

Timeline of TEAM Westport interventions in Westport Public Schools (summary and direct quotes from TEAM minutes)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Note #</u>	<u>Summary of selected minutes from TEAM meeting</u>
Jul-16	4	TEAM decides to interact directly with curriculum and teacher developments heads.
Sep-16	5	TEAM meets with curriculum heads.
Jul-17	6	HB speaks with strategic plan consultant.
Jul-17	7	TEAM pushes for race-based hiring in schools.
Sep-17	8	TEAM working with curriculum heads to revise books used and advise on teacher training.
Nov-17	10	TEAM members participate in teacher training.
Jan-18	12	TEAM prepares to install leadership teams in schools.
Jan-18	13	More teacher training by TEAM.
Feb-18	14	TEAM discusses direct access to students in schools.
Feb-18	15	TEAM plans administrator training.
Jul-18	17	TEAM prepares presentation targeteing white children ("What White Kids See")
Apr-19	19	HB requests involvement in hiring administrators.
Apr-19	20	Curriculum coordinator prepares antiracism training for staff based on Kendi's work.
May-19	21	TEAM presses for diversity in Superintendent search.
Jun-19	23	Administrator reports back to TEAM on progress towards equity training.
Sep-19	24	TEAM requests involvement in Superintendent search.
Sep-19	25	TEAM expresses need to target younger students who are not as "empowered."
Dec-19	27	TEAM organizes antiracism training (Kendi) for 40 administrators; equity analysis to be presented to BOE, Superintendent, and Superintendent search consultant; TEAM decides it "must start taking our message directly to the Board."
Jan-20	28	TEAM presents to Superintendent search consultant; expresses need for diversity emphasis.
Feb-20	29	More administrator antiracism training (Kendi).
Mar-20	31	Superintendent endorses TEAM framework.
Mar-20	32	TEAM addresses lack of leadership in changing K-8 curriculum; proposes solutions.
Jun-20	34	More administrator antiracism training (Kendi); success noted ("practical results") in changing hiring practices.
Jun-20	35	TEAM notes it "made sure" it spoke to Superintendent recruiter; TEAM notes it has already connected with Scarice.
Jun-20	36	TEAM reports it is "on track to strengthen our curriculum with regard to racism" (referring to WPS curriculum).
Jun-20	38	TEAM plans assigning parent groups to schools for "work on race."
Sep-20	39	Scarice and HB discuss equity audit.
Sep-20	40	TEAM plans equity audit; K-5 curriculum changes; more antiracism training; 10th graders to read Kendi's "Stamped."
Sep-20	41	TEAM insists all teachers (every subject) must "deliver the same message of equity." "No one gets a pass."

Date	Note #	Detailed minutes of TEAM meeting
Jul-16	1	TEAM Westport works to make sure that diversity is a part of the programming in all organizations within the town.
	2	The Guiding Principles (Westport 2025) include the curriculum to educate white children on race and living in America and what privilege is.
	3	The Guiding Principles encompass 21st century learning, i.e., global thinking, critical thinking, communications, etc. The purpose for these principles was to develop adults who have emotional and social awareness, are kind with sincerity, are principled in thought and action, and who appreciate learning always. We are now working on defining those and students and parents will work on them as well.
	4	Discussions about racism and bigotry make people uncomfortable and are difficult to get going; however, they must take place. To that end, TEAM Westport should meet the new curriculum and teacher development heads.
Sep-16	5	In preparation for our proposed discussion about 'how to talk to our children about race', Brett, Catherine Lewis, and Zoe met with the Westport Schools curriculum heads – Julie Droller (K-5) and Jennifer Allen (6-12). We gave an overview as to how to talk to teachers about race and we showed them the presentation that we developed. This was received positively. We shall follow up with Mses. Droller and Allen.
Jul-17	6	Harold has spoken with the consultant who is working with the Superintendent on her strategic plan particularly with regard to leadership around diversity – how it's built and maintained. Members of TEAM Westport will have an opportunity, at the Superintendent's request, to participate in a focus group (there are several being conducted in Westport) later this summer.
