



Friends for Equity in Avon Schools

Connecting. Belonging. Thriving.

Community Information Session
March 23, 2021

Agenda

- ▶ Introduction to Friends for Equity in Avon Schools
- ▶ Words from APS Superintendent, Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla
- ▶ Thoughts from each founding member on why this work is important
- ▶ Diversity, equity and inclusion work happening in surrounding communities
- ▶ Words from Avon community leaders
 - ▶ AHS Avon Voices for Equity
 - ▶ AHS PTO President, Carol Shubinski
 - ▶ AFPL Director, Glenn Grube
- ▶ What's next and how to get involved
- ▶ Q&A



Introduction to Friends for Equity

Friends for Equity is a group of Avon parents and residents advocating for an inclusive school culture that welcomes diversity and values racial equity through connection, education, and community collaboration.

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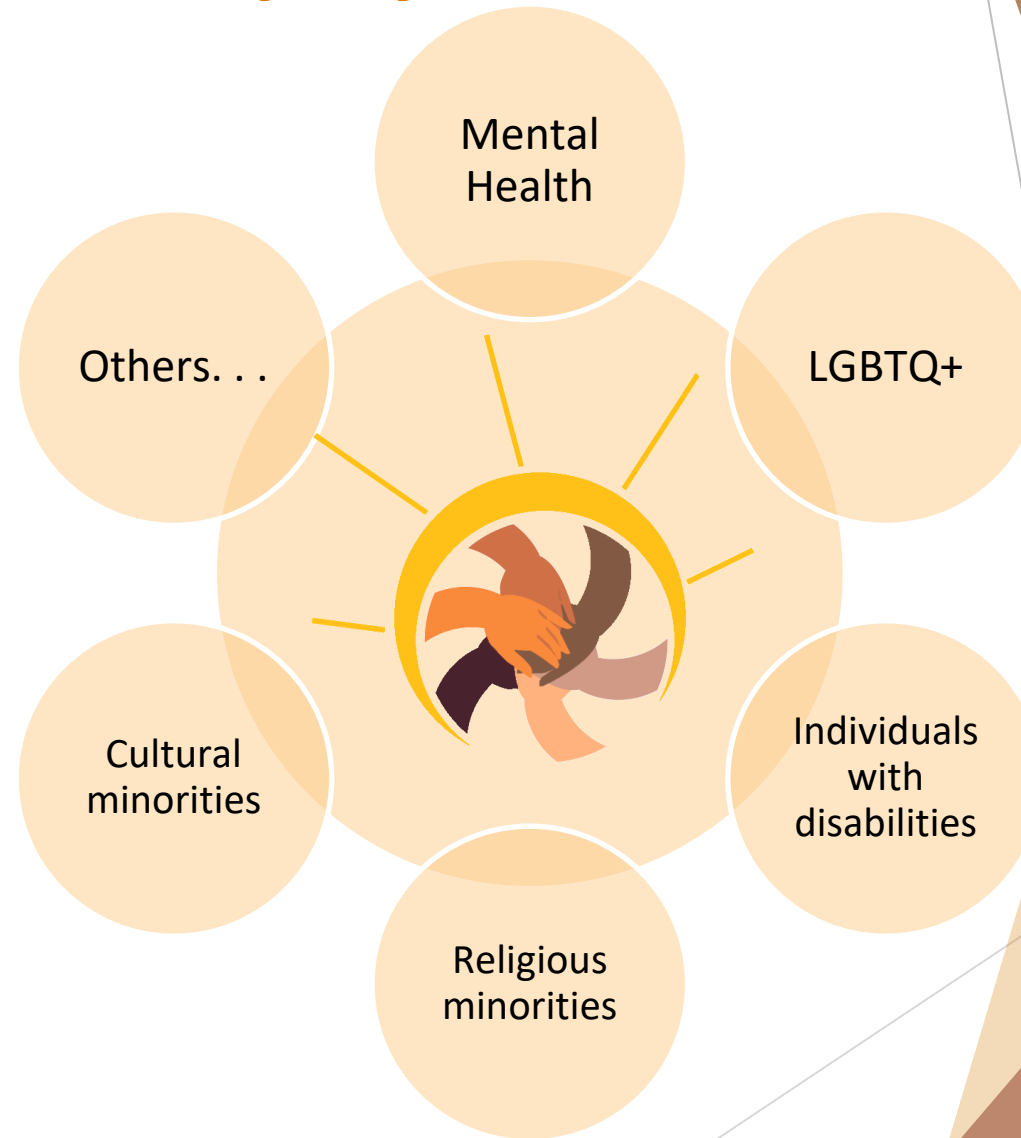


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Introduction to Friends for Equity

- **Our focus is on equity,** including doing our part to dismantle systemic racism, with the understanding that there are many important connections to be made with other groups and issues that impact our community.



