

Quarterly Convening

September 14, 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

- ▶ Opening
- ▶ Strategic Planning Activities & Timeline
 - Mission & Vision Process and Reveal
- ▶ Cornerstone Clarity
- ▶ Social Justice & Equity
 - TPS Partnership, Process, & Assessment
 - Draft Equity Statement
 - Action Plan & Call to Action
- ▶ NPS Strategic Plan Presentation + Q&A Discussion
- ▶ Closing

Strategic Planning Activities

1

Redesign our Mission and Vision – Clarifying cornerstones

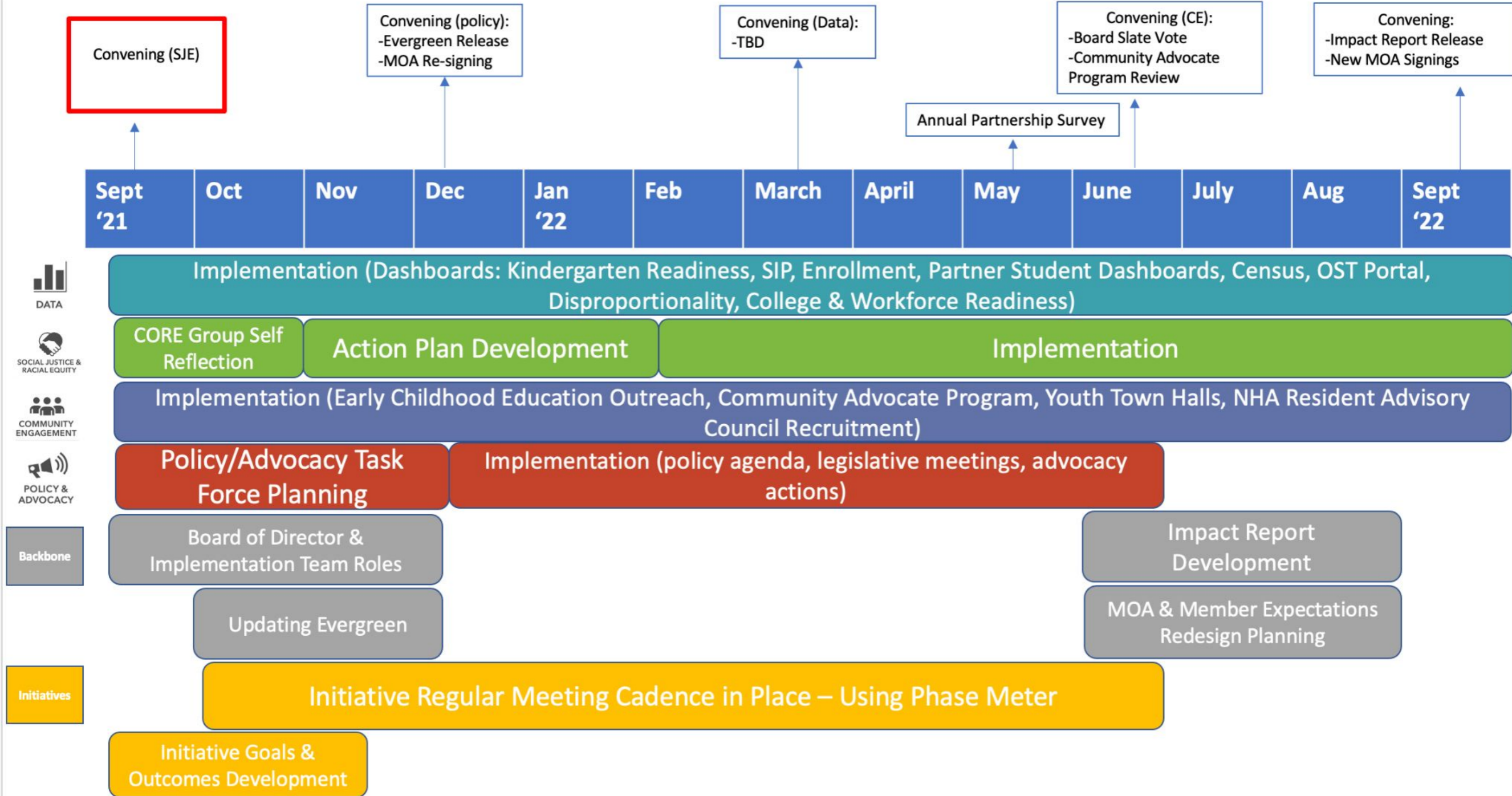
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Initiative Restructure: Initiative Phase Meter, Leadership Restructure, Goal/Outcome Revision

