CPS's Journey to Becoming an Anti-Racist District

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CPS's Journey to Becoming an Anti-Racist District

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)

Capstone

Submitted by

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This capstone is dedicated to ***my family***.

Ama y Apa—gracias por siempre apoyarme.

***To my brothers and sister*—**thank you for always being there for me no matter what.

***To my current and future nieces and nephews*—**thank you for inspiring me everyday.

***To my partner*—**thank you for your unconditional love.

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Abstract

For the past several years, Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) has implemented multiple equity and racial equity efforts. Most recently, in 2019, CPS made an explicit commitment to becoming an anti-racist district and drafted five district-wide initiatives to achieve this goal. These initiatives were underway when, in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the district to pause this critical work and focus on the shift to remote learning and working. At the same time, the impact of the pandemic, coupled with the national and local racial reckoning, heightened the demand for and urgency of anti-racism work.

In an attempt to address this dilemma, my residency at CPS focused on one of the five anti-racist initiatives: the creation of anti-racism professional development for all CPS school and district staff. Initially, the goal was to recruit a diverse group of students, caregivers, teachers, and school and district leaders to design it. However, due to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, among other unanticipated challenges, recruiting a multi-stakeholder team proved more difficult than expected.

In this capstone, I describe and analyze the successes and challenges of each of the four interconnected phases of the strategic project: defining a problem of practice, mapping the district's anti-racist journey, developing a coherent strategy, and implementing the strategy. In addition, I share evidence of the progress thus far, including the creation of the *Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan*, the recruitment of the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team, and the process used to draft the *Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors"*—the precursor to the anti-racism professional development. Lastly, I share the implications of what I have learned for myself as a leader, for my site, and for the public education sector at large.

Introduction

As a first-generation Mexican-American from Compton, California, I was excited to be a Doctoral Resident at Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) due to their explicit commitment to becoming an anti-racist district. Since the start of my professional career as an educator, *my why*, or why I do what I do (Sinek, 2009), has been to improve the opportunities and outcomes of all students, specifically by centering the perspectives of traditionally underserved populations. Even as I advanced in my leadership career, from teacher to member of a founding instructional leadership team to school administrator to district leader, *my why* has remained the same. Still, I never felt what I was doing was enough. That is why I enrolled in the Doctorate of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.) Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where my studies focused on producing equitable student outcomes at a large scale.

When it came time to decide where I would like to conduct my residency, I knew CPS was the site for me because they, too, had made an explicit commitment to providing all students with a rigorous, joyous, and culturally responsive education and to becoming an anti-racist district. CPS had recently launched five district-wide anti-racist initiatives, and I was excited to support them in this work. Then the global COVID-19 pandemic hit, followed by the national racial reckoning, which only increased the demand for this work. Given the COVID-19 context, I knew my residency was going to be unique; however, I remained committed to using my previous experience and expertise, the new the knowledge and skills I had gained through my doctoral studies, and my future learnings in residency, to support CPS in its anti-racist journey.

In this paper, I describe the strategic project I conducted, focused specifically on the creation and implementation of anti-racism professional development for school and district leaders. First, I share some relevant information about the context of CPS and provide an

overview of the main problem of practice that triggered this strategic project. Next, I share the Review of Knowledge of Action that informed the Theory of Action. Then, I describe what happened during the strategic project, provide evidence of progress made, and an analysis of the results. I conclude with implications for myself, the site, and the education sector.

Context

CPS is a medium-sized urban school district in Massachusetts serving more than 7,200 students across 19 school programs (11 elementary schools, one JK–8, four middle schools, one comprehensive high school and two high school programs). It is considered one of the top ten most diverse districts in Massachusetts, with 40% of students identifying as White, 25% as African American/Black, 14% as Hispanic/Latino, and 12% as Asian or Pacific Islander. Furthermore, 46% of its student body is classified as either economically disadvantaged, an English Learner, and/or a student with a disability. Despite the diverse student body, approximately 67% of school administrators and 76% of teachers are White. In addition, although a significant percentage of students qualify as low-income, Cambridge is a community with significant financial resources due to its high commercial tax base and has one of the highest expenditures in the state and country at approximately $30,000 per pupil (doe.mass.edu). The city is also home to world-renowned universities, such as Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The vision of CPS is to partner with families and the community to provide all students with a rigorous, joyful, and culturally responsive learning experience. Despite this equity-centered vision and a resource-rich environment, data analysis reveals stark disparities in the academic achievement of Black, Latinx, economically disadvantaged, and immigrant students, as

well as students with disabilities, when compared to other demographic groups. For example, the 2018–19 District Outcomes Report showed that only 18% of students with disabilities, 29% of African American/Black students, 30% of students labeled as economically disadvantaged and 38% of Hispanic/Latino students met or exceeded expectations in Grade 8 Math MCAS, compared to 72% and 76% of White and Asian and Pacific Islander students, respectively. The report also highlighted that over 90% of White and Asian and Pacific Islander students are enrolled in Advanced Placement and Honors courses compared to 42–68% of all other subgroups. (A summary chart highlighting key data points from the 2018–19 District Outcomes Report can be found in Appendix A.)

Aside from academic disparities, testimonials highlight the inequities students experience in other areas. According to one of the findings from the Building Equity Bridges Project, a collaboration between CPS and the Cambridge Education Association (i.e. teacher's union), "many students—especially students of color—are not yet experiencing positive student-teacher relationships, positive school cultures, and feelings of connectedness at school" (Talusan, 2019). For example, "students and families of color do not see their cultures reflected positively in the classroom." One student shared that "many of my teachers only talk to students of color if they are being punished or quieted."

These disparities have existed for many years and explain why Dr. Kenneth Salim began his superintendency at CPS in 2016 with a focus on equity. During his first year, he conducted listening sessions with stakeholders throughout the community, where he was often told that the district needed to prioritize equity and racial equity efforts. Consequently, the first key strategic objective identified in the *2017–2020 District Plan* was to increase equity and access, specifically to rigorous and culturally relevant curricula, resources, and programs, so that all

students could achieve academic success. In service of this strategic objective, the district led initiatives like cultural proficiency training for all staff, as well as increasing its focus on recruiting, hiring and retaining educators and staff of color through the Dynamic Diversity Program (2019). Systems of accountability were also put in place. For instance, equity-based components were added to the *2018–2020 School Improvement Plan* that required principals to describe how they would continue cultural proficiency training at their sites.

Along with internal efforts, CPS partnered with external organizations and other school stakeholders (e.g. students, caregivers, educators, and partners) to advance its anti-racism efforts. For example, during the 2018–19 school year, CPS hired Dr. Darnisa Amante, founder of the Disruptive Equity Education Project (DEEP), to help district and school leaders and school committee members engage in courageous conversations about race, racism, equity, power and privilege (2019). Ultimately, these conversations led to the creation of the *CPS Equity and Racial Equity Statements* (Appendix B), which were formally adopted by the CPS School Committee. In 2018, CPS also decided to sponsor a second cohort, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and family liaisons, to participate in the Educator Leaders for Equity program, a course co-taught by Professors Paula Elliott and Kathleen McDonough that trained staff in leading equity work back at their school sites (2018). That same year, through a joint partnership with the Cambridge Education Association (CEA) and through the financial support of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, CPS also launched the Building Equity Bridges (BEB) Project to uncover and better understand the root causes of inequities within the district.

The launch of the BEB Project was crucial to the district's anti-racist journey. Prior to the BEB Project, some schools and stakeholder groups had begun this work within their communities. The district had also initiated related efforts in previous years, as highlighted in the

examples provided above. However, as one principal highlighted, "the BEB project was an example that the district was willing to do [antiracism] work" in partnership with the community. Through an inclusive multi-stakeholder process that centered the voices of students, families, and educators, specifically those of color, the BEB Project produced the following two reports released in December 2019: 1) *The 9 Barriers to Equity Report*, which identified nine root cause of inequities at CPS (Talusan, 2019); and, 2) the *12 Commitments* (Milner et al., 2019) the district could make to address them (see Appendix C for a summary of the two reports). In an op-ed letter featured in *The Cambridge Chronicle* and in a letter to the CPS school community, Superintendent Salim responded to these reports by affirming that CPS "can—and must—do better" in its efforts to become an anti-racist district (2019). An internal Equity Committee was created, which used the findings from the BEB Project, in conjunction with the results from student, family and staff surveys and the *District Outcomes Report* to draft the *5 Anti-Racist Initiatives* (Figure 1), as concrete next steps in its journey to becoming an anti-racist district (2020). To increase transparency, in January 2020 the district launched the "Equity and Access" webpage (www.cpsd.us/equity), which featured a thorough description and outline of the action plan for each anti-racist initiative, a monthly update, and opportunities for the community to get involved.

Figure 1

Summary of CPS's Anti-Racist Initiatives

1. **Incident Response**: Create an improved response system for student reports of racist and other inappropriate behavior by adult staff members
2. **Anti-Racism**: Develop an anti-racism and racial equity statement
3. **Staff Training**: Implement mandatory staff training and professional learning for all educators and staff focused on anti-racism and equity
4. **Office of Equity**: Establish an office dedicated to racial equity reporting directly to the Superintendent
5. **Curriculum Review**: Review curriculum for cultural responsiveness, historical accuracy, and representation

An Emerging Problem of Practice and Strategic Project

Just as the district was launching the *5 Anti-Racist Initiatives*, CPS faced several unanticipated challenges that would make their work even more complex, difficult, and urgent: 1) calls for a school committee member to resign after she used a racial slur; 2) the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent district closure; and 3) the country's racial awakening. The first major challenge arose in December 2019, shortly before the release of the *5 Anti-Racist Initiatives*. Numerous students, caregivers, teachers, and school leaders attended multiple school committee meetings to demand the resignation of a White school committee member who used the N-word during a high school history course she was invited to participate in as a guest panelist (Saltzman, 2019). Stakeholders also called for the rejection of the educational and programmatic review of the incident, or *The Ryan Report*, because it focused on the teacher's actions as opposed to holding the school committee member accountable for the harm she caused. The opposition was so strong that, ultimately, the school committee member resigned. According to some one-on-one empathy listening sessions with teachers, caregivers, school leaders, and school partners, this incident served as a community "touchstone" because it publicly highlighted that, despite CPS's commitment to becoming an anti-racist district, "a lot of work still needed to be done." One leading member of the BEB Project went so far as to say, "this incident has taken us a step back" (2019).

Only three months later, in March, another unanticipated challenge arose: the COVID-19 pandemic triggered the district to pause its *5 Anti-Racist Initiatives* and shift its attention to emergency remote learning and working. The abrupt transition was hard on everyone, but especially those students and families who lacked the means to adapt to ever-changing

circumstances. For example, many people lost regular access to adequate academic and social emotional resources, technology, the internet, and food. Even when access was available, some families faced additional barriers to these essentials (e.g. families without cars had to find transportation to pick up supplies at designated pick-up sites). Overall, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic made CPS's commitment to anti-racism that much more urgent.

This sense of urgency was amplified by instances of anti-Black violence and racial discrimination occurring throughout the nation. On February 23, 2020, 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery was jogging near his home when he was shot and killed by two White men (Fausset, 2021). A few weeks later, on March 13, 2020, 26-year-old Breonna Taylor was killed in her home while she was sleeping when officers came into her home under a "no-knock" warrant (Oppel et al., 2021). A few months later, people witnessed George Floyd die under the knees of a White police officer (Hill, 2020). According to the Human Rights Watch, there was also an increase in violence against Asians and Asian-Americans since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). It is important to acknowledge that these were not the only injuries and deaths in 2020 from racial violence, but their dissemination by mainstream media helped many people, especially White people, see that racism is real and still prevalent (Harmon & Burch, 2020).

As a result of these three unanticipated challenges, the Cambridge community began to demand with greater urgency that the district intensify its focus on anti-racism work. The racial slur incident prompted a push for increased accountability. Meanwhile, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for greater wraparound services and support for underserved students and families. Lastly, the racial reckoning showed that disrupting inequities and centering the perspectives of students, families, and staff of color would take intentional effort. All together, these challenges elucidated the following problem of practice:

CPS committed to becoming an anti-racist district and began implementing several anti-racist initiatives. Then, the pandemic hit, which interrupted the work. However, now more than ever, CPS should increase its anti-racist efforts. How is CPS planning to fulfill its commitment to producing equitable student outcomes both during and after the pandemic?

To address this problem of practice and help CPS fulfill its commitment to becoming an anti-racist district, my strategic project focused on developing anti-racism professional development, including modules, for school and district leaders by the end of spring 2021. The anti-racist professional development would equip and empower school and district leaders with the resources and supports to identify and disrupt inequities. It would also hold all staff accountable to the district's commitment to anti-racism. Lastly, to ensure equitable student outcomes, the professional development would incorporate the perspectives of its most impacted stakeholders, particularly students, families, and staff of color.

Review of Knowledge for Action

My strategic project consisted of three different but interconnected processes. First, I needed to design a strategy that would build on past and current anti-racist efforts and cohere, or integrate, with other elements of the district's work. That way, my strategic project was likely to be implemented and embedded as part of the district's overall strategic plan. Second, I needed to recruit a multi-stakeholder group, composed of students, caregivers, educators, school leaders, and district leaders, so that all the stakeholders impacted by the anti-racism professional development would be involved in designing it. In addition to recruiting the team, I had to build

the appropriate teaming culture and provide the right resources for the multi-stakeholder group to

collaborate effectively. Third, I and the multi-stakeholder team had to learn best practices for

effective adult professional development, specifically around anti-racist work, so we could

incorporate the practices into the anti-racism professional development. Consequently, this

Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA) focuses on literature that shows how to implement

these three components well. (Note: although they are described chronologically in Figure 2 (e.g.

Process # 1), all three processes are interconnected and concurrent.)

