

# Norwalk ACTS Convening

**June 15, 2021**

# Welcome

---

**Please “rename” your zoom name with your first & last name and organization (or list community member)**

Select participants→select your name→select more→select rename

# Agenda

---

What Community Engagement means to Norwalk ACTS (30)

- Introduction of Community Advocate Program

Norwalk ACTS Strategic Planning Process Overview (15)

Member Breakout Groups for Mission/Vision Redesign (45)

Whole Group Debrief (25)

Next Steps (5)

# A view of our Community Engagement



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

---

## DEFINITIONS

**COMMUNITY:** the residents (children, young adults, adults and seniors) who live in Norwalk and the people and organizations who work to help make Norwalk a better place.

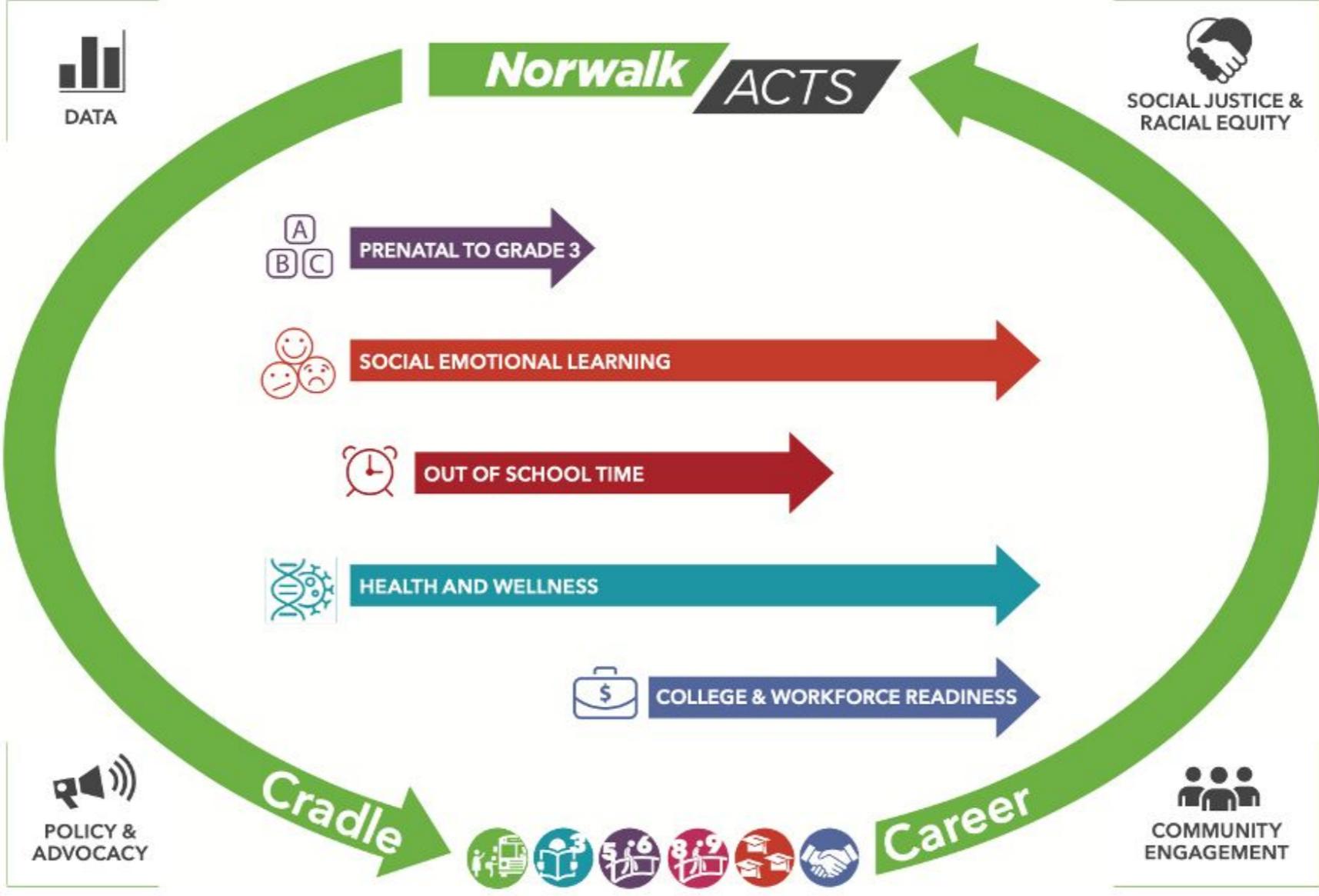
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The process by which community members are included and contribute to collective impact initiatives.

