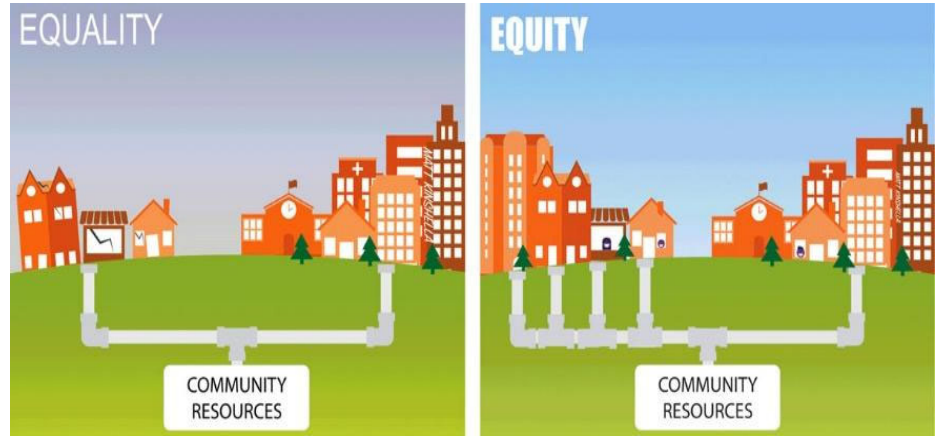




Racial Equity and Education

Defining Equity:

Equity involves trying to understand and give people what they need to be successful and overcome systemic barriers.ⁱ In order for equity to be achieved and sustained, it needs to be thought of as a systemic concept. Systemic equity acknowledges that the structures that influence our lives are interrelated. Systems need to be designed to create, support and sustain equity. Systemic racial equity requires the presence of deliberate well-thought out policies and systems designed to create and sustain racial equity.ⁱⁱⁱ



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Racial Inequity in Education

Educational attainment has been linked to several positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction and improved health. Creating racial equity in education is important because educational attainment helps people create positive outcomes in their lives and is a means of ending oppression.

Outcomes of Racial Inequity in Education

Black students are **2.4 times more likely** to be suspended than white students in Maine schools, while white students are **1.6 times more likely** to be enrolled in AP classes.

- Black Mainers are **6 times more likely** to be incarcerated than white Mainers.
- Black people are **treated more harshly** at every phase in the criminal justice system. They are more likely to be stopped by police, searched, ticketed, arrested, charged, and convicted, and when convicted, face longer sentences.
- Due to structural and historical privileges such as greater wealth and fewer barriers to higher education, white Mainers are only **half as likely** as Mainers of color to experience poverty or unemployment.^{iv}

Maine Hourly Wages by Race, Gender and Education ^{iv}

	White, Non-Hispanic		People of Color	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
High School	\$17.19	\$15.59	\$15.82	\$14.95
Bachelor's	\$25.93	\$20.88	\$21.07	\$18.33

The Young People's Caucus (YPC) brings together youth from across the State to inform decision-makers about those issues impacting the lives and futures of young people here in Maine.

The list of ideas below are culled from youth involved in YPC 2018-2020. Youth involved in YPC have lived experience and expertise on this topic, and in particular the way topics intersect and impact each other. The recommendations below are not limited to the education system.

Recommendations for how to address racism in our community here in Maine:

Systemic: Communicate and clearly say that racism is unacceptable within the education system, from microaggressions in the classroom to curriculum and hiring.

- Create equity policies that serve as a measurement for all policies.
- Establish recommendations for how racism is connected to safety and safety is a priority for all schools.
- Acknowledge the problems associated with race in the past and demonstrate with evidence what work has been done since to fix those problems.

Interpersonal: Shift the relationship between oppressed and oppressor by being transparent about power dynamics and actively work to counter imbalances of power.

- Hire diverse teachers, staff, administrators that reflect the diversity (racially and otherwise) within the state of Maine.
- Train teachers and school staff in how to identify, interrupt and address prejudice, bias and racism.
- Educate youth & adults about internalized oppression & racism. Give youth and adults a language with which to explore and understand the injustices they experience and witness - otherwise people might think they are crazy.
- Increase awareness of how oppression plays out differently on different oppressed groups.
- Create equitable opportunities for education i.e.; scholarships, translated information for parents, extracurricular options, etc.

Individual: Engage youth in problem-solving on issues of anti-racism, but avoid putting all the work on them.

- Create systems of support for youth in a range of ways from within the community and school to between peers, mentors and other networks.
- Implement and practice restorative justice so students can understand the harm they are causing others, especially around issues of racism.



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ⁱ <https://www.nwhu.on.ca/ourservices/Pages/Equity-vs-Equality.aspx>

ⁱⁱ <https://culturalorganizing.org/the-problem-with-that-equity-vs-equality-graphic/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.aecf.org/blog/racial-justice-definitions/>

^{iv} <https://www.mecep.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MECEP-racial-inequality-fact-sheet-FINAL.pdf>