Figure 2

Summary of the Three Interconnected Processes of my Strategic Project
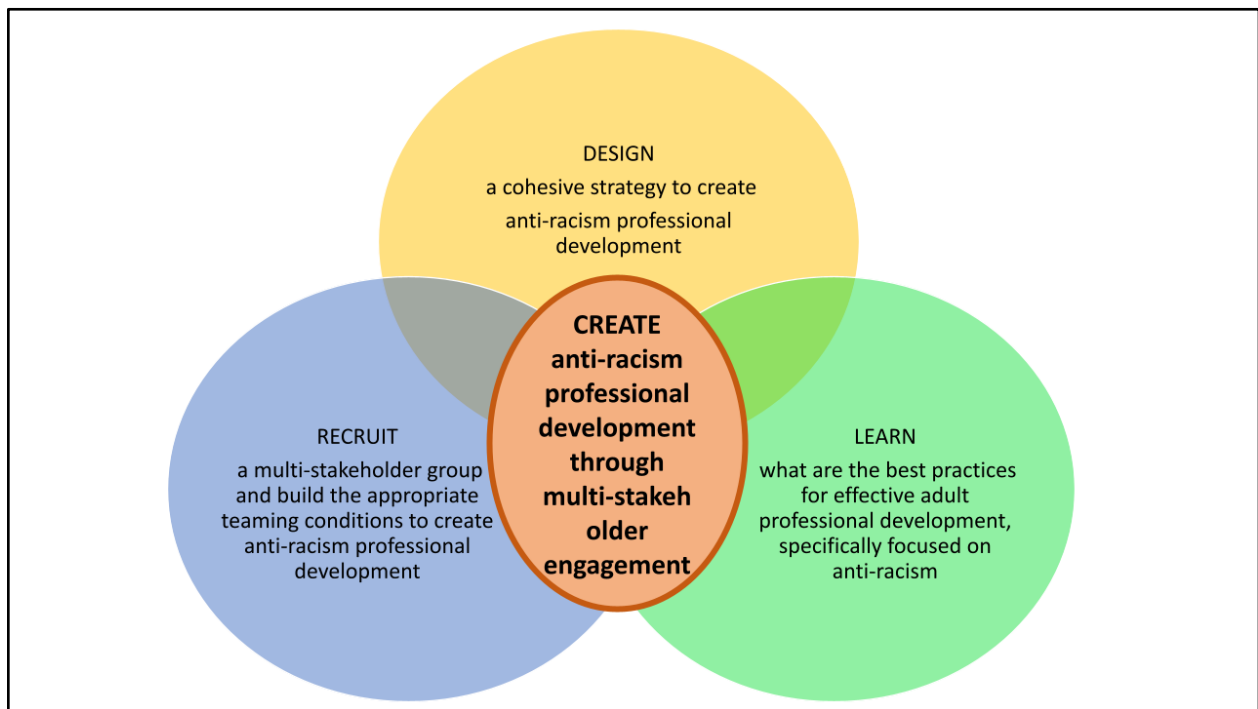
Process #1: Design a coherent strategy to create anti-racism professional development

Together, the *Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) Coherence Framework* (Figure 3)*,* the *Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment,* and the *Racial Equity Stages Framework* offer guidance on creating anti-racism professional development. The *PELP Coherence Framework*'s set of critical questions can be used to design a strategy that increases coherence within and among the different elements of an organization (e.g. culture, resources, systems, structures, and stakeholders) (2011). Meanwhile, the *Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment* identifies what specific elements need additional support and what research-based best practices might be most useful. Lastly, the *Racial Equity Stages,* by the organization Dismantling Racism Works, describes what issues to expect and how best to address them based on what racial equity stage the district is at (n.d.). Together, these three frameworks help create a strong, coherent strategy that is more likely to be embedded into the district's overall strategic plan and implemented long-term.

According to the *PELP Coherence Framework*, a coherent strategy is necessary to improve the instructional core (i.e. the learning opportunities and outcomes) of all students (p. 1). Specifically, the different organizational elements—culture, resources, systems structures, and stakeholders—must effectively work together to support the success and sustainability of the strategy. In designing a coherent strategy for the creation of anti-racism professional development, I found the following specific questions particularly helpful:

- Is our **strategy** clearly communicated and well understood? (p. 6)
- Does our existing **culture** support or hinder our ability to implement our strategy? (p. 7)
- How can we allocate our **resources** to be more coherent with our strategy? (p. 11)

- Which **stakeholders** can have an impact (positive or negative) on the implementation of

  the strategy? (p. 12)

Figure 3

Illustration of the PELP Coherence Framework

Like the *PELP Coherence Framework*, the *Leadership Academy's Equity Self-*

Assessment can be used by individual leaders and teams to assess an organization's status in

multiple areas (e.g. mission/vision, leadership, policies, professional development,

pedagogy/instruction, data, communication, etc.) (2020). Instead of asking critical questions like

the *PELP Coherence Framework*, the *Equity Self-Assessment* offers research-based best

practices, as well as indicators of success that can be used to outline next steps. The results from the *Equity Self-Assessment* can determine what specific organizational components require further support and what research-based recommendations might prove helpful. (See Appendix D for a snapshot of the *Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment*.)

Lastly, the *Racial Equity Stages*, by the organization Dismantling Racism Works, were used to draft an anti-racism professional development strategy that included a proactive approach to addressing potential barriers (n.d.). According to the *Racial Equity Stages*, organizations that commit to racial equity usually progress through the following stages: familiar dysfunction, explicit commitment to racial equity, culture shift/not knowing, relational trust, equity goals clarified, and equity practice. By understanding what happens at each stage and identifying what stage an organization is currently in, a better-informed decision can be made as to next steps the organization can take to advance in its racial equity journey. This information can be used to address ongoing and prepare for future challenges. A summary of the characteristics an organization experiences at each racial equity stage is given in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4

Summary of the Characteristics of the Racial Equity Stages

Racial Equity Stage	Characteristics of each Stage
Familiar Dysfunction	People of Color are expected to fit into dominant white culture (assimilate)
Explicit Commitment to Racial Equity	People begin to develop a shared language and understanding of racism People of Color gain renewed hope
Culture Shift & Not Knowing	Quick change is expected and, when this does not happen, it leads to frustration Good/bad, right/wrong, and either/or thinking
Relational Trust	People support and hold each other accountable
Equity Goals Clarified	Specific goals are identified at the cultural, institutional, and personal levels
Equity Practice	The organization makes a long-term commitment to racial equity goals

Process #2: Recruit a multi-stakeholder group and build the appropriate teaming conditions

  To create anti-racism professional development, it is critical to recruit people from every stakeholder group ultimately impacted by it (e.g. students, caregivers, educators, school leaders, and district leaders). It is equally critical to build the appropriate teaming culture so that, once brought together, the multi-stakeholder team can effectively collaborate. During my one-on-one interviews, the practices implemented by the BEB Team were continually highlighted as an exemplar for engaging a multi-stakeholder group focused specifically on anti-racism work. I reviewed the three main stakeholder engagement practices the BEB Team used, as highlighted in the *9 Barriers to Equity Report,* and conducted further research on how best to implement them.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Practice # 1: Leverage internal leadership and explicitly center the voices of youth and People of Color

  When engaging a multi-stakeholder group, it is important to leverage internal leaders and explicitly center the voices of youth and People of Color. According to the findings from the *9 Barriers to Equity Report*, students, families, and educators, especially those of color, have "powerful visions" for more equitable and engaging schools and classrooms (Talusan, 2019). Throughout the project, the BEB Team included youth and People of Color as key stakeholders in their planning and decision-making processes. This practice was further supported by the *Leadership Academy's Equity Leadership Dispositions*, specifically Disposition 3, which encourages leaders to seek diverse perspectives and examine which voices are not heard or are missing and why (2020). It pushes leaders to intentionally invite and uplift these voices. When recruiting the multi-stakeholder group, we aimed to recruit representatives from all stakeholder groups (students, caregivers, educators, and school and district leaders) with diverse backgrounds

and perspectives because we acknowledged that no group is monolithic. Special emphasis was placed on selecting youth, People of Color, people most impacted by the work, and people committed to advancing anti-racism work in the district. As a result, the stakeholders that would be affected by the anti-racism professional development would also be designing and advancing it.

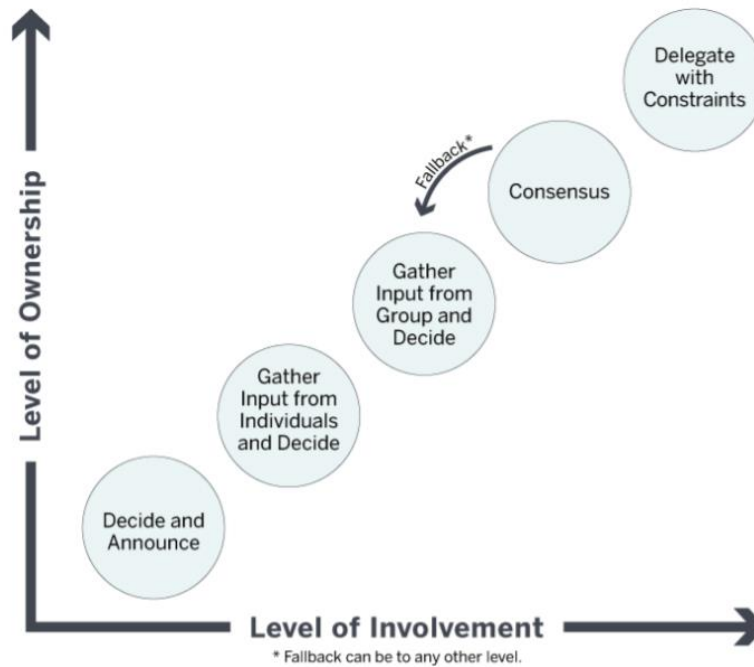*Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Practice #2: Make processes clear, transparent, and inclusive*

According to the *9 Barriers to Equity Report*, it was also important that the input, feedback, and decision-making processes be clear and accessible (Talusan, 2019). To make engagement processes transparent, the BEB Team used the *Maximum Appropriate Involvement Framework* (2012) presented in Figure 5. Under this framework, levels of stakeholder involvement in decision-making range from no input to consulting to active decision-making. The goal is to provide stakeholders with the highest level of decision-making power possible given constraints on time and resources, so that there is greater buy-in. However, as the title suggests, levels of maximum appropriate involvement vary. To determine what the right level is, it is important to first identify what decision needs to be made, who needs to be involved in the decision-making process (i.e. level of involvement), and who gets to make the final decision (i.e. level of ownership). Once the maximum appropriate involvement level is determined, this information should be communicated to all impacted stakeholders so that expectations are clear including the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group.

In alignment with the framework, CPS's goal was to provide the multi-stakeholder group with the maximum appropriate involvement. In this case, that meant empowering them to

determine the content and structure of the professional development and equipping them with the resources and support to create it.

Figure 5

Maximum Appropriate Involvement Framework

Multi-stakeholder Engagement Practice #3: Provide opportunities to build trust

Recruiting a multi-stakeholder team and empowering them with decision-making authority will not guarantee the group will collaborate or achieve any critical work; it is just as critical to build a culture of teamwork, psychological safety, and relational trust. Anti-racism work, including the creation of anti-racism professional development, is inherently challenging and complex. Members of the multi-stakeholder team must have ample opportunity to build a culture of teamwork, psychological safety, and trust. That way, when conversations about race

get intense or a mistake is made, the relationships are strong enough that people can have a difficult conversation, embrace discomfort, and request and provide support. These opportunities are not confined to community-building exercises, and they must be intentionally incorporated.

According to Patrick Lencioni, leaders can create a culture of teamwork and prevent the five dysfunctions of a team by: 1) creating trust by being vulnerable; 2) encouraging healthy conflict; 3) gaining buy-in and support from the team by including them in the planning and decision-making processes; 4) fostering team accountability; and, 5) focusing on team (rather than individual) results (2002). Amy Edmondson also supports the concept of teaming, specifically through the cultivation of psychological safety, or high interpersonal trust and respect (2019). She recommends that leaders lead by example and model psychologically safe behaviors, such as showing humility, admitting to mistakes and asking for feedback. Similarly, the *Leadership Academy's Equity Leadership Dispositions* posits that leaders should publicly model vulnerability and risk-taking to encourage their teams to have open conversations about race (2020). Bryk stresses that, by leading by example, modeling vulnerability, and showing personal integrity, leaders build relational trust with their school community (Bryk and Schneider, 2003).

Process # 3: Learn best practices for effective adult professional development, specifically focused on anti-racist work

To create effective anti-racism professional development, organizations must incorporate best practices for both adult professional development and anti-racism work. The *Standards for Professional Learning*, by the organization Learning Forward, provide seven key standards for effective professional adult learning (2011). Meanwhile, the *Leadership Academy's Equity*

Leadership Dispositions can be used to ensure that professional development equips leaders to engage in equity-based work. Lastly, Thomas Guskey's evaluation framework can be used to analyze the effectiveness and impact of professional development through data.

Together, *Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning* and the *Leadership Academy's Equity Leadership Dispositions* can be used to create effective anti-racism adult professional development. According to the *Standards for Professional Learning*, effective professional development embodies the following seven characteristics: 1) focus on continuous improvement; 2) building of leadership capacity; 3) effective use of resources; 4) intentional use of data; 5) active engagement and learning; 6) long-term change once implemented; and 7) alignment to both expected student and adult outcomes (2011). These standards act as a checklist for ensuring that the professional development contains all the appropriate components.

Meanwhile, the *Equity Leadership Dispositions* can be used to guide the *content* of the anti-racism professional development. According to the Leadership Academy, education leaders must "live out" five equity dispositions, summarized in Figure 6, to proactively address the inequities in their system. For each disposition, the framework provides a list of practices and reflection questions that leaders can use to push their thinking and actions forward.

Figure 6

Leadership Academy's Equity Leadership Dispositions

1. Reflect on personal assumptions, beliefs, and behaviors
2. Publicly model a personal belief system grounded in equity
3. Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in interactions, decision-making, and practice
4. Purposefully build the capacity of others to identify and disrupt inequities in the school
5. Confront and alter institutional biases: student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with minoritized populations.

The anti-racism professional development must also be assessed for its potential effectiveness and impact. According to Thomas Guskey, five levels of data can be used to assess professional development: 1) participants' reactions; 2) participants' learning; 3) organization support and change; 4) participants' use of new knowledge and skills; and 5) student learning outcomes (2016). As the multi-stakeholder team crafts the professional development, they will be expected to take these five different data points into consideration. Based on these five data points, the team can determine what types of improvements the professional development modules require (e.g. more interactive activities to increase participant engagement).

