

HERE

PRESENT



2021 // 2022 Annual Portfolio

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Dear Friends,

We deeply value being present with you. Our face to face interactions have a tremendous impact on our relationships. Our safety is a necessary foundation for everything we want to do together.

Did you see how excited I was to reopen our buildings in the Fall of 2021? Do you know how disappointed I was to see rising COVID infections cause our buildings to close again? I wanted to cry over and over.

The benefits of in-person instruction are irreplaceable. We will always put a priority on the importance of safely being present in our buildings with our scholars, and with you.

Shortly after Labor Day I met Seventh graders who were new to Equality the previous school year. They attended almost all of Sixth grade at Equality in our Remote Learning program. I was delightfully surprised to see that these Seventh graders embodied the values that make Equality unique. Being in their presence brought home to me that our community extends far beyond the walls of our buildings.

That realization changes how I think about the idea of “being present.” With Equality, we are in the presence of something that’s much greater than ourselves, even when there is a physical distance between us. Our unrelenting Principals have never wavered from prioritizing our kids’ best interests throughout all the turmoil of this pandemic. Our Guidance Departments continue to put the social & emotional needs of our scholars at the top of our agenda, every day. We work every day to make sure our scholars get the highest level of instruction possible, under any and all conditions that unravel before us.

Throughout this school year, we noticed that you stayed agile, you pivoted when needed and you stayed focused on moving ahead. We are energized by your energy and honored to stay present with you on this journey.

Onwards!

A handwritten signature in white ink on a blue background. The signature reads "Caitlin Franco" in a cursive, flowing script. The first name "Caitlin" is written in a larger, more prominent hand, and "Franco" follows in a similar style. The signature is positioned in the lower half of the page, centered horizontally.

Caitlin Franco – Executive Director & Founder

# making our way back

## How we offset pandemic learning loss and put our scholars back on track

During the 2020–2021 school year **our scholars experienced ongoing and repeated learning disruptions** due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We began 2021-2022 knowing we had to take action.

According to a national study conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute, findings showed the **significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on K-12 student learning**, “leaving students on average five months behind in mathematics and four months behind in reading by the end of the school year.”

In our Middle School, we noted

an **increased amount of anxiety compared to previous years** based on staff observation and scholar self-report due to COVID-19. A significant number of scholars reported they were easily distracted.

In our High School, **9th graders faced the most struggles** due to COVID-19, transitions to a new environment and a completely new online learning system.

The McKinsey Report also notes, “High Schoolers have become more likely to drop out of school, and High School seniors, **especially those**

**from low-income families, are less likely to go on to postsecondary education.** And the crisis had an impact on not just academics but also the broader **health and well-being of students**, with more than 35 percent of parents very or extremely concerned about their children’s mental health.”

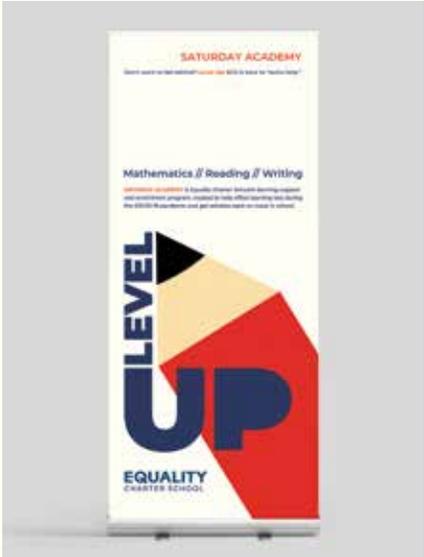
In 2021-2022 Equality decided to **mitigate losses by creating Saturday Academy.** Our new learning and enrichment program, **designed to help scholars “Level Up!”**—getting them back on track, by providing the extra help needed to restore confidence and academic success.