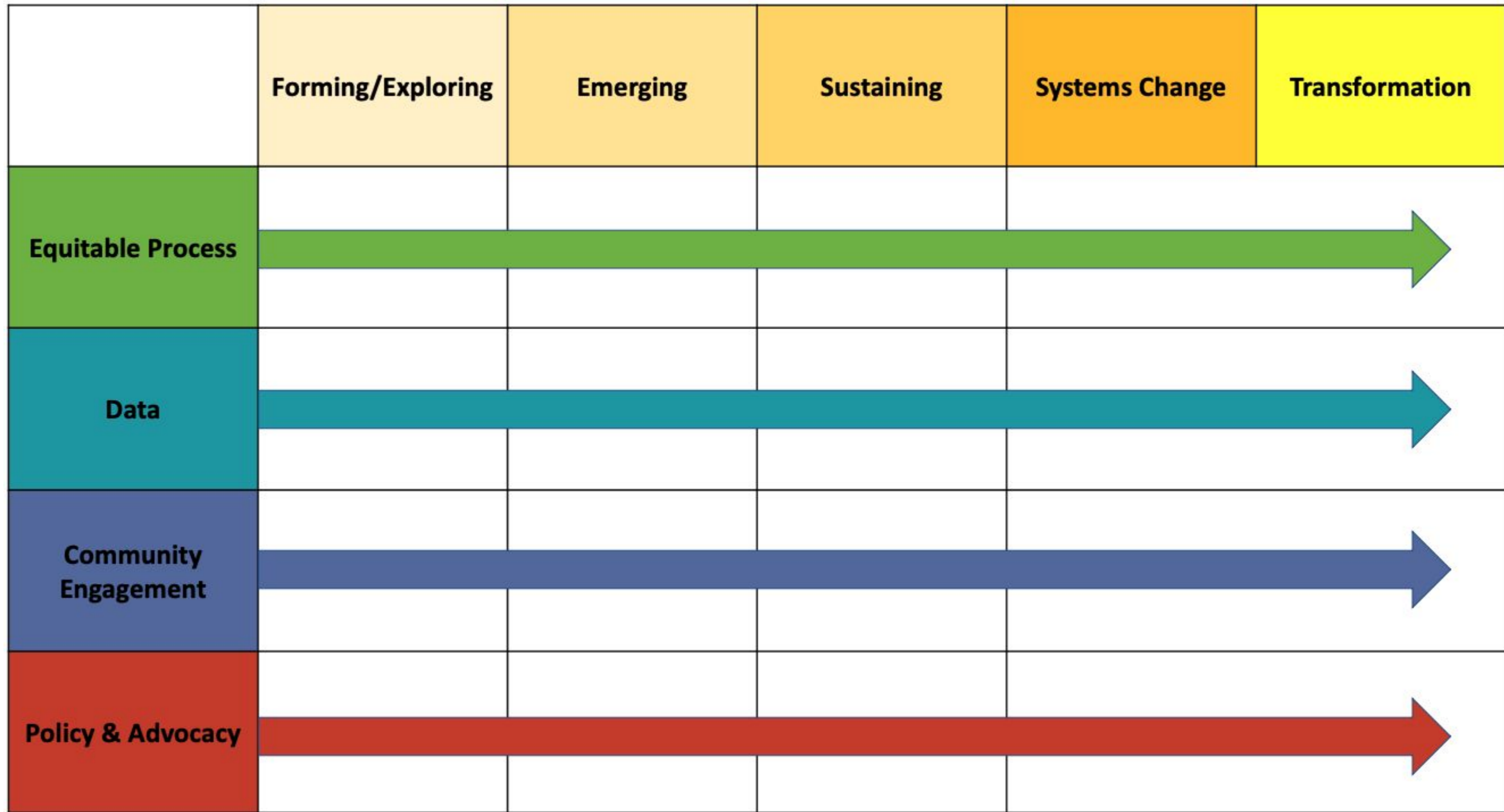
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Revising Roles & Expectations: Members, IT Members, & Board Members

Timeline at a glance



Initiative Phase Meter



Mission & Vision Redesign Process



-Partnership Survey
-Backbone Planning
-Implementation Team

-June Convening Focus Groups
-Backbone Retreat
-StriveTogether Evaluation

-Board of Directors Retreat
-Equity Core Team Review

-Membership Pulse Check Survey
-Implementation Team Review

Vision

OLD

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

NEW

Norwalk is a connected and equitable community where every child and young person thrives academically, physically, and social-emotionally from cradle to career.

Mission

OLD

To enrich and improve the lives and futures of all Norwalk's children and youth, cradle to career.