	7	John Bayers, is proactively recruiting candidates based on skill level and other factors. Several members of the system who are diverse have been hired to date; however, we recommend that more teachers of color be hired. Once teachers have been hired, retention is important. Also training for new hires and veteran teachers as to how race is discussed in the classroom and throughout the system is important. There are resources and materials to help address cultural differences. We also suggest working with students of color in the system more proactively.
Sep-17	8	Julie Heller and Rebecca Marsick emphasized that training of teachers is key. Educational material is in the process of being diversified. Julie Droller, Assistant Superintendent for K-5, is looking at all of the books in the schools to evaluate the mix. In general, teachers and students need to be able to discuss hard issues and be supported in that effort. Hence there is a need for training teachers so that they feel confident
	9	In August, members of TEAM Westport participated in a focus group with Superintendent Palmer as part of her development of a 3-year strategic plan for the school system. Our suggestions with regard to diversity and relevant considerations were compiled beforehand and presented before our session. Superintendent Palmer stated that at her opening convocation for the school year she would reinforce the values of the school system. Strategic leadership with accountability is being taught to the entire team with an emphasis on teaching staff to be able to convey "diversity" in a meaningful way. Our suggestions have been shared with the Board, teachers, and the PTA. Superintendent Palmer is now figuring out her strategic goals and objectives and making them measurable. Teachers will have opportunities to hear the message during Professional Development days. The first PTA meeting has been scheduled. Catherine Lewis mentioned that Border Crossers (NYC based) also trains teachers via intense programs and may be a resource.
Nov-17	10	On October 13th, Zoe and Catherine presented to a group of teachers at a Westport Professional Development Day. The take-away: training is key and teachers need tools to handle situations that come up in school settings with regard to race. On November 9th, Zoe and Catherine will give a similar presentation to parents at a Long Lots PTA meeting.
Dec-17	11	Harold met with the superintendent and a consultant earlier in the year. It is time for an update meeting and to assign a point person in the school system for implementation. Rebecca and Julie attended a Border Crossers session. Border Crossers provides training and may be a fit for the teachers in the Westport Public Schools as to how to teach about race.
Jan-18	12	Strategic Planning: We're ready to move forward to teach school leadership teams and are looking at the best way to do so.
	13	The Board has approved their strategic plan including statements for retention and hiring of diverse faculty and to eliminate achievement gaps. Are on her radar. Still approaching Open Choice. Teacher training from Zoe and Catherine. Is there board support? Yes, 3rd quarter.
Feb-18	14	Staples – Julie arranged a meeting for Harold and Bernicestine with James D'Amico, Staples' Principal. Mr. D'Amico is looking forward to continuing to work with TEAM. Mid-day sessions with students are possible. Also interacting with Kool to be Kind may work best since TEAM Westport-Staples is not active this year. He would like to schedule a session by Zoe and Catherine for faculty and administrators at Staples.
	15	Strategic Planning – Zoe and Catherine presented to Superintendent Palmer giving an overview of their training on "What Children See" in Westport. Julie will coordinate a leadership training meeting for the district's top administrators in April.
Jun-18	16	The Board has approved a Task Force on Diversity chaired by Lauren and Harold. Over the next year, subcommittees will be formed as well. Students will be involved as well.
Jul-18	17	Zoe and Catherine L. are scheduled to give their presentation on "What White Kids See" at Saugatuck Elementary in November and are targeting Staples and Bedford at some point. They would like to use their presentation as an introduction and employ breakout groups for more detailed discussion. Ideally, teachers in the schools will be trained and then go to Border Crossers. People who can lead the breakout sessions need to be identified.
	18	Karen Kleine resigned from TEAM Westport.

Apr-19	19	Harold has written a letter to the board requesting some involvement by TEAM Westport in the process of hiring new administrators.