Besides the three main resources highlighted above, many other equity-based resources, research, and tools were used to create the anti-racism professional development. A list of some of these resources is included as Appendix E.

Theory of Action

Based on what I learned from the research I conducted for the RKA, on the context of CPS as depicted by stakeholders in interviews, and on my own experience and expertise, I created the Theory of Action below. Since the *PELP Coherence Framework* was the initial framework used to design the strategy for the project, the Theory of Action highlights the critical components of that framework (e.g. strategy, stakeholders, etc.).

If I...

- Co-create and implement a **coherent strategy** for the district's anti-racism professional development *(strategy);*

- Recruit and convene a **diverse multi-stakeholder group** and leverage internal experts (e.g. students, caregivers, teachers, and school and district leaders) (*stakeholders*);

- Provide **resources and support** for the multi-stakeholder group to collaborate, create, and pilot anti-racism professional development for school and district leaders *(resources, structures, and systems); and,*

- Create a **culture of trust, support, and accountability** *(culture),*

Then CPS will...

- **Align with, build on, and amplify** its anti-racism efforts and cultivate a shared vision for how the district will engage as an anti-racist district *(strategy)*;

- Engage in a **transparent, intentional, and inclusive process** for creating anti-racism professional development that authentically incorporates feedback and input from all impacted stakeholders and includes differentiated systems of support and accountability *(stakeholders, resources, structures, and systems)*; and

- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to **build relational trust and psychological safety** *(culture)*

So that…

- **All staff** at Cambridge Public Schools will feel **supported and empowered** to engage in their anti-racist journey *(culture)*; and

- Ultimately, **all students** will experience a **rigorous, joyous, and culturally responsive** education (*instructional core).*

Description, Evidence, and Analysis of the Strategic Project

The Description: What and How

Before describing the strategic project, I should note that I worked in collaboration with the six primary school stakeholder groups (students, teachers, caregivers, partners, and school and district leaders) throughout my strategic project. As a Doctoral Resident, I did not have a dedicated team or formal authority; however, I was a formal member of the Superintendent's Cabinet, the Teaching and Learning Team (a subset of the Cabinet consisting of the Deputy Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary and Early Education, the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, and the Chief Strategy Officer), and Administrative Council (whole group of district and school leaders, including the Cabinet, curriculum coordinators, directors, deans, and principals). Therefore, I spent the first few months reaching out to more than 35 stakeholders for one-on-one listening sessions. I relied on their support to connect me to other people, who then connected me to other people, and so forth. As a result, most goals I completed were done with the support of or in close partnership with members of all major school stakeholder groups. Figure 7 provides a summary of the different stakeholders I collaborated with during my strategic project.

Figure 7

Summary of Stakeholders and Teams who Provided Support During my Strategic Project

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders or Teams
Students	Upper school students (80+ members)
Caregivers	Caregivers (4 members)
Teachers and Staff	Elementary School (2 members) Upper School (4 members) High School (7 members)
School Leaders	Principals (19 members) Assistant Principals & School Operations Managers (17 Members) High School Deans (8 members)
District Leaders	Superintendent Cabinet: Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director of Human Resources, Legal Counsel and the Teaching and Learning Team (10 members) Teaching and Learning Team: Deputy Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary and Early Education, the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, the Chief Strategy Officer (6 members)
School and District Leaders	Administrative Council: Cabinet, Curriculum Coordinators, Directors, and Principals (59 members)

Strategic Project Phases

The goal of my strategic project was to produce a district-wide approach to anti-racist professional development (e.g. focus areas, key objectives, content outline, etc.), including a set of introductory modules, through a multi-stakeholder engagement process by the end of spring 2021. Based on my Theory of Action, four main strategic project phases were identified: define the problem; map the district's anti-racist journey; co-develop a coherent strategy; and implement the strategy. A summary of what specific components of the Theory of Action are implemented during the different strategic project phases is summarized in Figure 8.

Figure 8

The Theory of Action Implemented during the Different Strategic Project Phases

Theory of Action	Strategic Project Phases			
	Phase 0: Define the Problem of Practice	Phase 1: Map the District's Anti-Racist Journey	Phase 2: Co-Develop a Coherent Strategy	Phase 3: Implement the Strategy
If I...				
Co-create and implement a **coherent strategy** for the district's anti-racism professional development	X	X	X	
Recruit and convene a **diverse multi-stakeholder group** and leverage internal experts		X	X	X
Provide the **resources and support** to collaborate, create, and pilot anti-racism professional development for district and school leaders			X	X
Create a **culture of trust, support, and accountability**	X	X	X	X
Then CPS will...				
Align with, build, on, and amplify its anti-racism efforts and cultivate a shared vision for how the district will engage as an anti-racist district			X	X
Engage in a **transparent, intentional, and inclusive process** for creating anti-racism professional development that authentically incorporates the feedback and input from all stakeholders and includes differentiated systems of support and accountability			X	X
Provide opportunities for stakeholders to **build relational trust and psychological safety**	X	X	X	X
So That...				
All staff at Cambridge Public Schools will feel **supported and empowered** to engage in their anti-racist journey			X	X+
Ultimately, **all students** will experience a **rigorous, joyful, and culturally responsive** education				X+

Note. The symbol X+ highlights the expectation that this is a long-term goal.

Each of the strategic project phases had its own set of specific but interconnected goals and timelines (Figure 9 and Appendix F). During Phase 0, my goal was to learn about the history, political landscape, context, culture, and systems and structures at CPS to better define the problem of practice. It is titled Phase 0 because defining the problem of practice lays the foundation for my strategic project. Next, during Phase 1, I mapped the district's anti-racist journey to date in order to align my strategic project with past and current equity and anti-racist initiatives. In Phase 2, I used the information gathered from the first few phases to develop a coherent strategy for carrying out my strategic project. Lastly, during Phase 3, my goal was to implement the strategy to ultimately develop the anti-racism professional development and accomplish my strategic project.

Figure 9

Summary of the Goals and Timelines of the Different Strategic Project Phases

Strategic Project Phases	Goal	June-Sept	Oct-Nov	Dec-Jan	Feb-March
0: Define the Problem of Practice	To learn about the history, political landscape, context, culture, and systems and structures to better define the problem of practice	X			
1: Map the District's Anti-Racist Journey	To map the district's anti-racist journey to create a coherent strategy that would build on the district's equity/ anti-racism efforts	X	X	X	
2: Co-Develop a Coherent Strategy	To identify the strategic project and objectives that would help create the anti-racist professional development	X	X	X	X
3: Implement the Strategy	To create the anti-racism professional development (i.e. complete the strategic project).		X	X	X

Phase 0: Define the problem of practice. On June 1, 2020, amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and just one week after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, I began my residency. I hit the ground listening and learning about the history, political landscape, context, culture, and systems and structures at CPS. From my first week in June through September, I engaged in a multi-pronged research approach, including asset inventories, literature reviews, virtual observations, and one-on-one empathy listening sessions with different stakeholders. On my first day, I began my inventory by re-examining critical district documents, such as the District Strategic Plan and the District Budget, and reviewing the district website (www.cpsd.us) to revisit the district's priorities and current initiatives. That first week, I also began reviewing literature on equity-based frameworks. References to some of the literature reviewed are found in Appendix E.

Yet my first week stands out most because I engaged in a "crash course" on the culture and political landscape at CPS by attending multiple stakeholder meetings. I attended meetings with the Cabinet, Teaching and Learning Team, Principals Team, School Committee, and City Council. I also conducted my first one-to-one listening sessions with two district leaders and engaged in a weekly check-in meeting with the Superintendent. This fast-paced, meeting-heavy first week foreshadowed my schedule for the next few months. An overview of my typical meeting schedule during these first few months is shown in Appendix G.

While all components of my multi-pronged approach proved useful, the one-on-one listening sessions proved most critical, since they allowed me to see from the perspective of different stakeholders and better define the problem of practice. The initial set of empathy listening sessions was conducted during the first three months of my residency (June to August 2020) with approximately 35 different people, including district leadership and staff, principals,

teachers, caregivers, and staff at partner organizations. I also made several unsuccessful attempts to connect with high school students. Besides traditional questions like, "Can you share more about you and your role?", one of the main questions I asked during one-on-one listening sessions was, "What do you think should be the main priorities of the district?" Ideally, the responses would highlight each stakeholder's perception of what the district's priorities should be as well as perceived barriers.

In response to these questions, the district leaders expressed that equity was their focus during the transition to emergency remote learning and in the creation of the reopening plan. Some examples district leaders cited included: distribution of laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots; continued provision of free lunch services; and creation of multiple multi-stakeholder working groups, such as the CPS COVID-19 Taskforce, to guide the district's fall learning plan; and, the focus on supporting the students with the greatest needs, including youngest learners, English Language Learners, and students who require special education services.

Meanwhile, caregivers and school leaders stressed that the district was not fully living up to its commitment to anti-racism. Major themes shared during the one-on-one listening sessions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- "The district can say they are an anti-racist district but if the schools are not doing the work, then it doesn't matter..." (caregiver)
- "[the district needs] to get everyone on the same page...from the superintendent to the students..." (caregiver)
- "A lot of the things the district has put out is well intended but we can't hold each other accountable if we don't have the same interpretation or understanding…" (school leader)
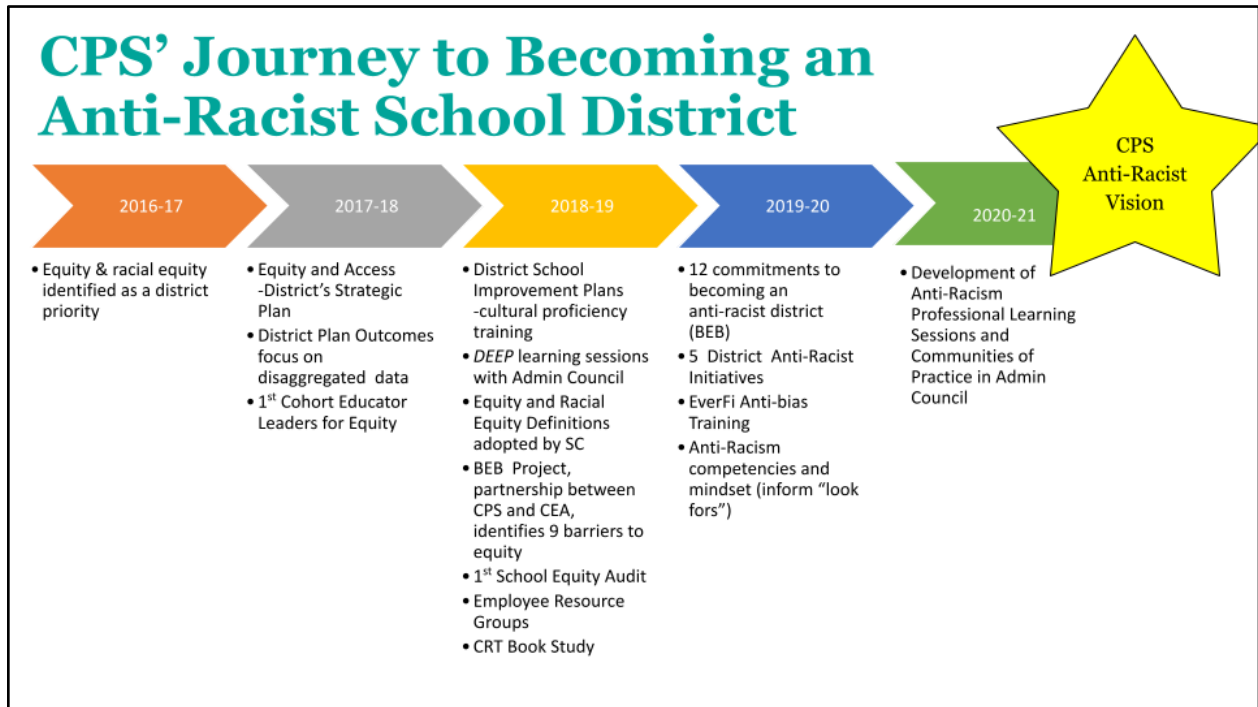
- "People were excited...public commitments were made but concrete actions of what it meant and what would happen did not occur..." (school leader).

These differences in perception highlighted the problem of practice: despite its best efforts, the district was not seen to be fulfilling its commitment to anti-racism work.

Phase 1: Map the district's anti-racist journey. In addition to defining the problem of practice, it was also critical to map the district's anti-racist journey in determining the strategic project. A timeline of the district's anti-racist journey to date did not exist to inform my thinking, so I created one (Figure 10). First, I used the information gathered from Phase 0, specifically from the district documents and the one-on-one listening sessions, to create the initial draft timeline. Next, from September through early October, I conducted an audit of current and ongoing district-wide equity and anti-racist initiatives, specifically the *5 CPS Anti-Racist Initiatives*, by following up with district leaders in charge of the initiatives for status updates. I then used the information collected to update the timeline and later followed up to confirm or correct the information. By the end of October, I had completed a timeline outlining the different equity-based initiatives the district had engaged in since the start of Dr. Salim's superintendency in 2016.

Figure 10

Timeline of CPS's Journey to Becoming an Anti-Racist District

CPS' Journey to Becoming an Anti-Racist School District

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	CPS Anti-Racist Vision
• Equity & racial equity identified as a district priority	• Equity and Access -District's Strategic Plan • District Plan Outcomes focus on disaggregated data • 1st Cohort Educator Leaders for Equity	• District School Improvement Plans -cultural proficiency training • *DEEP* learning sessions with Admin Council • Equity and Racial Equity Definitions adopted by SC • BEB Project, partnership between CPS and CEA, identifies 9 barriers to equity • 1st School Equity Audit • Employee Resource Groups • CRT Book Study	• 12 commitments to becoming an anti-racist district (BEB) • 5 District Anti-Racist Initiatives • EverFi Anti-bias Training • Anti-Racism competencies and mindset (inform "look fors")	• Development of Anti-Racism Professional Learning Sessions and Communities of Practice in Admin Council	

Phase 2: Co-develop a coherent strategy. From late August to October, I drafted a coherent strategy to create the district's anti-racist professional development through iterative feedback cycles. First, in August, I triangulated the information collected during Phases 0 and 1 and used the *PELP Coherence Framework* (2011) to see how existing elements within the district (e.g. systems, structures, resources, etc.) could be leveraged to implement the professional development. Then, I incorporated the *Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment* (2020) and the *Dismantling Racism Works' Racial Equity Stages* (n.d.) to ensure that the strategy embodied a research-based, anti-racist approach.

