



YEARS OF
**EDUCATION
FOR EVERYONE**

Table of Contents

Elementary
School Update

14

02

Board of Directors

15+ Years of
Continuous Growth

16

05

Letter from the
Executive Director

ECS Music
Program

18

06

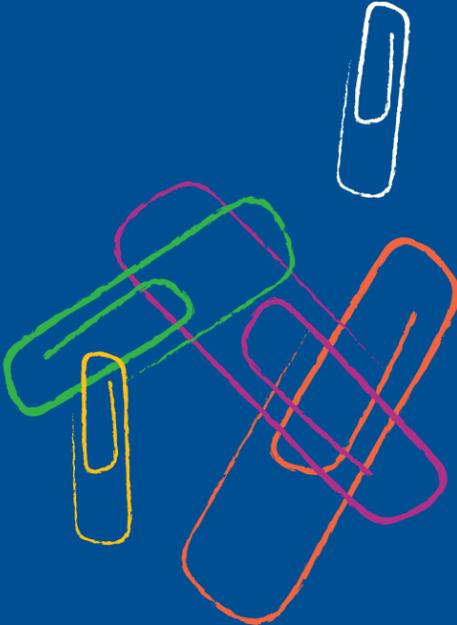
Our Commitment
to Racial Equity

Investing in
Wellness

20

10

Year in Review



Friends of
Equality

21

Board of Directors



Aziza Anderson
MEMBER

Robin Aufses
MEMBER

Amal El Bakhar
MEMBER

Edison Bardowell
MEMBER

Lisa Chen
MEMBER

Palak Forbes
MEMBER

Len Gilbert
SECRETARY

Ardian Hasko
MEMBER

Ed Hubbard
MEMBER

Erika King
VICE CHAIR

Roberta Osorio
BOARD CHAIR

James S. Stringfellow
TREASURER





As we came into this school year, I, like many of you, had moments of being completely overwhelmed by what was happening around me in the world, our country, New York State, and in the Bronx. But in spite of all of this, I have the privilege of feeling optimistic about the future.

“Pessimists are usually right, but it’s the optimists that change the world.”

— Adapted from Thomas L. Friedman

Every month I host a group of scholars at each school location to join me for lunch. Each lunch varies in discussion topic. Sometimes it’s directed by what they are eager to talk about, and other times I have specific questions I want to hear their feedback on.

Regardless of the topic, I push the scholars for constructive feedback, and give them the opportunity to “tell me how they *really* feel.” Contrary to the expectations of many, I always leave feeling hopeful about the future. In fact, I leave each lunch feeling excited, energized, and motivated. Our scholars are specific about what they want to see in the world—they have dreams for themselves and plans for how to move towards fulfilling their dreams, and they have opinions on their community and the world that are thoughtful and insightful. They share their visions with me and, simply put, they inspire me.

While our staff and community are working hard to provide a high-quality education for our scholars, it is our scholars’ willingness to engage in the hard work and their demonstration of hopefulness for the future that deserves recognition this year. They are what make this work meaningful for all of us.

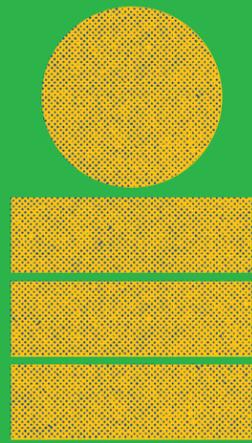
If you are receiving this Annual Portfolio it is because, in some way, you have contributed over the past 15 years to making Equality the special place that it is. I personally thank you, as this school has been an honor to lead. And I thank you on behalf of our scholars because they are well worth every hour of additional work, every obstacle we face and overcome, and every dollar donated for their future. They really are the ones who will change the world and we should all breathe just a little bit easier knowing that.

