

Portland Public Schools



Portland Public Schools

Leading with

Racial Equity

& a bold commitment to

Social Justice

Our Collective Plan & Framework

We believe in the fundamental right to human dignity and that generating an equitable world requires an educational system that intentionally disrupts—and builds leaders to disrupt—systems of oppression.



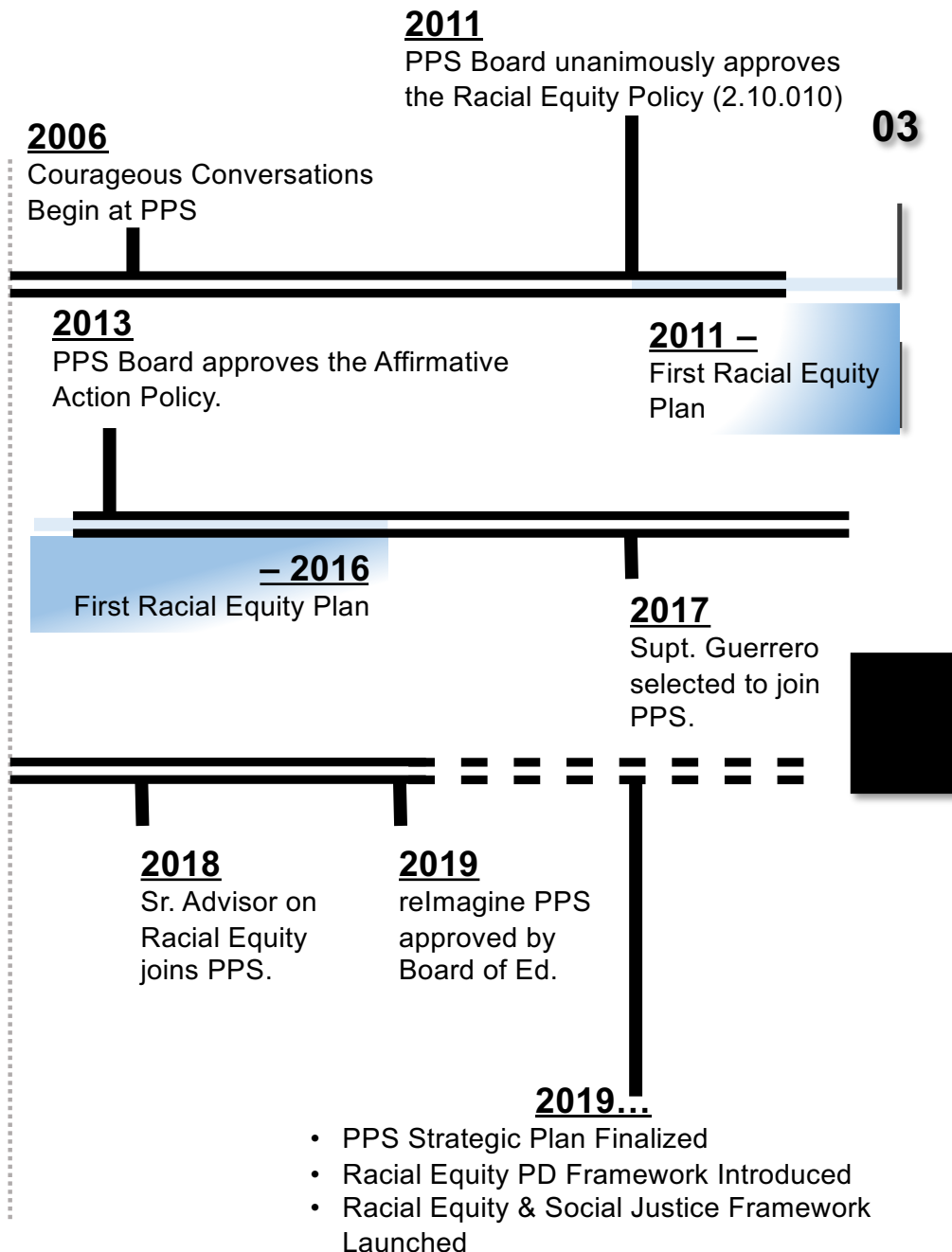
History and Timeline



In 2011, Portland Public Schools launched a Racial Educational Equity Policy and Five Year Plan to change its practices to eliminate the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories. The five year plan sunset in 2016 and today PPS has the opportunity to continue this important work.