Once a strategy was drafted in early September, I engaged in an iterative consultancy process with multiple stakeholders to finalize it. First, I met with the Superintendent and then the

Teaching and Learning Team, followed by other stakeholders, including two caregivers, seven school and district leaders, and three leaders from other school districts also doing equity-specific work. During these sessions, I provided a brief overview of my strategic project and strategy, including the proposed theory of action, objectives, and timeline and then, I asked for their feedback. (See Appendix H for a sampling of presentation slides I used.) For example, I asked questions like:

- Are these the "right" objectives?

- What other technical components should be considered?

- What other adaptive components should be considered?

- What implications for and/or connections to other District work exist?

I then incorporated the feedback and updated my strategic project before conducting another consultancy round with the next person or group. I conducted the final rounds of feedback in October; the final version of the strategy on creating anti-racism professional development is depicted in Figure 11.

Figure 11

Coherent Strategy to Create Anti-Racism Professional Development
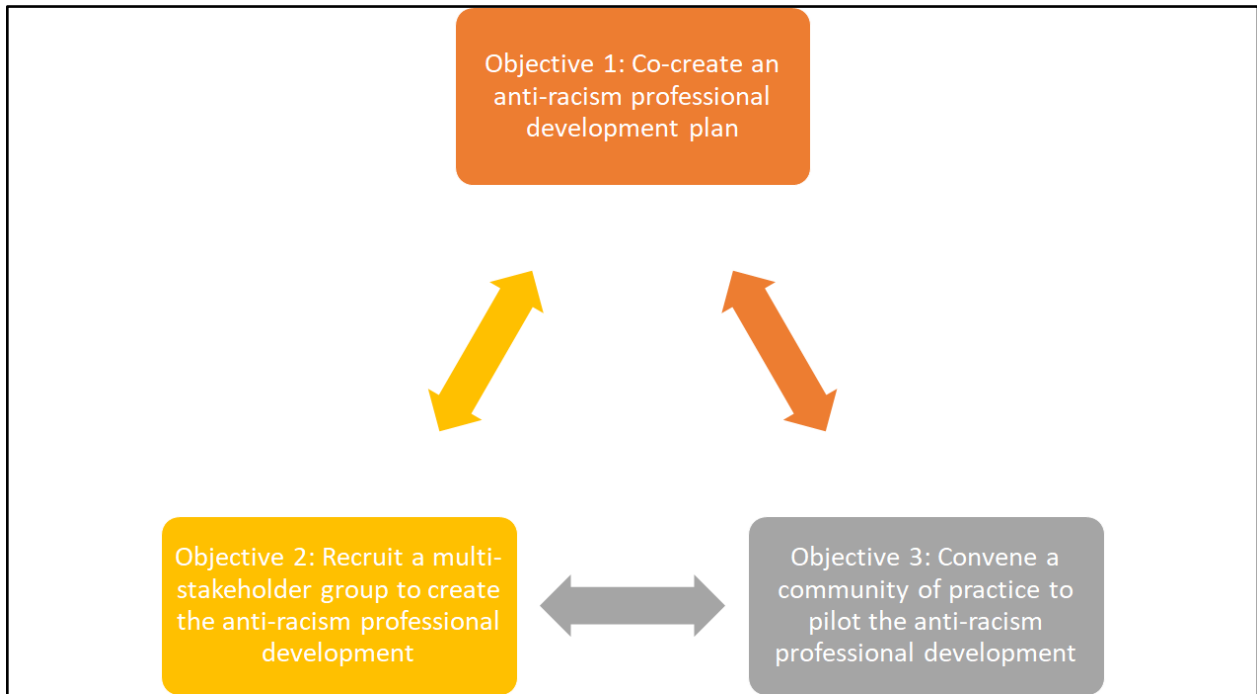
Phase 3: Implement the Strategy

The outcome of Phase 2, or the *Coherent Strategy to Create Anti-Racism Professional Development* (Figure 11), was the starting point of Phase 3. As illustrated above, the strategy is composed of three interconnected objectives that occur in parallel timeframes; however, to increase clarity, the three objectives will be described linearly below.

Objective 1: Co-create an anti-racism professional development plan. The main objective of Phase 3 was to create the anti-racism professional development plan, specifically the topics or areas of focus, objectives, and components of the professional development. In previous years, CPS had learned about various equity-based and anti-racism professional development

frameworks, such as *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond (CRT),

Universal Design for Learning by CAST (UDL), and *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support* (MTSS),

to name a few. According to multi-stakeholder perspectives, outlined in one-on-one listening

sessions and in the *9 Barriers to Equity Report* (Talusan, 2019), anti-racism professional

development by and large lacked a targeted approach, was not sustained, and lacked an explicit

connection to improved student outcomes. Furthermore, I observed during multiple meetings

about my strategic project that people would disagree about what framework to use. In an

attempt to find coherence, I conducted a crosswalk in October between the most popular

frameworks used by the district (e.g. CRT, UDL, MTSS, etc.), the *9 Barriers to Equity*, and the

research-based *Anti-Racism Competencies and Mindsets* created by the group of school and

district leaders who previously led this initiative in spring 2020. (A snapshot of this crosswalk

can be found as Appendix I.) I found that all other frameworks overlapped with the *Anti-Racism*

Competencies and Mindsets and I shared this finding with the Superintendent, the Teaching and

Learning Team, and my Personal Strategic Project Advisory Council (composed of the

Superintendent, Program Manager for Educator Development, Director of Human Resources,

Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary

Education, Director of Family Engagement, and Chief Strategy Officer). Based on their input, I

decided that the *Anti-Racism Competencies and Mindsets* would serve as the overarching focus

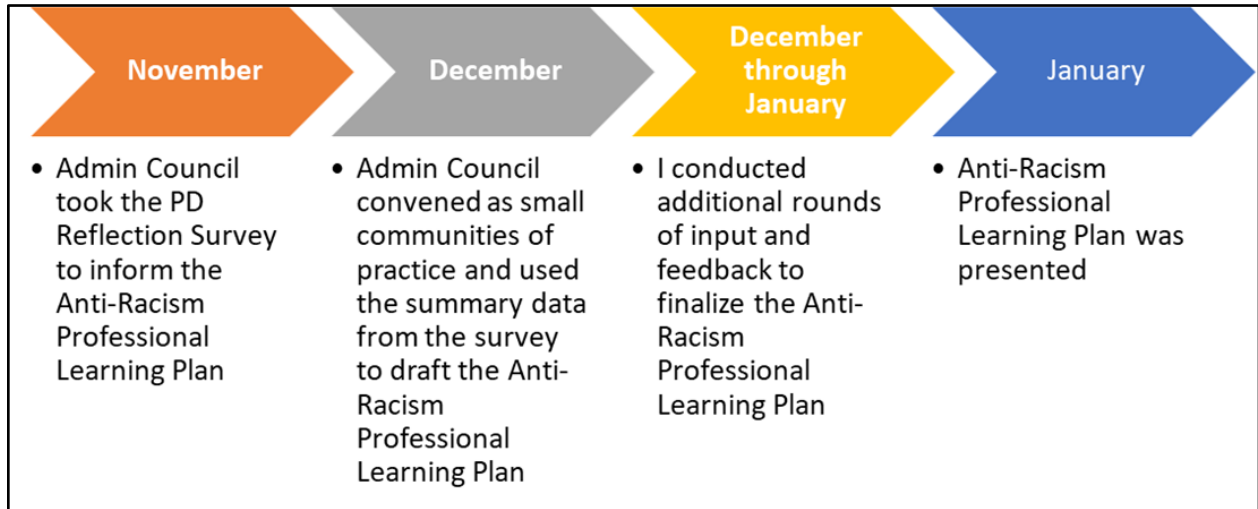areas for the future anti-racism professional development plan.

Once the focus areas for the anti-racism professional development plan were determined,

I created the *Anti-Racism Professional Development Reflection Survey* (Appendix J) to inform

the objectives and core components for the professional development. The survey was vetted by

the Superintendent, the Teaching and Learning Team, and four other district leaders (including

the Program Manager for Educator Development and four principals) to ensure that questions were clear and targeted. To boost the survey completion rate, I shared the purpose and a brief overview of the survey and allocated time during the November session for the Administrative Council (Admin Council) to complete the survey. The Assistant Principals, School Operation Managers, and Deans Team were also allotted time during their respective November meeting to complete the survey. I then analyzed the responses collected from 56 participants and presented a summary of the results during their respective December meetings. Next, we engaged in communities of practice and used a protocol to make sense of the data and brainstorm ideas for professional development for the spring.

In December, I drafted the *Spring 2020 Admin Council Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan* based on additional rounds of feedback. The draft plan was shared with the Superintendent, the Teaching and Learning Team, and the newly created Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team (described in the next section) and revised it based on their input. The final co-created *Draft Spring 2020 Admin Council Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan* was then presented to the Admin Council and the Assistant Principals, School Operations Managers, and Deans Team during their respective January monthly meetings. A summary of the process used to co-create the *Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan* is depicted in Figure 12. (Note: when I refer to the Admin Council, it can be assumed that the Assistant Principals, School Operations Managers, and Deans Team also participated in a parallel process.)

Figure 12

Process Used to Co-Create the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan

November	December	December through January	January
• Admin Council took the PD Reflection Survey to inform the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan	• Admin Council convened as small communities of practice and used the summary data from the survey to draft the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan	• I conducted additional rounds of input and feedback to finalize the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan	• Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan was presented

Objective 2: Recruit a multi-stakeholder group to create anti-racism professional

development. Originally, the goal was to recruit and convene a diverse multi-stakeholder group composed of all major school stakeholder groups (students, caregivers, teachers, and school and district leaders) to create anti-racism professional development. From October to November, I drafted an application process (Appendix K) and a corresponding budget to recruit the team using information, input, and ideas collected during one-on-one meetings and lessons learned from other district-supported multi-stakeholder processes (e.g. BEB Project and the Equity Collaborative). The application was slated for release to the public in December; however, due to several contextual factors, which will be described in greater detail in the Analysis section, I decided to forgo the application process.

Over the rest of November and into the spring, I remained committed to recruiting a multi-stakeholder group and getting perspectives from multiple stakeholders through other pathways. I reached out to three caregivers and four teachers to brainstorm additional ways to

recruit students, caregivers, and teachers. In January, I partnered with a sixth-grade social studies teacher and co-authored a lesson focused on getting the student perspective. (A sample of this lesson can be found in Appendix L.) By the end of the month, more than 80 students had participated. Throughout February and March, I continued to meet with additional stakeholders to brainstorm ways of getting additional perspectives and recruiting the multi-stakeholder team; as of yet, no specific process has been formalized.

While I remained committed to recruiting a multi-stakeholder group to create anti-racism professional development, I also specifically recruited school and district leaders to become members of the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team and lead communities of practice within Admin Council. To recruit the school and district leaders, I simply included a question on the *Anti-Racism Professional Development Reflection Survey* inviting people to sign up if they were interested. Initially, only nine people signed up to be part of the team, so I engaged in active recruitment and by February 2021, the team grew to 14 members.

Starting in December, the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team began meeting twice a month to plan and facilitate the monthly anti-racism professional development sessions for Admin Council. The first planning meeting usually focused on brainstorming ideas. We would debrief on what had worked well during previous sessions that should be incorporated into future sessions. Next, I would share the draft objective and any pertinent data or information. For the bulk of the meeting, the group brainstormed what would be the "final" objective, agenda, and protocols to be used during the session. The second planning meetings were dedicated to finalizing the protocols and materials.

Objective 3: Convene a community of practice to pilot the anti-racism professional

development. The monthly Admin Council sessions already convened school and district leaders,

thus serving as ideal forums for convening communities of practice. However, during the

summer and first few months of fall, Admin Council sessions were mostly dedicated to planning

for in-person learning. Realizing how critical it was to plan for in-person learning with an anti-

racist lens, I pitched the establishment of communities of practice in Admin Council focused on

anti-racism in early September. By October, I received support from the Superintendent and the

Teaching and Learning Team to create them.

Next, I had to generate interest and buy-in. In November, I administered the *Anti-Racism*

Professional Development Reflection Survey to Admin Council to assess what anti-racism

professional development they found effective and wanted implemented in future sessions. As

part of the survey, I also asked people if they were interested in participating in or leading a

community of practice. Almost 100% of respondents (55 out of 56) indicated they would like to

participate in a community of practice, and seven said they would like to host a session. I

reached out to the seven who expressed interest in hosting a session, as well as a few others,

asking if they could facilitate a small group during the upcoming December session to review the

results of the *Anti-Racism Professional Development Reflection Survey*. Nine people accepted

and in December, nine small communities of practice were convened.

Evidence To-Date

This section highlights the evidence of the results or progress made during the strategic

project based on my Theory of Action. The evidence includes many sources, from stakeholder

engagement, to facilitated sessions, to products created. Most of the time, the different

components of the Theory of Action were interconnected, and so was the evidence. To increase

clarity, this section is organized according to five key pieces of evidence or progress made

during the strategic project (Figure 13).

Figure 13

Summary of the Key Evidence of Results/Progress During the Strategic Project

Theory of Action	Key Evidence of Results/Progress

If I ...
 	
Co-create and implement a **coherent strategy** for the district's anti-racism professional development;
 	
Recruit and convene a **diverse multi-stakeholder group** and leverage internal experts**;**
 	
Provide the **resources and support** for the multi-stakeholder group to collaborate, create, and pilot anti-racism professional development for school and district leaders; and
 	
Create a **culture of trust, support, and accountability**
 	
Then CPS will...
 	
