OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

The Education Trust–New York is a statewide education policy and advocacy organization focused first and foremost on doing right by New York’s children. We advocate for students, especially those whose needs and potential are often overlooked. Our third year was one of significant growth. Our team. Our body of work. Our leadership on critical education equity issues. Standing on the foundation of work we built in our first two years, this year we were able to grow our reach and impact on the movement focused on education equity for all of New York’s students.
In 2018-19, we advanced critical equity issues through a series of reports and online data-driven projects. Here are some of the highlights:

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ADVANCED COURSES
New York State’s education system denies students of color access to rigorous instruction in a range of courses that will prepare them for success in college, careers, and civic life. But it does not have to be this way. The New York Equity Coalition continued advocating for its 5x25 Agenda, calling on New York’s leaders to fulfill 5 Commitments to every student in the Graduating Class of 2025, the cohort of students who entered sixth grade in fall 2018. In October, the coalition released the results of a poll that found just one in three New York public high school recent graduates report that they felt “significantly challenged” in high school, and roughly half of those who went on to college report having to take at least one remedial course. This year, the Governor included one of the “5x25” commitments in his State of the State agenda, and the State Education Department incorporated our recommendations for college, career, and civic readiness into the state’s new accountability system.

THE NEW YORK FAFSA COMPLETION PROJECT
While high school students who are low-income are more likely than their wealthier peers to attend schools with low rates of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), dozens of New York high schools that serve large shares of seniors who are low-income are models of success for the rest of the state, according to our analysis as part of the New York FAFSA Completion Project. The project aims to build on this success by providing easily accessible resources including an interactive data tool that allows users to track the progress of New York high schools, resources for schools and educators on how they can assist more eligible students in completing the FAFSA, a compilation of stories highlighting strategies being used by schools across the state that are top-performers and that enroll a high share of low-income students, and The New York FAFSA Completion Challenge, which recognized schools for high FAFSA completion rates and for improvements in FAFSA completion rates.
New York State’s education system suspended Black students at more than four times the rate of White students outside of New York City and more than five times the rate of White students in New York City during the 2016-17 school year, according to a report released by The New York Equity Coalition in December. Using previously unpublished state data on the number of students on whom school districts imposed at least one out-of-school suspension in the 2016-17 school year, the coalition found a statewide crisis in the use of suspensions to exclude Black students from classroom instruction.

The New York Equity Coalition

Stolen Time

New York State’s Suspension Crisis

The Educator Diversity Playbook

We collaborated with The New York State Council of School Superintendents and the Council’s Commission on Diversity & Inclusivity to produce the Educator Diversity Playbook, a tool for school district leaders to improve educator diversity, equity, and inclusion in their schools and central offices. Building on our 2017 report See Our Truth, the Playbook focuses on five practical steps that school districts can take to cultivate a more diverse workforce: encourage school boards to signal and embrace the importance of teacher and school leader diversity; collect and use data to examine school district recruitment, interview, and hiring practices; question and change recruitment practices to identify additional qualified applicants of color; improve the working environment for educators of color; and invest in mentorship and career ladders for current and aspiring teacher, school, and district leaders. For each of these steps, the Playbook briefly cites the research, offers a district policy checklist, recommends indicators to track, and describes examples of New York school districts that are taking on this important work.

Data Transparency in Teacher Preparation

Our Educator Equity Snapshot online data tool allows users for the first time to explore data that raises important questions about how school districts and higher education institutions are communicating their needs and priorities to each other and to future educators. Throughout more than two years of interviewing classroom teachers and analyzing previously unpublished data, we saw a common opportunity highlighted: improving transparency at each step of the teacher preparation pipeline — and intentionally using that data to strengthen teacher preparation — can advance educational equity. The online tool and accompanying report The First Frontier of Equity is intended to spotlight the importance of greater data transparency, availability, and usefulness by posing five critical questions: Is New York State preparing a diverse future educator workforce? Are program completers employed in New York State public schools after graduation? Do program completers remain in New York State public schools? Where do program participants teach in New York State public schools? How well do program participants succeed in the classroom?
NEW YORK SCHOOL FUNDING TRANSPARENCY

Our first-of-its-kind online data tool allows users to explore data on school-level budgets, learning for the first time how schools and districts allocate resources and whether low-income students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners are receiving the resources they need to succeed. An accompanying analysis found that large and mid-sized school districts often do not prioritize their highest-need schools for greater funding and experienced educators. And an online advocacy toolkit allowed parents to ask their local district officials to improve equity as they developed their budgets for the upcoming school year.