The RESJ framework and plan intends to build on the successes of the initial Equity plan while also critically examining opportunities to increase the effectiveness of Racial Equity and Social Justice practices through organizational change and system wide coordination. We intend to braid high leverage racial equity and social justice strategies into all aspects of our instructional core.

In the fall of 2018, PPS hired a district wide senior advisor responsible for the planning process and development of a framework that would integrate RESJ throughout all of PPS.



Planning Goals

- 1 Evolve PPS' RESJ practices into a comprehensive, defined framework with clear system-wide actions and measurable impact that ensure improved outcomes for every student.
- 2 Refine PPS' decision support tool (Equity Lens) and corresponding protocols that lead to measurable positive impacts for students.
- 3 Update the PPS RESJ Policy to reflect our newly defined framework.
- 4 Identify staffing and investment strategies to accomplish PPS RESJ framework.
- 5 Coordinate and align PPS RESJ framework with the PPS Vision (PPS reimagined) and subsequent multi-year Strategic Plan.

Planning Approach

- 1 Employ the collective wisdom, expertise and experience of the PPS community to inform the direction, update and development of the RESJ Plan.
- 2 Identify diverse voices from across departments, school sites and the broader community to participate in temporary teams that will develop a comprehensive and inclusive review of existing RESJ practices and support the development of the RESJ framework and subsequent strategies, goals and plan.
- 3 Coordinate, facilitate and surface existing and new innovations, strategies and plans through a continuous improvement cycle with impacted communities.
- 4 Focus on bold results in our system wide RESJ practices that lead to improved outcomes for every student.



Stages of Organizational Change at Portland Public Schools

To improve outcomes for every student, a comprehensive set of strategies will need to be implemented across the organization. System change at this level requires an understanding and current assessment of where all parts of the organization are in the change management process.

Our plan endeavors to examine all stages along the continuum of organizational change to assess strengths and opportunities for RESJ.



We are individuals throughout the organization that are self aware of our racial identity and how that socially constructed identity has a profound significance and shapes all aspects of our lives.

We proactively take personal responsibility to learn, grow and adapt in order to support the implementation of anti-racist practices.

We are individuals aware of the potential impact of RESJ to drive meaningful change and increase student outcomes and student success.

We are responsible for building a culture that proactively works to counteract inequities inside and outside of the organization. As such, we act with urgency to grow as adaptive leaders to better impact behaviors, mindsets, practices, programs and processes of the organization.

We champion programs and initiatives that are culturally responsive and make explicit ties to RESJ practices in order to increase student outcomes and student success.

Lastly, we hold a culture in which students, families and communities are valued as leaders and assets to our collective work.

We are a school system that unapologetically embrace and braid RESJ practices and principles into the fabric of our dynamic system.

As participants and constructionist of our system, we uphold that every decision-making, investment, continuous improvement effort and policies reflect the values and principles of RESJ.

How we conduct research, use and manipulate data must incorporate and bring forward RESJ values and principles as well.





Commitment, Governance & Leadership

Relevant literature tells us organizations that effectively lead with and integrate racial equity and social justice are better positioned to make and sustain transformational change leading to increased outcomes which strengthen the culture and performance of the organization. Leadership influence supported by cohesive governance structures to ensure the commitment to racial equity also bolsters a system's ability to increase equitable organizations and systems.

Since his arrival at PPS in October 2017, Superintendent Guerrero focused on ensuring that racial equity and social justice are foundational values as well as the driving motivation to improve PPS. His steadfast commitment to ensuring the success of every PPS student led him to structure the district to maximize opportunities to realize our shared aspirations for racial equity and social justice.