NEW

To collectively transform systems by ensuring resources, policies, practices, and power structures actively dismantle racism and drive equitable outcomes for every Norwalk child and young person.

Vision & Mission

Mission

To collectively transform systems by ensuring resources, policies, practices, and power structures actively dismantle racism and drive equitable outcomes for every Norwalk child and young person.



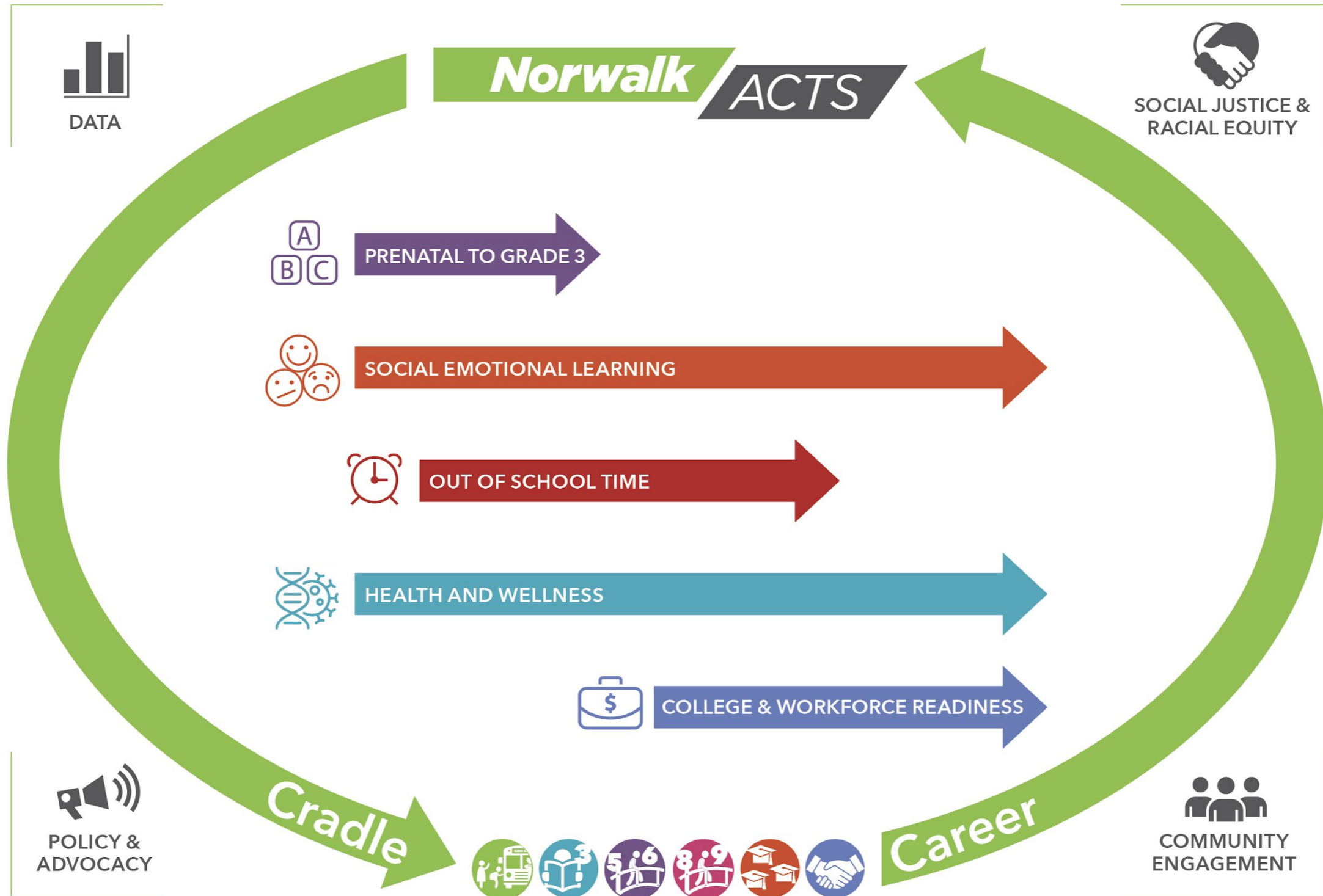
Vision

Norwalk is a connected and equitable community where every child and young person thrives academically, physically, and social-emotionally from cradle to career.

Acknowledgements

- tension of being vague/simple/short vs. specific/wordy/jargony → cornerstone statements dive deeper
- complex work to describe vs. revolving question of who is “our audience”
- mission and vision statement should always be paired together
- Later this Fall, we will be releasing an Evergreen with a glossary of terms, clarification of Cornerstones, and a revised focus of initiatives

Norwalk ACTS Cornerstones



What do we mean by cornerstones?

