

2023-24 NEF Collaborative Initiative Funding Summary

Applicants:

Mary Lammi, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services

Diane Simmons, Director of Strategic Planning and Community Engagement

Summary:

Using the Portrait of A Needham Graduate strategic plan as a guide, the district aims to create schools and classrooms with strong social emotional learning and equity practices in place in which students are far more likely to attend school and engage in learning, have stronger self management, social awareness, and relationship skills, report a stronger sense of self efficacy and perform better academically compared to students who do not experience these conditions.

Collaborative Initiative funding will be used towards specific equity improvement areas that have not been funded through the district's operational budget, using a three-prong approach as detailed below. Specifically, the funding will support professional learning focused on providing educators and leaders with the tools, strategies, and knowledge needed to create the conditions for learning for all students in every classroom.

1. Leadership Academy for Educational Equity, Understanding, and Organizational Transformation from William James College

The goal of the leadership academy is to sharpen the personal and collective equity lens and leverage leadership practices that lead to an expanded organizational ability to achieve educational equity and other change efforts that improve outcomes and experiences for all students. Sessions have been customized for Needham based on their graduate leadership program.

All members of the District Leadership Team (DLT) will attend the leadership academy during regular DLT meeting time. This team is comprised of 60 leaders, including administrators from each school, special education and support service leaders, curriculum leaders and department heads, central administration, and Metco leaders. The team will be divided into two smaller cohorts (30/30) to create a smaller learning community and the opportunity for additional engagement directed by the district beyond the course.

2. Teacher-focused professional development with author/educator Cornelius Minor

During the 22/23 school year, Cornelius Minor gave two keynote addresses and met with several department teams after a district-wide book read of his book *We Got This!* The professional development clarified the importance of building meaningful relationships with students as well as offering key classroom strategies for building an inclusive classroom. The funding will continue the professional development with Mr. Minor by providing opportunities for peer observation, data collection and analysis, and space for professionals to reflect and ritualize core equity-focused pedagogy. Four days of small group sessions with educators will be scheduled throughout the course of the school year with the goal of increasing teacher's use of data to improve learning that

is culturally relevant and provides equitable classroom practices that lift all students.

3. Consultation, training and support for implementing Restorative Practices in schools

Restorative Practices is an approach that focuses on developing safe and supportive communities through building, maintaining, and repairing relationships among community members. The funding will provide consultation and professional development to assist the Needham Public Schools in building awareness and understanding of restorative practices at all levels and to support implementation at Pollard Middle School and Needham High School.

The goal is for educators to foster healthy dialogue and increase mutual understanding and empathy among students and staff, leading to an overall sense of connection and increasing the capacity to handle conflict in a way that promotes growth and repairs relationships. Restorative Practices is also an umbrella framework that helps to pull together and integrate other initiatives like Social Emotional Learning and Culturally Responsive Teaching because of the shared purpose of creating the conditions for learning for all students.

Funding Summary:

1. Leadership Academy for Educational Equity, Understanding, and Organizational Transformation from William James College – **\$69,480**

2 hours	Planning Meeting
20 hours	Course hours (2 cohorts x 10 hours each)
30 hours	Coaching hours (30 1-hour sessions)

2. Teacher-focused professional development with author/educator Cornelius Minor – **\$24,000**

Four full-day sessions including:

6 hours	5 Metco educators
6 hours	5 Elementary Principals
4 hours	Cohort 1: ~70 Humanities teachers & 4 directors from High Rock, Pollard, NHS
4 hours	Cohort 2: ~70 STEM teachers & 4 directors from High Rock, Pollard, NHS

3. Consultation, training and support for implementing Restorative Practices in schools – **\$63,100**

4 hours	Action Planning for Pollard and Needham High School RP Leadership teams
10 hours	Course/Training for all Pollard staff
2 hours	Parent Education workshop for Pollard
20 hours	Coaching for all Pollard staff
8 hours	Course/Training for 20 early adopter staff at Needham High School
14 hours	Coaching for 20 early adopter staff at Needham High School
18 hours	3 introductory workshops to build awareness at the elementary level
12 hours	Readiness assessments & action planning for 2-3 identified schools

Total 23-24 NEF Collaborative Initiative Funding = \$156,580