- The Superintendent assembled a leadership team with a deep commitment to and experience in operationalizing racial equity in education. The Superintendent's Leadership team is comprised of nearly 50% leaders of color.
- The Superintendent has reorganized the central office to support an environment in which to support transformation. He hired a Senior Advisor for Racial Equity and Social Justice to lead planning and implementation of the integration of district strategies, practices and policies with measurable results to improve outcomes for students of color. He also established a new Office of Strategic Partnerships and Engagement to support deeper engagement with communities of color and to support student led initiatives.
- In the fall of 2018, the district launched a visioning process which engaged over 16,000 responses to articulate our "north star" to inspire collective action, guide strategies and drive our future growth. In June 2019, the Board adopted Portland Public Schools reImagined which includes a Graduate Portrait, Educator Essential and Educational System Shifts. Throughout the vision, tenets of racial equity and social justice are braided throughout all elements of the vision areas. Racial Equity and Social Justice is specifically called out in our core values, the Graduate Portrait: Transformative Racial Equity Leaders, the Educator Essentials: Racial Equity and Social Justice Centered, and System Shifts: Racial Equity Aligned Systems and Structures.
- PPS is currently aligning its strategies to support board goals that align with the vision in a Strategic Plan that will be adopted in 2019. The Racial Equity and Social Justice Work Plan will inform and be informed by the strategic plan.



RESJ Policies & Implementation Practice

Policies addressing racial equity ensure that organizations sustain progress through leadership changes while also providing a transparent vehicle for accountability.

In January of 2019, PPS adopted an updated RESJ Lens and corresponding protocols. The updated lens builds upon work done during the 5-year Racial Equity Plan, by connecting the application to the lens with specific high leverage scenarios for every department at PPS.

The information and answers from the lens will be utilized in the following ways in 2019:

What do we do with the information and data from the RESJ Lens?

- By December 2018, the RESJ Lens will be finalized. Departments will utilize the fillable form version of the RESJ Lens available.
- Completed RESJ Lens documents will be completed and saved to the RESJ Lens 2018 Folder.
- The Superintendent's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will review completed forms quarterly beginning in April 2019.
- SLT will collaborate with departments and present an annual report/synthesis of RESJ Lens themes. The report will also include process and use improvement recommendations for the tool.
- In December 2019, SLT will update the PPS RESJ Lens Protocols.



PPS Organizational Climate, Culture & Communications

To continue to build a culture that supports continuous learning, professional development and leadership in racial equity and social justice, knowledge acquisition must be accompanied by practical application opportunities.

In spring of 2019, in coordination with the Office of Teaching and Learning, PPS developed a RESJ Professional Development Framework which describes both the knowledge needed and application desired for all PPS employees. This set of competencies will provide the basis for future training, coaching and development in racial equity at PPS.

In the fall of 2019, PPS will engage with the Center for Equity and Inclusion to pilot training cohorts to increase our collective knowledge in the identity and culturally responsive organization and practices domains.

Knowledge Taxonomy		RESJ Professional Development Framework	
		Organizational Levels of Application	
6. Creating 5. Evaluating 4. Analyzing	System Integration	Implementing Strategies for Student Success Coherent strategies applied at all levels of the organization so that the organization is culturally responsive and explicit connections to RESJ practices are implemented successfully to improve student outcomes	Problems of Practice The system regularly refines and updates information, knowledge, analysis and strategies through continuous improvement efforts and collaboration to improve student outcomes)
	Individual Information Acquisition	Identity New learning and comprehension of identity issues relating to RESJ.	Individual and Team Application and Coherence Culturally Responsive Organization & Practices Shared understanding and analysis of opportunities for application.
3. Applying 2. Comprehension 1. Knowledge			



RESJ Partnerships

PPS has partnered with culturally specific organizations for nearly a decade to support students, families and staff to increase student outcomes. Relevant literature asserts that culturally specific services provide better outcomes for students of color. The ability to partner with these key organizations is a critical component to the success of our students and transformation of PPS.