“ In math, students in majority Black schools ended the year with six months of unfinished learning, students in low-income schools with seven. ”

–McKinsey & Company



Ensuring all our scholars Level Up! by not falling behind



Banners placed at the entrance of the MS and HS announcing the program



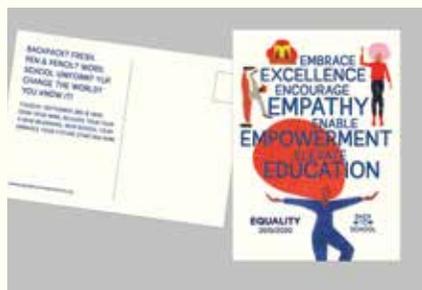
Tote bags given to our scholars as a thank you for signing-up for Saturday Academy

# let's begin

**Now that Equality has grown, and achieved major milestones, the time is right to re-brand.**

Equality Charter School includes a High School, a Middle School, and now an **expanded charter for an Elementary School.**

This achievement marks another milestone on our path and **commitment to elevate**



*Our first steps in rethinking our visual identity and our messaging*

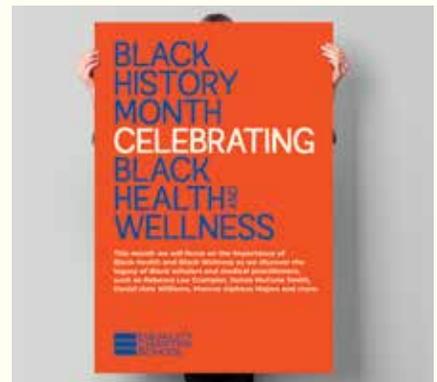
**education.** This milestone also presents an opportunity for us to rethink how we project ourselves to our faculty and scholars internally, and also outwardly to our community.

Working with creative partner PlanetFab Studio over the past few years, Equality has taken **incremental steps to evolve our visual identity.**

With the addition of the Elementary School, we realized it was time to **consolidate our rebranding efforts.**

We entrusted the studio to re-imagine not only our visual identity, but the overall brand, including creating a new logo that speaks to who we are, who we've become, and who we want to be moving forward.

We believe that these efforts are important and will help **define our course for years to come,** build school spirit and uplift our scholars and families.



*Celebrating Black History Month with our new branding*

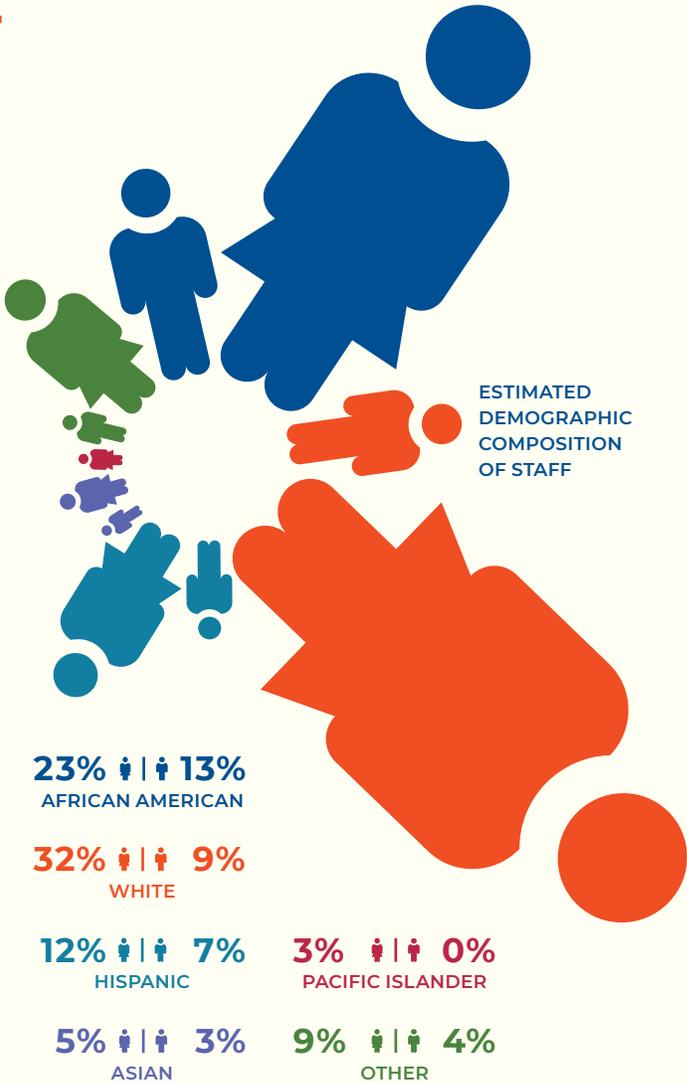
# The future is now – Elementary School Update:



## Moving forward together

The Racial Equity Initiative focuses on...

