

# Action4Equity

## Culturally Relative Trauma Related & Whole Child Community Care Policy Recommendations

*Updated: November 16, 2020 | Kellie Easton, Executive Director, Action4Equity*  
[www.Action4EquityWS.org](http://www.Action4EquityWS.org)

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 for a radical (at the root) effort to adequately address the status quo which prevents real and meaningful systemic change from taking 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 perpetuate trauma impacting the psychological, developmental, social, and emotional well being of children residing in these communities.

In order to address the holistic needs of children who have experienced trauma in relation to the systemic forces that impact their lives, which COVID-19 has exacerbated, 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 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 health<sup>1</sup> 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.*

---

<sup>1</sup> [NC State Department of Instruction, Whole Child, K-12 STANDARDS, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION, 4/10/2020](https://www.ncdehhs.gov/nc-state-department-of-instruction-whole-child-k-12-standards-curriculum-and-instruction-4/10/2020)

2. To Encourage And Support The ASCD Whole Child Initiative: Healthy School Communities (HSC)<sup>2</sup>  
*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 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 Engagement<sup>3</sup>  
Design schools to provide healthy development by implementing 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 Education<sup>4</sup>  
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.



**Action4Equity, in collaboration with Triad Restorative Justice, is calling for the WSPD to mitigate and transform the “discourse of silence” by not only publicly acknowledging systemic trauma caused by the criminal justice system, but a sincere prioritization in investing time, energy, and resources to eradicate these violences that harm youth.**

Through a culturally responsive community driven process, establish mechanisms that will work aggressively and collaboratively with the community organizations directly working with youth and families, and stakeholders, the WSFC School system to respond to the exacerbated trauma caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This should be done using a democratic process, in partnership with the greater community, so that collectively, we as a community can examine, eliminate and enact policies that are rooted in equity and maintained by culturally-relevant, restorative, trauma-informed practices.

We ask that the **WSFC Board of Education**, the **Mayor’s Office**, **City Council** and the **Forsyth County Board of Commissioners** avoid the natural response of working in silos and to support Action4Equity and Triad Restorative Justice’s recommendations to the WSPD.

In addition, we ask that each agency begin the internal process of achieving a Culturally Responsive Community Driven Process to establish trauma informed practices within their own institutions in order to indirectly and directly address the holistic needs of WSFC children and their families- who have experienced trauma in relation to the systemic forces that impact their lives, which COVID-19 has exacerbated.

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

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

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