Align with, build, on, and amplify its anti-racism efforts and cultivate a shared vision for how the district will engage as an anti-racist district;
 	
Engage in a **transparent, intentional, and inclusive process** for creating anti-racism professional development that authentically incorporates the feedback and input from all stakeholders and includes differentiated systems of support and accountability; and
 	
Provide opportunities for stakeholders to **build relational trust and psychological safety**
	Phase 0 & 1
	   1. *Timeline of District's Anti-Racist Journey To-Date* was created (Sept–Oct 2020)
	
	Phase 1 & 2
	   2. *Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan* was co-created (Nov–Dec 2020)
	
	Phase 2 & 3
	   3. Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team was recruited to design and facilitate Admin Council sessions; grew from nine to 14 members (Oct 2020–present)
	
	Phase 3
	   4. *Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors"* were co-created (Jan 2021–present)
	
	   5. Development of Communities of Practice in Admin Council (Nov 2020–present)

So That...	
All staff at Cambridge Public Schools will feel **supported and empowered** to engage in their anti-racist journey; and, Ultimately, **all students** will experience a **rigorous, joyous, and culturally responsive** education.	

1. Timeline of the District's Anti-Racist Journey To-Date

One of the earliest pieces of evidence was the creation of the *Timeline of the District's Anti-Racist Journey To-Date* (Figure 10). It served three main purposes. First, it showed school and district leaders all the different anti-racism efforts the district had engaged in, including those they may not have known about. Secondly, it let people take a step back and see how the district's anti-racist journey had evolved. Thirdly, it provided people with an opportunity to imagine what next steps the district could take in its anti-racist journey to **align with, build on, and amplify these efforts**. This was particularly helpful for my strategic project—the timeline informed the **creation of a coherent strategy** for the district's anti-racism professional development. In February 2021, the timeline was presented to Admin Council. Ultimately, one of the goals is to produce a public-facing version of the timeline to publish on the district's website so that all CPS stakeholders can also participate in these processes.

2. Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan

The **co-creation and implementation of a coherent strategy** was evidenced by the *Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan* (Figure 14). The plan, which was created through a **transparent, intentional, and inclusive feedback process** during November and December, represented the **shared vision** for how Admin Council would enact the district's anti-racist vision. Based on the input we received, the plan had three components: 1) "focus" areas for each monthly Admin Council session (based on the *Anti-Racism Competencies and Mindset*s); 2) specific objectives for each session; and 3) conditions necessary to cultivate communities of practice with a **culture of trust, support, and accountability**. Each session was intentionally designed to **align with, build on, and amplify** the content and practices from the previous

session. As noted in the plan, the objectives for April and May were intentionally left blank to provide the Admin Council Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team with the flexibility to address the needs of the group at that time given the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 14

Spring 2020 Admin Council Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan

Note. The objectives for April and May were intentionally left blank to provide the Admin Council Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team with the flexibility to respond to the needs of the group at that time given the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One sign of the *Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan*'s success is that, since November 2020, a significant portion of the monthly Admin Council sessions have

been dedicated to anti-racism professional development. I first introduced the plan to Admin

Council during the January 2021 session and presented it thereafter at every monthly Admin

Council meeting, so members were aware of the **shared vision** for anti-racism professional

development**.** As a result, according to 17 out of the 18 responses from the February and March

exit ticket surveys, participants felt that they had a greater understanding of the *Anti-Racism*

Professional Development Plan; one response noted that it was a "clear map." For each of the

past three Admin Council meetings (January through March), the anti-racism professional

development sessions were allotted one hour and 45 minutes, or almost half of the entire

meeting.

3. Admin Council Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team

I originally intended to form a diverse multi-stakeholder group composed of students,

caregivers, teachers, and school and district leaders to create anti-racism professional

development. An application process (Appendix K) and corresponding budget were created, but,

due to several contextual factors described further in the Analysis, I pivoted and focused on

recruiting a diverse school and district leadership team to form the Admin Council Anti-

Racism Professional Learning Planning Team. By November, nine members had volunteered,

bringing the group total up to ten members (including myself), six of whom identified as White

women. By February, the group increased to 14 members total, seven of whom identified as

leaders of color. In addition, the group included school and district leaders from various roles

(e.g. elementary, upper, and high school–level, building and central office–based, focused on

core and special subjects, etc.). Although the group was not a multi-stakeholder group, it was a

diverse group in terms of racial/ethnic composition and leadership roles (Figure 15).

Figure 15

Composition of Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team

	November 2020	**February 2021**

Group Composition	10 members
	   ● 6 members identify as White
	   ● 4 members identify as People of Color
	
	Leadership roles
	   ● 1 Elementary school leader
	   ● 2 Upper school leaders
	   ● 1 High school leader
	   ● 4 Central-office based leaders
	   ● 2 Instructional coaches
	   ● 0 School partners
		14 Members
		   ● 7 members identify as White
		   ● 7 members identify as People of Color
		
		Leadership roles
		   ● 2 Elementary school leaders
		   ● 2 Upper school leaders
		   ● 1 High school leader
		   ● 6 Central-office based leaders
		   ● 2 Instructional coaches
		   ● 1 School partner

The Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team usually met for one hour twice a month to plan the Admin Council sessions. I supported the team by handling "operations." For instance, I managed the scheduling, created draft agendas (Appendix M), conducted the initial input and feedback rounds (i.e. incorporating feedback from the Superintendent, the Teaching and Learning Team, the exit ticket survey data, and the work produced during the Admin Council sessions), and drafted the slide decks and materials. That way, when the team met, they had the **resources and support** necessary to design the session activities and the materials. Overall, team members said they felt supported and that the planning meetings felt collaborative. For example, during a feedback survey, one member said I had "done a great job managing and analyzing data and provid[ing] summary documents" for our planning sessions. Another member shared that they "enjoy these meetings and learning/hearing from other facilitators."

Although the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team was not a multi-stakeholder group, the group still **followed transparent, intentional, and inclusive processes** by which other stakeholders could also contribute to the anti-racism professional development. For example, the team incorporated feedback shared through exit ticket surveys and directly from members of the communities of practice they facilitated and other stakeholder groups like

students. All eighteen respondents who completed the February and March exit tickets reported that they appreciated that their input and feedback informed Admin Council sessions.

4. Admin Council Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors"

During the January and February sessions, Admin Council convened **communities of practice** to create a **shared vision** of what anti-racism leadership looks like in action at CPS. This process resulted in the creation of the *Admin Council Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors"*, which outline specific anti-racist actions or "look fors" leadership can take to achieve CPS's anti-racist vision. Ultimately, the goal is to incorporate the perspectives of all stakeholder groups (students, caregivers, teachers, and school and district leaders) through **transparent, intentional, and inclusive processes.** During the February session, the team incorporated student perspectives via vision boards created by more than 80 upper school students. Processes for incorporating additional student and caregiver and teacher perspectives are under development. Once finalized with additional stakeholder input, the *Admin Council Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors"* will be used to create the anti-racism professional development. An outline of the *Admin Council Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors"* is presented in Figure 16 and a complete version of the most recent draft is included as Appendix N.

Figure 16

Draft Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors" Outline

	SELF	**SYSTEMS**	**PRACTICE**		
	Self	Systems	Learning Conditions	Relationships	High Expectations
Brief Description	Continuously reflect on my cultural lens, beliefs, and biases and adapt my practice accordingly.	Work to dismantle systems of power and privilege that impact students, educators, and practice	Facilitate and co-create a safe, joyful, and rigorous personalized classroom environment that centers student voice and ownership	Cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships with each student, their family, and my colleagues	Maintain consistent and clear high expectations for all students, family, and staff
"Look Fors"					

5. Communities of Practice

A growing **culture of trust, support, and accountability** was evidenced by the communities of practice in Admin Council. In November, everyone in Admin Council was assigned to one of the nine communities of practice, with five to six members per community of practice along with a dedicated facilitator from the Admin Council Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team. The consistency of the communities of practice was well received—they were always mentioned as a "plus" by at least one participant in each monthly exit ticket survey. For example, in December and January, a few Admin Council members said they "appreciated the small group discussions around making actions steps for equity work" and the opportunity to have "great, rich, honest conversations"; one member in particular highlighted that it "feels like we are jelling/learning together." According to the most recent exit ticket survey data from February and March, 100% of the 18 participants said they have been building trust with other members in their group.

Apart from communities of practice, other opportunities to **build relational trust and psychological safety** were in place. This is evidenced by the large group check-ins conducted at the beginning of every meeting and the time allotted for engaging in affinity spaces. As a result of these community-building efforts, one Admin Council member reported appreciating the "opportunity to check-in with colleagues" during the January exit ticket.

The Why: Analysis of What Happened

In this section, I share an analysis of both the successes and the challenges I faced leading through each phase of the strategic project (Figure 17). First, I describe the overarching goal for each phase and rate how successful I was in achieving that goal. Next, I discuss my rationale behind the self-rating by including an analysis of why some components were successful while others were not. I conclude this section with speculations based on the analysis.

Figure 17

Summary Analysis of Each of the Strategic Project Phases

Strategic Project Phase	Goal/ Objective	Self Rating	Summary Analysis of the Successes and Challenges in Fulfilling the Goal/Objective of each Phase and Specific Components of my Theory of Action
Phase 0: Define the Problem of Practice	To learn about the history, political landscape, context, culture, and systems and structures to better define the problem of practice	Moderate Success	• Received strong support given my strategic project's focus on **building on the district's anti-racism efforts** • Conducted multiple one-on-one meetings with different stakeholders and gained a varied perspective about the district, including *defining a problem of practice* • Experienced difficulty accessing some stakeholders, especially students, caregivers, and teachers, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
Phase 1: Map the District's Anti-Racist Journey	To map the district's anti-racist journey to create a coherent strategy that would build on the district's equity/ anti-racism efforts	Success	• Learned about previous and current anti-racism efforts through the first-hand accounts of many of the people who led or participated in them; some of the efforts were also well documented in written sources • Created the *Timeline of the District's Anti-Racist Journey To-Date*, which highlighted the evolution of the district's journey and helped inform next steps

Figure 17 Continued

Summary Analysis of Each of the Strategic Project Phases

Strategic Project Phase	Goal/ Objective	Self Rating	Summary Analysis of the Successes and Challenges in Fulfilling the Goal/Objective of each Phase and Specific Components of my Theory of Action
Phase 2: Co-Develop a Coherent Strategy	To identify the strategic project and specific objectives that would help create the anti-racist professional development	Moderate Success	• Through an **intentional and inclusive process**, solicited the input and feedback from multiple stakeholders to co-develop a **coherent strategy**; collected limited input from students, caregivers, and teachers • Experienced difficulty developing a coherent strategy given the multiple anti-racism efforts; however, emphasis was placed on **aligning with, building on, and amplifying past and current efforts**
Phase 3: Implement the Strategy	To create the anti-racism professional development	*See the individual breakdown of the self-ratings and successes and challenges of each of the specific objectives below*	
	Objective 1: Co-create an anti-racism professional development plan	Moderate Success	• Co-created the *Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan* with Admin Council through a **transparent, intentional, and inclusive process**; although other stakeholder input was incorporated, it was limited • Experienced some difficulty determining the focus of the work due to multiple, competing district priorities
	Objective 2: Recruit a multi-stakeholder group to create anti-racism professional development	Limited Success	• Experienced difficulty **recruiting a multi-stakeholder group**, especially students, caregivers, and teachers for a variety of unanticipated challenges, which led to a critical pivot in the project • Recruited diverse members of Admin Council to be a part of the *Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team* to help develop the content and facilitate the monthly Admin Council sessions
	Objective 3: Convene a community of practice to pilot the anti-racism professional development	Success	• Increased **relational trust and psychological safety** by developing *Communities of Practice* within Admin Council • Co-created the *Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors"*, which outlined Admin Council's **shared vision** of anti-racist leadership in action • Intentionally designed the scope of the work due to the low meeting frequency

Phase 0: Define the Problem of Practice

During Phase 0, I had moderate success in achieving my goal. I learned about the history, political landscape, context, culture, and systems and structures within CPS to better define the equity-based problem of practice. However, I was not able to get any direct student input and

only limited teacher and caregiver perspectives. As previously mentioned, the district had made an explicit commitment to becoming an anti-racist district, and support for this commitment intensified following the national and local reckoning with racial violence and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, there was strong buy-in and support for a strategic project focused on anti-racism professional development. Almost every person I met with during my initial rounds of one-on-one meetings agreed that anti-racism, especially anti-racism professional development, should remain a district priority. Many described past and current efforts they knew about or participated in and shared links to resources used. They also named or connected me with other people. In just the first few months, I got to meet more than 35 and then 50 different stakeholders (e.g. teachers, caregivers, and school and district leaders) via Zoom and Google Meet. Through these meetings, I gained a varied perspective on the history, culture, and about some of the systems and structures at CPS. Equipped with this information, I was better able to define a problem of practice.

Although connecting online made it easier to connect with more people, it also made it challenging to connect with certain stakeholders, especially students, caregivers, and teachers. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the transition to mostly remote learning and working, I could only meet people by happenstance (e.g. because I participated in the same Zoom meeting) or through connections (e.g. one person connected me via email to another). I could not just knock on someone's door to check in—I had to make a formal request for time to meet via Zoom. This was especially burdensome in light of people's increased workload, particularly that of students, caregivers, and teachers. I often had to wait a few days or weeks before receiving a response or meeting confirmation, if I received one at all. The few teachers I spoke to felt that they could not commit to the additional time of a meeting (at least not at the moment), and the

few students I reached out to did not respond at all, despite multiple attempts. I therefore relied mostly on the BEB's *9 Barriers to Equity Report*, which included the input of over 200 CPS youth, caregivers, and educators, to incorporate their perspectives (Talusan, 2019).

Overall, I rate Phase 0 as moderately successful. I met with over 50 stakeholders and used the BEB Project's *9 Barriers to Equity Report* to ensure I included the perspectives of all the critical school stakeholders (students, caregivers, teachers, and school and district leaders) to better define the problem of practice. However, I was not able to get any direct student input and only limited teacher and caregiver perspectives. This was challenging since students, caregivers, and teachers are the stakeholders most impacted by the work and, therefore, their perspectives are most critical. One-on-one meetings with students, as well as more teachers and caregivers, could have provided additional pertinent information on the context of CPS and helped me better define the problem of practice. I also wonder if I could have gained additional stakeholder input through other channels like online surveys or through collaborations with other stakeholder-facing teams, such as the Family Engagement Department.

