

Education is the passport
to the future, for tomorrow
belongs to those who prepare
for it today. – Malcolm X

Annual Portfolio 2019 // 2020

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Parents, scholars, staff, friends and new friends,

Since 2009, Equality's had one purpose: to transform lives through education.

If you have been with us, has your life been transformed? If we have just met, are you open to transformation? I hope so, because that's what we are here for... that's the reason we are here.

We are here for our staff, doing our best to find the right positions for everyone on our payroll, where they are engaged and challenged, successful and growing stronger. We look hard to find the gifts that other people underestimated in them. I love to watch us all transform into our best professional selves.

We are here for our scholars and their parents, striving to learn everything we can about what interests them, challenges them, keeps them up at night, or gives them the best sleep of their lives. We push everyone we meet to stretch their thinking: academically, socially, personally and professionally. I like to think of each person in our community as a puzzle piece that transforms the picture of Equality into a thing of beauty each school year.

We are here for old and new friends, providing a community and forum where everyone we know can help transform education in America. It takes a lot. Transformation requires an open mind, commitment to hard work, faith in the long game and long honest stares in the mirror looking for flaws. I think our friends know even the smallest incremental growth can be a force multiplier in our momentum. I am honored that they stand with us, pushing the flywheel of change forward relentlessly.

I have been transformed by Equality—by each of you. I know you are here for me, and you are the reason I am here. Thank you for believing in Equality. I hope that you join me in celebrating at our Spring Reception on Thursday, May 14th - I will see you on the dance floor.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Caitlin Franco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Caitlin Franco — Founder & Executive Director

our values guide us...

Having strong core values has been the pillar of our success from the very beginning.

Equality was founded on the principle that we cannot afford for any child to get lost in the public educational system.

We believe in meeting our scholars where they are and **guiding them** on a path that **empowers them** to choose for themselves.

We believe in accepting all children that come to us:

Some with complicated family lives, some with learning

disabilities, many with social and emotional challenges, some with little knowledge of the English language and **all with an innate human curiosity, desire for love and the ability for growth.**

We believe that every child can benefit from integrated co-teaching classrooms, where scholars **with and without disabilities work together.**

We believe in a methodical approach to academic

achievement and have a rational systematic model for the **growth of the whole person** over time.

We promise to give our scholars the tools they need to **define their own meaning** of what success is, and the **tools to achieve** it throughout their lives.

Everyone deserves a great education. **Expanding our charter** makes it possible for us to live up to our promise.

“ *Diversity is being invited to the party;
Inclusion is being asked to dance.* ”

—Vernā Myers

26% SWD

Equality serves 26% scholars with disabilities...

We are one of only 15% of NYC charter schools that serve more than 25% scholars with disabilities.

9% ELL

Equality serves 9% English Language Learners...

In the past 2 years we have had a 100% increase in our ELL population.

We have an very strong ELL instructional program: 98% were promoted or graduated in 2019.

inclusion not exclusion

When other schools count kids out, Equality counts them back in.

95% attendance

Our **annual maximum enrollment is 650 scholars** and our **average daily attendance rate is 95%**, surpassing our original charter goal.

Our **chronically absent rate is 50% lower** than NYC DOE middle schools and **36% lower** than NYC DOE high schools.

measured success

2019
–
2020



95%

Next Level Readiness

We are #1 in our district at preparing middle school students for high school.



78%

Free / Reduced Priced Lunch

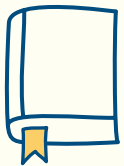
We provide equal opportunities in education to economically disadvantaged communities.



65%

Sports Participation

Having access to leadership opportunities outside the classroom, on the field, is a game-changer for some.



9%

Better Regents Results

Compared to NYC averages on ELA, Math, Science, US and Global History State Regents Exams, we're the best!



