

# PROPOSAL

## Racial Equity Framework for Mankato Area Public Schools

In collaboration with  
Minnesota Education Equity Partnership



## BACKGROUND ON THE EQUITY PROCESS

Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) called upon the research, convening, and equity action expertise of the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) for assistance in a formal and collective equity action planning process in this school year 2020-2021. In a historic year for Minnesota, MAPS dedicated itself as a premier learning institution to do a deep evaluation of how their school system was centering racial equity in their policies and practices and how they have been engaging various cultural community groups for vital input on racial equity, antiracism and inclusion and school systems change.

The MAPS equity planning process involved these key “learning stops” in the last nine months: a pre-assessment race equity review (with over 117 stakeholder interviews and/or survey input); a District Leadership Training (DLT) staff and administrators retreat (with 45 participants); a series of equity committee meetings guiding best approaches to stakeholder engagement (with 12 committee members); six parent/guardian visioning sessions (with 84 total participants); five youth visioning sessions (with 29 total participants); and a final MAPS stakeholder strategic retreat (with 23 participants in working groups) to draft a race equity framework and set of definitions for MAPS board approval consideration.

Based on the learning stops and critical community feedback, deep engagement with representatives of the Mankato Latinx, Somalian, Sudanese, African American, Asian American and American Indian community and students, several MAPS cultural liasons, MAPS administrators and staff, and MAPS nonprofit partners—the following document summarizes key race equity concepts, ideas and statements for your consideration:

**MAPS Mission Statement**

**MAPS Vision Statement**

**MAPS Values/Commitments**

**MAPS Race Equity Lens Tool**

**MAPS Equity definitions**

## MAPS MISSION STATEMENT

MAPS current mission, “Assuring learning excellence and readiness for a changing world,” was reviewed at the strategic retreat for an update with new and refreshed racial equity input. While the statement honors the past, the working groups concluded that a new statement could be more inspirational and reflect the urgency of equity with the community—and impact on an ever-changing global society.

**“Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) is committed to working together equitably, with families and communities, so that each learner has the knowledge and skills to be successful and contributing citizens in a diverse global society.”**

## MAPS VISION STATEMENT

The working groups concluded that the current vision statements do not capture a “future state” that reflects what was recently heard from parents and students around ideas of inclusion, dignity, equity and what is being committed to for each child. Most importantly, from what the parent visioning sessions revealed, this group lifted up the reminder that families sending their children to MAPS want an assurance that their children are treated with respect, love, and to know that they are truly heard and valued.

**“MAPS vision is that every learner will be seen for who they are inclusive of: race, national origin, home language, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or religion. A MAPS learner and their family will experience a school environment that builds their voice and agency. Learners and families will be seen and heard. MAPS diverse learners will then gain the skills to go into a global society with a joy for learning, a positive vision for the future, and the ability to navigate the world with hope, dignity and their multiple talents.”**

## MAPS VALUES/COMMITMENTS

The working groups discussed that MAPS current values are more traditional in nature, and upon reflection, need to be infused with more equitable and inclusive terms, and be more actionable as promises and commitments. It's also important to consider how a set of values will be translated and understood in each cultural context in the community. A natural next step for all school community groups (i.e. School Board, educators/staff, families) would be to explore and identify the equity commitments of each group in MAPS.

### Current MAPS Values:

**Integrity**  
**Respect**  
**Excellence**  
**Adaptability**  
**Responsibility**  
**Engagement**  
**Collaboration**

### See Example:

**Authentically Inclusive**  
**Intentionally Adventurous**  
**Optimistically Innovative**  
**Humility of Heart**  
**Vigilant Equity**  
**Love**

*(Source: Hopkins schools)*

### MAPS will reach its mission and vision when...

*(commitments by educators)*

- Each student is ready for kindergarten
- Each student is reading well by 3rd grade
- All achievement gaps are closed
- All students are ready for career and college by graduation
- ALL students graduate
- Each (student, staff, family) feels safe, is welcome and treated with dignity and respect

## MAPS RACE EQUITY LENS

The working groups agreed that an equity lens has been applied in other equity-minded district examples showing how further ahead they may be in advancing equity and closing opportunity gaps with their school communities. A racial equity lens is a vital tool in policy and practice decision-making because it disrupts status quo power. A racial equity lens and application process, furthermore, slows down decisions to ask who has historically been excluded in shaping a specific policy or practice—and yet has experienced disproportionate impact by such institutional decisions. So once the equity lens application slows down the decision-making process and removes barriers—a more inclusive and equitable conclusion can come forth for the institution.