Phase 1: Map the District's Anti-Racist Journey

During Phase 1, I successfully achieved the goal of mapping the district's anti-racist journey. This was possible because I was able to collect rich information about the district's equity and anti-racism efforts from the numerous stakeholders I met during Phase 0 and from other sources who documented these efforts. Some of the stakeholders I met during Phase 0 were people who led or participated in the district's anti-racism efforts. As a result, I had the opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of past goals, participants involved, and resources used.

Besides participants, some of these efforts were also well documented by other sources, such as the district's communication team on the district's website, and by reporters from local newspapers like *The Cambridge Chronicle* and *Cambridge Day*. Given the plethora of sources, I had sufficient information to create the *Timeline of the District's Anti-Racist Journey To-Date*. This timeline, which highlighted the evolution of the district's main equity and anti-racism efforts, proved useful in informing next steps in the district's anti-racist journey.

Phase 2: Co-Develop a Coherent Strategy

I was moderately successful during Phase 2 in developing a coherent strategy for the creation of the district's anti-racist professional development, mainly because I was able to build on the successes from Phases 0 and 1. As noted above, during Phase 0 I met many of the people who had led or participated in previous and current anti-racism efforts. I kept in contact with them on account of their experience and expertise, and, during our follow-up meetings, I solicited their input and feedback on the professional development strategy. For example, six district leaders became members of my Personal Strategic Project Advisory Council and advised me throughout my residency. Countless others, including teachers, caregivers, and school and district leaders, served as honorary members and also provided feedback. Because of these multiple tiers of support, I was able to create a coherent strategy for anti-racism professional development through an inclusive and iterative process.

The timeline created during Phase 1 also bolstered the development of a coherent strategy. By identifying what professional development the district had already engaged in, the timeline provided critical information on how to best align with, build on, and amplify these

efforts in the future strategy. This increased coherence boosted the likelihood that the strategy would be supported, implemented, and sustained long-term.

The major challenge in creating the strategy was achieving coherence given the multiple efforts and frameworks the district had adopted over the years. The district held annual colloquiums, brought in guest speakers such as Dr. Tyrone Howard and Dena Simmons, engaged in year-long talks on *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond, and held professional development sessions conducted by Dr. Darnisa Amante from the Disruptive Education Equity Project, to name a few. At various points, the district introduced multiple equity-based professional development frameworks, including *Universal Design for Learning* and *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support*, among others. However, some of these efforts were inconsistent, not sustained, or interrupted by the shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, different school and district leaders gravitated towards different frameworks. Overall, these challenges made it difficult to agree on what specific anti-racism efforts and frameworks should be incorporated into the future strategy and showed why a coherent strategy was necessary.

Phase 3: Implement the Strategy

Phase 3 contained multiple objectives; as a result, I experienced mixed success. I analyze each objective separately for the sake of clarity.

Objective 1: Co-create an anti-racism professional development plan. Overall, I was moderately successful in creating an anti-racism professional development plan, specifically the

Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan. I succeeded in large part because I engaged in a transparent, intentional, and inclusive process with Admin Council. I shared the responses from the *November 2020 Professional Development Reflection Survey* and the monthly exit tickets with the team so that they too had access to the data. In addition, I asked them for their input and conducted additional feedback rounds with them once an initial draft was created. By intentionally incorporating them throughout the process, I co-created a plan responsive to their collective needs and ideas. Consequently, I obtained sufficient buy-in to support the implementation of the *Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan* during the future monthly Admin Council sessions.

Despite this success, there were challenges. I had a hard time getting other stakeholder feedback and determining the focus of this work given the district's multiple priorities. Due to the limited capacity of other stakeholders, the *Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan* was primarily based on feedback from members of Admin Council. The input of other stakeholders was incorporated; however, it was limited to just a few teachers and caregivers. The second challenge was determining the focus of this work. Admin Council was often split into two parts: a chunk of time was dedicated for anti-racism professional development and the rest was reserved for preparing for the expansion of in-person learning. In my opinion, these are not two competing priorities, as anti-racism should be the lens through which districts plan for any type of learning. However, because people do not usually view the work through this lens, the two are often thought of as two different priorities. Consequently, the greatest challenge the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team experienced in planning the Admin Council sessions was making the connection between the two more explicit.

Objective 2: Recruit a multi-stakeholder group to create the anti-racism professional development. As of March 2021, I only experienced limited success in recruiting a multi-stakeholder group to create the anti-racism professional development. I created an application process to recruit a multi-stakeholder team; however, I never launched the application, for two main reasons: 1) personal reasons people cited; and, 2) the high probability of another abrupt school closure. As highlighted during Phase 0, I had difficulty reaching students, caregivers, and teachers. When I initially shared the idea of recruiting a multi-stakeholder group to create anti-racism professional development, some stakeholders said they did not want to join another multi-stakeholder working group because they did not "trust" that their ideas were taken seriously by district leadership (caregiver) and they felt "burned out" (teacher). Meanwhile, other stakeholders, specifically those of color, said it was frustrating to engage in what felt like the "same conversations about race over and over" (school leader). Another reason cited was that people felt too "overwhelmed" to participate, especially without compensation (teacher on behalf of students). People did not want to participate in what appeared to be yet another anti-racist initiative if there was no guarantee of improved outcomes.

Despite these obstacles, I still felt cautiously optimistic that some stakeholders would sign up; however, the high probability of another abrupt school closure persuaded me to wait until spring to recruit a multi-stakeholder group. I initially planned to launch the application process during November and December. Coincidentally, there were also large spikes in the number of COVID-19 cases during this time, which threatened to trigger another shutdown. This uncertainty, coupled with the personal concerns people cited and the upcoming two-week winter break, led me to momentarily pivot away from recruiting a multi-stakeholder group to what was in my locus of control—working with members of Admin Council.

Although I was not successful in recruiting a multi-stakeholder group, I was successful in recruiting diverse members from Admin Council to be a part of the Anti-Racism Professional Development Team. Admin Council had previously participated in anti-racism professional development; as a result, there was buy-in and support for restarting this work. Many of the people who signed up were currently leading anti-racism efforts at their school sites or with their teams. They wanted to share best practices and to shape the content of future sessions. Meanwhile, others wanted the opportunity to facilitate anti-racism professional development. Initially, only nine people signed up to be part of the team; however, after I engaged in active recruitment to diversify the team, the team grew to fourteen members with diverse racial identities and roles.

Overall, I experienced limited success in recruiting a diverse multi-stakeholder team, which led to a critical pivot in my strategic project. Specifically, I decided to momentarily transition from intentionally recruiting a diverse multi-stakeholder group to intentionally recruiting a diverse Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team within Admin Council to help create the anti-racism professional development. Although this pivot diverged from the original objective, it spurred the creation of the anti-racism professional development and the communities of practice (Objective 3). Furthermore, it allowed us to pilot-test what conditions, resources, and supports would be necessary to foster a culture of trust, support, and accountability once a multi-stakeholder group was convened in the future.

Objective 3: Convene a community of practice to pilot the anti-racism professional development. With the support of the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team (Objective 2), we were successful in convening communities of practice within Admin Council

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to pilot the anti-racism professional development. Admin Council is composed of approximately 60 school and district leaders. Due to the high number of people who signed up to be part of the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team, we were able to divide Admin Council into nine communities of practice of six to seven people each. Given the smaller size of the groups, this allowed all members of the team to participate in discussion, which deepened relational trust and psychological safety within each community of practice. Although each community of practice engaged in their own discussions, they all participated in the same connecting activity, independent work, and protocols, which solidified a collective vision and sense of trust. As a result of this collegiality, we were able to draft the *Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors,"* which outlined our shared vision of anti-racist leadership in action.

Convening as a community of practice and co-creating the Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors" diverged from what school districts traditionally do when engaging in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work. However, the difference in approach was one reason for the project's success. When school districts decide to focus on DEI work, a common approach is to hire an external consultant or organization to conduct an equity audit and to provide recommendations and professional development based on the assessment. Another common approach is to adopt and implement externally created professional development. These are two great approaches for organizations new to anti-racism work or in flux, but not for organizations like CPS which have made an explicit commitment to racial equity, received external anti-racism professional development, and set anti-racist initiatives both at the district and school levels. Instead, we sought to create professional development that leveraged the internal experiences and expertise.

Leveraging the internal experience and expertise of the Admin Council to create the *Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors,"* as opposed to hiring external support, pushed the team to use

their individual and collective knowledge, skillsets, and power to transform the district into an anti-racist district. The co-creation process allowed multiple members to bring in their experiences and expertise and develop a shared vision for anti-racism leadership. Collective ownership of the work and relational trust and psychological safety flourished as a result. Ideally, this would also translate into all members holding themselves and each other accountable for implementing the *Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors."*

The main challenge in convening the communities of practice within Admin Council was determining the scope of the work due to the low meeting frequency. Admin Council only met once a month, and the anti-racism professional development session was usually limited to approximately two hours since other topics warranted coverage (e.g. planning for the expansion of in-person learning). According to exit ticket surveys, it often felt like there was "never enough time" or things were "rushed." Consequently, the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team had to be strategic about what common experiences the large group engaged in, what discussions and protocols the small communities of practice conducted, and what individual and small group reflection opportunities were provided. Creating such intentional sessions, specifically through an iterative process, required an intense amount of planning and coordination. For example, February's two-hour Admin Council session required more than 24 hours of planning, including four Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team meetings.

In summary, I experienced mixed success in the different phases of the strategic project. In each phase, I achieved at least some level of success because I was able to build on the successes of former phases (e.g. the information collected from Phase 0 was critical in achieving the objective of Phase 1). However, I also experienced challenges in each phase, particularly Phase 3. Recruiting a multi-stakeholder group to create the anti-racism professional development

was supposed to be the core of my strategic project. From the start, I knew it would be difficult to recruit a multi-stakeholder group due to the impact of COVID-19 and the racial reckoning, but I remained optimistic because I believed in the importance of involving the stakeholders most impacted by the work. Once I pivoted, I realized I could still achieve the original objective; however, the plan and timeline might look different. This made me wonder if I could have ultimately achieved the objective, or experienced greater success, had I made the pivot earlier. In addition, I wonder what impact the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning had on the strategic project.

Implications

Implications for Self

During my residency at Cambridge Public Schools (CPS), I learned three main lessons: 1) to always keep *my why* central; 2) meet people where they are; and, 3) to be unafraid to pivot and implement creative solutions. Intuitively, I believed in these three principles, but my residency cemented their importance in leadership. Below, I share the three lessons I learned, including their implications for my future role as an instructional leader focused on equity.

One of the first lessons I learned during my residency was the importance of keeping *my why* central. As mentioned in the introduction, *my why* is to improve the opportunities and outcomes of all students and their families, especially those traditionally underserved, by centering their input and perspectives. However, during some meetings, I would get so distracted by the multiple perspectives shared that I ended up agreeing to a decision that did not align with

or even contradicted *my why*. For example, in one of my initial consultancy sessions, I asked the group for feedback on how to recruit a diverse multi-stakeholder group to create the anti-racism professional development through a transparent, intentional, and inclusive process. By the end of the conversation, the main suggestion was to tap a few district leaders to create it. This was not a "bad" idea per se—the district and school leaders would have formed an all-star group, given their expertise in professional development and in anti-racism work. The issue was that the suggestion did not focus on incorporating the perspectives of students and families.

This and similar experiences brought home what my Ed.L.D. professors, mentors, and research on leadership highlighted: if I want to lead with *my why*, I need to keep it central. To keep *my why* central, I plan to explicitly share it with all my colleagues, especially my team, so they understand why I do what I do and so they can hold me accountable to it. Secondly, I plan to share how the objectives or goals of my current work align with *my why*. If I cannot draw a direct connection, this will serve as an accountability check that I should not proceed with the work or that I should pivot until it does. Thirdly, to ensure that I do not lose sight of *my why* once I am engaged in the work, especially when it gets difficult and complex, I plan to ask myself and colleagues: "Is this an equitable practice or leading to improved outcomes for students and families, especially for those traditionally underserved and unheard?" If the answer to either of these questions is no, then it is my responsibility to broach the subject. My goal in being clear and upfront about *my why* is to gain the requisite trust, support, and accountability to keep equity at the forefront of every leadership decision I make, so that all students—especially those traditionally underserved—experience a rigorous, joyous, and culturally responsive education.

A second lesson learned was that leading equity work means meeting people where they are at, specifically their current capacity for and commitment to equity work and their level of

trust and psychological safety. In my research, I was reminded that people only change at the rate of change that they can manage (Heifetz, 2009) and that they will resist and oppose change if there is a lack of trust, psychological safety (Edmonson, 2019; Bryk and Schneider, 2003; Leadership Academy, 2020) and connection to their work (Lencioni, 2002). These past few months have been extremely difficult on many fronts, from ongoing racial violence to the COVID-19 pandemic to political turmoil. During almost every single meeting, people expressed feeling "overwhelmed" and talked about how one or several of these factors was dramatically impacting their lives. Engaging in equity work requires ongoing introspection and change, and, given the current social unrest and people's individual contexts, some people had little to no capacity or commitment. Their capacity and commitment were further diminished if there was no trust or psychological safety among the team or if they saw no connection to their current work.

The importance of meeting people where they are was evident during one of the meetings I facilitated with the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team. At first, the March Admin Council session objective was for the communities of practice to engage in a consultancy protocol on an equity-based problem of practice. However, the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team mentioned that we had not yet built sufficient trust and psychological safety as a group to engage in such a protocol. Instead of conducting a traditional consultancy protocol, which requires the presenter to be vulnerable, share a dilemma and request feedback from the group, we decided to engage in a modified version of the *What? So What? Now What? Protocol* by the School Reform Initiative (n.d.), which also requires the presenter to share a dilemma but focuses more on participants learning about, connecting to, and supporting one another's work. During our debrief session, all facilitators in attendance reported that this was "the most impactful" session yet.