Cornerstones are the key ‘ingredients’ embedded into all of our work along the cradle to career continuum. They are essential elements to moving the needle on population level changes.



DATA



SOCIAL JUSTICE &
RACIAL EQUITY



COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT



POLICY &
ADVOCACY

TPS Overview

Established in 2016, TPS is an organizational and leadership development firm founded by Jamal Jimerson. We offer our partner organizations consulting, training, and coaching through a humanistic, process-oriented approach with equity at the center. Our partners include scores of nonprofits, foundations, municipalities, small to midsize businesses, and schools including public K-12, charter, private, and higher education.



Thought Partner
SOLUTIONS

TPS & Norwalk ACTS: The Process

- ❑ TPS was selected by Norwalk ACTS (“NACTS”) to help the organization get started on a racial equity journey. The work began in September 2020.
- ❑ TPS facilitated a comprehensive racial equity organizational assessment to learn about NACTS’ culture, the impact of their policies and practices, the collective racial equity knowledge and skills, and to identify ideas for making progress toward racial equity.
- ❑ TPS reviewed various organizational documents, stakeholder surveys, and met with stakeholders from the Board of directors, implementation team, backbone staff, and membership organizations.
- ❑ TPS created a report summarizing our findings as *Positive Acknowledgements* (what NACTS is doing well), *Potential Barriers* (practices that *may* erode your racial equity advancement), and *Commitments* (what NACTS can do to begin advancing racial equity).

Equity Core Membership

Godfrey Azima- Norwalk Parent,
BOE Member, *(Implementation
Team Member)*

Jennifer Barahona- NACTS
Backbone

Sandy Bria- Norwalk Resident,
Race and Social Justice Coalition
at St. Paul's

Monisha Gibson- Odyssey
Preschool *(Implementation Team
Member)*

David Huevelman- Norwalk
Parent, Common Council member

Yazmin Iglesias- All Our Kin,
Norwalk/Stamford Director

Betsy McNeil- Norwalk/ Stamford
Grassroots Tennis *(NACTS Board
Member)*

Nehemie Moise- Norwalk Resident,
Horizons at NCCS

Vicki Oatis- Norwalk Parent,
Norwalk Public Library

Kate Ritter- Ritter Family
Foundation *(NACTS Board Member)*

Denique Weidema-Lewis- NACTS
Backbone

DRAFT

Norwalk ACTS Race Equity Statement

The need for racial equity in Norwalk is critical and non negotiable. It is important and central to the work of Norwalk ACTS; since its inception, the lack of racial equity has and continues to drive our work. Norwalk ACTS is dedicated to identifying and breaking down barriers, changing and rebuilding systems, and improving outcomes for all of Norwalk's children and families in order to live healthy, fulfilling lives free of racism and oppression. As such, we recognize the need to center the lived experiences of the BIPOC community and for Norwalk residents to lead and guide all work moving forward. We also recognize intersectionality is crucial to equity work. The different identities we hold overlap and affect how we experience discrimination. Examples are race, ethnicity, class, gender identity and sexual orientation. That work requires a commitment to developing anti-racist policies, practices and behaviors to empower those within the community.

We are committed to transforming the way we work with equity woven into the fabric of Norwalk ACTS. Of every endeavor we need to ask, 'Will this move racial equity forward?' and ensure that our commitment to equity is consistently reinforced by our collective action to improve outcomes for historically marginalized, disenfranchised, and oppressed peoples in Norwalk. This is a continuous learning journey which requires humility, vulnerability, the willingness to adapt and embrace failure. Our work and our equity statement will evolve as we progress and learn new perspectives and information on this journey towards anti-racist action.

Racial Equity Feedback

We would appreciate your feedback on the draft racial equity statement. Your feedback will be used by the Equity Core team to inform its further development ahead of future adoption of the statement by the Norwalk ACTS membership.

Long Term Racial Equity Outcomes

Outcome 1- NACTS' organizational leadership will demonstrate a commitment to aligning the organization's racial equity values with its governance and operational practices.

Outcome 2- NACTS will demonstrate equity in its human resources – with a goal of recruiting and retaining a backbone team that is diverse and reflective of the city and public schools.

Outcome 3- NACTS will expand BIPOC community representation & engagement in membership.

Outcome 4- NACTS will convene and support member organizations to advance racial equity.

Racial Equity Outcome 1

NACTS' organizational leadership will demonstrate a commitment to aligning the organization's racial equity values with its governance and operational practices.