- PPS has maintained and strengthened strategic partnerships with culturally specific organizations who partner with PPS to support student success, parent and family engagement, high school graduation and extended day programs.
- The Senior Advisor for RESJ has launched a contract review process to continue to develop aligned and coherent ways to partner with organizations and ensure we invest in high leverage, high impact strategies to support student success. This contract review will include both programmatic and administrative considerations including impact of programming, relationship development, community and family engagement, services and educational alignment, efficient contract development processing and management, process transparency and data collection, reporting and evaluation.



Student, Family and Community Voice and Influence

PPS aspires to provide concrete strategies to enable student and community voice and to ensure these perspectives influence improvements at all levels of the organization. Relevant literature points to the importance of authentic community and stakeholder involvement as critical to the ability of an organization to demonstrate cultural responsiveness and that organizations that give consumer voice an impactful role accelerate their progress in becoming culturally responsive.

- Over the last 10 months, a shared vision was co-developed by our Guiding Coalition--a group of approximately 90 people from across Portland, representing diverse communities and viewpoints. This group of stakeholders represented the true diversity of our community--language, socioeconomic status, geographical location, race, gender. Moreover, we hosted over 35 city-wide and targeted community meetings, doubling down on our effort to hear the perspectives of our large, but historically silences communities, communities of color. This included meeting communities in safe spaces where their voices could be amplified in our process. This level of engagement will set the tone for being increasingly targeted and intentional with galvanizing the power and wisdom of our communities of color.
- In the summer of 2019 PPS hired a Director of Community Engagement who will oversee the district's implementation of strategies to effectively engage families and communities who historically have not had the same opportunities to participate in policy and administrative decisions.



Beginning in January 2019, four temporary teams met to surface bright spots, provide analysis and recommendations for the RESJ Plan.

Nearly 100 staff members from various school sites and departments participated in the three month planning process.

Temporary RESJ Teams



Teaching and Learning

Examined all aspects of instruction, support and student learning.



Student Initiatives

Examined all student led initiatives, conferences, leadership programs, mentoring and clubs to support student success.



Community Partnerships

Examined all of the culturally specific and culturally responsive networks of organizations and community groups that support student learning and success.



Talent Diversity

Examined all of the professional development, retention and recruitment efforts aimed at diversifying and strengthening the PPS workforce.



These teams were responsible for the development and vetting of a comprehensive catalog of promising RESJ practices, an analysis of high leverage opportunities that would inform the RESJ framework and policy updates.

The framework includes goals organized by four areas: Teaching and Learning, Student Initiatives, Community Partnerships, and Talent Diversity. A detailed work plan will be developed to support these goals by department after the completion of the district Vision and Strategic Plan.

To support the development, progress monitoring and accountability of the RESJ work plan, a district wide RESJ Advisory Team comprising of representation of all PPS departments will be established.





Curriculum

Implement GVC across all content areas, ensuring equitable access and opportunity for all PPS Students by implementing a comprehensive, rigorous, and culturally responsive and sustaining core instructional program and integrating culturally and linguistically sustaining teaching practices.

Successfully implement Oregon K-12 Ethnic Studies Standards.

Ensure completion of PPS Board mandate for ethnic studies electives at every high school.

Apply PPS RESJ lens to all new curriculum adoptions and instructional materials.



Instruction

Identify, adopt, support and implement culturally responsive instructional practices.

Eliminate disparities in HS Graduation rates.

Increase representation of students of color in TAG.

Decrease over representation of students of color in Special Education



Student Support

Implement culturally responsive MTSS

Implement and support Restorative Justice practices throughout PPS

Provide a comprehensive, culturally responsive and systematic continuum of supports

Apply our racial equity and social justice lens in responding to diverse needs of students through PLCs and SIT team processes

Use data analysis and data-driven decision making to inform academic, social emotional and behavioral supports





Student Identity Development and Affirmation

Increase opportunities for students to develop a positive social identity and develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirms and accurately describes their multifaceted identity.