### Sample MAPS Racial Equity Lens Questions:

1. **Who benefits or is advantaged by the current system? What is the impact on this group of people?**
2. **Who is disadvantaged? What is the impact on this group of people?**
3. **How is it a systemic and/or institutional issue?**
4. **How is it out of line with our Equity Vision? How does it represent our Equity Vision?**
5. **Why hasn't it been addressed? OR, how has it begun to be addressed?**
6. **Overall, what are the main concerns, and what are some potential action steps that could be taken to correct them?**



## Mankato Parents Hopes and Dreams for their Children...

- Our dream and hope for them are to get their high school diploma and get their college degree so they can get a good future for their home, identity and community too. [Sudanese]
- My dreams for my children is for them to know that they matter, are acknowledged, are connected, outside of home, there are few places that they feel that, outside of home, so that would be the ultimate dream, so Mankato a school could develop and craft that, that would be a dream. [African American]
- I would like to see my daughter in 10 years in an active role in school, whether it is in sports or student council. I would hope to see my daughter have the confidence from those roles. [Native American]
- To reach their goal, to succeed and get to higher education so they can help their families back. We will try our best as a parent and do our role when they are home and also we request from the district input on how we can achieve that goal and we can work together to achieve that goal. [Somali]
- My dreams are that my kids can go to the HS and graduate and I want my kid to be a good person in the future. [Latinx]
- My Daughter is able to pursue her passions and that teachers are able to work with her and maximize her potential. She has all these dreams and passions, from marine biologist to actor. [Asian]

## MAPS EQUITY DEFINITIONS

A school community is always strengthened by clearly defining for all stakeholders the use of key terms and concepts used in their racial equity framework and policies and practices. The work groups reviewed the definitions presented during the retreat: individual racism, institutional racism, structural racism, racial equity and anti-racism. In addition to confirming that listing, the work groups also agreed that MAPS could have an equity glossary and that further discussion, to gain consensus, would be necessary on that glossary full listing of definitions and concepts to guide stronger race equity policy, practice and positive student and community narratives at MAPS. (Note: the working groups listed more terms and concepts that can be shared with administration for a later discussion).

### MAPS Core Definitions:

**Individual racism** refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing. (source: Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building. Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. 2005) and "Racism is, in itself, systemic in nature. Systems thrive on policies. and actors upholding that very system" (Source: Ibram X. Kendi)

**Institutional Racism** refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from historically oppressed groups. Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create

advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

(Source: Evanston/Skokie Schools)

**Structural Racism:** Structural racism is the racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systemically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color" (Source: Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide, Annie E. Casey Foundation)

**Race Equity:** Race equity is a new condition that brings about clear remedies for historic and present day structural and policy barriers producing racial disparities and disparate impacts. Race equity is not merely a value, it is a systemic and structural shift. Race equity is actualized fairness and justice. (Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation)

### In a race equity condition:

- People of Color and Indigenous and/or American Indian students, families, and teachers are provided the learning assistance specific to their needs and full access to learning opportunities that build on their talents and cultural assets.
- Those who are most impacted by inequities have the space to build power and lead through collective action. Students and families of color and Indigenous and/or American Indian students and families provide input into decisions that impact their education and life opportunities.
- Race equity is raising the achievement of all students while eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which students occupy the highest and lowest achievement levels. (Source: Minnesota Education Equity Partnership)

**Anti-racism:** Anti-racism education is the active process of identifying and dismantling racist attitudes, systems, structures, policies, and practices to advance a more racially just future where the humanity of everyone is valued and uplifted. (Source: Ibram X. Kendi)



### Mankato Youth Dreams and Goals...

- I just want to make myself proud. I want to be a neonatologist.
- I want to be a computer science major and go to a university. It's really cool coding. I may take a class to see if I'm good at it.
- My goal is to become a teacher, change these student's minds, pass on the knowledge.
- My dream is to go to college, find a job and become a vet.
- I'm planning on attending Carleton college to study econ and statistics and then go into public health law.