1. **Better preparing our scholars (nearly 100% POC) to navigate the world**
  - a. Knowing the history of racism and the fight against it
  - b. Understanding racism in current day America
2. **Analyzing policy and practices at Equality**
  - a. Reviewing Scholar uniforms policy
  - b. Analyzing emphasis on test scores
  - c. Embracing restorative practices
  - d. Analyzing demographic composition of staff
3. **Increasing competencies in our staff**
  - a. Knowing the history of racism and the fight against it, and multi-cultural history
  - b. Leading challenging/uncomfortable discussions competency
  - c. Empathy competency-increasing empathy for the racial experiences of others



# a year in review

2021  
-  
2022



**95%**

### Next Level Readiness

We are #1 in our district at preparing Middle School students for High School.



**79%**

### Free / Reduced Lunch

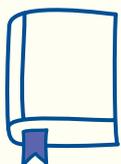
We provide equal opportunities in education to economically disadvantaged communities.



**42%**

### Better Graduations

Compared to NYC average graduation rates for Students with Disabilities, Equality is the best by far!



**11%**

### Better Regents Results

Compared to NYC averages on ELA, Math, Science, US and Global History, Equality is unequaled.



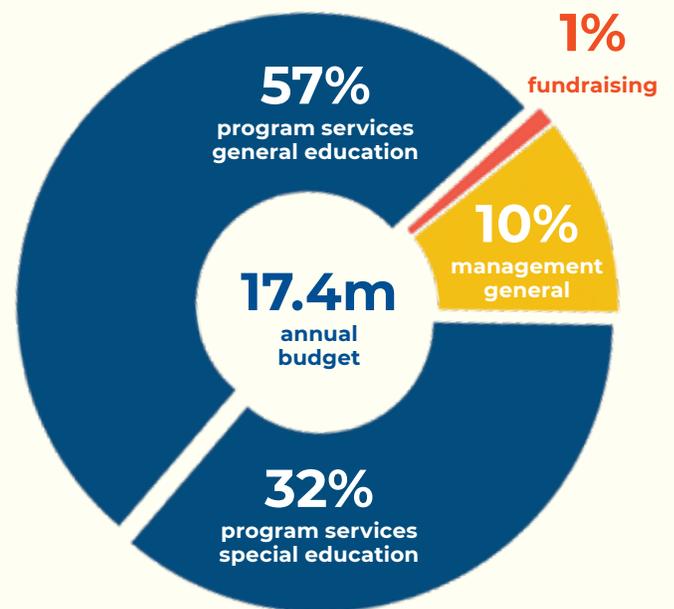
**<1%**

### Expulsion Rate

Equality prides itself on having one of the lowest expulsion and long term suspension rates in the state.

## Spend Wisely

The numbers below show the “functional expense analysis” of our 2021 / 2022 budget.



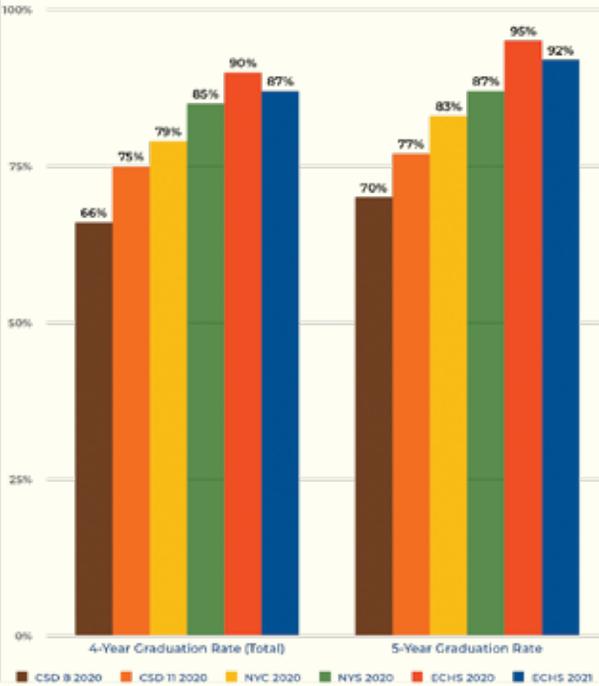
## Tech saves the day!

