

Partnership for Development of Racial Equity Improvement Ambassadors



Submitted to:

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Introduction

Derute Consulting Cooperative enthusiastically submits this proposal to support Malcolm X College capacity building for equity change. We are pleased to find that our skills match well with Malcolm X College's expressed needs as outlined in the Illinois Equity in Attainment Malcolm X College Equity Plan. We share Malcolm X College's belief that "all opportunities are within reach" and applaud the College in acknowledging the attainment gaps within its student population that persist as outlined in the Equity Plan analysis of student performance. We share Malcolm X College's commitment to eliminating the identified inequities. We feel we are the ideal partner organization to support this ambitious goal through initiating the implementation of your equity plan. In the remainder of this proposal, we outline a scope of services that will help your organization advance its racial equity priorities. The proposal contains the following sections:

Section 1. A Project Overview that explains the theory-practice lenses we propose advance racial equity and a rationale for our proposed approach.

Section 2. An Overview of Implementation Activities, including timeline, and key deliverables.

Section 3. Presentation of our **Organizational Profile**, which includes biosketches of evaluation team members and experiences performing comparable work.

Section 4. The **Requested Financial Investment** to carry out the outlined scope of work.

Section 1. Project Overview

Our proposed scope of work is designed to support the implementation of the Malcolm X Equity Plan developed in 2020. Aligned with the strategic plan's year 2 and 3 "Pilot and Evaluate" priorities, we propose guiding Malcolm X faculty and staff in adopting Dr. Irby's race-conscious inquiry cycles (Irby, 2021) as an approach to continuously improve their ability to better serve its Black and Brown students. We define continuous improvement as ongoing, systematic, cumulative improvement in an organization's deliverables, operating procedures, and organizational systems. It is both a verb and a noun. It emerges and persists through conscious and goal-oriented effort towards establishing a set of design requirements for an organization to achieve continuous improvement in a systematic way (Lillrank, Shani, and Lindberg, 2001).

Race-conscious inquiry is a continuous improvement approach that involves teams in data collection, critical analysis, and sense-making that explicitly discerns and amplifies the racialized nature of educational problems, patterns, and practices for the purposes of organization-wide racial learning and improvement (Irby, 2021). Race-conscious inquiry disrupts institutionalized patterns that reify racial disparities and imagines and tests organizational

practices that affirm Black and Brown people, generate agential interventions, and proliferate interactions that produce racially equitable outcomes.

For this project, we will deliver Malcolm X College faculty and staff a **practice-based professional development experience that will enable them to generate insights into their students' experiences, pilot locally-generated strategies for improvement, and evaluate the impact of their newly adopted strategies on student learning experiences and outcomes**. This project is organized around three interrelated objectives, which will lead to the identified outcomes below:

Objective 1. Increase the capacity of faculty and staff to identify problems of instructional practice as evidence in faculty and staff engagement in systematic processes of student, teacher, and classroom-level data collection and analysis.

Objective 2. Increase the capacity of faculty and staff to co-learn together and co-lead racial equity improvement strategies as evidenced in the creation of equity improvement-focused faculty and staff learning communities.

Objective 3. Pilot racial equity improvement strategies and evaluate the impact of practices designed to increase student equity.

Through meeting the above objectives, the project will yield two outcomes. The **first outcome** of this professional learning is that ***Racial equity improvement teams (ambassadors) will possess the capacity to lead their colleagues in continued implementation of improvement strategies that exemplify Malcolm X College's commitment to eliminating the identified inequities*** between students, both in terms of student experiences and outcomes. The **second outcome** will be ***a repository of localized learning resources - select video-recorded lectures, readings, faculty and staff testimonials, data collection tools, and protocols*** - that Malcolm X College's racial equity ambassadors can use for its continued racial equity plan implementation.

