

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Our Why

We want to live in a more just, equitable, and caring world and believe that education has the ability to be a powerful tool for liberation. We seek to rethink and dismantle historically unfair and oppressive systems, and then rebuild them so all learners can succeed and thrive.

- *We believe systemic change in education is possible*
- *We believe in ALL students' ability to thrive in school and in life*
- *We believe that through high-quality, inclusive, and culturally responsive education, all students, families, and communities can chart their own paths to success*
- *We believe that the voices of students, families, and educators are critical in leading sustainable improvement in education*

We do this by emphasizing compassion, justice, and anti-racism in all our work to turn equity from a value into an integrated and sustainable practice.

Our Commitment

In order to advance the vision and practice of an inclusive, anti-racist education system, the Rennie Center internally and externally commits to promoting the following core values within everything we do: Equity & Justice, Learning, Integrity, Empathy, Balance, and Community

We commit to EQUITY & JUSTICE because together we strive to empower and support students, families, educators, and communities and work together to build a more equitable education system.

We believe that all students, families, and communities deserve the best educational experiences and opportunities and we fight for a future where our education systems will support that reality. We believe in the power of diverse perspectives in decision making, as no one person has all the answers to overcoming systemic inequities. Through our work, we strive to break down historic barriers that too often keep those most impacted by change out of decision making spaces, especially those voices marginalized by a history of racism and oppression.

We commit to the journey of LEARNING because together we can experience and share in a more interconnected world where better is possible.

We believe that learning is a life-long adventure and every situation and interaction offers opportunities for growth. We believe that mistakes can lead to powerful new understanding that failure is part of the journey towards success. We believe that the most rich learning can emerge from genuine curiosity in any situation.

We commit to leading with INTEGRITY because together we can forge a culture of honesty and transparency, both internally and externally, to achieve our most ambitious goals.

We believe consistent follow-through, shared accountability, and clear ongoing communication will contribute to a culture of trust and lead to better outcomes for our team and those we serve.

We commit to leaning in with EMPATHY because together we seek to understand and honor the complexity and humanity of each person.

We strive to show up with compassion and consideration. We affirm each other's experiences by leaning in with curiosity and humility. We seek to recognize and honor the background and perspectives of each person, community, or organization we collaborate with and support.

We commit to operating with BALANCE because together we take care of each other and our community.

We recognize that physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing comes first. We believe in a culture of balance to ensure we show up as the best version of ourselves. We commit to honoring COMMUNITY because together we can achieve more. We believe that collaboration is critical to creating meaningful change. We strive to create spaces where authentic relationships can flourish and everyone feels a strong sense of belonging.

How this Manifests in our Work

The Rennie Center strives to center equity and prompt anti-racist beliefs and practices in all aspects of its work, including but not limited to the topics we study, the organizations and communities we partner with and support, and the ideas and policies we develop and promote to achieve large-scale sustainable improvements in education.

IN RESEARCH

1. We investigate strategies for building an education system that dismantles barriers to student learning and healthy development rooted in systemic racism and inequality.
2. We elevate the voices most impacted by the issues we study and value their knowledge and stories as critical data that guides our own understanding.
3. We strive to produce actionable, adaptable products that may be used by communities to author their own paths toward improvement and success.

See, for example, our research on [*The Power Gap in Massachusetts K-12 Education: Examining Gender and Racial Disparities Among Leadership*](#).

IN PRACTICE

1. We partner with communities, school systems, and organizations committed to justice and overcoming inequities that harm marginalized students and families.
2. We employ methods that invite all project participants to join us as learners, building our collective capacity to continuously grow and improve.
3. We commit to local ownership and work to “put ourselves out of business” by ensuring our partners can independently manage and sustain their own improvement efforts.

See, for example, our work to support the [Systemic Student Support \(S3\) Academy](#).

IN POLICY

1. We promote open lines of communication and create opportunities for collaboration among community and state leaders to create brave spaces for discussing policy changes.
2. We work tirelessly to ensure policymaking is rooted in a deep understanding of local knowledge and lived experiences, especially from voices that are often unheard.
3. We remain vigilant in our efforts to ensure policymaking is aimed at achieving large-scale, systemic change that redresses a legacy of oppression and neglect that has barred far too many people from achieving their full potential.
4. We reject any policy that discriminates, or continues to perpetuate inequality, by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, wealth, culture, language, age, physical and mental ability, or any other ability or attribute core to the human experience.

See, for example, our analysis of the [Educator Diversity Act](#).

To keep ourselves accountable to our commitments, we continually ask ourselves:

- How are we supporting equity of voice among those “closest to the work” by understanding who is currently involved with, and who is directly impacted by, our work?
- How are we cultivating psychologically safe team cultures within projects, and among partners and our internal team?
- Are we intentionally designing with the community, not for the community?
- Are we aware of, and actively interrupting, our individual assumptions and biases that may be limiting our learning?

- Are we taking an asset-based approach to our work and including data that lifts up stories, lived experience, artifacts, and observations from diverse perspectives?
- How is our work focused on getting at the root of systemically inequitable practices that underlie individual, school, and community outcomes for the purpose of redesigning systems to produce different results?
- Are we intentionally and continuously adapting our strategies based on what we are learning throughout a project to ensure equity is at the center?

We use these questions to maintain an equity focus within our projects and partnerships, continually assess our internal team structures and overall organizational health, and maintain a vigorous public commitment to dismantling systems of oppression in our education system.