	20	Lauren is working on an equity audit encompassing district data – one of the top recommendations from the Anti-racism training in December. Additionally, ongoing talks acknowledge that equity needs to be a theme for all administrative training going forward. We are looking at trying to line up an anti-racism session this August, based on Dr. Ibram Kendi's work.
May-19	21	We particularly recommend a superintendent search slate with candidates from diverse backgrounds. For the record, we have had in the past an assistant superintendent of schools (Cliff Barton) and an interim principal at Bedford Middle School (Dr. Bell) who were of color.
Jun-19	22	Harold reviewed a list of preliminary recommendations developed by TEAM Westport for the school system re: equity based on the input of community members including parents and students.
	23	Lauren reported the following: 1. The school district is currently talking to several groups about providing equity training. 2. Lauren is committed to doing an equity audit and examining the Staples code of conduct which needs to be updated with policy about harassment and sexual assault as well as hate and equity. 3. Teachers read this year's TEAM Westport essays to help determine professional development needs. Rebecca is leading the Professional Development committee at Staples and will support the Connections team. [The mission of Connections is to: serve as an intentional time to communicate school-related information, foster meaningful connections between students and staff members, and create a safe environment where students feel comfortable to hold open discussions throughout their Staples career]. It provides the protocol for difficult conversations and what teachers need to lead small groups, etc. This just passed at last night's School Board meeting.
Sep-19	24	[Dr. Abbey] also said that soon we would have news about the process for selecting a new superintendent. Normally the board hires a search firm and gathers information from the community via surveys and focus groups. TEAM Westport would like to have some part in that process.
	25	At the high school, the 10th grade social studies curriculum is being reviewed. Also, Michele Cerino (Literacy Coordinator for PreK-5) is now reviewing that social studies curriculum. Zoe expressed a concern that work is primarily being done at the high school where kids are more empowered. Several members around the table agreed that work needs to be done with the younger children and that teachers need to be equipped to handle whatever needs to be done.
	26	Brett mentioned sessions provided at The Center for Racial Justice on the elementary school level. She recommended that a budget line item should exist since it is so important to do have everyone understand true history every year. People have not had the history.
Dec-19	27	Training conducted by Dr. Chris Petrella, Director of Engagement at American University's Antiracist Research & Policy Center, and a colleague from the Center for the top 40 administrators in our school system took place on December 11th. The feedback thus far is very positive. Half of the administrators attended in the morning and half in the afternoon. The entire group came together for another hour at 5, very similar in content to our session last year in December 2018. We want to shape an equity analysis to present to the Board of Education, the superintendent, and the consultant involved in the search for the new superintendent. We plan to meet with Dr. Anthony Buono and to organize a meeting with the new Board of Education chair, Candice Savin. We must start taking our message directly to the Board. We need their commitment as well as that of the administration. Presentation of the environment in the schools and recommendations with respect to that environment need to be brought forward. Budget line items should certainly be proposed to implement the recommendations and an analysis.
Jan-20	28	Harold, Zoe, Catherine, Lauren, and Bernicestine met last Thursday with Joe Erardi who is the consultant working with the Board of Education (BOE) on the search for our new school superintendent. Presented to him were...a list of recommendations developed by TEAM Westport re: diversity equity and inclusion for the Westport Schools District.... Foremost is the need for someone who will lead the team focused on diversity for the entire district.
Feb-20	29	On December 9th, 2019, training was given to Westport school administrators by the Anti-Racist Research and Policy Center founded by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi (American University). Follow-up gameplan and ongoing training is desired by attendees and required for effective implementation and sustainable improvement.
Mar-20	30	We have to figure out a way to gauge progress and cannot have dueling narratives . We must gather info systematically by speaking with students, faculty, and parents. A climate study was conducted last year and will be again in May. It was calibrated on a district wide basis (grades 3-12). We have info for all of the questions with respect to racial groups. The suggestion is that we take a look at the results and determine from those how we make progress going forward. We should know where we are now, how to gauge progress, and in what areas.