Words from APS Superintendent

- ▶ Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla



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Thoughts from FFE's founding members

- ▶ Kim Stevenson
- ▶ Kisha Smith
- ▶ Jaime Polhamus
- ▶ Julie McNeill
- ▶ Carrie Firestone



Diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) work in surrounding communities

- ▶ Simsbury
- ▶ Granby
- ▶ Canton/ S.E.E.Connecticut
- ▶ Farmington
- ▶ West Hartford
- ▶ Others





Simsbury

- ▶ Equity Council – Guiding Coalition
- ▶ Spirit Council – town sponsored
 - ▶ Events Subcommittee
 - ▶ Outreach Subcommittee
 - ▶ Data/Audit Subcommittee
- ▶ Passed a town resolution declaring racism a public health crisis

Simsbury Public Schools EQUITY STATEMENT

In the Simsbury Public Schools (SPS), an equitable system ensures that all members of our community can reach their full potential. For us, equity is the dismantling of racism and all forms of marginalization that impede growth and harm our community.

We believe:

- Growth toward the achievement of equity is everyone's responsibility.
- Silence supports the oppressors and prevents positive change.
- Expectations matter because we can rise to our own beliefs and the beliefs of others around us;
- Stories matter because they provide insight and understanding into who we are;
- Healthy connections matter because they promote safety, support and positive relationships; and
- Accountability matters. All adults have the responsibility to actively implement and maintain equitable practices to ensure students' positive experience.

In our relentless pursuit of equity:

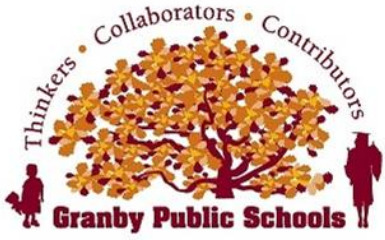
- We will recognize and address the biases and inequities that exist within our school system.
- We will hold ourselves accountable to examine data and curriculum, create policies, and provide frequent training to adults and students.
- We will provide opportunities that guarantee access for all students to meet and exceed academic, social, and civic expectations.

BOE approval at 07/21/20 meeting



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Granby

- ▶ 2017: the Center for School Change performed an equity audit on GPS, which revealed a significant performance gap between white students and minority students.
- ▶ 2018: concentrated in 4 key areas
 - ▶ **Climate:** Why are office referrals and in-school suspensions of black males so much higher than white males?
 - ▶ **Professional Capacity:** Increase and retain minority teachers
 - ▶ **Special Education:** Why are Black students recommended for special education twice as much as white students?
 - ▶ **Achievement:** Why are the AP, PSAT, and SAT achievements of black students lower than other students?
- ▶ The progress is *“slow but deep and equity is now fully part of our educational culture”* - Equity Team Member

Granby Public Schools EQUITY STATEMENT

Equity in the Granby Public Schools ensures practices that allow all students to achieve at high levels, and that outcomes are not predicted by race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation; and barriers are removed to meet the needs of students of all abilities and backgrounds; thereby realizing the district missions for all students to become powerful thinkers, effective collaborators, and compassionate contributors.





