

Westwood Public Schools Equity Audit
Scope of Work
RFP # SCH-22-R-005

Overview:

The Westwood Public Schools seeks an Equity Audit. This audit will examine practices and structures within the District and ensure that they are supporting the strategic move toward a more equitable, integrated school district.

Project Background:

In the Westwood Public Schools (the “District”), we believe that all children should be educated in an environment where they feel safe, supported, engaged, and challenged. Our mission is to prepare students for college, career, and civic life by providing a rich and challenging curriculum, high-quality instruction, and authentic educational experiences. Since 2018, the District has committed to honor diversity, pursue equity and foster integration within the Westwood Public Schools; indeed, these goals have been referenced, both explicitly and implicitly, in our strategic priorities since that commitment.

In connection with this commitment, we have engaged in four broad realms of activities, which are cited below along with a few examples of our efforts:

- **Curriculum and Instruction:** school/classroom library updates; core text updates; and professional development on culturally responsive practices.
- **Culture and Climate:** Let’s Talk About Race, Culture and Ethnicity student group at WHS; parent series on talking with kids about race; Jennifer DeLeon author visit; and GSA at Thurston Middle School.
- **Talent Recruitment, Retention and Development:** membership in Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education; DESE Diversity Network and PLC; formation of affinity groups; creation of exit interview process; and training for hiring heads.
- **Family & Community Partnerships:** Juneteenth celebration (a collaboration between Thurston Middle School Family Welcome Club, Hale Education and Westwood METCO)

Goals:

We have two goals for an Equity Audit: first, we would expect the audit to help us approach this vital work more strategically and effectively by identifying and prioritizing critical areas for growth and improvement and recommending approaches to the change process.

Second, we expect the audit to examine policies and protocols within the District and ensure that they are supporting (and not impeding) progress toward a more equitable, integrated school district that supports all children and families.

Community and Demographics:

The Westwood Public Schools serves a total population of 2909 students. Our current schools and enrollment are as follows:

Westwood High School	962
Thurston Middle School	667
Deerfield Elementary School	182
Downey Elementary School	303
Hanlon Elementary School	193
Martha Jones Elementary School	271
Sheehan Elementary School	288
Westwood Integrated Preschool	43
Total Enrollment	2909

A look at student and teacher demographic data about race, as reported to DESE, reveals that Westwood’s student population is becoming more racially diverse over time. Racial diversity of staff is also changing, but more slowly, and staff is currently less diverse than the student population.

Students (DESE)	2017-2018	2020-2021	Change
African-American	2.4%	2.1%	-0.3%
Asian	9.6%	11.8%	2.2%
Hispanic	3.5%	4.9%	1.4%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3.4%	4.8%	1.4%
Native American	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White	81.1%	76.3%	-4.8%

Staff (DESE)	2017-2018	2020-2021	Change
African-American	1.1%	1.5%	0.4%
Asian	1.2%	1.8%	0.6%
Hispanic	1.5%	2.1%	0.6%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	0.4%	0.6%	0.2%
Native American	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White	95.8%	94.1%	-1.7%

2020-2021 (DESE report)	Students	Staff	Gap
African-American	2.1%	1.5%	-0.6%
Asian	11.8%	1.8%	-10.0%
Hispanic	4.9%	2.1%	-2.8%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	4.8%	0.6%	-4.2%
Native American	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White	76.3%	94.1%	17.8%

Data from Westwood’s MCAS scores, VOCAL survey, and Panorama survey also indicate key differences in students' performance, their perceptions of climate and culture, and their confidence with SEL skills when analyzed by race, income, special education status and gender.

Scope of Work & Qualifications:

We have two goals for an Equity Audit: first, we would expect the audit to help us approach this vital work more strategically and effectively by identifying and prioritizing critical areas for growth and improvement and recommending approaches to the change process.

Second, we expect the audit to examine policies and protocols within the District and ensure that they are supporting (and not impeding) progress toward a more equitable, integrated school district that supports all children and families.

The Westwood Public Schools is seeking an external consultant to assess the following: (1) curriculum and instruction; (2) culture and climate; (3) talent recruitment, retention and development; (4) family and community engagement; and (5) district policies and practices (e.g., student discipline, access to AP coursework). The goal of the assessment will be to analyze the extent to which the District is providing equitable opportunities and access to programs and resources for all students in these specified areas.

The consultant will consider both quantitative and qualitative data, along with current research in the field, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses, to prioritize specific strategies for improvement and to recommend approaches to implementing meaningful and lasting change.

A qualified consultant will have experience supporting equity efforts in K-12 public education, a strong grounding in research related to equity and integration, including an understanding of intersectionality, and a commitment to promoting equity and integration. Consultants with organizational assessment and strategic planning experience in other sectors are strongly encouraged to bid as well.