Section 2. Implementation Activities

The **theory of change** that drives our design process is as follows: As Malcolm X faculty and staff learn to use race-conscious inquiry to improve their classroom and advising practices, students will benefit in terms of learning experiences and outcomes. Through actively learning and documenting the racial equity improvements, faculty and staff will be ambassadors who can facilitate continuous learning and improvement, ultimately becoming resources for all Malcolm X faculty and staff. Aligned with this theory of change, the project will involve a select group of **no more than 25 faculty and staff** in the process of activity piloting and evaluating locally derived racial improvement strategies. Our proposed activities will take place from Dec 2022 to June 2023 and guide participants through four of the five stages of the race-conscious improvement cycle pictured below.

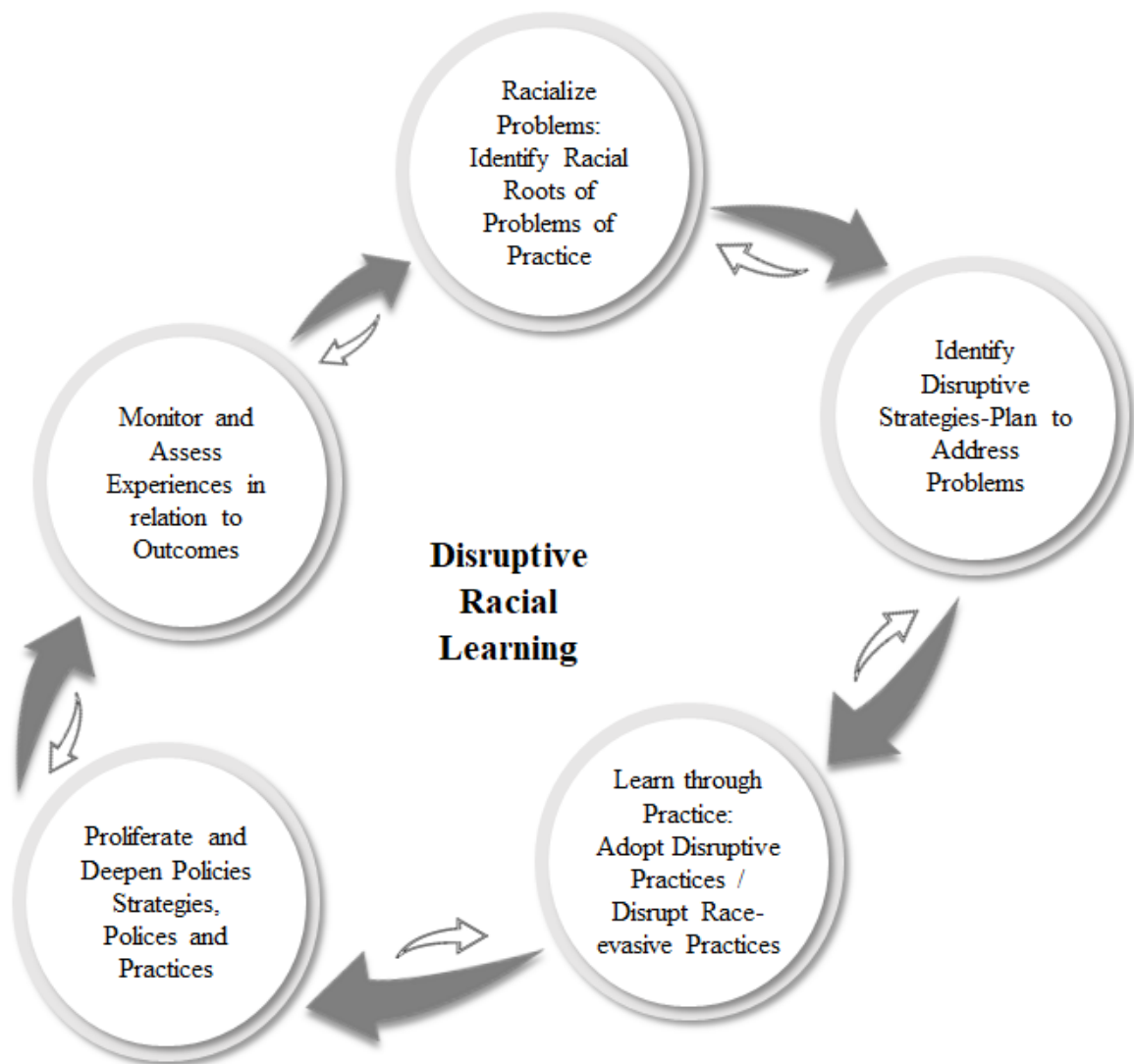


Figure 5.1. Race-conscious improvement cycle (Irby, 2021)

The **first cycle stage** is to racialize problems (much of this work is already underway, as reflected in the Malcolm X Equity Plan). Racializing problems requires improvement teams to consciously make race and racism, which are assumed to present within the organization, a visibly recognizable aspect of patterned organizational interactions and outcomes. Because the timeline of the project is condensed, we propose organizing the inquiry cycles **no more than three of the following four interrelated priorities** that, when addressed, improve Black and Brown learners' educational experiences and outcomes (based on a review of racial equity plan):

Healing and well-being: attending to student wellness (time management, test and writing performance anxiety, stress, etc.).

Inclusivity of different-abledness: Identifying and meeting the needs of differently abled learners.

Cultural responsiveness and identity-affirmation: Engaging race- gender-linguistically marginalized learner assets.

Formative assessment and feedback: Assessing student learning and providing useful feedback that helps students improve their performance.

In the **second cycle stage**, teams identify “disruptive strategies” that modify their curricular, pedagogical, or relational, to break established patterns of racial inequities in no more than three of the four areas above. Then, participants work in their teams to develop strategy implementation plans. During the **third cycle stage**, team members learn through implementing their previously chosen strategies, which are designed to (a) disrupt institutionalized racial patterns and (b) affirm and support Black and Brown students. Finally, during **the final stage**, participants will monitor and assess their experiences implementing the racial equity improvement strategies. NOTE: Because this is a pilot, we will not focus on the fourth stage (proliferate and deepen practices beyond the ambassador teams); however, the repository of resources we co-generate with ambassador teams will enable participants the opportunity to share their learning with Malcolm X College faculty and staff who do not participate in the professional development process.