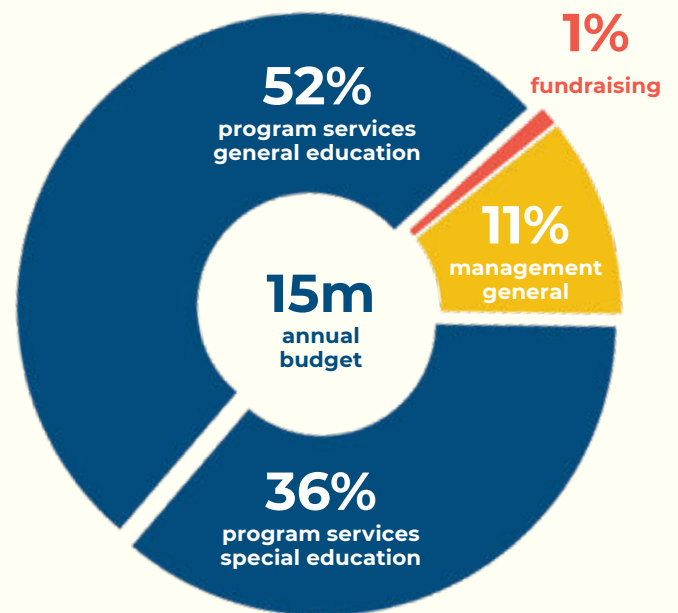
< 1%

Expulsion Rate

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

Spend Wisely

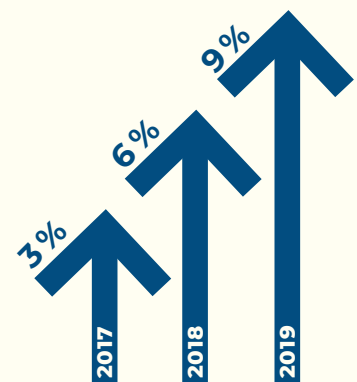
The numbers below show the “functional expense analysis” of our 2019 / 2020 budget.



x3

English Language Learners

We've tripled our English Language Learner enrollment in the last 3 years!

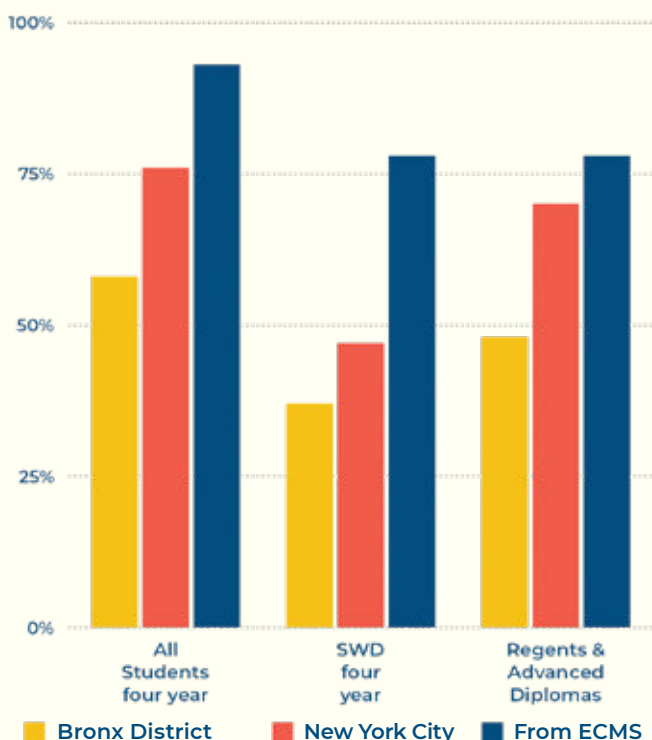


The message is clear:

- **Scholars do better the longer they stay with us**
- **Our HS success is due to the foundation laid at our MS**

2018 Graduates

ECMS graduated at a much higher rate than their City and District counterparts.



We love our staff!

Last school year, we conducted “Stay Interviews” to determine how we can better engage 3rd and 4th year teacher to stay with Equality longer. As a result of those interviews, we implemented the following new benefits:

- **Tuition reimbursement** for approved academic work for all staff.
- **Financial Wellness tools**, including an ongoing subscription to Everydollar (which is a personal budgeting app) for all staff.
- **Fully paid parking** in the garage for eligible teachers at our Middle School (our High School has a parking lot).

In addition, our staff continue to use and appreciate the following unique benefits:

- **Telemedicine** — allowing prescriptions for antibiotics to be prescribed over the phone, when needed.
- **Ergonomic wellness incentives**— our staff are encouraged to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- **Gym membership** reimbursement through our medical benefits.
- **Free copays for children** on our most popular medical benefit plan.
- All staff receive a **returning bonus** each year.
- Staff **referral bonuses** of \$750.

What's next for our graduates?

A majority of our scholars pursue post secondary education. We dream of recruiting them in the future to teach the next generation of Equality's student body.