Equality provided support and technology solutions to our scholars and faculty during the height of the pandemic:

- Scholar Chromebooks - **\$22,000**
- Staff Computers - **\$66,000**
- Wifi Hotspots for Families - **\$18,500**
- Video / Audio Classroom Tech - **\$12,000**

# 2020 & 2021 Graduates

HS scholars from ECMS who attended ECHS graduated at a much higher rate than their City and District counterparts.



# Health and Wellness for our staff

We believe that hiring and keeping high quality teachers makes a huge difference in a child’s education at Equality.

In 2021-2022, we launched **new health benefits with CIGNA**, including expanded options for mental health and wellness.

We expanded our Financial Wellness benefits by rolling out a **concierge service for teachers** who are facing student loan debt.

We are partnering with **NYC Charter Center to provide 1:1 support** with the many layers of the debt forgiveness process.

We responded to staff feedback for more wellness opportunities by expanding our popular **wellness program** with the **Difference Card**.

In February, staff enjoyed **wellness activities including yoga, basketball, massage and guided meditation**.

# 10-Year Anniversaries

Scott Hendrie, Math Department Head  
Gabriel Park, Chief Financial Officer

# Thank you to our stakeholders!

Your support made 2021 a year worth celebrating!



A special Shout-out to:

Senator **Jamaal Bailey** Assemblyman **Michael Benedetto** Assemblywoman **Karines Reyes**

Thank you for making time for our scholars!

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## Friends of Equality

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**Congratulations to our six very lucky graduates that received scholarships to invest in their futures.**

Founded in 2018 by Loretta Piscatella and Sherman Reid, Friends of Equality offers scholarships to ECS graduates exemplifying our school values. Each year our graduating class can submit a personal essay about how they have incorporated one of our core values (professionalism, integrity, maturity, achievement/progress) into their life. A winner from each group is selected and awarded a check at graduation.

**THIS YEAR'S WINNERS WERE:**  
*(Clockwise)*

**Adelia Anderson - UAlbany**

**Sybil Owusu - Temple University**

**Sabrina Bautista - UAlbany**

**Roshaye Clarke - Morgan State**

**Denzel Tortchar - Westchester  
Community College**

**Niouma Gasama - Mercy College**

# Scholar Profile

**We celebrate that each scholar has unique talents, needs, goals and challenges. Moreover, we stand in awe of the beauty of their growth on different paths.**

**Irene Okyere** was a member of Equality Charter High School's **first graduating class of 2018** and she was a recipient of the Friends of Equality Scholarship.

**open minded** about career options I never would have considered." Irene spent both her sophomore and junior years working with SBU's Career

JPMorgan Chase." Irene spent the summer of 2021 working in their **Chase Leadership Development Program as an analyst.**

Irene is currently a college **senior at Stony Brook University** (SBU), where she studies Sociology, and is about to start her last semester. She shared that, "as an Equality scholar and a **Friends of Equality Scholarship recipient**, it's always rewarding coming back to where it all started and thanking the administration, faculty and ECS Board for the role they played in my achievements. College has allowed me to step out of my comfort zone and remain



Center as a marketing intern. Irene credits her Equality experience with **experiential learning** as something that has made her grow as a professional. Irene shared with us that "the foundation Equality provided, along with the skills I gained during my four years at Stony Brook [enabled me] to land a summer internship with

As Chase's program neared its end, Irene was offered and **delighted to accept a full time position.** It starts right after she graduates in May of 2022. Irene says that she "couldn't be more thrilled for what's to come. Thank you again to Equality and the Friends of Equality for their never ending support."

We are equally as excited to see all the **great things Irene accomplishes in the future.** We will make sure to keep you updated!

# Thank you to our Supporters!



**Thank you to our Board Members, staff, parents, and alumni for going above and beyond!**

**Annual Appeal Raised \$21,725** (goal was \$15,000) helping our scholars to **Level Up! in our Saturday Academy**

**Sexauer Foundation \$25,000**  
**The Hyde & Watson Foundation \$10,000**



For while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us...

—Amanda Gorman

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