Increase experiences outside of the classroom for students to express pride, confidence and healthy self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of others, recognizing that people's multiple identities interact and create unique and complete individuals, all while being able to negotiate their own personal identity in multiple spaces.



Student Leadership

Increase the active participation of students of color in leadership opportunities (i.e. student government, clubs/affinity spaces, site council) across each PPS middle and high school campus.

Establish district-wide alignment and equitable representation in support of affinity groups based on race and ethnic representation (i.e. MECha, Black Student Unions, Native American Student Unions, etc.)

Facilitate intentional and intersectional group gatherings (i.e. student summits/conferences) that increase leadership and professional skills of all students, and in particular students of color.



Student Voice

Center student voice in the districts decision making processes so that they (1) have ample opportunity to discuss how they experience school, (2) engage in facilitated discussions where they can express various viewpoints even if they are counter to dominant narratives, (3) have a system for providing feedback to district leadership regarding school issues, suggestions and desires and 4) have multiple means of expressing their perspectives regarding district or school issues.

Increase Increase opportunities for students to identify and work on racial equity issues impacting their educational experiences with District leadership.

Actively involve students in district improvement efforts and meetings, developing the capacities to address the issues they identify alongside district leadership.

Ensure historically marginalized youth have ample of opportunities to re-engage in their education through leadership and civic engagement.



Goals: Talent Diversity



Recruitment and Hiring

Incorporate RESJ expectations into all job descriptions.

Increase the demographic diversity of PPS Workforce.

Increase the numbers of people of color and women in the construction and technical trades through apprenticeship opportunities on District construction contracts and district operations.

Increase the apprenticeship/intern opportunities for PPS job pathways.



Retention

Develop incentive system to increase RESJ capacity of PPS Workforce.

Increase employee retention for people of color.

Increase retention of diverse workers in construction pathways through respectful workplace trainings.



Professional Development and Learning

Develop RESJ PD scope and sequence to support development for all employees

Implement mentoring program for new leaders



Goals: Community Partnerships



Community Engagement

Develop coherent frameworks that embolden more community participation in relevant and substantive ways, informing district policy and administrative decisions.

Elevate the importance of interdependence among PPS and the broader community, ensuring decisions embody our community's voice.

Create opportunities that build our families' capacity to be informed and actively engaged in their children's education and in school improvement efforts, especially students and families of color.



Business and Philanthropy

Drive financial, in-kind and human capital resources to district priorities that increase the academic and socio-emotional wellbeing of historically marginalized students and their families.

Forge connections between the broader community and the district to benefit the learning experience of students and families of color.

Leverage data and insights to drive innovation, change and shared value of closing the pervasive achievement and opportunity gap between various social identity markers.



Partnerships

Increase effectiveness and alignment of PPS investment in education partnership contracts





Resource Allocation

Develop comprehensive resource allocation framework in alignment with racial equity and social justice

Increase effectiveness and alignment of PPS investments.

Develop and implement a budget tool to assist in making resource allocation decisions, including discretionary budget allocation, investments, contracts, grants, and sponsorships using a racial equity lens

Integrate RESJ into financial sustainability and life-cycle planning.



Regenerative Org

Develop regenerative operations framework in alignment with racial equity and social justice goals focused on safe facilities, transportation, energy and nutrition.

Sustain and expand strategies that localize food systems, support supplier and agricultural diversity, and eliminate waste in nutrition services and business operations.

Develop prioritization process for projects and facilities for energy reduction and carbon sequestration determined by impact on frontline communities.

Increase safety in transportation options for students of color.

Develop RESJ technology framework that aids in the reduction of paper and decreases other environmental impacts.



Economic Participation

Provide greater professional, supplier, construction, and personal services procurement opportunities to minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, and emerging small businesses.