50%

CUNYS 2-4 year

25%

SUNYS

20%

Private Colleges

1%

Trade Schools

making a difference

What has made the biggest difference in your life so far?

Was it your 9th grade English teacher? Did they make you read *Romeo and Juliet* just when you were falling in love for the first time? Was it your 8th grade social studies teacher who was also your basketball coach? Did they push you everyday to put points on the board, both on their courts and in their classes?

Those times changed you, and made you who you are. And now, times have changed on you, on all of us. Today, access to information, science and technology is driving change in

our lives as never before, as we realize that we can learn and master almost anything we can type into a Google search bar. We are finding out that adults not only trust children—you are relying on them—to code the next generation of computers to push our species forward.

Equality's purpose is to transform the lives of all the people in our community—the parents, the politicians, the teachers, the grandparents, the alumni, ourselves—the scholars—our brothers and sisters and our future children.

High School

We are so proud that our scholars graduate at higher rates than our local district, New York City as well as New York State.

Middle School

We are proud to say that we are in our 10th year of operation and thriving. Plus, we've become a central part of our Co-Op City community.

Elementary

We are proud to say we've gotten positive praise and support for planning a future Equality elementary school. Stay tuned!

Equality's graduation rate in 2018 and 2019 surpassed our district (58%), New York City (76%) and New York State (83%). The foundation laid in our Middle School for growth continues to produce immense dividends in High School.

Step 1: Include and admit scholars as they come to us—don't counsel kids out or find reasons to expel them. We believe that treating kids like they are dragging a school down is what drags a school down—it's not the kids, it's the attitudes of the adults. We like to admit kids who need a lot of help because we like to help kids.

Our Graduation Rate

89%

Equality's model just works...

Step 2: Focus on systematic growth—don't teach for the test and don't pay special attention to the data sets that makes us look the best. We believe that scholars who come to us with immense reading challenges can get the same success in life as scholars who come to us reading well beyond their grade level. We believe in the motto: "it's not where you've gotten to, it's how far you've come."

Step 3: Don't talk about love. Just be stubborn about doing it.

Equality and Rolling Admissions

31% of our 2014 Cohort and 22% of our 2015 Cohort entered in grades 10-12. Everyday, we are delivering on our promise to take the public as they come to us. Our teachers and counselors deliver one of the most rigorous, robust and effective credit recovery programs in NYC.

80% of our latecomers graduate on time.

We believe graduating our scholars on time is a sacred responsibility that we accept when we accept each person through our doors.

31%

**2014 Cohort
grades 10-12**

22%

**2015 Cohort
grades 10-12**

80%

**Late-comers
graduate on time**

Friends of Equality

Four lucky graduates received scholarships towards pursuing their dreams.



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.

Arnisha Statom graduated in 2019. She currently attends **College of Mount Saint Vincent** and is a psychology major. *“When I graduate, I aspire to relocate and start my next chapter as a family therapist.”*

Foluke Okoduwa, was salutatorian of Equality's first-ever high school graduating class of 2018, and went on to attend **Stony Brook University**. She is currently a sophomore majoring in psychology on the pre-nursing track. *“I’ll soon be attending nursing school to become a Midwife in the near future.”*

Irene Okyere, was valedictorian of Equality's first-ever graduating class in 2018, and currently attends **Stony Brook University**. She is a sociology major and also a marketing intern with the school's Career Center. *“I’m so happy to have the opportunity to explore various career options so that I can find the one that best matches who I am as a person.”*



Reem Al-Barati started at our middle school in January 2018, the middle of her 7th grade year. She is from a Yemeni family, a native Arabic speaker, and came to Equality with no English speaking abilities. In less than 1.5 years, Reem ended her 8th grade experience with a Level 2 on ELA, a Level 3 on Math, and an Expanding Level on the NYSESLAT. It is gratifying to share that Reem is also the first girl in her immediate family to continue her formal education past 8th grade, a process that involved our ELL teacher's frequent communications with her parents about her academic talents and potential. We are thrilled to see Reem in the halls and classrooms of our high school this year. We know her future is bright!

Scholar Profiles

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.