Given my future focus on leading equity work, I plan to meet people where they are at by building on their capacity, commitment, level of trust and psychological safety, and their current work. First, I plan to conduct a survey, focus groups, and/or one-on-one conversations with the stakeholders impacted by the work (e.g. students, caregivers, educators, school leaders, and district leaders). In this data collection phase, I will stress that our commitment to equity is nonnegotiable; however, I will ask them to outline what resources and supports they need to fulfill this commitment. I will also ask what their current level of trust and psychological safety is and what can be done to improve it. Next, I will ask them to share an overview of their current work and to highlight any specific equity-based initiatives. Lastly, I will use the data, with the support of key members from each stakeholder group, to co-create a plan for increasing the capacity, trust, psychological safety, and coherence among individuals to achieve the collective goal of equity.

The third transformative lesson I learned was to be unafraid to pivot and implement creative solutions. There is no one way to do anti-racism work. Intellectually, I understood this; however, when I began to brainstorm ideas for carrying out my strategic project and creating anti-racism professional development, I could not help thinking: "What is the *best* anti-racist professional development out there, and how can I get it? That's the answer!" During this initial research stage, I discovered multiple high-quality research-based frameworks, assessments, audits, webinars, modules, and books used by external organizations and districts. I learned about some of the work that CPS and individual school leaders, teachers, and community members had done as well. All the work that I read about, heard about, and saw was amazing, but the approaches varied. This finding led to a realization: I could think creatively about what

anti-racism professional development looks like, what process can be used to create it, and who can be involved and how.

This eye-opening experience has taught me not to limit my future leadership actions to what has traditionally been done, especially if I plan to disrupt the current barriers to equity and to push myself and my colleagues to be innovative. I will still review best practices and research-based initiatives, connect with people who have done and are currently doing the work, collect input and feedback from those most impacted by the work, and build on past and current initiatives. However, I will also encourage and empower the team to use the information they have learned to try something new or different when it has the potential to positively impact our students and families, especially those traditionally underserved.

Implications for Site

Drawing on the successes and challenges I experienced in my strategic project, there are three main implications I recommend CPS consider as they continue in their journey towards becoming an anti-racist district: 1) communicate and implement a shared vision for how the district will operate as an anti-racist district; 2) create transparent, intentional, and inclusive processes for continuously and authentically incorporating the input and feedback of everyone, but especially of the most impacted stakeholders; and 3) provide the resources, support, and conditions necessary for building sufficient capacity, relational trust and psychological safety to engage in anti-racism work. During my residency, these were critical components of the "then" section of my Theory of Action; given the progress we've made, they can continue to serve as critical steps in the district's anti-racist journey.

Throughout this section, I discuss the Chief Equity Officer; therefore, prior to sharing the implications, I want to first clarify how I view this role. The Chief Equity Officer can be a critical leader in organizing anti-racism work but they should not be the sole owner, nor should the responsibility of "fixing" equity issues for the entire organization or even for other individuals fall on this person. The Chief Equity Officer, like anyone serving in a senior leadership role, is responsible for setting the vision, theory of action, and strategy for the work. But the work is everyone's work. Every single person in the organization must commit to fulfilling the district's anti-racist vision.

The first implication I suggest CPS consider is to communicate and implement a shared vision for how the district will operate as an anti-racist district. Throughout the strategic project, one of my main tasks was increasing coherence, and thereby increasing support and accountability, which was a challenge because of the multiple frameworks used and competing priorities. For example, during initial Admin Council planning sessions, significant time was spent debating whether to use the framework *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond, *Universal Design for Learning*, or *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support*. To avoid this dilemma, increase coherence, and work towards a shared anti-racist vision, I recommend the Chief Equity Officer serve as a key member of the Superintendent's Cabinet and Teaching and Learning Team to collectively select one vision and one corresponding framework to anchor all future anti-racism work, including the design of professional development and accountability systems.

In order to infuse the anti-racist vision into the different structures and systems of the district, I also recommend the Chief Equity Officer work in close partnership with the Superintendent and the Cabinet. First, they can view the *Timeline of the District's Anti-Racist*

Journey to-Date and the results from the *Professional Development Reflection Survey* to learn about past and recent anti-racism efforts and what professional development, tools, and frameworks school and district leaders have found effective. Once a vision and corresponding framework is selected, the team can use research-based resources like the *PELP Coherence Framework*, the *Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment*, and the *Racial Equity Stages Framework* to determine what equity-based and coherent strategy, and what professional development and accountability systems, can be used to implement and support the vision long-term.

Second, I recommend CPS create transparent, intentional, and inclusive processes for incorporating the input and feedback of everyone, but especially of the most impacted stakeholders. In accordance with *my why*, my strategic project posited that those most impacted by the problem should also be involved in designing the solution. Therefore, I relied on partnerships with all stakeholder groups (students, caregivers, educators, and school and district leaders). Each stakeholder I met with shared valuable context, ideas, and feedback, which helped better define and strengthen the goals, implementation, and outcomes of the strategic project. For example, as a member of Admin Council, I got to continually solicit and incorporate the input and feedback of its members to create the *Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors."* I only wish I had had a similar avenue for accessing the perspective of the stakeholders most impacted by the work, especially students, caregivers, and educators of color.

One next step for creating transparent, intentional, and inclusive processes for integrating the perspective of students, caregivers, and educators into anti-racism work is for CPS to build on this strategic project and recruit a multi-stakeholder group. Specifically, CPS can review the research conducted for this strategic project (i.e. Review of Knowledge for Action), update the

Draft Application for the Multi-Stakeholder Team, and leverage its Family Engagement

Department to conduct outreach. One recruited, the multi-stakeholder group can also help build

additional processes.

Third, I suggest CPS provide the resources and support necessary for building the

requisite capacity, relational trust, and psychological safety for different stakeholders to engage

in anti-racism work. In one-on-one interviews with stakeholders, people shared several major

concerns: not knowing how to start or what to do next, feeling too overwhelmed to take on such

a critical task, especially without support, and insufficient trust among stakeholders to effectively

collaborate. To help build the capacity, relational trust, and psychological safety necessary for

school and district teams to engage in anti-racism work, I suggest CPS hire a team of equity

coaches.

The focus of the equity coaches would be to purposefully build the capacity of leaders to

engage in anti-racism work. The members of the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Team

served as provisional equity coaches as they helped design and facilitate the anti-racism

professional development for Admin Council; hiring formal equity coaches to support district

and school leaders would be an appropriate next step. Equity coaches would work closely with

the Chief Equity Officer, who would also strategize with the Superintendent and Assistant

Superintendents (i.e. Teaching and Learning Team) to design the district-wide professional

development based on observed need. For those schools that already have equity teams, equity

coaches would be responsible for supporting the leadership team and ensuring alignment with

the district's overarching goals. Overall, the equity coaches' job would be to equip and empower

everyone to be anti-racist leaders and achieve the district's anti-racist vision.

Implications for Sector

Like CPS, districts across the nation are making an explicit commitment to becoming anti-racist. However, as highlighted by this strategic project, becoming an anti-racist district takes more than just a verbal commitment—it also takes a long-term commitment to action. For school districts, this commitment to action means equipping and empowering all staff with the time, resources, and support they need to engage in their anti-racist journey. It also means districts holding all staff accountable to providing *all* students with a rigorous, joyous, and culturally responsive education. Drawing on the implications for myself and my site, I share some general considerations for districts in their long-term commitment to anti-racist leadership and action.

To help equip and empower their staff to engage in anti-racist leadership and action, district leadership can allocate time, resources, and support to their staff. First, I recommend the district assess where their staff are, including their current capacity for and commitment to leading anti-racism work, their level of trust and psychological safety to engage in this work with one another, and the possible impact the answers to these questions may have on the current work they are doing. This information could be collected through multiple methods: one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and surveys with all stakeholders (students, caregivers, educators, and school and district leadership). Next, driven by the input and feedback of—or even in direct collaboration with—the stakeholders most impacted by the work, the information collected could be used to develop a coherent strategy. Districts could thus determine what time, resources, and support they can allocate (e.g. quarterly district-wide anti-racism professional development and training for all staff, direct coaching support to school and district leaders from the Chief Equity Officer, equity coaches, etc.).

In addition to providing time, resources, and support for engaging in their anti-racist leadership journey, districts should also hold themselves and their staff accountable to producing equitable student outcomes. When districts make a commitment to anti-racism, the goal is that one day, all students, regardless of their race and other identities, will receive a rigorous, joyous, and culturally responsive education. To attain these equitable outcomes, all staff must commit to being anti-racist leaders; in other words, engaging in anti-racism work must be nonnegotiable. As highlighted by the *Racial Equity Stages Framework*, this accountability is critical because, when the work gets difficult and complex, for instance when privileged families question the purpose of equity initiatives, some staff might capitulate and revert to the status quo. By making anti-racism work nonnegotiable and holding all staff accountable to uphold this commitment, districts can ensure that, one day, all students will experience equitable opportunities and outcomes.

Regardless of what specific data and tools are used to hold staff accountable, it is important that the information collected be continuously reviewed and used to improve outcomes for students. For example, data could include both quantitative and qualitative data, such as student suspension data and listening interviews with students. Meanwhile, tools used might include public data dashboards or private staff evaluations. The data, tools, and even the initiatives themselves may change throughout the district's anti-racist journey; however, what must remain the same is the commitment to achieving equitable student outcomes. The district must continuously monitor the data and make changes to the initiatives, resources, support, and even the staff if they are not leading to improved student outcomes.

Conclusion

As a Doctoral Resident at CPS, I had the opportunity to support CPS in its journey to becoming an anti-racist district. This experience also allowed me to take the next step in my own journey as an anti-racist leader. My strategic project focused on creating anti-racist professional development. My project could have been a technical solution with a short timeline. I could have taken the common approach of simply adopting external professional development and implementing it at CPS. However, my initial residency experiences at CPS taught me that creating anti-racism professional development needed to be a unique process, one that embodied the spirit of "by CPS for CPS".

When I began my residency, the district was at a critical juncture in its anti-racist journey, having engaged in numerous anti-racism efforts over the past few years, including professional development. Multiple internal leaders, from students to teachers to school and district leaders, had led or were leading anti-racism work throughout the district. Thus, it was essential the anti-racism professional development leverage this internal experience and expertise. To achieve this objective, my Theory of Action for this strategic project focused on four interconnected processes: 1) co-creating a coherent strategy; 2) recruiting a diverse multi-stakeholder group; 3) providing the appropriate resources and support and, 4) building a culture of trust, support, and accountability.

Although I was not able to complete all elements of my strategic project, CPS is well equipped to take the next step in creating the anti-racism professional development. The work that was done thus far has laid the groundwork for the creation of anti-racism professional development. In collaboration with multiple stakeholders throughout CPS, I created the *Timeline*

of the District's Anti-Racist Journey To-Date and the *Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan*. I recruited the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team to facilitate the communities of practice in Admin Council. I led Admin Council in the creation of the *Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors,"* the roadmap for the anti-racism professional development. In sum, CPS is poised to take the next step in its journey to becoming an anti-racist school district by creating and implementing its own anti-racism professional development.

Dismantling anti-racism requires a long-term commitment to action. The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the nation's racial reckoning, at once raised the stakes for anti-racism work and impacted its context. For example, stakeholders throughout CPS supported the creation of anti-racism professional development; however, it was hard to recruit people due to the pandemic. As people return to in-person learning and working, I believe it will be easier to recruit a multi-stakeholder group to create the anti-racism professional development; however, I also wonder if the transition back to "normal" may cause people to lose interest in anti-racism work. In a few months—or, in a worst-case scenario, in a few years—we will be out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the ongoing racial pandemic will have the same fate. However, if everyone takes deliberate action towards becoming actively anti-racist individuals, we will be one step closer to producing an anti-racist district and society.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Key Data from the 2018-19 District Outcomes Report

	Grade 3 Literacy (% Met or Exceeded)	Grade 8 Math (% Met or Exceeded)	AP & Honors Enrollment (% Enrollment / % 3+ AP Score)	Chronic Absenteeism (%)
Average of All Students	68	55	80/81	17.6
White	80	72	91/89	13.8%
Asian & Pacific Islander	80	76	94/74	17.5%
African-American/Black	44	29	67/ 48	19.2%
Hispanic/Latino	59	38	68/72	24.9%
Students with Disabilities	41	18	42/*	*
English Learners	30	*	*	*
Economically Disadvantaged	48	30	64/56	*

Appendix B: CPS's Equity and Racial Equity Statements

Equity means that each student, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or socioeconomic status will have access to the opportunities, resources, and support they need to attain their full potential.

Racial Equity means the absence of institutional and structural barriers experienced by people based on race or color, that impede access, opportunities, and results.

Achieving racial equity requires proactive and continuous investment in communities of color, who have endured centuries of systemic oppression. CPS is committed to dismantling structures rooted in White privilege, to hearing and elevating underrepresented voices, and recognizing and eliminating bias.