# Principles of Community Engagement in the Norwalk ACTS ecosystem

Data for for continuous improvement includes voices and experiences from the community



Leadership positions are representative of the community members most impacted by systems change



Mechanisms are established for gathering community input, and Norwalk ACTS uses input to help prioritize our work



Community contributes to our efforts including participation in leadership, decision making, and development & management of goals

# Levels of Community Engagement

## Inform

Community provides information to help you understand the issues, find solutions, and discover opportunities.



"We will keep you informed of our work."

## Consult

Community gives you specific feedback on alternatives, analyses, or decisions.



"We will offer you our ideas and listen to your input as we make decisions."

## Involve

Partnerships engage community to ensure goals, concerns and alternatives are considered and understood.



"You have opportunities to provide input at multiple stages of the process. We will let you know how your involvement influences our decisions."

## Collaborate

Partnerships and community members work together, sharing information and some power in all aspects of the decision-making process to reach a shared goal.



"You have a seat at the table and are involved throughout the change process. Together, we will partner in creating and implementing decisions."

## Shift Ownership

Community members/ youth and families provide information, find solutions and discover opportunities.



"Your decisions will drive the work. You have power and resources to create change."

# How? -- Community Advocate Program

---

**Intentionally provide a safe space and a systemic framework for community members including youth to:**

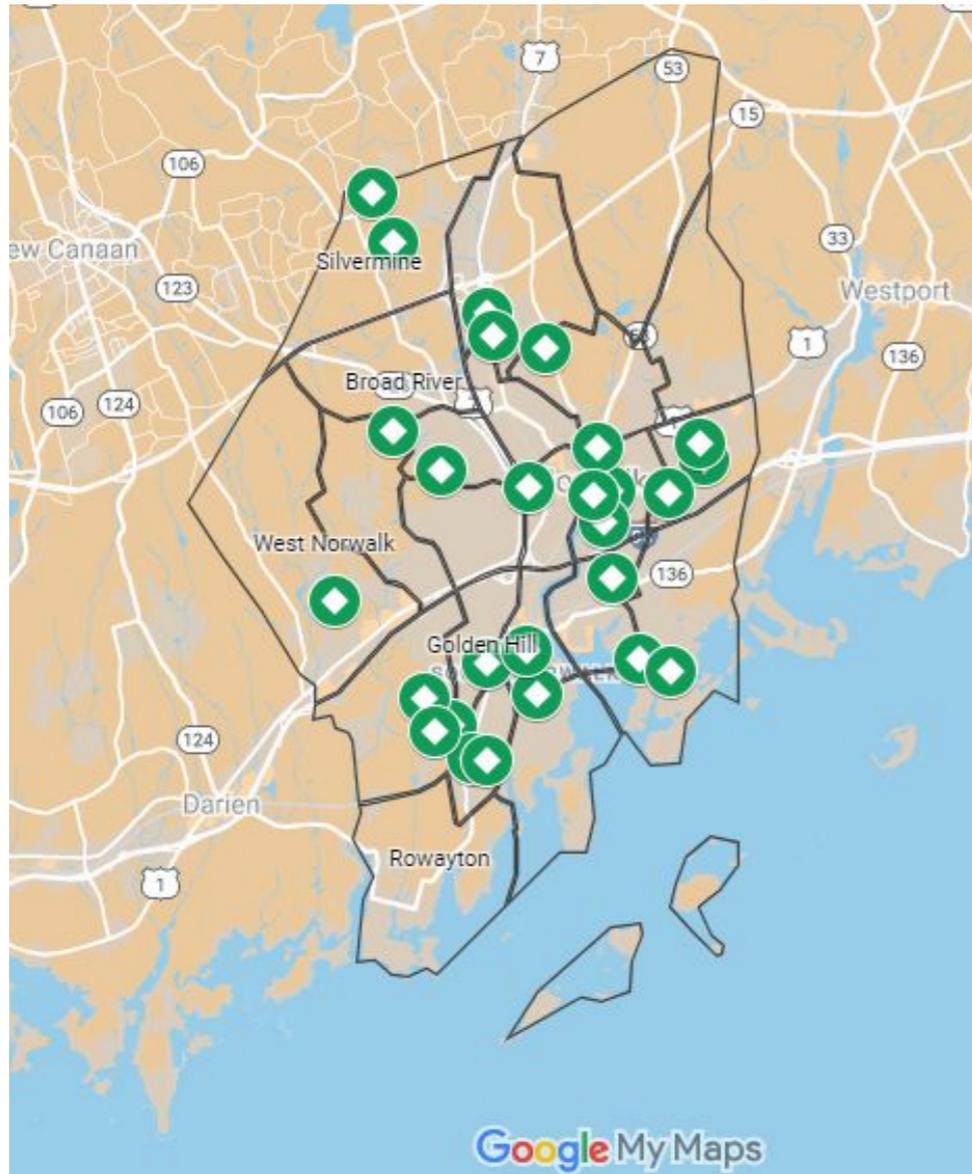
- ▶ **listen and lead discussions about shared experiences**
- ▶ **develop & design solutions to address challenges and barriers**
- ▶ **recruit other grassroots community members to advocate at the city and state level for or against specific policies affecting Norwalk children and families**
- ▶ **share Norwalk ACTS information and other community resources**
- ▶ **participate in workshops of their choice that are designed by community leaders and experts (recorded to share with other Norwalk community members)**