Caitlin Franco

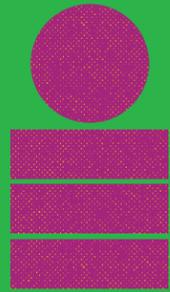
Caitlin Franco

Founder & Executive Director

CURRENT APPROXIMATED SCHOLAR DEMOGRAPHICS



AFRICAN AMERICAN
66%



HISPANIC
29%



ASIAN
2%



OTHER
2%



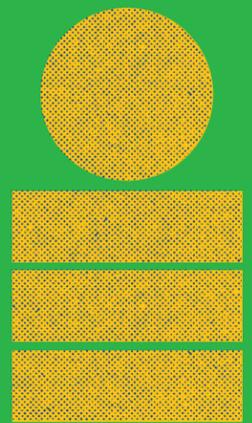
WHITE
<1%

OUR COMMITMENT TO

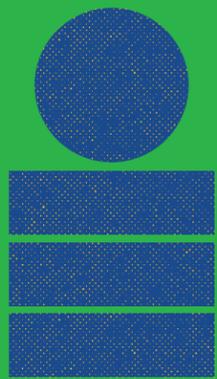
Racial Equity

In April 2020, nine individuals came together to form the Equality Racial Equity Committee. This committee is dedicated to keeping racial equity a priority across all of our schools and programs.

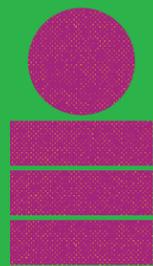
CURRENT APPROXIMATED STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS



AFRICAN AMERICAN
35%



WHITE
32%



HISPANIC
17%



ASIAN
8%



OTHER
8%





Equality's 2024 Strategic Racial Equity Goals

- 1 Increase staff capacity to lead or engage in Racial Equity work
- 2 Ensure our scholars feel the impact of our Racial Equity initiatives through culturally responsive pedagogy and restorative justice
- 3 Prioritize and differentiate Racial Equity work by department
- 4 Continue to hire staff members that reflect our students and the world around them

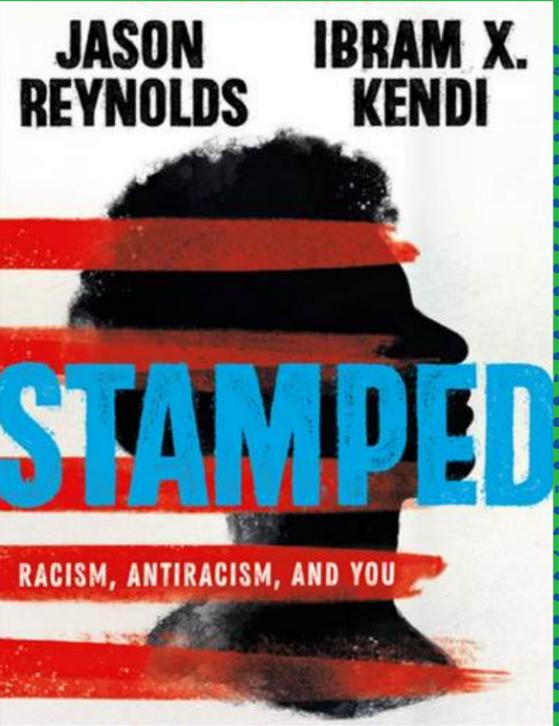
Our Progress Report

- ✓ Our Racial Equity Committee is meeting biweekly, as well as hosting quarterly, in-person sessions.
- ✓ We're continuing to refine and add action steps to our goals.
- ✓ We continue to work with Racial Equity Consultant, Jamilah Pitts, to help us reach our strategic plan goals.
- ✓ Our entire staff read *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You* by Jason Reynolds.
- ✓ Our Educate the Facilitator program is training 10 staff to provide in-house facilitation of Racial Equity PDs.
- ✓ Our Racial Equity leaders and Executive Leadership closely collaborate to move our work forward.