Deliverables:

1. Analysis of existing qualitative and quantitative data by race/ethnicity, gender, special education status, income status, and English language proficiency, and any other subgroups including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Student data
 - i. Academic achievement/grades/standardized assessment
 - ii. Course enrollment & level placement
 - iii. Targeted intervention support
 - iv. Student behavior/discipline
 - v. Attendance
 - vi. Drop-out and graduation rates
 - vii. Extracurricular involvement
 - viii. Special education and ELL qualification
 - b. Staff data
 - i. Hiring
 - ii. Retention
 - iii. Development (training and PD)
 - iv. Promotion
 - c. Physical, paper and virtual space/representation
 - i. Display cases
 - ii. Bulletin boards (classrooms & hallways)
 - iii. Permanent art installations
 - iv. Web sites
 - v. Promotional materials (brochures, flyers)
 - d. Climate/culture
 - i. Assessments (VOCAL, panorama, other)
 - ii. Student activities and groups

- iii. Staff activities and groups
 - iv. Observations
 - e. Family & community engagement
 - i. Newsletters & email updates
 - ii. PTO and site council notices and agendas
 - iii. Flyers for performances, celebrations and special events
 - f. Financial resources
 - i. Student activities
 - ii. Fundraising
 - iii. Donations
 - iv. Financial assistance
2. Creation and implementation of surveys and focus groups with students, caregivers, staff and community partners in order to better understand the impact of the District's efforts to ensure that all students and families are welcomed and experience a sense of belonging, that students are academically engaged, supported and challenged, and that students are well-prepared prepared for college, career and civic life.
3. Review of policies and practices including the District's School Committee Policy Manual, Student Handbooks, and Employee Handbook.
4. Analysis of curriculum review process, with particular attention given to the extent to which the process leads to more equitable learning outcomes.
5. Assessment of the capacity of the leadership team and staff to engage in meaningful change processes that lead to more equitable outcomes.
6. Review of current literature, highlighting specific strategies and practices that promote equitable outcomes.
7. Interim reports (2) summarizing findings from items 1 - 5 above, with accompanying presentations to the District leadership team, School Committee and equity leaders on or around June 15 and October 31.
8. A final report in the form of a written submittal, including an executive summary of findings, prioritized strategies for improvement and recommended processes to create meaningful and lasting change. This report is to also be presented to the District leadership team, equity leaders, and School Committee in December 2022.

Project Timeline:

The work of the Equity Audit is scheduled to begin in March of 2022, with interim reports due by June 15 and October 31 and a final report completed by December 1. The final presentations are to be completed in December 2022.

Proposal Submission Requirements:

- A work plan describing methodologies as well as roles and responsibilities within the team
- Sample reports demonstrating capacity to meet deliverables

- A summary of experience providing consulting services, including audits or assessments related to equity, diversity, inclusion and/or cultural proficiency in the education and non-for-profit sectors.
- A statement of experience with and philosophy related to working as part of a diverse team
- Professional training and short bios of the proposed project team leaders
- A sample list of past and current clients, including at least two public schools
- Contact information for a minimum of 3 relevant references.
- Timeline
- Estimated costs

Evaluation of Proposals:

It is the intent of the Westwood Public Schools to select the most qualified firm that meets the needs of the District. All responsive proposals that satisfy the proposal submission requirements and the minimum criteria will be evaluated and ranked on the comparative criteria as follows:

- Highly advantageous
- Advantageous
- Not Advantageous
- Unacceptable (does not meet the minimum criteria)

Minimum Evaluation Criteria:

Each proposal shall first be reviewed to determine whether the submitting contractor (1) satisfies the “Scope of Work/Qualifications;” (2) meets the outlined “Deliverables;” (3) adheres to “Project Timeline;” and (4) included all “Submission Requirements.”

Comparative Evaluation Criteria:

Once the District has determined that the Minimum Evaluation Criteria has been met, each proposal will be evaluated based on the following:

	Highly advantageous	Advantageous	Not Advantageous	Unacceptable
<i>Experience of the Contractor</i>	Contractor has extensive experience working in K-12 public education as well as in other sectors, is well-versed in current research, and demonstrated commitment to promoting equity and integration.	Contractor has experience working in K-12 public education, is versed in current research, and has demonstrated commitment to promoting equity and integration.	Contractor has limited experience working in K-12 public education.	Contractor has no experience working in K-12 public education.
<i>Quality of Sample</i>	Sample reports	Samples reports	Sample reports	Sample reports

<i>Reports</i>	demonstrate detailed data analysis, clear summarization and prioritized, specific recommendations. Communication is clear, direct and concise.	demonstrate some data analysis, summarization and recommendations. Communication is clear.	demonstrate little data analysis, limited summarization and few recommendations. Communication is somewhat clear.	demonstrate little data analysis, no summarization and/or limited recommendations. Communication is unclear.
<i>Depth of Data Collection and Data Analysis</i>	Qualitative and quantitative data is collected through multiple varied sources (surveys, focus groups, interviews and public data/document review), analyzed using research-based methodology, outlined in detail and explained to the viewer in clear and comprehensive terms.	Qualitative and quantitative data is collected through multiple sources, analyzed using standardized methodology, outlined in some detail and explained to the viewer in clear terms.	Qualitative and quantitative data is collected through a few sources, analyzed using unknown methodology, outlined and explained to the viewer.	Qualitative and/or quantitative data is not collected, or data analysis is faulty, or explanation of data is misleading or unclear.