Develop incentive system to increase the RESJ priority in all bid/competitive processes.

Address barriers in PPS contracting processes that currently prevent COBID-certified firms and community partners from contracting with PPS.

Develop framework to implement community benefit agreements in contracting.

Develop more robust RESJ policies and practices



RESJ Advisory Team

In the fall of 2019, PPS will institute a district wide RESJ advisory body consisting of all levels of leadership and staffing across all departments.

Membership of the RESJ Advisory Team will consist of at least two members from every school cluster and department across PPS. Members will apply and must have the approval of their supervisor. The final team will be approved by the Superintendent's Leadership Team.

The Executive Sponsor of the RESJ Advisory team is the Superintendent and the RESJ team will be staffed by the Senior Advisor for Racial Equity and Social Justice.

The RESJ Advisory team will meet monthly and report to the Superintendents Leadership Team and the School Board annually.

RESJ Advisory Goals



Develop into a community of thought leaders on district wide RESJ approaches and practices at PPS who provide leadership support to the organization.



Provide leadership, support and project management of the RESJ Work Plan 2019 – 2022



Provide a venue for meaningful opportunities for feedback and suggestions for district wide RESJ work for all departments at PPS.



Collaborate with the SLT to review RESJ Lens protocols and information and make recommendations based on emerging themes and needs of the district and ensure the success of the RESJ Action Plan.



Racial Equity

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. (*Center for Assessment and Policy Development*)

Racial Justice

Racial Justice [is defined] as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all. (*Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grantmaking Assessment Report*, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity and Applied Research Center, 2009.)

Social Justice

Those who strive for social justice believe in the triumph of our shared humanity. Social Justice is a process, not an outcome that calls for both personal reflection and social change to ensure that each of us has the right and the opportunity to thrive in our community regardless of our identities. It calls on us to design and continually perfect our education institutions by challenging the roots of oppression and injustice, empowering all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential and building social solidarity and community capacity for collaborative action.

Targeted Universalism

Targeted Universalism alters the usual approach of universal strategies to achieve universal goals, and instead suggests we use targeted strategies to reach universal goals.

(<http://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/targeteduniversalism>)

Inclusivity

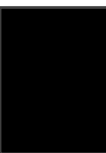
Portland Public Schools strives to be inclusive and cultivate a sense of safety and belonging for every student, family and community. We believe that, experiencing a sense of belonging occurs when the design of societal level arrangements is inclusive to all, being especially sensitive to the most marginalized and multiply disadvantaged. Belonging-related activities encourage positive group and intergroup relations, creating and maintaining conditions of safety, healing, and restoration, creating social trust across group boundaries, and expanding the circle of human concern. Othering of the self, of each other, and of the environment decrease the experience and reality of a sense of belonging.

(Adapted from powell, john a., and Menendian, Stephen. "The Problem of Othering: Towards Inclusiveness and Belonging." Haas Institute.)

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; a theoretical approach based on such a premise. (Oxford Dictionary) Intersectionality is a framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people's overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face.

In other words, intersectional theory asserts that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers. Intersectionality recognizes that identity markers (e.g. "female" and "black") do not exist independently of each other, and that each informs the others, often creating a complex convergence of oppression. Understanding intersectionality is essential to combatting the interwoven prejudices people face in their daily lives. (Crenshaw, Kimberly Columbia Law School)





PPS leads with race, with the recognition that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities has been baked into education institutions, and that racial inequities across all indicators for education success are deep and pervasive. We have to design our work to have a focus on race because when we lead with race we ensure we are capturing students of color. Defaulting to regular practices without an articulation of racial inequities leaves students of color behind.

Leading with race is grounded in the strategy of Targeted Universalism which is a powerful way to make the transformational changes we need. Changes we need to improve life chances, promote inclusion, and enhance and sustain equitable policies and programs.