Example Recommendations:

1. Hire a Director of Racial Equity to serve as the principal leader on racial equity matters for NACTS. NACTS needs to have an internal expertise and experience in advancing equity and in bringing the needed technical, process, strategic, and political skills to the collective impact effort.
2. Mandate annual participation in racial equity workshops for Board, Implementation Team, CEO, and Backbone staff to ensure that there is a shared understanding of racial equity terminology, shared values, operational skills, and strategies to advance racial equity.
3. Ensure that the Racial Equity Core team (or larger Racial Equity Social Justice Task Force) is adequately resourced to provide support, skills development, and monitoring of the racial equity implementation plan.

Racial Equity Outcome 2

NACTS will demonstrate equity in its human resources – with a goal of recruiting and retaining a backbone team that is diverse and reflective of the city and public schools.

Example Recommendations:

1. Engage backbone staff and Equity Core team / Racial Equity Social Justice Task Force to develop job descriptions, set minimum qualifications, review resumes, conduct interviews and make hiring decisions in developing and implementing strategies for equity.
2. Develop multidimensional recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies that support BIPOC talent.
3. Ensure that all hiring managers or committees are trained in strategies to mitigate implicit bias.

Racial Equity Outcome 3

NACTS will expand BIPOC community representation & engagement in membership.

Example Recommendations:

1. The groundwork and deep dive on data that we have done to date shows that a clear and surgical strategy targeting the BIPOC population for membership is necessary for NACTS to undo the ills of systemic racism. We also acknowledge the diversity and intersectionality that exists within BIPOC communities.
2. Earn community trust by demonstrating transparency about who makes what decisions at Norwalk ACTS and how community residents (those affected by decisions made) can be a part of the membership. Reach out to the community through partnerships with organizations that have trust equity.
3. Build alliances and share power with historically marginalized and minoritized residents. Develop the structures and processes to consistently center the experiences and ideas of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities) residents.
4. Place more emphasis on diversifying membership on the NACTS website. Create a membership video featuring a Norwalk resident. Create a user-friendly membership portal for residents to join.
5. Host resident membership drives in BIPOC communities and online through Zoom and other platforms. Invite community residents, create an inclusive platform for their participation, and share how power decisions are made at Norwalk ACTS (what decisions are by the Board, the Implementation Team, the CEO, Backbone, and membership).

Racial Equity Outcome 4

NACTS will convene and support member organizations to advance racial equity.

Example Recommendations:

1. In partnership with member organizations, develop public engagement forums to connect members with resources, engagement opportunities, contracting opportunities, etc. that will advance racial equity.
2. Produce and provide research and information to support member organizations in advancing equity efforts
3. Work with member organizations to increase the utilization of local BIPOC, women, and emerging small businesses.
4. Work to align and support the equity work coming out of the Norwalk Public Schools, City of Norwalk, and other local organizations and groups.



Future Ready for All

2021-2026 Strategic Plan

Goals for 2021-22



Mission

Norwalk Public Schools provides an excellent and equitable education so ALL students graduate future ready as civically responsible, globally engaged and positive contributors to an ever-changing and diverse world.

Vision

Norwalk Public Schools is building a more equitable and just world where each and every Norwalk student is prepared for all aspects of life.

Values

◆ EQUITY

We ensure that each and every student in every neighborhood has access, opportunity, support and encouragement to excel in all current and future endeavors.

◆ DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We embrace and nurture a diverse and inclusive community with individuals representing a variety of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

◆ OUR PEOPLE

We support all our faculty and staff through investing in learning, developing a trusting professional culture and celebrating success.

◆ CREATIVITY & INNOVATION

We seek out new solutions in creative and flexible ways to prepare ALL students for an ever-changing future.

◆ STUDENT POTENTIAL

We provide access, opportunities & supports so that all students can meet their promise and potential.

◆ EXCELLENCE

We strive for the highest level of achievement for our schools, students, staff and community.

◆ RELATIONSHIPS

We foster constructive and meaningful connections among students, between students and educators, and with the larger school community.

◆ INTEGRITY

We are honest, transparent, fiscally responsible and committed to doing our best for ALL our students, families and community.

◆ COORDINATED SERVICES

We work collaboratively with families and community partners to coordinate learning opportunities, experiences and wraparound support for ALL students.

◆ CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We pursue improvement through reflection and disciplined use of data and evidence in all we do.





5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

FUTURE READINESS

Prepare all students so they are ready for further education, career and workplace opportunities, and globally engaged leadership.