# Outcomes of Community Advocate Program

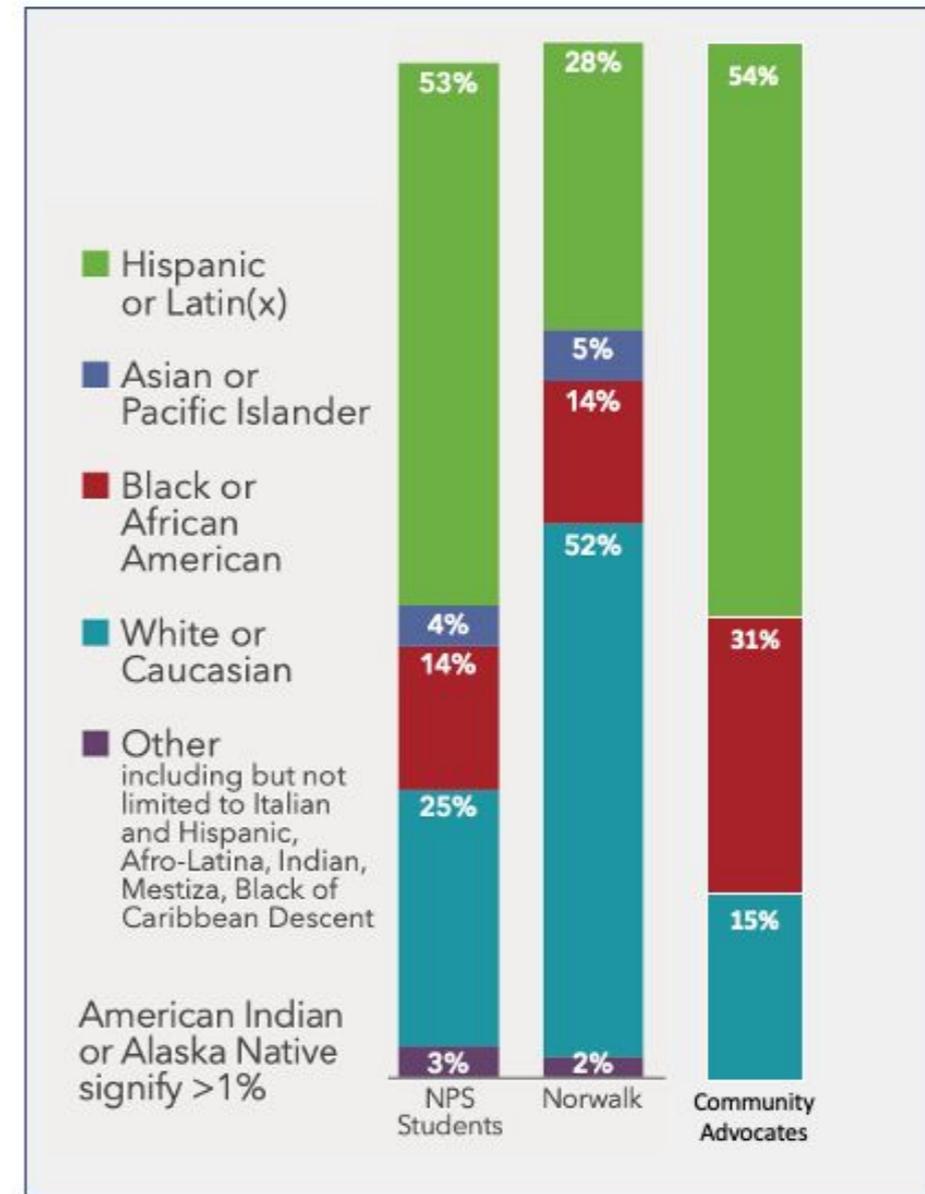
---

- **Increase the number of community advocates and community members representative of the Norwalk population participating in Norwalk ACTS Initiatives, Workgroups, and Task Force**
- **Increase awareness about cultures, neighborhoods, and resources available to Norwalk residents**
- **Move local decision makers and statewide legislators to make system and policy changes that directly impact Norwalk children and families**
- **Create a strong community by increasing a sense of belonging in our communities, increasing knowledge about advocacy and increasing familiarity with accessing community resources**

# Community Advocate Connections to Norwalk



- ▶ **12 Adults, 1 Student**
- ▶ **Over 20 Norwalk Community Groups**
- ▶ **NPS: 4 elementary, 3 middle, 2 high schools**