Faculty Commitment

As part of our strategic initiative to prioritize Racial Equity, we surveyed our faculty to get a baseline understanding of their feelings toward prioritizing the issue of racism against the BIPOC community.

The results confirmed that an overwhelming majority of faculty agree or strongly agree that racism against people who are part of the BIPOC community is a real problem.



What's Next

By the end of 2024, the Racial Equity Committee is excited to recommend changes to our employee handbook, transition PD development work from outside consultants to internally trained staff, and improve practices related to committee structure and operations.

Year in Review

We're proud to announce that once again, Equality Charter High School 2023 graduation rates exceed those at comparable schools in the area, even NYS! ECS takes all scholars, at any point in their educational journey—even undercredited latecomers—and supports them across the finish line.

12%

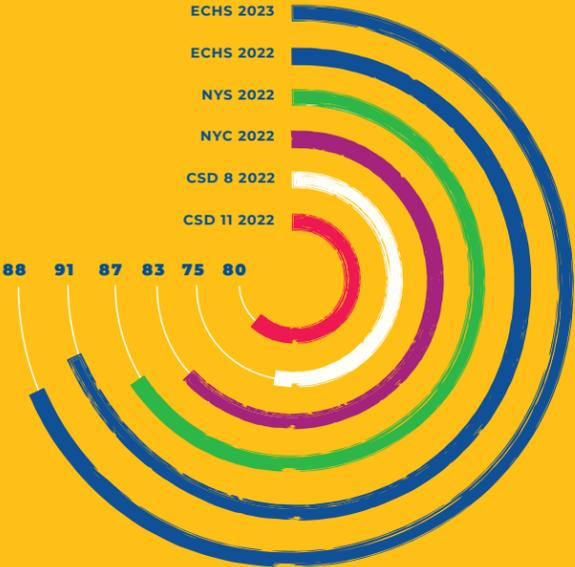
of 2023 graduates came to ECS after 9th grade

1/2

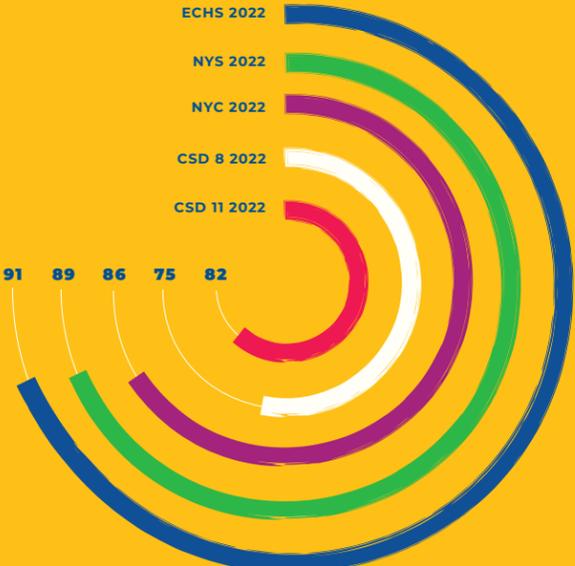
of those latecomers were undercredited when they arrived

70%

graduated on time



4-YEAR GRADUATION RATES



5-YEAR GRADUATION RATES





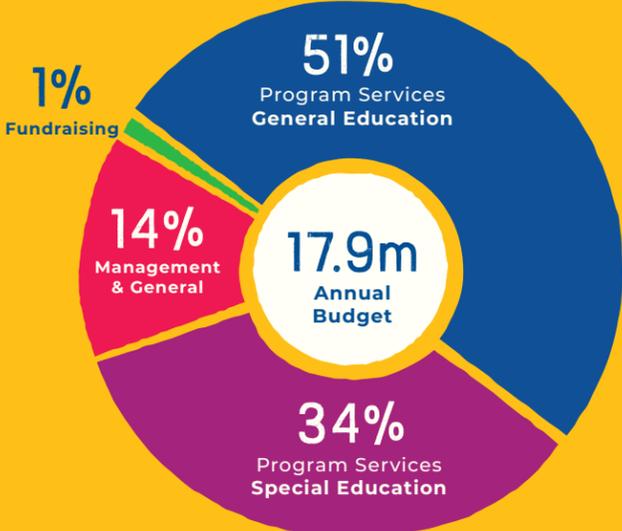
ELL & SWD GRADUATION RATES



Equality serves SWDs and ELLs. ECHS special population 2023 graduation rates exceeded all comparison groups.