FOR THE STUDENTS: WHO RUNS OUR SCHOOLS

In most New York school districts, elected school boards run our schools. Their members establish the district’s values and determine the allocation of resources, including making the most important human capital decisions. Their work can ensure that a child’s zip code and circumstances do not have to determine her future, and build education systems with the transformative power to close opportunity and achievement gaps. Our work helped raise awareness of critical equity issues in two of New York’s largest school districts — Buffalo and Rochester — and put all of the candidates running for office on the record for how they would address these issues. Working with our partners in these cities, we distributed more than 10,000 get out the vote postcards in Buffalo and published an insert in the Sunday Rochester Democrat and Chronicle that reached more than 150,000 people.

VOTE ON MAY 7 in the Buffalo school board elections.

LEARN about the candidates
SIGN UP for text and email updates
FIND RESOURCES for voters
COMMIT to vote
www.forthestudentsny.org/buffalo

#equalisnotequitable
NYSchoolFunding.org
THE NEW YORK EQUITY COALITION

We and our partners have built a growing coalition of key civil rights, education, parent, and business organizations committed to education equity. The New York Equity Coalition originally came together in 2016 with a shared belief that the Every Student Succeeds Act presents a critical opportunity to improve New York’s education system — a system riven by massive systemic inequities in access, opportunity, and performance, especially for students of color, students who are low-income, students with disabilities, and Multilingual Learners. It has since broadened its focus to include other education equity issues that contribute to the gaps in access and opportunity that hold too many students back from a bright future and from the state achieving its potential.

EQUITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

We are committed to supporting parent and student-serving community-based organizations in their state-level advocacy on important equity issues. From Buffalo to the Bronx, our Equity Partnership Program helps these trusted partners take on issues such as course access, educator diversity, school improvement, and addressing disproportionate school discipline.

COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

We presented our work at a number of significant events, including the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus annual conference. In May, we hosted a town hall forum on educator diversity on Long Island in partnership with several education and civil rights organizations. And we continued our partnership with the New York State Education Department to amplify student voices during two social media campaigns.

Buffalo’s Breaking Barriers Young Men and Boys of Color Leadership Council, which participates in the Equity Partnership Program, traveled to Albany to ask state legislators to work to reduce disproportionality in suspensions.

The New York Equity Coalition presented its findings on course access at the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus.
PARENT LEADERSHIP

Parents play a key role in advocating for policies that promote and advance educational equity. But all too often, parents who are low-income and parents of color are under-represented in critical state policy conversations. Working with trusted partners, Ed Trust–NY is helping change that through the New York Parent Equity Fellowship program. Over the course of the fellowship, seven New York parents received training in a variety of topics to develop their advocacy skills and the opportunity to connect and collaborate with other parent leaders across the country. The fellowship covered topics including the education policy landscape, data interpretation and use, policy analysis, effective interaction with policymakers, and effective advocacy communications. In addition, fellows received tailored coaching focused on activities such as preparing for public hearing testimony, drafting op-eds, and meeting with policymakers.

LAUNCHING A BIRTH-TO-3 AGENDA

_Raising NY_ is a new coalition of parent, early childhood, civil rights, business, and health organizations dedicated to helping more young children who are low-income and other groups that have been historically underserved be on track for school readiness.

New York has more than 700,000 children under the age of three, a period of life when 80% of a child’s brain development occurs. But statewide, hundreds of thousands of families are prevented from accessing the high-quality programs, services, and opportunities they need to raise healthy and thriving children.

_Raising NY_ is focused on advancing policies that support families of infants and toddlers during these first critical years of life. The coalition’s priorities are improving access to health and developmental care, improving access to high-quality, affordable child care, helping more parents become financially secure, and developing a system that works together for families. Learn more at RaisingNY.org.

Parents participating in the New York Parent Equity Fellowship program met with Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes.
BUILDING THE EQUITY NARRATIVE

We continued developing relationships with media outlets across New York State and promoted our equity agenda through about 100 news articles, editorials, opinion pieces, and broadcast segments.

"THE EQUITY COALITION IS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT TO STAY ON TOP OF THE DISTRICT’S EFFORTS. AND, YES, IT IS ONLY A SMALL STEP TOWARD REPAIRING YEARS OF INEQUITY AND STRUCTURAL RACISM WITHIN THE SCHOOLS. AS THE GROUP UNDERSTANDS, CORRECTING THE ERRORS OF THE PAST TAKES TIME. SOONER MUST BE THE GOAL."

THE BUFFALO NEWS EDITORIAL BOARD
LOOKING AHEAD

Building on the momentum of our first three years, we will continue working alongside our partners across New York State to advocate for improved access and opportunities that will enable all students to be successful. Learn more about our work at edtrustny.org.

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