EQUITY

Ensure equitable opportunities, facilities, experiences and outcomes for all students.

EXCELLENCE

Achieve excellence in all aspects of our organization through effective systems, modern learning environments and continuous improvement processes.

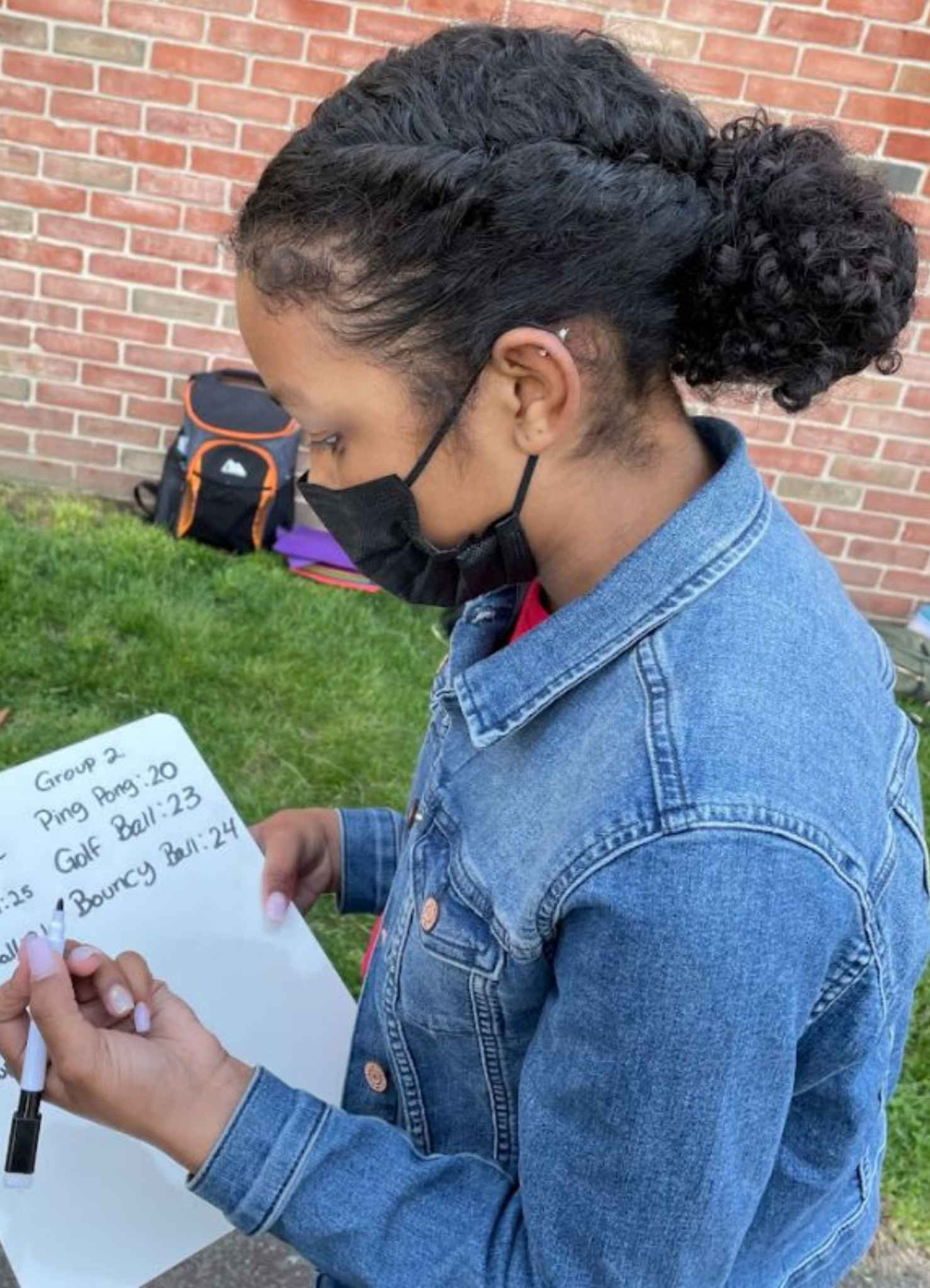
ENGAGEMENT

Ensure all children, families, team members and the community are informed, are involved and feel welcome in our schools.

HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION & SUPPORT

Foster relevant and intellectually stimulating learning with targeted supports that produce social, emotional and academic growth.





Goal 1:
NPS will strengthen individualized student success plans.