### I'd like to be a...

- Psychiatrist
- Therapist
- Airplane pilot
- Doctor
- Business woman
- Dentist
- Professional soccer player
- Surgeon
- Cosmetologist
- Rapper and get into activism
- Nurse at a nursing home and take care of the elderly
- Successful entrepreneur and make six figures
- Professional basketball player



## Mankato Parents Hopes and Dreams for their Children...

### ...a better education and better opportunities than they had growing up

I have a good hope and future for my kids which is much better than the way I grew up in my education in Somali.[Somali]

Now it is their time and they are able to go to school by bus and eat breakfast and lunch there. They have the opportunity to go to school,

study and have opportunities that I never got. [Sudanese]

They will speak English better than me and I also want them to speak Spanish really well and speak both languages very well. I want them to be happy in life and not give up what they want. These are my goals. [Latinx]

### ...to graduate from high school and/or college and pursue specific goals

My dreams are that my kids can go to the HS and graduate and I want my kid to be a good person in the future. [Latinx]

My two kids in Kennedy school what I really want for them, I want them to be happy, finish high school and go to university or college. [Latinx]

Our dream and hope for them are to get their high school diploma and get their college degree so they can get a good future for their home, identity and community too. So we encourage them to do what they are supposed to do. [Sudanese]

To reach their goal, to succeed and get to higher education so they can help their families back. We will try our best as a parent and do our role when they are home and also we request from the district input on how we can achieve that goal and we can work together to achieve that goal. [Somali]

My Daughter is able to pursue her passions and that teachers are able to work with her and maximize her potential. She has all these dreams and passions, from marine biologist to actor. [Asian]

I would like to see my daughter in 10 years in an active role in school, whether it is in sports or student council. I would hope to see my daughter have the confidence from those roles. And see her in those positions. [Native American]

### ...to have their cultural histories and identities treated with respect in their education journey and know that they matter

We want our kids to be same with the kids in the world and this country. All the parents are saying that they want to see their kids improve in school but they cannot say that because [in] theory do not see that. [Somali]

We need our children to be the same as the children of other colors, to have the same rights as those born in this country. [Somali]

It feels like sometimes especially with boys that educators are scared of them and treat them differently. Educators should receive more education from community members about their biases and for them to exercise self

awareness around racist tendencies, for them to acknowledge that, so our children receive the best education. [African American]

The biggest thing is that my kids know about their identity and race, we teach that at home, but we hope that what gets taught in the class is reflective of what's happening in the world and not be ignored. [African American]

I want my daughter to become confident in the woman she's becoming that she's able to be confident in her to be able to express that. [African American]

My dreams for my children is for them to know that they matter, are acknowledged, are connected, outside of home, there are few places that they feel that, outside of home, so that would be the ultimate dream, so Mankato a school could develop and craft that, that would be a dream. [African American]



## Mankato Youth Dreams and Goals...

I want to be a computer science major and go to a university. It's really cool coding. I may take a class to see if I'm good at it.

I may do dual enrollment, I get college credit for participating. I would like to go to Hamline University or Manoa in Hawaii.

I just want to make myself proud. I want to be a neonatologist.

I want to go to college and then graduate school.

I'm planning on attending Carlton college to study econ and statistics and then go into public health law.

I just want to go to college and travel for a bit. I want to experience more around the world and not just the United States.

I'm just going with the flow.

Finish college and go into the service.

My dream is to finish school and hopefully be a spanish teacher and move out of Minnesota.

My goal is to become a teacher, change these student's minds, pass on the knowledge.

My dream for the future is to go to college and graduate. Have a stable job and move somewhere nice, away from Minnesota.

My dream is to basically go to college and get a good job and travel the world.

My dream is to go to college, find a job and become a vet.