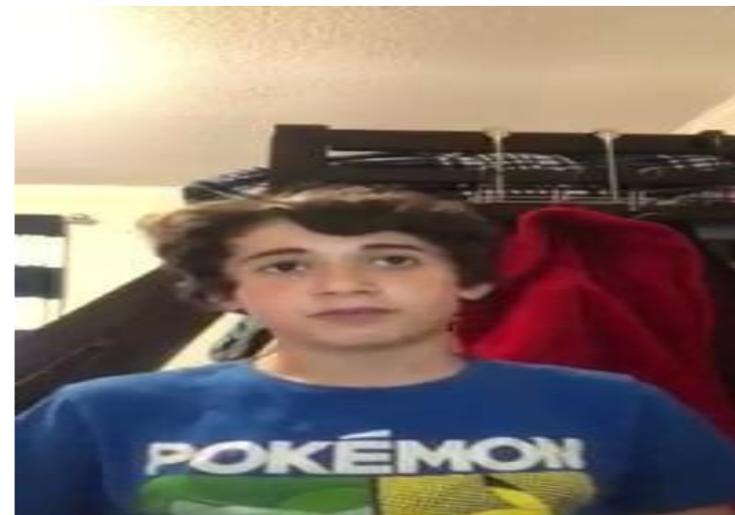
- ▶ **6 speak Spanish fluently**
- ▶ **2 speak Hatian Creole fluently**

# Community Advocate Introductions

---

Doreen Anderson  
Barbara Beaujour  
Michael Broncati  
Angel Dorleans  
Stacey Dumas  
Laura Garcia  
Maria Guzman

Erika Hernandez  
Christopher Mahanna (video)  
Sonia Morales  
Diana Revolus  
Camilla Vallejo (video)  
Francisca Nunez



# ASK to Norwalk ACTS Member Organizations

---

## TOP SIX WORKSHOP TOPICS CHOSEN BY CAs

- **Community Building, Advocacy and Organizing**
- **Social & Economic Trends Affecting Children and Families**
- **Technological Training to help with communication including social media, computer software, apps and data collection**
- **Facilitating and leading community conversations**
- **Trauma Informed Care/ACEs Training**
- **History of Immigrant Community in Norwalk**

## A POINT OF REFLECTION

**How can Norwalk ACTS member organizations offer and support community advocates?**

- **Providing Places for Connection**
- **Leading Workshops**
- **Sharing opportunities**
- **Networking**

# Community Advocate Recruitment

---

**THANK YOU to the Community Engagement Advisory Group and the many community members who assisted with the development of the program & provided referrals to engaged adults and youth.**

# Annual Partnership Survey Key Theme

---

Different viewpoints on what & who Norwalk ACTS is:

Some view Norwalk ACTS solely as a nonprofit organization - when describing the who - they are referring to backbone staff as Norwalk ACTS

Some view Norwalk ACTS as a movement - when describing the who - they are referring to a collective of members (including themselves)

# Strategic Planning Priorities

---

1

Redesign our Mission, Vision, Values  
(connected to cornerstones)