Goal 1: Roadmap to Success

- Redesign K-12 Curricula Map to fully integrate all learners, incorporate healthy social emotional boundary practices, and achieve consistent implementation across schools and grades through a districtwide assessment system
- Implement K-5 Reading Curricula and develop teacher professional capacity to teach reading
- Refine SRBI and enhance Gifted and Talented programs
- Launch three-year roadmap that responds to 2020 audit of services for Students with Disabilities
- Develop and refine diversified programs, that motivate students through specialized / theme-based curricula in areas such as arts, language, STEM, IB, coding and web development, health, marine sciences and media
- Develop holistic educational processes that cultivate and develop our students' academic, physical, emotional, moral, psychological attributes



Goal 2:

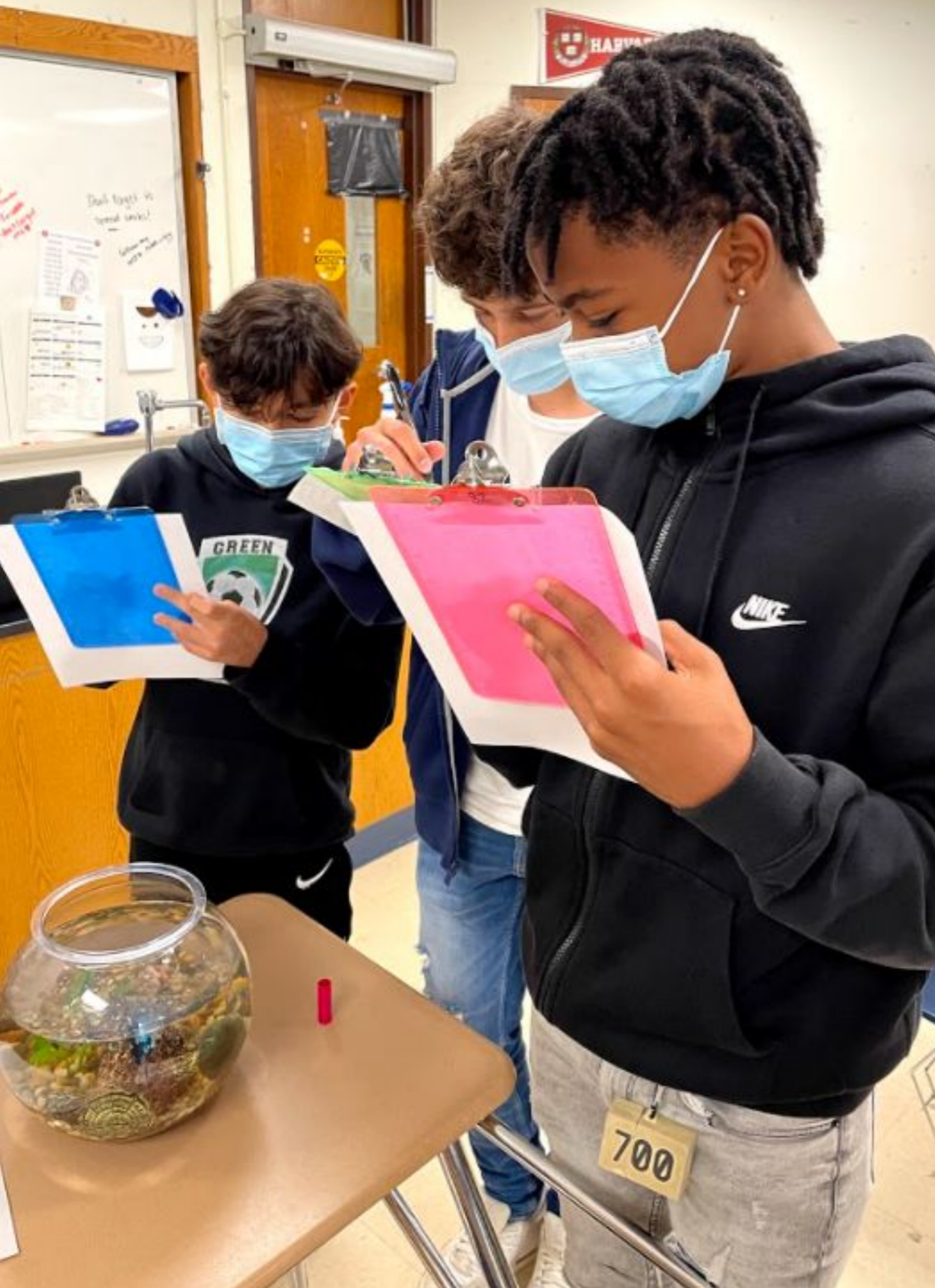
The Business and Operations Department, in consultation with Finance, will develop a three-to-five-year facilities plan, inclusive of annual building-based facilities plans and score boards, in conjunction with the city's capital budget and five-year capital plan.