Throughout the project, we will make every effort to build on the current and existing efforts underway at Malcolm X College. We will also work to integrate our in-person learning into existing meeting structures. The project implementation will require the following:

- A combination of online and in person learning
- Learning time integrated into existing equity meetings and teams
- Active learning will take place through implementation of strategies and opportunities to individual and collectively reflect on implementation successes and challenges
- Specific Derute team members will be assigned as implementation coaches for specific learning communities

Ultimately, the faculty and staff who participate will become resources for other faculty and staff. Throughout the final months of the project, our project team will finalize the online repository of lectures, resources, and tools generated by the Derute team and program participants. Examples of repository lectures will include a race conscious cycles lecture. Examples of repository tools will include data collection instruments. The repository will provide Malcolm X College ambassadors with resources required to continue their own growth to support the proliferation of equity practices throughout the organization.

a. Project Activities

Malcolm X College will recruit willing participants from faculty and staff to engage in the racial equity improvement process. We will introduce the race conscious improvement process, organize groups into no more than three learning teams (aligned with the topics identified above) and facilitate their development of strategies/practices and implementation plans. We will then move to implementation of strategies / practices and progress monitoring. Participants’ will focus their efforts on data collection at the classroom and student-staff interaction levels to supplement that broader programmatic and institutional level work outlined in the equity plan. Each equity ambassador team will be paired with an expertise-specific “implementation coach” from the Derute team that will support their efforts over the course of the implementation and progress monitoring period. Small teams will routinely convene with the full ambassador group to co-reflect about their learning, successes and challenges. The project will wrap up with a facilitated ambassador retreat. Participants will engage in a series of analysis and reflection activities that are designed to individually and collectively evaluate the process and outcomes of their piloted strategy implementation.

