

Action4Equity

Culturally Relative Trauma Related & Whole Child Community Care Policy Recommendations in Response to COVID-19.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has shed a bright light on the already emphasized inequities plaguing our city and county. While charitable and philanthropic efforts mount in order to address the basic needs of communities of color, who by design, have been marginalized and neglected, Action4Equity calls forth a radical (at the root) effort to adequately address the status quo which prevents real and meaningful systemic change to take place in Winston-Salem Forsyth County. As we continue to advocate for equity for students in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools in academic achievement, access to high quality instruction, and safe and healthy school environments, we believe a radical change must be invoked from a deep understanding of racial inequity and an acceptance of the historical context in which it was manufactured and bred. In addition, we believe the disproportionate inequities plaguing our marginalized communities perpetuates trauma impacting the psychological, developmental, social, and emotional well being of children residing in these communities.

In order address the holistic needs of children who have experienced trauma in relation to the systemic forces that impact their lives, which COVID-19 has exasperated, we ask the WS/FC School Board, the City of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County to immediately act upon the following recommendations in order for every student to be healthy, safe, engaged and supported in order for them to reach their full potential in spite of the current pandemic:

We ask the following of Winston-Salem / Forsyth County School Board:

1. To support a collaborative community and culturally responsive effort in the implementation of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model (WSCC), which uses an integrated, collaborative approach to address barriers and supports related to learning and health¹ per the WSFC/SS strategic plan:

WS/FCS will eliminate barriers so that factors of achievement predictability do not impact students' equitable access to learning opportunities.

WS/FCS will build and strengthen partnerships and communication with families, local businesses, educational organizations, community agencies and advocacy groups in order to engage families and community stakeholders in the entire educational process for all students.

WS/FCS will foster an inclusive climate that values the safety and well-being of all students, faculty and staff and foster an environment that creates a sense of belonging..

2. To Encourage And Support The ASCD Whole Child Initiative: Healthy School Communities (HSC)²
Principal leadership matters. In fact, the recent evaluation of the Healthy School Communities (HSC) pilot project showed that the role of the principal was the most critical piece of the puzzle in implementing meaningful school change and school improvement. Other elements were crucial—such as an understanding that health

¹ [NC State Department of Instruction, Whole Child, K-12 STANDARDS, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION, 4/10/2020](#)

² [ASCD Learning, Teaching and Living in Healthy School Communities](#)

improvement supports school improvement, authentic community collaboration, and the ability to make systemic rather than merely programmatic change—but these pieces more often than not arose via the influence and role the principal took in the implementation of HSC.

3. To Establish Best Practices That Foster Authentic Parent Engagement³

Design schools to provide healthy development by designing culturally responsive outreach to families as part of the core approach to education, including home visits and flexibly scheduled student-teacher-parent conferences to learn from parents about their children; outreach to involve families in school activities; and regular communication through positive phone calls home, emails, and text messages.

4. Ensure Educator Personal Support And Learning For Developmentally Supportive Education⁴

Invest in educator wellness through strong preparation and mentoring that improve efficacy and reduce stress, mindfulness and stress management training, social-emotional learning programs that benefit both adults and children, and supportive administration.

Design pre-service preparation programs for both teachers and administrators that provide a strong foundation in child and adolescent development and learning; knowledge of how to create engaging, effective instruction that is culturally responsive; skills for implementing social-emotional learning and restorative justice programs; and an understanding of how to work with families and community organizations to create a shared developmentally supportive approach. Include supervised clinical experiences in schools that model how to create (and for administrators, how to design and foster) a positive, developmentally supportive school climate for all students.

We ask the following of the **Mayor's Office and the City of Winston-Salem**:

1. Through a culturally responsive community driven process, establish mechanisms that will work aggressively and collaboratively with the School system to respond to the exasperated trauma induced as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We ask the following of the **Forsyth County Board of Commissioners**:

1. Through a culturally responsive community driven process, establish mechanisms that will work aggressively and collaboratively with the School system to respond to the exasperated trauma induced as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We ask that the **WSFC Board of Education**, the **Mayor's Office and the City of Winston-Salem**, and the **Forsyth County Board of Commissioners** to apply a Culturally Responsive Community Driven Process and Establish Common Measurements and Standards in order address the holistic needs of children who have experienced trauma in relation to the systemic forces that impact their lives, which COVID-19 has exasperated as follow:

1. **Community Driven Process** - Active community involvement in this process is a necessary condition for the success of the model. The participants who are being served need to own the process.
2. **Establish Common Measurements and Standards** - The policy recommendations could be monitored and evaluated through a strengthened version of the Community, Culture, and Environment Committee of the School Board with Liaisons from City and County Government.

³ [Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success \(Darling-Hammond, Cook-Harvey\)](#)

⁴ [Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success \(Darling-Hammond, Cook-Harvey\)](#)