Goal 2: Roadmap to Success

- Three-to-five-year facilities plan
- Annual building-based facilities plan
- Building-based facilities scoreboard, completed annually
- Aligned facilities plan and capital plan





Goal 3:

The Human Resources, Finance, and Business and Operations Departments will have evaluated and streamlined their respective departments.



Goal 3: Roadmap to Success

Streamlining will include best practices, cross-functional efficiencies, alignment, and coherence starting with:

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Safety and security
- Business and operations
- Research and analytics
- Communications
 - including initial progress on developing a ticketing system to track questions and requests





Goal 4:
NPS will cultivate instructional leadership in all school buildings.



Goal 4: Roadmap to Success

To cultivate school leadership in all school buildings:

- Professional Learning for school leaders and teacher leaders
- Frequent progress monitoring
- Cycles of support
- School improvement planning
- Instructor-led training
- Teacher teams
- Equity teams
- Data dashboards





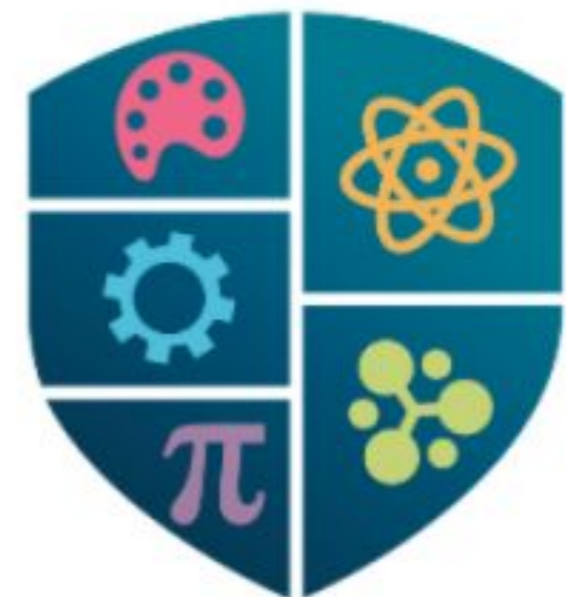
Goal 5:

NPS will develop and/or refine our instructional programming options to increase opportunities for students and to ensure all students have access to high quality instruction and support.



Goal 5: Roadmap to Success

- Implement Virtual Academy to open in September 2022
- Bilingual programs/dual language
 - Increase diversity of programs for English language acquisition
 - Develop a dual language pathway from elementary to middle school
- Refine Twilight Academy and develop it into a permanent option
- Ponus STEAM Academy
 - Develop K-8 STEAM plan and pathway to high school
- Refine and continue to build an arts pathway for students from elementary to high school





Goal 6:

We will ensure families are provided with equitable opportunities to access district resources and programs.



Goal 6: Roadmap to Success

- Establish the NPS Family Center as a central hub for parents and guardians
- Launch the central registration process
- Plan and execute a series of family workshops
- Create marketing communications materials to promote choice options and highlight key features of all schools



Q&A Conversation Norms & Logistics

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 (please participate), step back (to allow other voices into the dialogue)..

Logistics

We will be moderating the discussion using the chat feature.

If you have a question, please type in the chat.

If you are unable to type, please raise your hand and we will add you to the question que.

Upcoming Events in 2021 - Save the Dates!

All links will be shared in follow up email

Youth Town Hall

PLEASE JOIN THE CENTER FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE FOR STUDENTS 12-17 YEARS OF AGE. SPECIAL GUESTS INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE NORWALK HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE NORWALK COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER.

This discussion is hosted and led by the Center for Youth Leadership and is presented by Norwalk ACTS. It provides a safe space for youth to come together to educate, share experiences and explore solutions to ensure an equitable school environment.

Date & Time:
Wednesday September, 22nd
at 7:00pm on Zoom

[REGISTER HERE](#)

- Registration ends 9/22/21 at 5pm
- Zoom link will be sent out at 6pm on 9/22/21
- Adults and parents are encouraged to listen in, however this is a student led discussion.

September 22
7:00-8:00



Register now for the 2021 Cradle to Career Network Convening

StriveTogether
2021 Cradle to Career Network Convening

October 4-8
Events 9:00-4:00



Board of Education Candidate Forum - Youth Led!

October 27
7:00-8:30



Norwalk ACTS Quarterly Convening: Policy/Advocacy

December 14
9:00-11:00

Closing

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

We designed a new newsletter - sign up on our website!

Are you a member? Please sign our digital Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).