Session Focus (format)	Activity Description
Project Initiation	
Equity Ambassador Recruitment and Schedule Development	A Malcolm X point person will recruit no more than 25 staff and faculty. In addition, the point person will collaborate with Derute to identify existing meeting times where the professional development in person vs. virtual work can be embedded to support the development of the academic year calendar for the professional development.
Administer Pre-Questionnaire (online)	Derute will administer a pre-assessment of racial equity improvement knowledge, skills, practice, and confidence to the equity ambassador participants. Ongoing assessments will be embedded into session activities to provide formative feedback to inform the design of subsequent session planning.

Orientation to Race-Conscious Continuous Improvement (in person)	Participants will receive an overview of the race-conscious inquiry process, calendar of activities, and be oriented to online learning resources. Equity ambassador participants will establish group norms and healthy ways of engaging in talking about race and racism.
Racialize Problems	
Understanding Problems Through a Lens of Race and Racism (online async)	<p>Ambassador participants will increase their capacity to identify and name inequitable actions and belief frameworks that create and perpetuate racism (e.g., deficit thinking, color-blind thinking, racial conflict avoidance, white fragility, etc.).</p> <p>Through a series of guided online lectures, participants will unpack and examine the five ways in which racism is embedded in the fabric of everyday experiences (systemic, institutional-procedural, substantive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal).</p>
Race-Conscious Data Collection (in-person)	<p>The ambassador participants will increase their capacity to identify and name inequitable actions and belief frameworks that create and perpetuate racism (e.g., deficit thinking, color-blind thinking, racial conflict avoidance, white fragility, etc.).</p> <p>Ambassadors will examine racially equitable and inequitable practices and begin identifying data, data collection options, and other assessment tools available to advance racial equity initiatives in their respective organizations.</p>
Race-Conscious Data Analysis (online sync)	This session will develop participants' racial equity knowledge and skills through examining sample scenarios from their specific organizations. Participants will identify and name inequities in policies and practices.
Identify Disruptive Strategies	
Selecting Improvement Strategies to Pilot (in-person)	Participants will be guided through a process of how to identify potential solutions and actions to disrupt the status quo within their organization. Participants will identify their spheres of influence within their organization.
Implementation Planning (online sync)	Participants will develop implementation plans that outline how they will implement their strategies into their classrooms.

Learn through Practice <-> Monitor and Assess <-> Adjust Strategies

Small Team Implementation of Strategies (virtual support and coaching)	Derute will communicate and collaborate with designated inquiry leads and will offer ongoing consultation to equity ambassadors as they implement their strategies and monitor their progress.
Evaluating Impacts (online async)	Participants will regularly use the data collection tools and strategies identified in cycle 2 to evaluate the implementation challenges and successes of the piloted strategies.
Equity Improvement Meeting - Report Outs and Troubleshooting Implementation (in-person)	Participants will share initial results from their strategy implementation, challenges and successes of the piloted strategies. They will use feedback offered in the collective meeting to make necessary adjustments to their strategy and implementation process.
Continue Small Team Strategy Implementation and Progress Monitoring	Participants will continue implementing and evaluating the impact of revised strategies throughout the course of the semester.
Evaluating Impacts, Part 1 (in-person or virtual)	Participants will initiate an impact evaluation of the piloted strategies.

Process and Outcome Evaluation & Sharing Learning

Evaluating Impacts, Part 2 (in-person or virtual)	Participants will finalize an impact evaluation of the piloted strategies.
Sharing Learning and Impacts (in-person)	At this session, ambassadors will share their learning and impacts across their learning communities. Derute will capture video recordings of participants' improvement testimonials that will be edited into video for continued use and professional learning for Malcolm X College faculty and staff.
Reflection and Adjusting Strategies (online synch)	In the final reflection session, participants will evaluate the impacts of the piloted strategies. They will make necessary adjustments to their strategy and implementation and revise their implementation plan for the upcoming fall semester.

