

## Equity Toolkit Part 1:

### Creating Board Readiness for Equity-Focused Governance

#### Governing with Equity

Education, long praised as the great equalizer, is in no way immune to the negative impacts of oppression. Finding ways and creating spaces to encourage leaders in public education to engage in dialogue around race, power, and equity is an essential part of improving educational opportunities for all students, especially those traditionally and still underserved by public schools. Charter school boards have the power to deepen organization-wide commitment to equity. The Equity-Centered Governance Toolkit is a resource for boards who want to explore and implement equity-centered governance.

The Equity-Centered Governance Toolkit has three parts:

- **Part one** identifies **three strands** a board will need to invest in to ensure **comprehensive and sustainable outcomes**; systemic, individual, and organizational
- **Part two** provides an **overview of the six phases** or steps to adopting and furthering equity-focused governance on a board
- **Part three** identifies **specific actions and activities** aligned to EBPs Standards of Effective Governance, to carry out equity-focused governance (*available through coaching support*)

#### Systemic Focus: Understand the Roots/History of Oppression

For members of a board to tackle inequitable outcomes in their organization, they must first understand the system that resulted in the current state in which they are working. Therefore, it is foundational to:

- grow knowledge of systemic oppression
- know the legacy of systemic oppression and its impact on public education
- understand the relationship of various levels of oppression; individual, interpersonal, organization, systemic/societal/cultural.

## Individual Focus: Create Space for Ongoing Individual Work

The boards of public charter schools are responsible for the academic, organizational, and financial performance of the schools. Committed citizens step up to offer their skills, networks and experiences to govern and lead schools and organizations that support public schools. However, many members accept the responsibility without knowledge and understanding of power and oppression in their own lives, their own racial socialization and its impacts on how they lead.

As a result, boards should seek expert support and devote time to:

- aid members in understanding their **personal development of racial socialization** and **identity development**
- understand how **oppression impacts and influences how they govern/lead**
- support members in **developing the skills and competencies** needed to identify, analyze, and act in ways that increase equity and eliminate oppressive actions

## Organizational Focus: Audit Policies, Procedures & Practices

In addition to assessing personal mindsets and experiences, as well as systemic and historic oppression, it is critical for boards to take action to counter inequity.

For actions to be relevant and strategic, boards should:

- **audit** policies, procedures, processes and experience of stakeholders **to understanding the current state** of your school/board, including strengths and challenges
- engage diverse stakeholders in **analysis to identify priorities and vision** for the future
- **create a customized plan of action** to eliminate inequity in your school/board. The plan should include metrics, indicators and deadlines