



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).


PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: Equity Programming
Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Victoria Davis
Title: Public Relations Specialist
Department: Public Relations
Telephone: 804-501-4933 Website: www.henrico.us
Email: dav127@henrico.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Brandon Hinton
Title: Deputy County Manager for Administration
Signature: 

Program Overview

One of the focus areas in Henrico County Public Schools' (HCPS) Destination 2025, the division's strategic plan, is to establish and provide support for elementary coalition and secondary equity teams. These teams are the driving force at the school level to lead practices and create structures that reflect inclusion and equity for all students. Teams identify opportunity gaps and develop action plans to address these areas of need, thereby fostering a sense of belonging for students, increasing family engagement and improving academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

As indicated by disproportionality data, parent and student surveys and focus group feedback, our majority-minority school community requested more intentionality in addressing issues of inequality, inadequacy or inconsistency in our schools. The elementary coalition and secondary equity teams were established to provide ongoing opportunities to provide the forum, support and professional learning to address these issues at the school and division level.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

Measures must be in place to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity for success to achieve and thrive. This demands a thorough awareness of the unique challenges and restrictions that individuals or groups of students face and additional support to help them overcome those challenges. While this may not ensure equal outcomes in and of itself, we strive to ensure that every child has a similar shot at success. The focus of HCPS' innovative equity programming is to ensure that everyone's voice is heard and energized, focused on understanding the subtleties of the concern or situation and developing agreed-upon objectives within the work of creating more equitable school environments and practices. As you see, our work is in progress, but many

efforts are being made, and we have greater engagement with our stakeholders to ensure ALL voices are heard in the conversation as our focus continues to address the inequities which exist in our school.

How Program Was Carried Out

In 2019, the HCPS Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity began offering consultation and support to other offices, departments and schools across the division on best practices for addressing barriers towards equity, inclusivity and other issues within our purview. One of the primary areas of focus in this work is supporting the elementary equity coalition and secondary equity teams. We also provide broader programming with the overarching goal of growing the internal capacity to address inequities and promote a school culture of belonging. The elementary equity coalition is a cohort of educators from each elementary school who participate in professional learning opportunities focused on equity and culturally responsive education in the classrooms using the culturally responsive education model, or CREM, and social and emotional learning as a prevention and countermeasure for bullying and harassment. Our office facilitates training for coalition members. Participants are provided a deliverable professional learning experience at each meeting to share with the staff at their school so that all elementary educators have the opportunity to grow in their understanding of equity and culturally responsive education practices.

Equity teams are the driving force in our secondary schools for the work around inclusion and equity for all students. Equity team goals include:

- Establish school-based teams that are versed in the intersection of race, class and public education and can engage in meaningful dialogue and problem-solving with the support of the training offered through the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and the Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity.

- Identification of opportunity gaps at the school level using data from measures of achievement, discipline, student enrollment in courses and survey results.
- Identification of the school's equity story based on qualitative and quantitative data.
- Development of a school-based equity goal within the school quality plan.

The Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity provides coaching and collaboration with equity teams in every middle and high school. Over the last several years, we have worked in coordination with the Henrico Educational Equity Initiative grant through the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities to train and establish school-based teams that are versed in the intersection of race, class and public education and are able to engage in meaningful dialogue and problem-solving. Each team is charged with developing at least one school-based equity goal that aligns to school improvement measures within their Virginia Continuous School Improvement Plan.

Some of the key roles and responsibilities in the ongoing work of the elementary coalition and school equity teams include the following:

Division-Level Support through the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Opportunity

- Quarterly check-ins with the equity team lead.
- Consultation upon request regarding equity team initiatives and processes.
- Professional development support upon request.

School-Based Equity Lead(s)

- Serving as the point of contact for the Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity.
- Scheduling monthly meetings with the school-based equity team.
- Setting the agenda for the school-based equity team.
- Facilitating the equity team meetings.
- Attending the quarterly check-in meetings with the Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity.

School-Based Equity Champion

- Ensures student voices are heard within the context of the equity work.
- Facilitates opportunities for student equity ambassadors to be involved in the ongoing equity work at the school and division level.

Financing and Staffing

The total cost of the program is approximately \$15,000. The Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity provides quarterly virtual training to all participating elementary schools supporting the elementary coalition initiative. We host week-long summer training sessions for school-based equity teams where we provide professional learning to support their work during the school term. Much of the training is provided in-house, and we have had external entities provide workshops, but this is either in-kind or paid for by outside grants. The Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity provides snacks for any in person sessions. In addition, we provide stipends to school-based secondary equity champions trained to support the school-based equity teams and centralize student voice in these conversations.

Program Results

The equity school teams have engaged in varied activities to identify responses to unique issues within their school context. For example, one school identified a problem with the underrepresentation of students of color in Advanced Placement — or AP — classes because they are working toward having the enrollment demographics of honors and AP courses match their overall school demographics. The equity team and school leadership analyzed the results and then identified students who could be encouraged to take AP and honors courses during the 2022-23 school year. After identifying 75 students, the Equity Team created an AP influencers program and assigned select equity team members a handful of our identified students. The equity team's AP Influencers had four main objectives. First, the AP influencer reached out to two

of their assigned students' teachers to obtain valuable insight and feedback on student performance. Second, the AP influencer met up twice with their assigned students and had intentional conversations and encouraged their assigned students to attend the AP course fair and join the AP scholars program. Student members of the Equity ambassadors who are currently or previously enrolled in an AP course participated in the AP course fair. They stationed themselves at a table in the gymnasium with a trifold display they created describing the class and their experience. More than 100 prospective AP students were able to walk through the AP course fair and learn valuable first-hand information about AP courses that might be interesting to them.

Using feedback from an internal survey conducted by their equity team, another school learned that students did not feel that teachers were always culturally sensitive to the needs of students and there was perceived devaluing of students of color. In response, the equity team, in collaboration with students from the minority student union, created professional learning for staff on cultural and racial sensitivity. The feedback following this professional learning opportunity was overwhelmingly positive.

A third school focused on addressing concerns that current instructional materials were not inclusive and directly affected student engagement and overall academic achievement. This school advocated for adopting culturally relevant texts as one of their action steps to boost student reading success. The team worked closely with their English department to ensure their leveled literary text was also culturally and ethnically inclusive.

Brief Summary

Within our schools and communities, there are long-standing decision-making practices that contribute to the root causes of inequities. Changing course and identifying corrective actions must be a combined and collaborative effort in order to be effective and bring about meaningful change. Appreciating the complexities of the issues and engaging in transformative change takes a willingness to acknowledge past and present injustices and inequities and a commitment to new ways of thinking about how to make change.

The equity programming taking place through Henrico County Public Schools' elementary coalition and secondary school equity teams is an important step towards ensuring these conversations, examination of practices and action plans to reflect needed change in each of our schools and at the division level. These teams are the driving force at the school level to lead practices and create structures that reflect inclusion and equity for all students. Teams identify opportunity gaps and develop action plans to address these areas of need, thereby fostering a sense of belonging for students, increasing family engagement and improving academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. Examples of impacts teams are making in their schools include increasing awareness of advanced coursework for students, especially underrepresented groups, a stronger focus on racial and cultural sensitivity through professional development and review of instructional materials to ensure cultural and ethnic inclusivity.

As we continue to support our school-based equity teams, we look forward to continued growth in our ability to respond to our students' and communities' needs and priorities through programming and actions that reflect the division's commitment to equity and inclusiveness for everyone we serve.