Appendix C: Summary of 9 Barriers to Equity and 12 Commitments (BEB Project)

BEB Report	Summary
9 Barriers to Equity	1. Inequitable School and Classroom Experiences 2. Lack of Focus on Relationships 3. Youth are Not Centered 4. Educators of Color are Not Being Valued, Centered, and Supported 5. Whiteness, Privilege, and Bias 6. Power in Decision-Making is Inequitably Distributed 7. Existing Structures and Practices Perpetuate Inequities 8. Lack of Coherence has Disproportionate and Inequitable Impacts 9. Equity Work has Lacked Commitment, Coherence, and Accountability
12 Commitments	1. Transparent process for investigating and responding to reports of racist behavior 2. Investment in healing spaces and mental health supports 3. Mandatory anti-racism professional learning 4. Audit school-based discipline policies and practices 5. Center youth voice 6. Invest in youth, family, and educator councils 7. Create new Anti-Racist Statement 8. Create Office of Anti-Racism and Equity 9. Audit district and school-wide policies and practices using the Anti-Racist Statement 10. Audit K–12 curriculum and assessments 11. Host community conversations/trainings 12. Create a Community Accountability Plan

Appendix D: Snapshot of the Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment

Mission/Vision

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
System leaders do not recognize or indicate equity as relevant to their work	System leaders recognize and indicate the importance of tackling inequities and are contemplating next steps, including soliciting input from stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community members) on a vision/mission for the system	System leaders recognize and indicate the importance of tackling inequities and are in the process of developing a shared and collaborative vision/mission grounded in equity	System leaders have developed a collaborative vision/mission grounded in equity and have cultivated a shared understanding of and commitment to the vision/mission among stakeholders	System leaders have integrated equity in stated mission and vision which are actively being used to guide the system's policies, programs, and decisions

COMMENTS:

Leadership

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
System leaders do not openly acknowledge or examine their identity (race, language, ethnicity, ableness, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.), privilege, biases, and assumptions nor how these impact their decisions and actions; System leaders do not openly express a commitment to equity	System leaders are open to the idea of examining their identity, privilege, biases, and assumptions and may do so in an informal or inconsistent manner; System leaders express a limited understanding of equity and/or its importance	System leaders publicly model a consistent examination of their identity, privilege, biases, and assumptions; System leaders explicitly communicate their commitment to equity and willingness to take action in service of a more equitable system	System leaders create opportunities for others to examine their identity, privilege, biases, and assumptions and facilitate conversations about equity within the context of identity; System leaders communicate a unified commitment to creating a more equitable system and encourage others to join in	System leaders consistently provide forums for others to examine and discuss their identity, privilege, biases and assumptions; System leaders have created an environment where others take initiative and action toward a more equitable system

COMMENTS:

Source: New York City Leadership Academy (2020). *Equity self-assessment*. Retrieved from:

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Appendix E: List of Additional Resources Used

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Appendix F: Timeline of Key Activities During Each of the Strategic Project Phases

Strategic Project Phase	Timeline
Phase 0: Define the Problem	**June–Sept** • Conducted one-on-one empathy listening sessions with different stakeholders (e.g. caregivers, teachers, partners, school and district leadership) • Reviewed critical district documents (e.g. District Strategic Plan, budget, etc.) • Researched literature on equity/anti-racism • Observed different stakeholder meetings (e.g. Cabinet, Teaching and Learning Team, Principal, School Committee, City Council meetings, COVID-19 Task Force meeting, etc.) **Aug-Sept** • Defined the problem of practice
Phase 1: Assess the District's Anti-Racist Journey	**June–Sept** • Created a map of the different stakeholder groups and key members, groups, and teams to consult with **Sept–Oct** • Conducted a landscape audit of the different equity/ anti-racist initiatives taking place throughout the district • Created a timeline of the district-wide anti-racist initiatives **Nov** • Drafted a crosswalk of the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Competencies and other equity/ anti-racist frameworks used by the District (e.g. Culturally Responsive Teaching, Universal Design for Learning, Barriers to Equity, etc.)
Phase 2: Co-Develop a coherent Strategy	**June–Present** • Conducted research to learn about effective equity/anti-racist practices, models, tools, and frameworks **Aug–Oct** • Used the problem of practice to determine the strategic project and strategy **Sept–Present** • Consulted with leaders from other districts conducting equity/ anti-racism work **Oct–Nov** • Created the *Anti-Racism Professional Development Reflection Survey* to help inform futures anti-racism professional development**;** completed by 93% of Admin Council **Oct–Present** • Convened with Personal Strategic Project Advisory Council (1x/month) and Teaching and Learning Team to consult on strategic project and strategy (weekly) **Nov–Dec** • Co-created a coherent strategy on how to create the anti-racist professional development and modules • Co-created the Admin Council *Anti-Racism Professional Learning Plan* (e.g. areas of focus, objectives, etc.) **Jan** • Shared the *Spring 2020 Anti-Racism Professional Development Plan* with Admin Council **Jan–Feb** • Co-created a strategy as to how to incorporate (additional) student, caregiver

	perspectives
Phase 3: Implement the Strategy	**Nov** ● Recruited members of Admin Council to form the Anti-Racism Professional Learning Planning Team (2x/month) **Oct–Nov** ● Created an application process and corresponding budget to recruit a multi-stakeholder team to design the anti-racism professional development **Dec** ● Reinstituted Communities of Practice within Admin Council to pilot anti-racism professional learning sessions **Jan** ● Co-created and co-taught a lesson with a teacher to get student perspectives (~80 students) **Jan–Feb** ● Co-created the Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors"

Appendix G: Overview of Typical Meeting Schedule

Type of Meeting	Frequency (average)
Cabinet	1–2 per week, if needed
Teaching and Learning Team	1–2 per week, if needed
Principal	1–2 per week, if needed
Admin Council	1 per month
Assistant Principals, Deans, and School Operations Managers Team	1 per month
Special topic or with specific stakeholders (e.g. COVID-19 Taskforce, Family Policy Council)	4–5 per week
School Committee	Every week June–Oct; traditionally, 2 per month
One-to-one empathy listening sessions with different stakeholders	5–6 per week
Check-in-meetings with the Superintendent	1 per week

Appendix H: Sample of Presentation Slides Used During Strategic Project Consultancies

Fall 2020

OBJ	PURPOSE	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
1	• Support the new Director of the Office of Equity, once hired. • Highlight the district's journey to becoming an anti-racist district. • Inform the new District Strategic Plan	• Use the data and information collected through 1-on-1s, district documents, etc. to create a comprehensive timeline of the different district-wide anti-racist initiatives- in progress	• Use the data and information collected through 1-on-1s, district/school documents, and surveys to catalogue school, parent, and community initiatives- in progress	Create a comprehensive description of the district's journey to becoming an anti-racist district and share with new Director. Create a sharing of practices
2	• Support the new Director of the Office of Equity, once hired. • Inform the new District Strategic Plan	• Convene a Personal Strategic Project Advisory Council to help inform strategy	• Draft a clear, comprehensive, and cohesive strategy, specifically how to embed this work in larger systems and structures within the District (e.g. District Strategic Plan, Cabinet, Admin Council, School Improvement Plans, etc) using the PELP Coherence Framework	Draft a clear, comprehensive and cohesive strategy for how CPS can engage in its journey as an anti-racist district

Consultancy Protocol (modified from SRI)

Consultancy Protocol (modified from SRI)
1. **Strategic Project Overview Presentation (5 min)**
   - Introduction
   - Problem of Practice
   - Objectives + Timeline + (Budget Proposal)
2. **Clarifying Questions (5 min)**
3. **Probing Questions (10 min)**
4. **Group Discussion (20 min)**
   - Are these the "right" objectives?--> coherent, systemic, & sustainable approach
   - What other technical components should be considered?
   - What other adaptive components should be considered?
   - Implications and/or connections to other District work?
5. **Debrief + Next Steps (5 min)**

Appendix I: Snapshot of the Crosswalk Between the Anti-Racism Competencies and Mindsets and Other Frameworks

Purpose: Make an explicit connection as to how professional development on anti-racism can lead to changes in mindset and practice and ultimately, improved student academic and social-emotional learning.

Vision: The Cambridge Public Schools, in partnership with our families and community, will provide _all students_ with rigorous, joyful, and culturally responsive learning as well as the social, emotional, and academic supports each student needs to achieve their goals and post-secondary success as engaged community members.

Source	SELF	SYSTEMS	PRACTICE		
	SELF	SYSTEMS	LEARNING CONDITIONS	RELATIONSHIPS	HIGH EXPECTATIONS
Competencies & Mindsets	I will: • Continuously reflect on my cultural lens, beliefs, and biases and adapt my practice accordingly.	I will: • Work to dismantle systems of power and privilege that impact students, educators, and practice	I will: • Facilitate and co-create a safe, joyful, and rigorous personalized classroom environment that centers student voice and ownership	I will: • Cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships with each student, their family, and my colleagues	I will: • Maintain consistent and clear high expectations for all students
9 Barriers to Equity	• Whiteness, privilege, and bias	• Educators of Color are not being valued, centered, and supported • Power in decision-making is inequitably distributed • Existing structures and practices perpetuate inequities • Equity work has lacked commitment, coherence, and accountability	• Youth are not centered • Inequitable school and classroom experiences	• Lack of focus on relationships • Lack of coherence has disproportionate and inequitable impacts	• Inequitable school and classroom experiences
Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain (Z. Hammond, 2015) Ready for Rigor Framework	Awareness (Chapter 4) • Understand sociopolitical context • Unpack implicit bias • Know and own your cultural lens • Build your cross-cultural background knowledge • Manage own social-emotional	Awareness • Understand sociopolitical context, specifically structural racialization	Learning Partnerships • Give feedback in emotionally intelligent ways Information Processing • Adapt learning based on the student's culture • Couple all new information with existing funds of knowledge	Learning Partnerships • Establish an authentic connection with students based on trust and respect • Familiarize self with common actions/conditions that make students feel unsafe • Reduce students' social-emotional	Learning Partnerships • Hold students to high standards • Provide both care and push (warm demander) • Help students become self-directed independent learners Community Building

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Appendix J: Snapshot of Anti-Racism Professional Development Reflection Survey

Onward! ⌄ ⋮

To support you in your journey to becoming an anti- racist educator and leader, what professional learning, support, and/or accountability do you need from district leadership? If not applicable, please indicate N/A.

1) Continue *

Long answer text

2) Start *

Long answer text

3) Stop/Change *

Long answer text

A possible next step is to engage as a network/community of practice of district and school *
leaders engaging in equity, culturally responsive instruction, and anti-racism work to meet,
exchange ideas, and provide each other with feedback. Please indicate your interest in
participating. ***Please check ALL THAT APPLY***.

☐ I would like to listen, learn, and participate

☐ I would like to host a session and share a best practice or initiative.

☐ I would like to participate in a consultancy or problem of practice protocol to receive feedback and ideas o…

☐ Other…
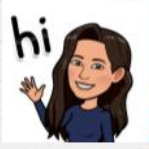
APPLICATION PROCESS

Note: This application was created using the original goals of CPS' 5 Anti-Racist Initiatives, the 9 Barriers to Equity, input from multiple one-to-ones with different stakeholders including parents, teachers, parent liaisons, principals, district leaders, and school partners, and was inspired by the Equity Collaborative Application.

Directions: Please complete this application by either:
- Completing this written application form;
- Submitting a video (the video submission should address all of the same questions as the written application and includes the same word limit) by Dec 14 to Leslie Jimenez (ljimenez@cpsd.us); or,
- Signing up to conduct an open conversation by emailing Leslie Jimenez (ljimenez@cpsd.us)

Application Form Questions

1. Please tell us about yourself, including your identities (e.g. race, ethnicity and gender, etc.) and affiliation to CPS (e.g. student, caregiver, educator, etc.), and what influenced your decision to apply. (500 words max)

2. Please tell us what "anti-racism" and "racial equity" mean to you. In your experience, what does "anti-racism" and "racial equity" currently mean in Cambridge Public Schools compared to what should it mean? And, what systems of support and accountability should be made available? (500 words max)

3. Please share 1-2 examples of previous work and/or projects that highlight your commitment to supporting yourself and others build capacity to address inequities.

Appendix L: Snapshot of the Student Lesson

Appendix N: Admin Council Anti-Racist Leadership "Look Fors" (Complete Version)

	SELF	SYSTEMS	PRACTICE		
	SELF	**SYSTEMS**	**LEARNING CONDITIONS**	**RELATIONSHIPS**	**HIGH EXPECTATIONS**
BRIEF DESCRIPTION	Continuously reflect on my cultural lens, beliefs, and biases and adapt my practice accordingly	Work to dismantle systems of power and privilege that impact students, educators, and practice	Facilitate and co-create a safe, joyful, and rigorous personalized classroom environment that centers student voice and ownership	Cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships with each student, their family, and my colleagues	Maintain consistent and clear high expectations for all students, family, and staff
"LOOK FORS" As an actively anti-racist district/ school Leaders, I... **Note:** This document is intended to support leaders with implementing the District's Anti-Racist Vision and can be adapted to each leader's individual context. They are not intended to be exhaustive and can be applied to multiple categories.	• Identify and examine my personal experience with race (e.g. my racial background, assumptions, privileges, biases, struggles, and understanding) in order to increase my self-awareness and minimize negative impact on others • Model vulnerability by sharing personal learning moments of self-discovery & introspection • Intentionally carve out space for and engage in conversations with diverse multi-stakeholder teams about race and equity • Continuously pause and evaluate whether the decisions and actions I make reflect the needs and priorities of the stakeholders most impacted, specifically students and families.	• Regularly examine school and district priorities, policies, practices, and data to identify and address inequities (e.g. disproportional assignment) • Develop and implement clear, transparent, and inclusive decision-making processes • Authentically seek and center the perspectives of students, families, and staff especially from historically underserved populations • Engage in clear, inclusive, equitable, and comprehensive communication and outreach practices (e.g. translation services, restorative practices) • Actively recruit, retain, and support staff, especially of color, and partner with stakeholders who reflect our anti-racist values and commitments • Develop and adhere to a robust system of reporting and address racist actions through restorative practices	• Provide all students with rigorous, joyful, and culturally responsive learning experiences, where their culture is positively reflected • Provide stakeholder-centered environments where students, caregivers, and staff have choice and agency in their learning • Create welcoming, inclusive (i.e heterogenous) environments where all stakeholders are encouraged to learn from each other and feel comfortable making mistakes. • Dedicate time for all stakeholders to engage in learning focused on anti-racism (e.g. courageous conversations, restorative circles) • Model culturally responsive and inclusive practices in all spaces	• Ensure each student and family has a strong and positive relationship with at least one adult in their building. • Practice inclusive two-way communication and listening that centers the voices/perspectives of students, families, and staff especially those from historically underserved populations. • Invest in student, caregiver, and staff well being by creating a culture of belonging • Create opportunities for all stakeholders (e.g. students, caregivers, and staff) to build trust and relationships (e.g. team building meetings) • Actively and meaningfully connect with and learn about students, their families, and communities using an asset-based and culturally responsive lens.	• Use an asset-based approach and address a deficit mindset toward all, and especially traditionally underserved students (e.g. examine how we define "success of a scholar") • Clearly define, implement and ensure effective Tier 1 supports are in place, especially prior to an IEP referral • Create a culture of individual and collective commitment to anti-racism (i.e. this is everyone's work) • Regularly use data to provide actionable, concrete feedback focused on continuous improvement • Purposefully build the capacity of others to identify and disrupt bias and inequities in the school (e.g. professional learning and coaching)

DRAFT March 2021   3