### I'd like to be a...

- Psychiatrist
- Therapist
- Airplane pilot
- Doctor
- Business woman
- Dentist
- Professional soccer player
- Surgeon
- Cosmetologist
- Rapper and get into activism
- Nurse at a nursing home and take care of the elderly
- Successful entrepreneur and make six figures
- Professional basketball player



## PARTICIPANTS

### COMMITTEES | VISIONING & STRATEGIC RETREAT | PRESENTERS

#### MnEEP TEAM

Jennifer Godinez, Associate Executive Director, Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP)

Dr. Rose Chu, Senior Systems Fellow, MnEEP

Leiataua Dr. Jon Peterson, Program Consultant, MnEEP

#### MAPS LEADERSHIP

Dr. Paul Peterson, Superintendent, Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS)

Audra Boyer, Community Education and Recreation Director, MAPS

Stacy Wells, Director of Communications, MAPS

#### EQUITY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Audra Boyer, Community Education and Recreation Director, MAPS

Stacy Wells, Director of Communications, MAPS

Tania Lyon, Talent Development Coordinator in Teaching and Learning Department, MAPS

Monde Schwartz, Principal, Prairie Winds Middle School, MAPS

Michael Elston, West High School Assistant Principal, MAPS

Melanie Helling, Assessment Coordinator, MAPS

Darcy Stueber, Food Services Director, MAPS

Liliana Cartagena, District Cultural Liaison, MAPS

Angie Potts, Informational and Instructional Technology Director, MAPS

Kristi Schuck, School Board member, MAPS

Kenneth Reid, School Board member, MAPS

Dr. Rose Chu, MnEEP

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#### AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENT VISIONING SESSION

*Cultural Influencer:* Maurice Staley, community leader

*Facilitators:* Jennifer Godinez and Tania Lyon

*Note-takers:* Brittany Wright, Our Gray Matter team.

#### SUDANESE PARENT VISIONING SESSION

*Cultural Influencers:* Habiba Rashid and Ruth Aganya, Minnesota Council of Churches

*Interpreters:* Ruth Aganya, Mn Council of Churches

*Facilitators:* Melanie Helling, Sarah Morrison, Audra Boyer, and Jennifer Godinez

*Note-takers:* Brittany Wright, Our Gray Matter team.

#### LATINX PARENT VISIONING SESSION

*Cultural Influencers:* Lourdes Menjiva (COPAL) and Liliana Cartagena

*Interpreters:* Lourdes Menjivar (COPAL) and Rito Ayala

*Facilitators:* Melanie Helling, Tania Lyon and Jennifer Godinez

*Note-takers:* Brittany Wright, Our Gray Matter team.

#### SOMALI PARENT VISIONING SESSION

*Cultural Influencers:* Habiba Rashid, Mn Council of Churches

*Interpreters:* Ahmed Mohamud and Mohamed Ibrahim, MN Council of Churches

*Facilitators:* Dr. Rose Chu, Tania Lyons, Darcy Steuber and Monde Schwartz

*Note-takers:* Brittany Wright, Our Gray Matter team.

#### NATIVE AMERICAN PARENT VISIONING SESSION

*Cultural Influencers:* Megan Schnitker and Jocelyn DeSutter with MAPS

*Facilitators:* Jennifer Godinez and Audra Boyer

*Note-taker:* Molly Preismeyer, Good Working Group.

#### ASIAN AMERICAN PARENT VISIONING SESSION

*Cultural Influencers:* Sang Vo, MAPS

*Facilitators:* Jennifer Godinez and Audra Boyer

*Note-takers:* Brittany Wright, Our Gray Matter team.

#### YOUTH VISIONING SESSIONS

*Latinx, Somali, Asian, Native American, and African American MAPS Students*

*Outreach assistance:* Christina Mattson, Assistant Principal East High School and Brian Hanson, Principal of Central High School and Central Freedom School

*Facilitators:* Jennifer Godinez and Dr. Jon Peterson

*Note-takers:* Brittany Wright, Our Gray Matter team.

#### JUNE 22, 23 STRATEGIC RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

*Note-Take/Work Group Leads\*\**

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Ruth Aganya, Sudanese cultural community

Sang Vo, MAPS

Habiba Rashid, Mn Council of Churches

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