Administer post-questionnaire	Derute will administer a post-assessment of racial equity improvement knowledge, skills, practice, and confidence.
Ambassador Retreat: Reporting Experiences and Impacts (in-person presentation to faculty)	Equity ambassadors will publicly present their inquiry processes and outcomes with the broader faculty in an ambassador retreat. Derute will capture video recordings of participants' improvement testimonials that will be edited into video for continued use and professional learning for Malcolm X College faculty and staff.
Project Evaluation and Impact Reporting: Recommend Next Steps (in person)	We will share our findings from the pre-post questionnaire, process and outcomes evaluation with Malcolm X College leadership and recommend next steps for continued implementation of the strategic plan.
Finalize resource repository	By the end of the project, we will finalize the online resource repository, which will include lectures, resources, and tools generated by the Derute team and program participants.

Section 3. Organizational Profile

a. About Derute Consulting Cooperative

Who we are. Critical perspectives on racial, gender, and economic equity and social justice practices underpin our own organization structures and practices - we practice what we preach. Derute Consulting Cooperative is a certified Women-owned and Minority-owned Business formed in 2014 to support organizations committed to racial justice as they advance their work with Black and other communities of color. We achieve our mission by providing equity and justice-oriented organizational and leadership development; trainings and workshops; participatory research, assessment, and evaluation; and program design and implementation support services in local and global contexts. We are a member-owned consensus-governed cooperative of academics, professionals, and grassroots community leaders with member-consulting bases in Chicago, Illinois; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Newark, New Jersey; Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Washington, District of Columbia. We are in a strong position to support your organization as it advances its mission based on our:

Expertise in designing anti-racist, culturally sustaining evaluation tools and processes, organizational structures and routines, and racial equity practices that disrupt structural and systemic racism,

Experience performing similar work in partnership with a broad array of communities, agencies, and organizations that span the racial, ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and cultural richness of the U.S., and

Commitment to using teaching/learning and improvement methodologies that build the collective literacies and skills required to achieve racial equity as an organizational characteristic

How we work on ourselves. We organized Derute Consulting Cooperative as a continuously improving racial equity organization. Collaborative team anti-racism learning, developmental skill transfer, and ongoing active professional development are normative aspects of our work culture. We understand continuous improvement and undoing racism because we think about, research, and work to undo racism as a part of our day-to-day work. We share Malcolm X College's commitment to propagate among their students and within their campus. In all of our work, we remain conscious of, and transparently acknowledge, the race-gender hierarchical paradigms that constrain an organization's attempts to change the prevailing race narratives, policies, and practices (including ourselves).

How we work *with* partners. We are a people-oriented racial justice-centered learning organization. We selectively partner with organizations to co-create the conditions for continuous improvement and transformation aimed at creating a society that affirms the inherent dignity of people most impacted by structural and systemic racism. We focus on growing the capacities of partners and clients in a culturally responsive manner to produce the racial equity

outcomes they espouse in their missions but are often unable to achieve in their actions. In the process of engagement, we gain the mutual benefit of co-learning and co-constructing knowledge in partnership and collaboration. The gender, racial, linguistic, and experiential diversity of our membership enables us to cultivate trusting relationships with partners, which we know are requisite for establishing successful coaching and working relationships and an essential aspect of establishing conditions for deep learning.

b. Racial equity statement

We understand racial equity as a process and an outcome. To achieve racial equity, those most impacted by structural racism must play a central role in creating the processes, policies, and means to dismantle structural racism. Racial equity requires acknowledging and righting past wrongs, (re)distributing resources in relation to need, and dismantling historic and contemporary structural and institutional practices that maintain racial and economic injustice.

The tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) shapes our understandings of structural and systemic racism, how that intersects across multiple domains and identities, and what that means for racial equity in practice. First, we regard *racism as normalized* and woven into the fabric of everyday life. White people enact and uphold it and people of color experience it, at times supporting it through their adoption of anti-racist practices and beliefs. Second, we know that *racism advantages white people* materially and psychologically. Because white people are invested in their whiteness as a form of property (Lipsitz, 2006), racial “progress” is contingent upon a *convergence of interests* (when white people are willing to exchange some racial benefits of a current racist configuration for some other, presumably more worthwhile configuration, that offers a new set of material or psychological benefits). People of color are fortuitous beneficiaries of these interest convergences.

Third and fourth, *race is a consequence of social thought and relations* in which dominant groups racialize groups based on their interests at a given socio-historical or spatial moment. CRT also recognizes that *oppressive race, gender, and class hierarchies interlock* to create distinct structures of oppression that are differentially experienced, and best comprehended, using an intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1991). A fifth tenet of CRT is a commitment to *anti-essentialism*, which recognizes overlapping and often contradictory identities, interests, and allegiances within racial groups. We use our knowledge of the tenets of critical race theory to inform all aspects of our approaches to racial equity improvement in organizations.

c. Project team members (alphabetical by last name)

The following individuals comprise the core team that will implement the proposed scope of work. The team will draw on additional colleagues as needed over the duration of the project:

Dr. Cindy Clough is an educator and consultant who has developed an unwavering commitment to providing opportunities for transformational learning pertaining to social justice

and equity for all people. Dr. Clough's educational and professional journey as an occupational therapist working in K-12 educational settings and currently in higher education have led her to development of understanding of issues pertaining to the institutional and social structures that maintain marginalization of people by race, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Through teaching and learning in higher education, she continues to deepen her understanding of how disability, race, and other identities intersect to compound the effects of marginalization. Dr. Clough believes that transformative education requires a deliberate and well-planned process addressing the underlying beliefs and biases that individuals and groups hold toward marginalized peoples. Witnessing changes of mind and heart that lead individuals toward honoring the humanity and dignity of all people is what Dr. Clough seeks from her life's work

Dr. Liz Drame is a professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she prepares special educators and coordinates the Autism Spectrum Disorders Certificate Program. Dr. Drame teaches courses in behavioral supports, assessment of students with disabilities, curriculum accommodations, autism spectrum disorders, action research and collaborative strategies. Prior to teacher preparation work in non-profit organizations and universities, Dr. Drame worked as a special education teacher in Chicago Public Schools and Milwaukee Public Schools. Dr. Drame's participatory research centers on equitable outcomes for children with disabilities in inclusive schools, and equity issues in special education locally, regionally and internationally with a focus on West Africa. Her publications include co-editing *Collaborative Practitioners, Collaborative Schools* and *Black Participatory Research: Power, Identity and the Struggle for Justice in Education*, and co-authoring *The Resistance, Persistence and Resilience of Black Families Raising Children with Autism* with Black mothers of children with autism.

Dr. Decoteau J. Irby is a professor, author, consultant, singer-songwriter, and organizational design and improvement expert. Dr. Irby's life's work focuses on questions of how to create and sustain organizations that ensure Black people's self-determined well-being, development, and positive life outcomes. He uses design thinking and continuous improvement methods to help leaders and teams design and create organizations that affirm Black people. He is a co-investigator for a \$500,000 Spencer Foundation-funded study of PK-12 district equity directors, which extends the first systemic research project that seeks to understand the work of district equity directors. Finally, he is the author of several books and peer-reviewed articles and works as an Associate Professor of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Dr. Latish Reed is a highly sought-after leader with a demonstrated track record of embracing the complexities within organizations from practical and research perspectives. Dr. Reed has served as professional development manager and district equity specialist, among other roles, in Milwaukee Public Schools. She leverages strong theoretical knowledge, written and oral communication, and relationship building to develop the capacity of organizations to address the cultural and social factors that impact it. Dr. Reed is a resourceful problem-solver who can navigate organizational challenges and barriers to improved outcomes for marginalized populations. Dr. Reed is regarded as a creative and high energy educator delivering instruction

aligned with a personal and professional brand of integrity, compassion, and dignity that mirrors a philosophy of hope.