	31	TEAM Westport has come up with a framework for making progress. Dr. Abbey stated that he may not agree with all of the suggestions and the school system may have some of their own to contribute. However, the framework is good.
	32	When asked about the Middle School, Dr. Abbey has spoken to Lauren and to Dr. Buono about that curriculum pointing out that things must change. The Superintendent focuses more on the high school, but we do need to look at K-8 . For example, there is no systematic approach to Black History Month now. Many teachers are afraid to confront race. We are not color blind. TEAM Westport has proposed that there be someone responsible for "diversity" at the top and a team in each building.
	33	Jen Tooker, who is still involved with SERC, stated that the core of the work of that group is to build out approaches and that, if we need anything, to contact her.
Jun-20	34	[David Abbey] Working with TEAM Westport has prompted us to do things I would not have done. We brought in 2 trainers from the Anti-racism Center at American University for 40 administrators. It brought practical results in the way we hire, our hiring emphasis, and in our making sure people of color are on hiring committees.
	35	Candice stated at the BOE meeting that there is considerable work to do in training, hiring, and the curriculum and we are committed to do it. These issues have become part of our consciousness. We made sure that TEAM Westport spoke with the recruiter for the Superintendent position. The Board spoke with candidates of color. Tom has made the connection with TEAM Westport already. This is wholly different. A number of members of the School District are on this call as well as two members of the BOE.
	36	We are on track to strengthen our curriculum with regard to racism, PreK – 12. Lauren sent out the message to the Social Studies teachers that this is a moment that we have to teach in the moment not next year. It's emerging, it's happening nationally, it's happening here. The principals and the teachers understand the importance. Lauren has sent out resource information as to how to deal with this issue.

	37	[Dr. Abbey]: Teachers need to be able to have difficult conversations and so they need training. However, in the short term, we have sent out resource materials.
	38	There is a Teaching and Learning committee meeting for reopening the discussion. Ali Moran has been working (with Rebecca, Faith, and Keri) on racism and teaching and learning. The work on race is a priority for that group. [Harold & Zoe]: The focus is to have the TEAM Westport parents group assigned to the schools and to have Catherine and Zoe stay in contact with them – thus keeping some parent representation under the TEAM Westport umbrella.
Sep-20	39	Harold spoke with Superintendent Scarice yesterday... He has seen the 10 TEAM Westport-proposed recommendations; he has viewed the August 25th session conducted by the Staples alumnae as well as the June 30th TEAM Westport parents' meeting which reviewed the 10 proposed recommendations. He has not yet had a firm look, though, and wants to get data on disparities (equity audit) to determine how we start and what we do to move forward. We can't eliminate areas of concerns overnight. He wants us to present recommendations to him for consideration.
	40	Lauren: • The teachers in Grades 6-12 will look at these materials tomorrow to see how to fit them into the curriculum. Teachers need time to react. Taking kids out of buildings has always been a logistical challenge. As difficult as it is, we can now do things better. Teachers are looking at new ways to talk to organizations. • We fully support an equity audit that would happen concurrently with things we have already identified. • We will push for evaluation of the K-5 curriculum this year. • We still have the committee that is working on the multicultural and global studies course and we plan to implement as soon as we have the materials. • Keri and Rebecca talked to teachers and they are watching the video from the Westport Museum to address how to incorporate it through an anti-racist lens. • All of our students in grade 10 are reading Stamped - The Remix by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. Our AP US History students are reading it, too. The College Board curriculum does not include this book, but we will be using it for historical thinking and Rebecca will be using it for literacy.
	41	Judy: With respect to curriculum concerns, we cannot look only at areas of study that go deep. We have to go wide, because unless all teachers get the message and reinforce the message, the message will be seen as pertaining to just Social Studies, just English, or just AP. Every discipline has to deliver the same message of equity and fairness and that we all belong here whether it's math, physics, or gym. It needs to be uniform and universal. No one gets a pass. It's almost like saying that black literature is for black people. It is for all people. Equity and justice are for everyone to carry, be aware, and deliver