SMART SPENDING

Over 85% of our 2022/2023 budget directly supported our scholars.



EQUALITY WILL BE A K-12 School!



In the Fall of 2025, Elementary and High School are set to move to 801 Bartholdi—Grades K-2 and 9-12. This new complex will house our High School and Elementary School. Equality's Middle School will remain at our current 4140 Hutchinson River Parkway East location.

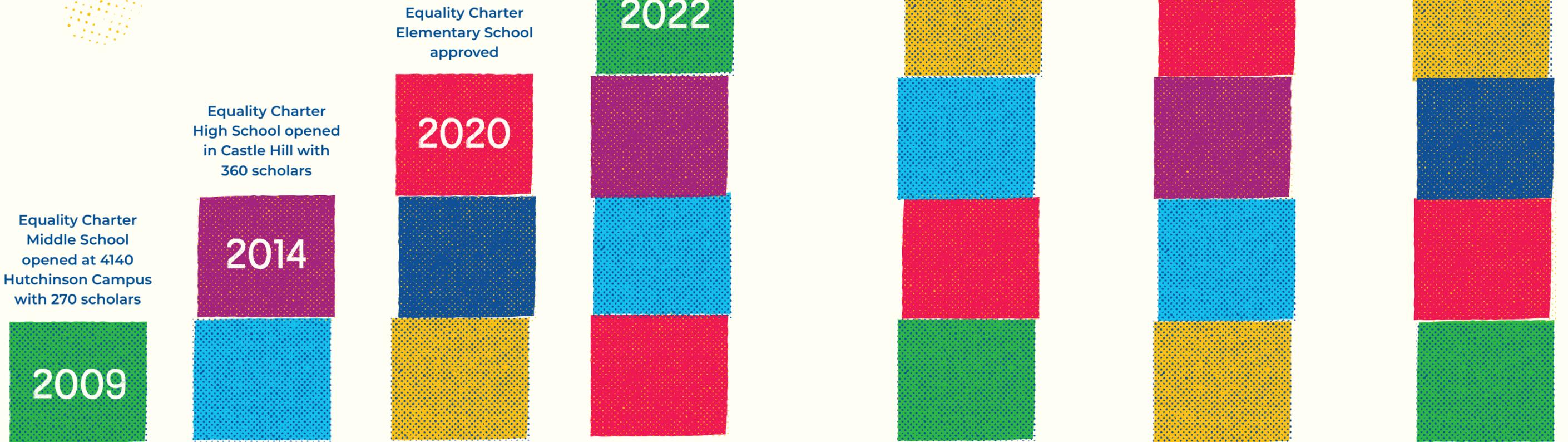
There is nothing more exciting than thinking of our youngest K-5 scholars learning from our 9-12 scholars in our new facility. If you have met our High School scholars, you would understand how beautiful this experience will be to see our High Schoolers supporting our next generation of Equality Learners.

Scholars will start with us in Kindergarten where they will receive a strong foundation in reading, writing, and math. More importantly, they will learn how to effectively express their opinions and ideas both verbally and in writing. Then they will move to our Middle School to explore who they are, push their critical thinking and problem solving skills, and form more independent conclusions. As High Schoolers they will become more autonomous individuals and independently function as they model for our youngest learners what it takes to succeed at this level. They will end their Equality experience by returning to our educational complex where they started their Kindergarten journey.