Matai Calander started at Equality as a 6th grade scholar. He came to us already having repeated one grade level and was over-aged. He struggled behaviorally throughout middle and high school. In his junior year, Matai, his parents, and school administration agreed that continuing at Equality was not the best choice for him. With the continued support of our staff, he earned his high school equivalency. He is now studying welding at BCC. He was the honored speaker at our school's 10 year celebration along with his sister, who graduated Equality in 2018 and currently attends **New York Institute of Technology**.





Snaps!

Some special moments...

Left:

(from left to right) HS Principal **Favrol Philemy**, MS Principal **Amanda Huza**, Executive Director **Caitlin Franco**, CFO **Gabriel Park**

Below:

(from left to right) Seniors **Stephanie, Sayge, Kyla, Zuri, Raseam, Deborah, Daijon**, and **Xavier**, participating in a mock Democratic debate

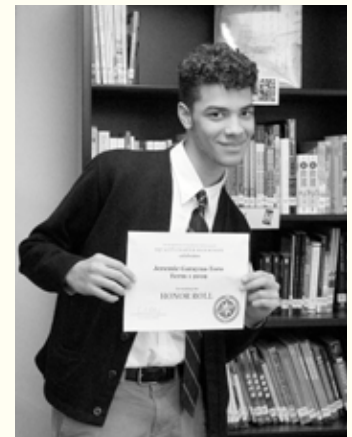


Left:

Carnival Fun! with **Brianna** and **Maya**

Right:

Award breakfast where **Jeremy** proudly displays his honor roll certificate





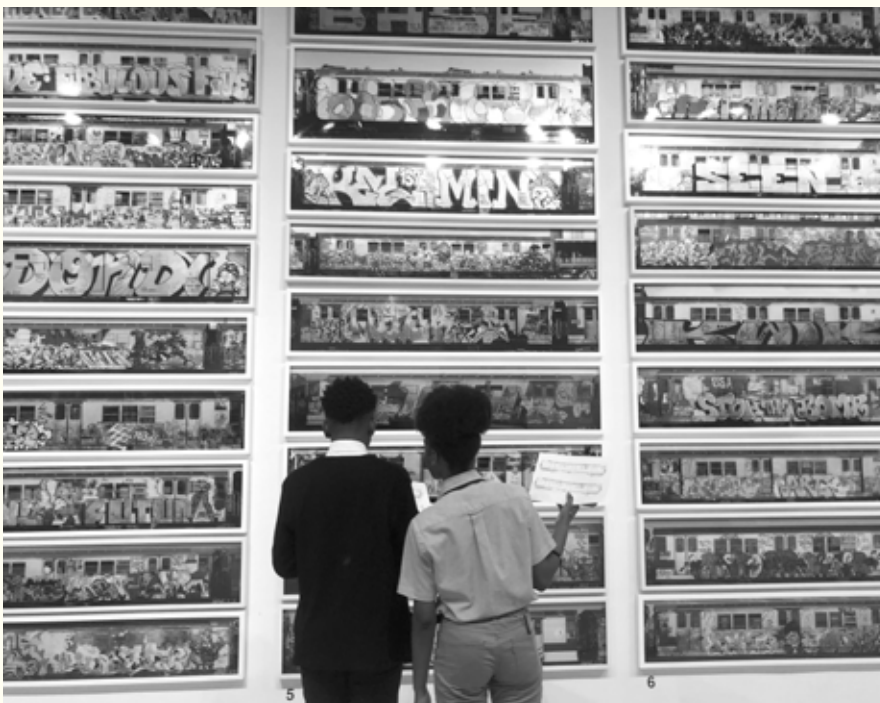
Left:
Stephanie participating in our debate

Below:
Ms. Benway and our ESOL class on a visit to “English speakers of other languages” at the Statue of Liberty



Above: MS Scholars during “Sports Day” in Spirit Week

Below:
Ms. Petruccio and **Ms. Roemer** with scholars **Demi-Anna** and **Charlotte** at our Spring reception



Left:
9th graders at the Bronx Museum of the Arts learning about the history of graffiti in the Bronx

Below:
(L) **Madison** and **Idaliz** at our College Fair. (R) Our MS Men of Tomorrow group



we did it!



“ Education is the key to unlocking the world, a passport to freedom. ”

—Oprah Winfrey



Equality's Graduating Class of 2019

Congratulations to all for a great year!



The future of education in the Bronx will depend on the continued success of Charter Schools such as Equality, which strive to elevate scholars and their communities.

— Caitlin Franco
Founder & Executive Director

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