Canton and S.E.E. Connecticut

Founders: Felicia Jordan & Cailyn Carr

Steering Committee: Amy Peltier, Gretchen Washington, Ali Hager & Jenny Abel

- ▶ “We are not dealing with changing minds/opinions but changing systems that have been in place for so long. One of the biggest challenges is people thinking that nothing needs to be done or that all is well within the community when it comes to equity work. Or, thinking that change can happen quicker than it is able to.”
- Canton Parent and Equity Leader
- ▶ Meet monthly: identify and discuss issues, info sharing among FV communities, session on the new Black and LatinX curriculum, support student voices, teachers/parents/students participated in anti-racism training focused on supporting the teachers and explored Canton’s Black history.
- ▶ S.E.E. has been forming safe spaces for students and teachers to share what they need so that we are able to advocate effectively for change within our community.
- ▶ **Next meeting will be held April 25th at 4:00pm.** We plan to share our petition.
 - ▶ **Please register in advance to attend
 - ▶ <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86105649885?pwd=UWozSGxKZy9Hay9vUDRNUWR2Mm0wUT09>
- ▶ Remaining meetings for 2021: June 6, Aug. 1, Oct. 3 & Dec. 5

<https://www.ct-see.com/>; <https://www.facebook.com/SEE.Connecticut/>

Words from Avon community leaders

- ▶ Avon Voices for Equity Rose Mouning, Danielle Phillips, Caitlin Ith
- ▶ AHS PTO President, Carol Shubinski
- ▶ AFPL Director, Glenn Grube



Some of FFE's core focus areas

- ▶ As parents and community members in a majority white, but diversifying community, owning our responsibility to educate ourselves about equity/ anti-racism, support/act where needed, and be role models for our kids
- ▶ Advocating for an equity audit of APS that clearly identifies where work is needed
- ▶ Supporting a meaningful plan to address the issues and change the system where needed
- ▶ Advocating for goals and outcomes that are transparent, measurable and transformative
- ▶ Making sure we are focused on closing the opportunity gap and raising and educating thriving kids who have the strength, resiliency, education, and skills for future success
- ▶ Building community and making Avon a more welcoming and better place for everyone



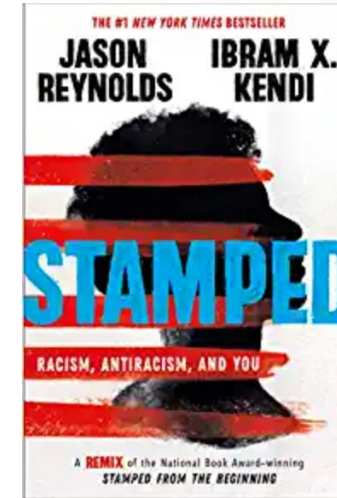
What's next

- ▶ We'll be organizing regular events where the community can participate
- ▶ FFE and AVE will be meeting in the next few weeks to discuss collaboration
- ▶ Steering Committee will be meeting regularly with Dr. Carnemolla and her team
- ▶ We are planning strategic work in the spring/ summer to clarify our priorities, goals, workplan and governance structure – all focused on determining how FFE can be most impactful



How to get involved

- ▶ Join Us! Stay tuned for upcoming FFE community forums
- ▶ Upcoming events:
 - ▶ Community reading and discussion of *Stamped* on Wed, June 16th
 - ▶ S.E.E.Connecticut meeting on April 25th at 4PM
- ▶ The PTO's are also looking for volunteers to serve on their boards.
- ▶ FFE would like to encourage Avon residents who are supportive of equity issues as well as diverse candidates to consider these roles.



How to get involved

- ▶ You can stay informed through our Facebook page or email us; we have a website on the way

Find us on Facebook at Friends for Equity

avonffe@gmail.com



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Q&A



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Suggested resources we've been learning from

► General

- [Stamped](#): Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning by Ibram x Kendi
- [White Fragility](#): Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin DiAngelo
- [The Black Friend](#) by Frederick Joseph
- [The Color of Law](#): A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America by Richard Rothstein
- 13th Documentary (on Netflix)
- A very simple explanation of systemic bias – [YouTube Video](#)

► Education Focused

- [Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?](#): And Other Conversations About Race, by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- [Schooling for Critical Consciousness](#): Engaging Black and Latinx Youth in Analyzing, Navigating, and Challenging Racial Injustice
- [CABE](#) Webinar: [Dear School Boards, Your Students and Staff of Color Are Not Okay](#)
- [The Great Divide – Boston Globe](#) – a series of education articles and forums lead by the Boston Globe

► Hartford County Focused

- [On The Line: How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and its Suburbs](#), <https://jackdougherty.org/>



Thank you!

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