Dr. Jackie Robinson-Hunsicker is a tenured faculty member of Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC). She serves as the Instructional Chair of the Social Science department and has extensive experience teaching community college courses, developing college curricula, and leading college diversity trainings with community and religious institutions. Dr. Robinson-Hunsicker has developed and coordinated the Student Success course and has conducted numerous faculty trainings on student success. Additionally, she has taught courses at Alverno College and Carroll University. Prior to working at MATC, Dr. Robinson-Hunsicker lived in Mali and Senegal working with Malian villages and organizations in the area of grassroots community development. She has worked in various capacities that include a cultural broker, researcher, Fulbright Scholar, and a Peace Corps volunteer. Outside of higher education, Dr. Robinson-Hunsicker has co-developed and co-facilitated an adult education series with Lutheran Churches that examined white privilege and racial inequalities within the denomination, which led to the creation of an Ethnic Diversity Task Force that collectively examines how the church can become more ethnically diverse and develop an action plan to implement this initiative.

Dr. Jason Salisbury is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies working in the College of Education's Urban Education Leadership program, where he teaches classes related to education leadership and organizational theory. Through his teaching and outreach, Dr. Salisbury draws on his expertise to support educators and leaders in developing their capacity to lead urban schools that serve students of color. He has co-facilitated a two-year anti-racist professional learning plan for principals across Des Moines Public Schools, co-led a district investigation into the racial climate of a wealthy suburban school district, and offered numerous inservices for districts and schools across Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin related to anti-racist school leadership. He has published 20 peer reviewed journal articles, guest edited two journal volumes, written multiple book chapters, and authored over 40 conference presentations.

CVs and resumes available upon request.

d. Similar projects

Work Samples and Professional References available upon request

Section 4. Investment Schedule

The table below outlines the investment required for the design, planning, and implementation of activities required to complete the deliverables outlined in the scope of work. The consulting rate is calculated at \$1625.00 per day (6 hours) for approximately 114 days of off and on site work over a 28 week period. Exact time frames and calendar of implementation activities will be determined during project initiation planning.

Activity	Timeframe	Investment
Project initiation planning activities: Administration and analysis of pre-questionnaire, leadership planning meetings, set-up of virtual learning platform, repository design meetings, planning and facilitation of an in-person project orientation.	Weeks 1 - 4 approx. 30 days	\$48,750
Content development and preparation meetings for race-conscious cycle stage 1 and 2 activities.	Week 4 approx. 4 days	\$6,500
Implementation of race-conscious cycle stage 1 activities	Weeks 5 - 8 approx. 10 days	\$16,250
Implementation of race-conscious cycle stage 2 activities	Weeks 9 - 12 approx. 8 days	\$13,000
Content development and preparation meetings for race-conscious cycle stage 3 activities	Week 13 approx. 4 days	\$6,500
Implementation of stage 3 race-conscious cycle activities	Weeks 14 - 22 approx. 20 days	\$32,500
Content development and preparation meetings for findings sharing and reflection activities,	Week 23 approx. 4 days	\$6,500
Project close-out activities: Administration and analysis of post-questionnaire, final presentation development and testimonial recordings and deposit final content into repository, reporting and recommendation for next steps	Weeks 24-28 approx. 25 days	\$40,625
Graphic design, tech, audio, videography services, initial repository development and ongoing maintenance (for duration of project). Rate: *\$150 per hr.	Ongoing approx. 96 hrs	\$14,400
TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$185,025		

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