2

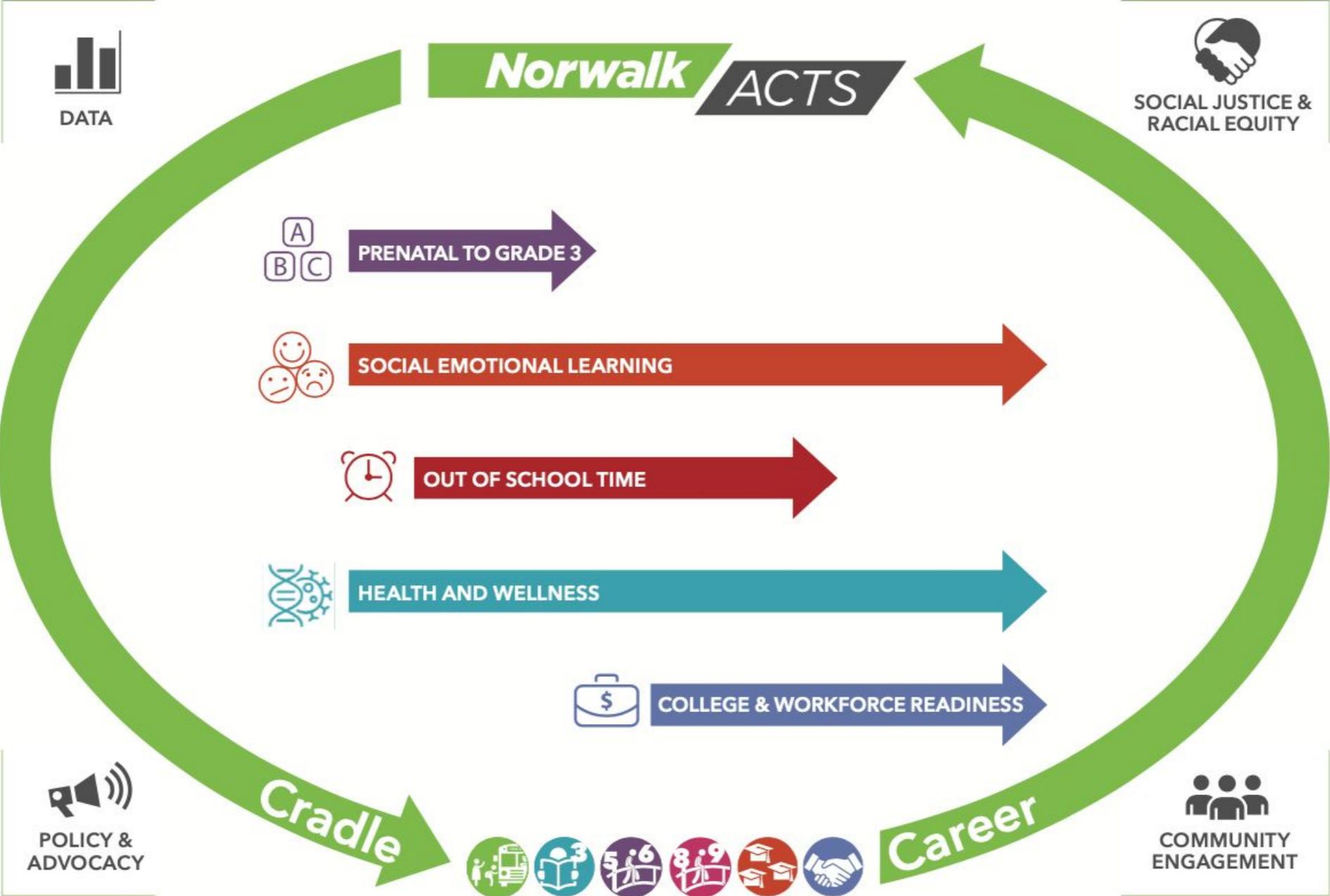
Initiative Restructure: Initiative Phase Meter,  
Leadership Summit, Goal Revision

3

Clarifying Member Expectations: MOA  
resigning in September

# Strategic Planning Process Overview

Our cornerstones are embedded into each of our five Initiatives across the cradle-to-career continuum.



# Strategic Planning Input Structure

---



# Timeline & Sequence



# Role of the Implementation Team



# Mission & Vision Components - TBD

---

## Vision

Statement that looks towards the future/is aspirational. A declaration of the long term goals of the community we serve. Answers “What do we want to achieve or be true for Norwalk’s children?”

**Current: Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow academically, social emotionally, and physically.**

## Mission

Statement that talks about what we do, our reason for being, serves as a guide for achieving the vision, Answers “How do we achieve the vision?”

**Current: To enrich and improve the lives and futures of all Norwalk’s children and youth, cradle to career.**

# Breakout Group Conversation Norms & Agenda

---

## Conversation Norms

1. Listen and be open to different perspectives and experiences.
2. Show respect and suspend judgment.
3. Disagreement is an opportunity to expand our perspectives.
4. Check your assumptions and assume positive intent.
5. Be purposeful and to the point.
6. Step up, step back.

## Breakout Group Logistics

- 4 randomly assigned breakout groups with 2 topics
- 1 facilitator and 1 “supporting” backbone staff member

## Groups Numbers Facilitated By:

1. Pastor Liz, Cornerstone Church
2. Barbara Smyth, Common Council
3. Wendy Gerbier, Norwalk Housing Authority
4. Theresa Argondezzi, City of Norwalk

## Timing:

Introductions

20 Vision Word Cloud & Themes

20 Mission Ideas & Themes

# Group 1 - Pastor Liz - PLACEHOLDER for Mentimeter Word Cloud

---

Vision: Statement that looks towards the future/is aspirational. We exist to realize our vision. A declaration of the long term goals of the community we serve. Answers “Where do we aim to be”.

Current: Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow academically, social emotionally, and physically.

**Write down as many words or phrases as you can to describe what you believe the vision of Norwalk ACTS should include?**

# Group 1 Vision Key Themes

**Vision:** Statement that looks towards the future/is aspirational. We exist to realize our vision. A declaration of the long term goals of the community we serve. Answers “Where do we aim to be”.

