The Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement continues to be intentional in our efforts in assisting schools in eliminating all gaps.

Commemorative Months

Anne Arundel County Public Schools is committed to fostering learning environments that honor, respect, and support the diversity of the AACPS student body. The Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement rolled out the Commemorative Months site this school year. The goal of the site is to provide age appropriate materials, resources, and activities so that teachers can explore with students the rich histories of the various groups that continue to contribute to our American story. The Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement emphasizes the following statement from Dr. Tiffany Mitchell Patterson, Assistant Professor of Social Studies at West Virginia University:

"If we’re really moving toward anti-racist, anti-biased curriculum, then we have to make these histories a part of the natural fabric of education. When students only hear about these histories during designated months, it seems as though these stories aren’t a thread throughout American history, or that these lives aren’t really embedded in our society."

Summer Professional Learning

The Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement will be hosting the Equity and Innovation Symposium on June 22, 2023. The keynote speaker will be Zaretta Hammond, author of Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain. Schools have been focused on the content of the text for the past two school years. Therefore, we are excited to have Zaretta Hammond kick off our Symposium. Participants will select from a variety of professional learning sessions, such as Equity Learning Visits: an initiative sponsored by the Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement for the purposes of increasing our equity awareness; building relationships across our various school communities; breaking down stereotypes of students and schools; and providing a learning visit opportunity with a specific focus on equity. Participants will gain valuable insights that will assist in participating and planning for Equity Learning Visits as well as innovative ideas for implementing their learning from the experience. Another example of a professional learning session is Overworked and Overstressed: Ways to Mitigate Educator Stress and Burnout with Innovative Practices. There will be several professional learning sessions for the Student Equity Advisory Team (SEAT) that empowers student voice and agency.
The executive team will be engaging in a book study on the book: The Leader’s Guide to Unconscious Bias: How to reframe bias, cultivate connection, and create high-performing teams. School-based and central office personnel will also have an opportunity to engage in the book study on different days.

The Office of Equity and Accelerated Student Achievement will be engaging central office and school-based personnel in a discussion around defining what creating equity schools actually LOOK like and how to truly CULTIVATE and SUSTAIN equity and NOT just examine it.

In the Community

Local History Workgroup Initiative

In October of 2020, the Office of Equity spearheaded the AACPS Local History Workgroup Initiative in partnership with the Social Studies Office. This initiative is a collaboration between Anne Arundel County Public Schools and representatives from various educational, community, and civic organizations. The purpose of the AACPS Local History Workgroup is to curate a collection of local history resources to integrate into our existing K-12 curriculum. These resources are used to help students become communicators, synthesizers, and critical consumers of content as part of the curricula experience. The aim is to do more than teach about local history but teach THROUGH the history.

Caucus of African American Leaders Student Recognition

The Office of Equity is proud to partner with The Caucus of African American Leaders (CAAL) of Anne Arundel County to recognize the achievements of African American students in AACPS. Each month, The Office of Equity selects one high school student to be celebrated at the CAAL meeting for their accomplishments both in the classroom and in their community.

The Joint Commission on the Opportunity Gap

The JCOG was created by Executive Order in May 2021 to further the work of the Joint Initiative to Eliminate the Opportunity Gap, a partnership with Anne Arundel County Public schools which commenced in September 2019 and resulted in four priority recommendations, 14 goals, and 78 potential strategies. The report was formally presented to the public in November 2020. The commission is composed of 15 appointed members representing the County, school system and community and is the result of a collaborative effort to meet the first priority recommendation in the Joint Initiative to Eliminate the Opportunity Gap report. The Commission is empowered to provide ongoing review and oversight of structural and systemic
racism that contributes to the opportunity gap in AACPS and the County, and to recommend changes to address equity issues in academics and discipline. For more information visit: https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/jcog/.

Student Equity Advisory Team (SEAT)

Student voice in education has become a growing movement that affords students the opportunity to play an active role in planning and leading their learning experiences, as well as contributing to the development of school practices and policies. AACPS values the lived experiences and perspectives of our students and is dedicated to honoring their voices so that we can provide educational experiences that are safe and equitable for all. The primary purpose of the AACPS Student Equity Advisory Team (SEAT) is to demonstrate and implement a commitment to ensuring that student stakeholders “have a seat at the table” where they can listen, share, define and influence without retribution.

We acknowledge that acting on interests and perspectives helps them feel invested in their community and can ignite passions that will last a lifetime. Therefore, AACPS wants its student body to not just have a SEAT, but to have a voice.

Through personal and professional development activities, students exercise their agency and advocacy towards raising awareness about equitable expectations and practices within the AACPS system. Since November, SEAT Ambassadors have played an integral part in the Superintendent’s Listening and Learning Tours where stakeholders came together to provide their thoughts on a variety of topics related to the school system. Ambassadors gave a warm introduction of Dr. Bedell, provided instructions for gathering community feedback and participated in the facilitated discussions. Behind the scenes, Ambassadors are working diligently to vet texts and create activities for AACPS Unites and their alignment to the Social Justice Standards. OEASA is excited to support student leadership through upcoming opportunities where Ambassadors can have a “seat at the table” to share their perspective in areas such as the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, curriculum development for the African American Local History course, and the Board of Education’s Equity Committee.

Program Description

The SEAT is a diverse and inclusive body of student representatives from grades 8 – 12 in Anne Arundel County Public Schools. Through personal and professional development activities, students exercise their agency and advocacy towards raising awareness about equitable expectations and practices within the AACPS system.
Membership in SEAT offers a multi-tiered range of learning opportunities intended to help students assess, address, and facilitate discussions around issues of equity and social justice to enact meaningful change. These student partners will give voice and vision to how we can build and sustain bias free environments that are inclusive for all.

SEAT Ambassador Meetings

Ambassador meetings are held once a month, either in person, virtual, or in a hybrid model and are facilitated by The Office of Equity & Accelerated Student Achievement (OEASA). Ambassadors represent the collective voice of the school community to listen and provide updates on equity initiatives in the district and schools, discuss relevant student-led themes of interest, and engage in solution centered discussions.