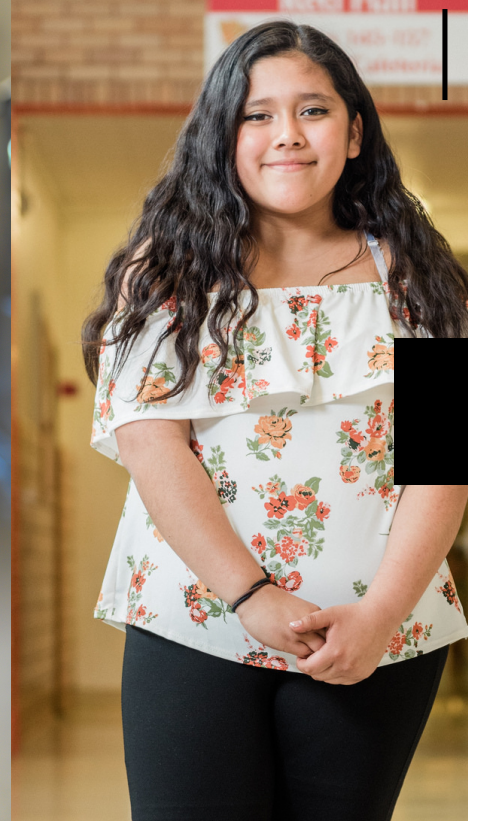
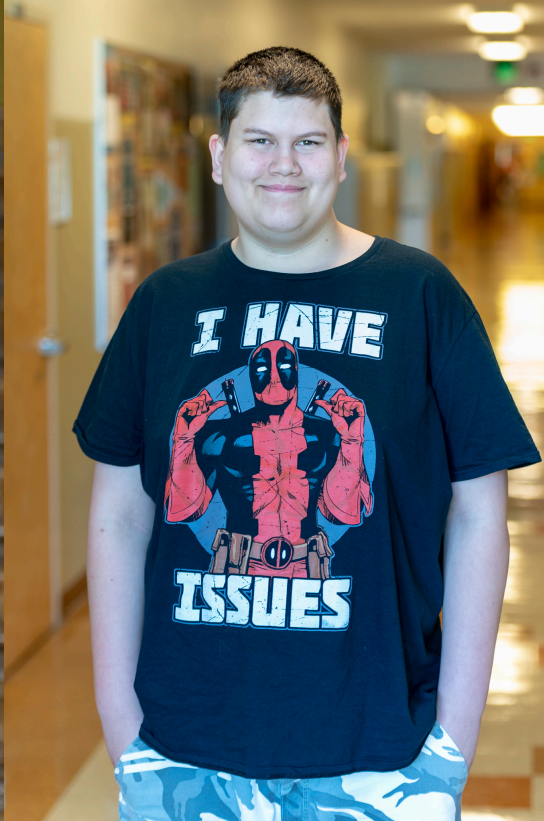
“In its name, targeted universalism signals flawed policies that are either targeted policies or universal policies. Targeted universalism addresses the weaknesses and strengths of these two types of policies. In so doing, targeted universalism is conceptually and operationally different—it is not simply an amalgamation of each type.

Neither universal or targeted approaches are able to accomplish swift, lasting, and large scale transformative change. We refer to targeted universalism as equity 2.0 because the framework puts equity into practice while bringing to fruition the full potential of focusing on equity over equality—one of many critical distinctions necessary to respond to the diverse forms of othering that we have to dismantle.” (John Powell, Haas Institute)

We also know that other groups of students are still oppressed, including based on ability, sexual orientation, gender and income. Focusing on racial equity provides the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools and resources that can also be applied to other areas of marginalization. A racial equity framework that is clear about the differences between individual, institutional and structural racism, as well as the history and current reality of inequities, can address other marginalized groups.

It is critical to address all areas of inequity, and an institutional approach is necessary across the board. As other public institutions deepen their ability to eliminate racial inequity, PPS will be better equipped to transform our systems and structures impacting other marginalized groups.





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