**Current:** Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow academically, social emotionally, and physically.



Equity- advancing equity, equitable opportunity  
Health  
Passionate about the work  
Equity in resources, different types of equity, regardless of a person’s race, ethnicity, generr, disability, zip code, circumstance  
Responsibility by everyone including leaders -- we need to step up and role model to our youth  
Community Advocates empower the voices of our community  
Opportunity -- access to opportunity and opportunity  
Everyone’s voice  
How does Norwalk ACTS be that vehicle to teach truth to power and power elements?  
How do we hold organizations accountable?  
everyone is accountable in their own vision - NPS accountable for itself and towards the whole community  
Norwalk ACTS creates system and framework for fully accountability  
Collaborative not competitive  
We are stronger together  
There is enough to go around  
All kids  
Resources are shared for the greater good and not for one particular organization  
We are creating a collective statement of every member organization and for every individual Norwalk community member  
How do we develop support system so we can have a sustainable environment.  
The Norwalk community takes responsibility to intentionally, passionately, and collectively advance equity, access and opportunity so all community members can thrive.

# Group 1 Mission Ideas

**Mission:** Statement that talks about what we do, our reason for being, serves as a guide for achieving the vision, Answers “How do we achieve the vision?”

**Current:** To enrich and improve the lives and futures of all Norwalk’s children and youth, cradle to career.

**Write down as many words or phrases as you can to describe what you believe the mission of Norwalk ACTS should include?**

- ▶ think about shared power - the pyramid of power flipped upside down
- ▶ If people who have power could step back and allow people who don’t have power to step up
- ▶ Holding accountability
- ▶ Events and collaboration from different sides of the spectrum -- for example: The NICE Festival, community projects over the past week, let families have tents, Rowayton community members also to be involved, exposing everyone to different cultures, raising awareness about different perspectives, pushing people out of their comfort zones
- ▶ How can we engage families who are part of the steering and planning process?
- ▶ Build sustainable leaders and systems that will keep the work moving forward
- ▶ Removing barriers - we need to listen to what the barriers are for Norwalk community members, we need to look at systems and try to unbundle them so families can do the things they want to do
- ▶ how explicit do we want to be as a city or a community?
- ▶ Address the disparities, racial, gender, economic -- all impact children’s success --
- ▶ Developing an equitable system plan - how do we build leaders and then have a sustainable next step? Everyone has responsibility in this work.
- ▶ Where are Norwalk ACTS strengths in order to move this forward? What are opportunities for Norwalk ACTS including shared power, systems change -- How can this play a key role in our mission?
- ▶

# Group 1 Mission Key Ideas

---

- ▶ Where are Norwalk ACTS strengths in order to move this forward? What are opportunities for Norwalk ACTS including shared power, systems change -- How can this play a key role in our mission?
- ▶ The collective impact has a different vantage point in this global shift.
- ▶ Shared power
- ▶ Accountable leaders
- ▶ Creating a level playing field for all voices to be at the table -
- ▶ Removing barriers
- ▶ Helping people identify where they
- ▶ Norwalk ACTS can provide training and build capacity for members and for the community
- ▶

# Group 2 - Barbara Smyth - PLACEHOLDER for Mentimeter Word Cloud

---

Vision: Statement that looks towards the future/is aspirational. We exist to realize our vision. A declaration of the long term goals of the community we serve. Answers “Where do we aim to be”.

Current: Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow academically, social emotionally, and physically.

**Write down as many words or phrases as you can to describe what you believe the vision of Norwalk ACTS should include?**

# Group 2 Vision Key Themes

**Vision:** Statement that looks towards the future/is aspirational. We exist to realize our vision. A declaration of the long term goals of the community we serve. Answers “Where do we aim to be”.

**Current:** Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow academically, social emotionally, and physically.



## Vision Statement Themes

- ▶ equity is equal access to opportunities and resources
- ▶ not everybody starts at the same place
- ▶ create independent learners
- ▶ current vision addresses the “whole child” - including health & wellness outcomes
- ▶ making people more aware of the resources (not everyone is aware)
- ▶ Where does family engagement come into here? Do we address families?
  - equal access to resources and opportunities should be offered to families
- ▶ making resources more accessible in as many ways as possible
- ▶ Thoughts on healthiest? What do we mean by “healthiest”? needs to be defined
  - healthy means everything (social emotional, academics, etc.)
  - holistic is a better replacement
  - social equality, food security, sense of belonging
  - language barriers do connect to these themes
- ▶ abundant - plentiful and accommodating word to cover all resources/opportunities
- ▶ Should this be in the future or the present - can we attain this? Are we in the process of this? present vs. future tense
- ▶ Continuously cultivating spaces and environment
- ▶ value and embrace diversity
- ▶ can Norwalk be the leader in this effort

# Group 2 Mission Ideas

**Mission:** Statement that talks about what we do, our reason for being, serves as a guide for achieving the vision, Answers “How do we achieve the vision?”

