



Dear Colleague-

I am writing today to invite you and your district or charter management organization to apply to join us in an exciting new partnership to help develop more diverse and equitable schools and school systems.

This year, the Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools Project (RIDES) will be piloting a coaching and improvement model for working with diverse schools and school systems (either districts or charter management organizations) that are committed to taking better advantage of their diversity and achieving more equitable outcomes for their students.

We are looking for a small set of strategic partners with racially and economically diverse schools who have already started to work to promote equity and who are reasonably close to Cambridge. We hope to learn from the work that our partners are doing—at the school and central office level—and support that work by sharing and field testing diagnostic and improvement tools we have developed as part of RIDES.

During the coming school year, we will be offering a new practicum course, *Coaching for Equity and Diversity in Schools and Systems* for doctoral and masters students with at least three years of experience with organizational improvement, coaching, leadership, and/or diversity and equity work. These coaches-in-training will work with our partners using the RIDES diagnostic and improvement tools in a visioning, diagnosis, improvement and followup process described below. Coaches will work in pairs, so that improvement work can simultaneously take place at the school and the district or CMO level. They will be expected to spend an average of 3 hours/week (approximately 80 hours total) at the site over the school year. Districts or CMOs outside the greater Boston/Cambridge area will need to allocate travel funds for coaches. Otherwise, there are no financial costs for participating, beyond the staff and stakeholder time commitment for the work.

For more information, read the summary of mutual expectations, outline of the arc of the coaching process over the year, and application process below. To get some broader context about RIDES, our philosophy and approach, and brief descriptions of prototype diagnostic and improvement tools we will use, click [here](#).

Thanks for your commitment to diversity and equity in schools. If you think this partnership might support your work, please send me an email indicating your interest by July 29 and get the completed application to us by August 8. Let me know if I can help with any questions or further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Teitel'.

Lee Teitel
Lecturer and Director, Reimagining Integration:
The Diverse and Equitable Schools Project

Diversity and Equity Strategic Partnership Overview – July 2016

What you can expect from us:

- Access to diagnostic tools and improvement processes being developed by RIDES. See background on RIDES and prototypes of some of the tools we will use [here](#).
- Two coaches-in-training working with you an average of 3 hours/week (approximately 80 hours total). (Coaches-in-training will have three years of experience in organization improvement, leadership, coaching, or race/equity roles; they will be learning the RIDES processes through concurrent course.)
- A learning community with Harvard and other schools, districts and CMOs on diversity and equity issues. We see these partnerships as strategic ways to share and improve what we are doing, and look forward to learning with you. We will meet with you and your teams for a day-long launch Saturday October 1 and for a closing conference (April 8), and maintain connections and learning over the year.

Our expectations of you:

- Formation (or reformation or expansion of an existing) diversity and equity working group that includes stakeholders from the system level as well as the participating school, who are diverse in race/ethnicity and in roles (teachers, administrators, parents). Recommended size: up to 15.
- Ownership of this work, including commitment of the working group to meet twice monthly over the school year and of other stakeholders to conduct the work that the working group decides upon.
- Identification of a point person at the school and system level to interface with coaches and with the Harvard teaching team for planning and assessment purposes. This includes periodic feedback to help us improve diagnostics, tools, and coaching processes.
- If your district or CMO is not in the greater Boston/Cambridge area, a travel reimbursement fund set aside for the coaches-in-training.

Arc of our work together over the year

Although the following may be modified once the partners are on board, here is the planned arc of the work.

0- August	Partnership Application completed by August 8; responses by August 22
1- September	Formation, or reformation, or expansion of a working group to guide equity and diversity work (During September, interviews will take place between partner sites and coaches-in-training pair; matches will be finalized by late September)
2- October	Working group builds community, develops norms, discusses current system and school issues in the context of race at interpersonal, individual, and institutional levels, gains familiarity with RIDES approach to systemic improvement. (Day-long workshop at Harvard with teams and coaches Saturday, October 1 will launch this.)
3- November	Using RIDES diagnostic tools, the working group does a broad assessment of where the district or CMO and the school is on 7 factors (students, teachers, content; family and community engagement, systems and structures, culture, and leadership) as well as looks with critical lens at role race plays at all levels
4- December	Growing from its diagnosis in November, the group selects an area to dig in further at the school level and one at the system level (Note: they may be linked)
5- January and February	Working group leads a deep dive into the focus areas it selected at school and system level, working with other stakeholders to get a clearer common vision of what the particular area should look like (e.g. culturally connected classroom content) and then following this with a deep diagnostic look at the current reality.
6- March, April, May	Teams analyze the patterns that emerge from the vision and diagnostic work to identify “high-leverage” patterns to work on and then develop and implement follow up plans. They reflect on what they have done and plan for next year and prepare to share insights at the April closing conference.

