

IPS Racial Equity Initiative – A Historical Overview



Vision: An IPS community where student outcomes cannot be predicted by race or ethnicity.

Mission: To lead a collaboration of community members who will partner with IPS to improve outcomes for all students by eliminating racial disproportionality and disparity.

In order to prepare us as employees to meet the needs of our students, Indianapolis Public Schools embarked on an initiative around racial equity. By partnering with the Racial Equity Institute in 2015, we are able to receive the training and guidance needed to increase our knowledge, shift our thinking, and elevate our understanding. To date, staff from 19 pilot schools have participated in the REI initiative in IPS. Three high schools will be added to this number in the 2019 school year, bringing the total to twenty-two. Monday, October 14, the second annual Equity Team Summit and Community Conversation will be held featuring Dr. Richard Milner, Equity Specialist and Deena Hayes, Director, Racial Equity Institute.

This anti-racism effort has proven to be so impactful in our district that the School Board agreed to extend the work during the 2018-2019 school year. Training provided by REI engages administrators, teachers, parents, support staff and community members. The work includes establishing active School Equity Teams who partner with the District Equity Team for monthly planning meetings to develop measurable goals, engage in book/workbook study groups, review disaggregated academic and discipline data, understand racism in all its forms, including how/when/where it occurs at all levels of the school community, even without intent.

Beginning this Fall, teachers new to the district will experience the two-day, 9a5p equity training to better prepare them to meet the challenges they may face in their classrooms. Recognizing that the majority of IPS teachers are white and the majority of their students are black and brown, this training is critical. The Indianapolis Public Schools is one of the few districts in the country confronting this pervasive and complex circumstance.