**Current:** To enrich and improve the lives and futures of all Norwalk’s children and youth, cradle to career.

**Write down as many words or phrases as you can to describe what you believe the mission of Norwalk ACTS should include?**

- ▶ Focus on diversity ability to provide and expand services to families and children.
- ▶ eliminate "equal" when discussing access to opportunities and resources. I think we want individuals to get what they specifically need in regards to access. Some need more access than others so equity is the goal as opposed to equality.
- ▶ value and embrace diversity
- ▶ we should focus on doing things with community, not for community - this is what we do in Norwalk/how we do it
  - co-creating with community equitable solutions
- ▶ In order to achieve this, we need to include an inclusive community and empower
- ▶ Empowerment - actively engaging, participating - community’s voice is important
- ▶ empowerment - give a man a fish - he can eat for a day - teach a man to fish - can eat everyday
  - keys to the door
  - building confidence of community members to do this - in a positive way
  - engaging the entire community - not just educators, nonprofits - including entities like supermarkets (and other for profits)
    - » “it takes a village”
- ▶ Norwalk ACTS is both a non-profit and a movement
  - It’s not an either or - it’s a non-profit movement
  - Norwalk ACTS is a (collaborative) movement to enrich the lives of and futures...
    - » Should we even use the word movement? very powerful, can be criticized - maybe a different terms
      - ✓ leave it out - imply it
      - ✓ Is Norwalk ACTS a community organizations? a community nonprofit?
  - what does NACTS do? they bring people, organizations, and resources to the table to enrich and improve...
    - » Convener of partners - facilitator of partners?
  - movement is a big term and implies that there is a big problem - is there something really wrong right now?
  - a proactive operation or proactive undertaking

# Group 2 Mission Key Ideas

---

- ▶ **Empowerment** → empowering individuals empowers community
- ▶ **Convener/facilitator of partners (collaborative) - mission spells out role of Norwalk ACTS**
- ▶ **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion - important words both vision and mission**
- ▶ **Movement?**

# Group 3 - Wendy Gerbier - PLACEHOLDER for Mentimeter Word Cloud

---

Vision: Statement that looks towards the future/is aspirational. We exist to realize our vision. A declaration of the long term goals of the community we serve. Answers “Where do we aim to be”.

Current: Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow academically, social emotionally, and physically.

**Write down as many words or phrases as you can to describe what you believe the vision of Norwalk ACTS should include?**

# Group 3 Vision Key Themes

**Vision:** Statement that looks towards the future/is aspirational. We exist to realize our vision. A declaration of the long term goals of the community we serve. Answers “Where do we aim to be”.

**Current:** Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow academically, social emotionally, and physically.



- ▶ Community was the biggest word/most commonly used. Currently missing from vision is role Norwalk AcTS plays as a convener from every angle of a child’s life. Collaboration, community, persistent, etc. captures the journey as well as end vision goal.
- ▶ Shared ownership & accountability, fully engaged community
- ▶ Need to also be looking at people who don’t have children and why should it be important for them.
- ▶ Anti-racist, inclusive - if we had it our way, what would we want - we want action in the vision - end goal for students to create a world that is inclusive. Mission is what we are going to do to realize the vision. What did we produce
- ▶ Keep focus on whole child. Is healthy broad enough? Is mental health part of social emotional? Might need to be spelled out? Strive for language that captures breath of a healthy child.
- ▶ Preparing youth for future leadership. Words empowerment, hope, realizing potential - kids are in control of own path with the resources they need.
- ▶ Access - certain zip codes, etc. don’t have access. Equal access. Not calling out ‘marginalized’. Under resourced communities do need more.

# Group 3 Mission Ideas

**Mission:** Statement that talks about what we do, our reason for being, serves as a guide for achieving the vision, Answers “How do we achieve the vision?”

---

**Current:** To enrich and improve the lives and futures of all Norwalk’s children and youth, cradle to career.

**Write down as many words or phrases as you can to describe what you believe the mission of Norwalk ACTS should include?**

- ▶ add community engagement, convening
- ▶ Different opinions on a short mission vs. room for bullet points.
- ▶ Action is missing...BY providing.....collaborating with agencies to ensure
  - by collaborating
  - by inspiring authentic voice of community
  - data driven decision making
  - advocating
- ▶ What else is the ‘how’? Access, equity
- ▶ Like strengthen vs. improve (doesn’t assume it needs to be improved upon). Come from a strengths based approach.
- ▶ Asset vs deficit
- ▶ Like the word promote equity and access to strength the lives and futures of children,...
- ▶ What do we do?
- ▶

# Group 3 Mission Key Ideas

---



# Group 4 - Theresa Argondezzi -

Go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) and use the code 3546 0719

---

Vision: Statement that looks towards the future/is aspirational. We exist to realize our vision. A declaration of the long term goals of the community we serve. Answers “Where do we aim to be”.

Current: Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow academically, social emotionally, and physically.

**Write down as many words or phrases as you can to describe what you believe the vision of Norwalk ACTS should include?**



# Group 4 Mission Ideas

**Mission:** Statement that talks about what we do, our reason for being, serves as a guide for achieving the vision, Answers “How do we achieve the vision?”

