who cause harm accountable
- c. A transparent process of accountability for teachers and staff
- d. Students should have the experience of having the loop closed for them. If students have the courage to report it, they deserve a follow up.
- e. Inclusive curriculum: Who is represented? What materials are we using and why? How are teachers trained to deliver curriculum around race, racism, and texts that use the N-word?
- f. Be respectful, fair, and equal with all types of students. How are we sharing power with teachers and students? Establish practices to help teachers see ALL students as holistic humans with lives and responsibilities.

4. Clarify and limit the role of police within our schools

- a. Clarify what police can be called for in the updated student handbook
- b. What needs to happen to get a new MOU in place with BPD? (recommended in the safety task force report)
- c. Decrease who can and what students can be searched for. Administrators holding this power of students prevents an environment of trust and further criminalizes students.
- d. Extract law enforcement from our processes for responding to issues that arise
- e. Keep data on what officers are called to our schools for and the outcome

5. Ensure BIPOC students have BIPOC classmates

- a. Presently many students of color end up being the only BIPOC person in classrooms full of white students and teachers
- b. Our district is made up of 40% youth of color, there is no reason students should be by themselves
- c. Have guidance counselors review class lists to ensure BIPOC youth are not alone in their classes, particularly classes where race is discussed

6. Hire and support BIPOC teachers and staff

- a. Recruit teachers/staff from the local community and beyond
- b. Make a plan and identify methods and strategies to hire people of color
 - i. Adjust the application process to be easily navigable
- c. Create support systems for the BIPOC teachers/staff that we have and cultivate a safe environment to retain them
- d. Create pathways for youth and adults from our communities to become staff/teachers/paraeducators and hold positions in our district
- e. We know the teachers who come here face the same racism that we do in our schools. Please remember this when you are interacting with your BIPOC colleagues. We need them.

7. Keep our support systems safe for students

- a. Reexamine what for and how often you call parents/guardians, particularly with new American students

- b. Don't weaponize the Multilingual liaisons; MLL's are a tool for communication, not one to get us punished
 - i. When MLL's are called, they also contact parents or guardians
 - ii. Review and look over cases where MLL's can be called in
 - iii. Don't bring MLL's into a situation unnecessarily or use the prospect of calling them as a threat
- c. Since we currently do not have enough adults of color who can do this work, we recommend establishing a peer support network for youth of color
 - i. These students should be trained in how to report incidents in case a report needs to be made and connected to a trusted adult at the school to help them navigate any issues that arise.

8. Believe the experiences and perspectives of students/youth

- a. Give students agency over themselves and their education
 - i. Student voice is not enough if it's not being listened to or acted on
- b. Increase compensated opportunities for youth in our district and community
- c. Inform youth of their rights both inside and outside of school
- d. Dismantle the power dynamic between youth and adults