In addition to the program we are proud to deliver to our scholars, we also look forward to our entire K-12 school community benefitting from our new facility:

- ★ **Access to fresh, home-cooked meals** from a private chef service who will cook out of our new state-of-the-art kitchen, worth over 500k
- ★ **A high school regulation gym** with the ability to host high-quality sporting events and school productions
- ★ **A rooftop recreation area** for outdoor play
- ★ **A true community complex**, hosting neighborhood events, inviting local officials to partner with us, and working with local non-profit organizations

15+ Years of Continuous Growth





Music to Our Ears

At the heart of Equality Charter High School's music program is a commitment to comprehensive musical education, covering everything from fundamental music theory to the art of practical performance.

Founded by Giovanni Cruz in the 2022-23 school year, the program thrives on the collaborative spirit, as students come together to perform songs as an ensemble. Scholars enrolled in the program have not only honed their musical skills but also experienced substantial cross-curricular and social-emotional gains. The culmination of their hard work and dedication was showcased at

last year's graduation, where the school's band left an indelible mark.

Beyond the ensemble, the program has given rise to engaging clubs like the Guitar Club, Advanced Band, and Lyricist Lounge, providing students with additional avenues to express and develop their musical prowess. Equality Charter High School's music program not only nurtures musical talent but also fosters a sense of community and growth. It is a testament to the transformative power of music in shaping well-rounded individuals ready to embrace the challenges of the future.



MINDFUL STEPS TOWARD

Staff Wellness

We have continued to prioritize the mental health and wellness of our school community. Improvements to mental health and wellness of school employees also supports students' health.

In 2023-2024, we expanded upon the health and wellness benefits offered by CIGNA. We introduced a new mental health and wellness platform through Guardian called Spring Health. Spring Health allows staff to identify a licensed therapist and access in the moment for support when it is needed.

Through our partnership with SmartDollar we expanded upon our Financial Wellness benefit by incorporating one-to-one coaching with a financial advisor. Staff are partnered with a

financial advisor who provides customized support with budgeting and becoming economically responsible.

We have continued to develop our staff's empathy and overall knowledge of racial matters through engaging in meaningful discussions, socratic seminars and professional development.

As always, we welcome and prioritize our staff's feedback on the benefits they would like to see continued or added to the wellness program of our school community.

FRIENDS OF EQUALITY



Congratulations to our six lucky graduates that received the Friends of Equality Scholarship.

Founded in 2018 by Loretta Piscatella and Sherman Reid, Friends of Equality offers scholarships to ECS graduates exemplifying our school values. Each year, members of 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 lives. A winner from each group is selected and awarded a check at graduation.

THIS YEAR'S WINNERS INCLUDE (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)

Reem Al-Barati
LEHMAN COLLEGE

Dynasty Jiminez
BARUCH COLLEGE

Joely Rondon
PACE UNIVERSITY

Shania Martin
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Chijioke Mbalewe
SUNY POLYTECH

Jahmelia Edwards
HUNTER COLLEGE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, Equality!

Our 2023 Annual Appeal raised

\$32,389

which surpassed our goal for the year!

Thank you to our Board, families, staff, and supporters who are making Equality's 15th Birthday a year to remember!

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING WHO AWARDED US GRANTS THIS YEAR:

Council Member Amanda Farias

Council Member Kevin Riley

The Heckscher Foundation for Children

The Hyde & Watson Foundation

McCarthy Dressman Education Foundation

The Mockingbird Foundation

The Sexauer Foundation

Summer Boost



Scan the code below or visit
EqualityCharterSchool.org to
check out our new website:



HIGH SCHOOL

2141 Seward Ave
Bronx, NY 10473
718-459-9597

MIDDLE SCHOOL

4140 Hutchinson River Pkwy E
Bronx, NY 10475
718-517-3169

www.equalitycharterschool.org
info@equalitycharterschool.org