---

**Current:** To enrich and improve the lives and futures of all Norwalk’s children and youth, cradle to career.

**Write down as many words or phrases as you can to describe what you believe the mission of Norwalk ACTS should include?**

- ▶ Excellence/ Opportunity for excellence. (Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, opportunities to be better than survivors, need additional opportunities to thrive, strive for excellence.) In order to do that, we need to meet people where they are. Being present within the moment. We have to take this to the people where they are, bring resources directly to the family; which will lead to excellence, opportunities.
- ▶ ‘Engagement’- we need ALL folks to engage; we need to ensure that all people have equal opportunities for engagement, services. It’s easy to be overlooked if not easily engaged
- ▶ ‘Empowerment’ needs to be included within the mission statement. Given the tools to be and feel a part of the community.
- ▶ Structure that is safe to say that ‘I’m struggling’.
- ▶

# Group 4 Mission Key Ideas

---





- ▶ Where are Norwalk ACTS strengths in order to move this forward? What are opportunities for Norwalk ACTS including shared power, systems change -- How can this play a key role in our mission?
- ▶ The collective impact has a different vantage point in this global shift.
- ▶ Shared power
- ▶ Accountable leaders
- ▶ Creating a level playing field for all voices to be at the table -
- ▶ Removing barriers
- ▶ Helping people identify where they
- ▶ Norwalk ACTS can provide training and build capacity for members and for the community

#### Mission Key Themes 1

- ▶ add community engagement, convening
- ▶ Different opinions on a short mission vs. room for bullet points.
- ▶ Action is missing...BY providing.....collaborating with agencies to ensure
  - by collaborating
  - by inspiring authentic voice of community
  - data driven decision making
  - advocating
- ▶ What else is the 'how'? Access, equity
- ▶ Like strengthen vs. improve (doesn't assume it needs to be improved upon). Come from a strengths based approach.
- ▶ Asset vs deficit
- ▶ Like the word promote equity and access to strength the lives and futures of children,...
- ▶ What do we do?

#### Mission Key Themes 3

- ▶ Empowerment → empowering individuals empowers community
- ▶ Convener/facilitator of partners (collaborative) - mission spells out role of Norwalk ACTS
- ▶ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion - important words both vision and mission
- ▶ Movement?

#### Mission Key Themes 2

- ▶ Excellence/ Opportunity for excellence. (Maslow's hierarchy of needs, opportunities to be better than survivors, need additional opportunities to thrive, strive for excellence.) In order to do that, we need to meet people where they are. Being present within the moment. We have to take this to the people where they are, bring resources directly to the family; which will lead to excellence, opportunities.
- ▶ 'Engagement'- we need ALL folks to engage; we need to ensure that all people have equal opportunities for engagement, services. It's easy to be overlooked if not easily engaged
- ▶ 'Empowerment' needs to be included within the mission statement. Given the tools to be and feel a part of the community.
- ▶ Structure that is safe to say that 'I'm struggling'.

#### Mission Key Themes 4

# Our Next Steps

---

- ▶ **Strategic planning groups meeting throughout the summer**
- ▶ **Stay tuned for a midpoint check-in**
  - This could look like an email(s) between now and September with draft versions of a mission/vision statement(s) that seek your input
- ▶ **September 14th Convening goal is to share updated mission, vision, cornerstone values, and member expectations**
- ▶ **Today's convening deck will be shared to all registrants and our mailing list in the next week**

# Closing

**Want to be more involved?  
Have more questions or  
thoughts from today?  
Please reach out to us  
directly or share in our  
plus/delta form!**

**Please complete our  
optional plus/delta form to  
leave convening feedback  
(link in chat):**

The image shows a digital form titled "Norwalk ACTS Quarterly Convening Plus/Delta Form". The form is designed with a clean, professional layout. At the top, the "Norwalk ACTS" logo is displayed in green and black. Below the logo, the title "Quarterly Convening Plus/Delta Form" is followed by a brief instruction: "Please use this Plus/Delta form to share your feedback on how we can make our convening even better next time, and what we should carry over, or add to, our convening moving forward." The form consists of several sections: 1. "First and Last Name (optional)" with a text input field. 2. "Organization Name (optional)" with a text input field. 3. A rating question: "How informative was this convening to your organization's role, responsibilities, and/or practice?" with a 5-point Likert scale (1 to 5) and radio button options for "Not informative" and "Very informative". 4. Another rating question: "How engaging was this Convening?" with a 5-point Likert scale (1 to 5) and radio button options for "Not engaging at all" and "Very engaging". 5. "What went well with today's convening? (Plus)" with a text input field. 6. "What should we consider differently next time? (Delta)" with a text input field. 7. "Any questions or wonderings that were unraveled?" with a text input field. At the bottom of the form, there is a green "Submit" button.