Criteria for Strategic Partner Selection:

- The district /CMO and the selected school within it have already shown commitment and work around diversity and equity—the work needs to be fully owned at central and at school
- Both school and system need to be racially and economically diverse
- Leaders at school and central level need to be willing to model transparency/ vulnerability
- Participants at school and central level need to be willing to go beyond trying to throw a single solution at a diversity/equity challenge, but rather to think systemically by (1) seeing connections between what students and teachers are doing with classroom content, and how they are affected by systems and structures, culture, family/community involvement, and leadership of the school and the district or CMO and (2) seeing how individual, interpersonal, institutional and cultural racism apply at every step of the way, and need to be understood and dismantled.
- The school and the central office need to have a diverse and inclusive team, or be willing to build one for this work on diversity and equity
- There needs to be a point person at each level who will work directly with the coaches-in-training and with Project staff on planning, modifying, coordinating and assessing the work.
- The site needs to be “reasonably local,” meaning that graduate students could get to the site for bi-monthly meetings, classroom observations, and any other on-site work. If the district or CMO is not in the immediate Boston/Cambridge area, it needs to set aside a fund sufficient to reimburse the coaches for travel.

Application process and timeline

- By July 29 send a short email indicating interest and asking any questions to [Lee Teitel@Harvard.edu](mailto:Lee_Teitel@Harvard.edu).
- By August 8, apply, in tandem with a racially and economically diverse school in your district or CMO, using the attached questions.
- By August 15, one of the Project staff will contact you with any follow up questions.
- By August 22 we will notify applicants and compile the responses from potential partners who meet the criteria so students can see the field possibilities when they consider enrolling in the course. *Note that, because we do not know how many students will sign up and qualify to be coaches-in-training, even if you have met the criteria, we cannot guarantee a coaching team for you this year.*
- By August 25, students who apply to take the coaching course will be notified of acceptance. First class is September 2.
- By September 5, students who are admitted to the course will put together short biographies to share with partnering sites, and coach pairs interested in working with you will arrange a meeting to establish mutual interest in working together.
- By September 29, matches will be finalized after meetings are held and there is mutual interest established in working together. A Memo of Understanding will be drafted, outlining scope of work. Non-local sites will agree on a fund and process for reimbursing coach travel.
- Saturday, October 1--daylong launch at HGSE with coaches -in-training and all partner teams.

**Strategic Partnership Questionnaire for coaching course 2016-17 -- Due August 8 to
Lee_Teitel@Harvard.edu**

Please fill out short responses to the following questions.

- 1- Give some general background on your district or CMO as well as the specific school you are applying to work with— demographics, etc (include website link; add anything else pertinent)
- 2- Share what you have already been doing about diversity and equity at the school and central (district/CMO) level
 - a. Be specific here to set the context—including working with staff, parents, students, curriculum
 - b. Take stock so far-- What is working well; What do you want to improve?
 - c. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing you around diversity and equity
 - i. At the identified school?
 - ii. At the central level?
- 3- Describe the diverse and inclusive team that exists now, or will be convened for this work on diversity and equity. Include information on roles as well as demographic information for team members. If it is an existing team, indicate how long the team has been in place.
 - i. At the identified school?
 - ii. At the central level?
- 4- Describe the ways, at school and central level, that you go beyond trying to throw a single solution at a diversity/equity challenge, but rather think systemically. For example:
 - a. In what ways, if any, do you and your colleagues make connections between what students and teachers are doing with classroom content, and how they are affected by systems and structures, culture, family/community involvement, and leadership of the school and the district or CMO?
 - b. In what ways, if any, do you and your colleagues make connections between your improvement efforts and your understanding of how individual, interpersonal, institutional and cultural racism impact policies, practices and perceptions?
- 5- Other information, not addressed above
 - a. Are there any particular scheduling or other logistic issues that would be relevant for students (e.g. the diversity and equity working group meets on Wed afternoons; unusual travel or issues)
 - b. Anything else a potential coach in training thinking of working with you should know?
 - c. If you are not in the immediate Boston/Cambridge area, are you willing and able to set aside a fund sufficient to reimburse the coaches for travel?
- 6- Contact info:
 - a. Who is the designated contact person in August for inquiries about this application?
 - b. Who will be the designated point person over the year?
 - i. At the identified school?
 - ii. At the central level?
 - c. Who will be the coordinating contact for collection of regular feedback, for overall Project planning, and for collaboration in upgrading the improvement and diagnostic tools and the coaching process we will be using this year?