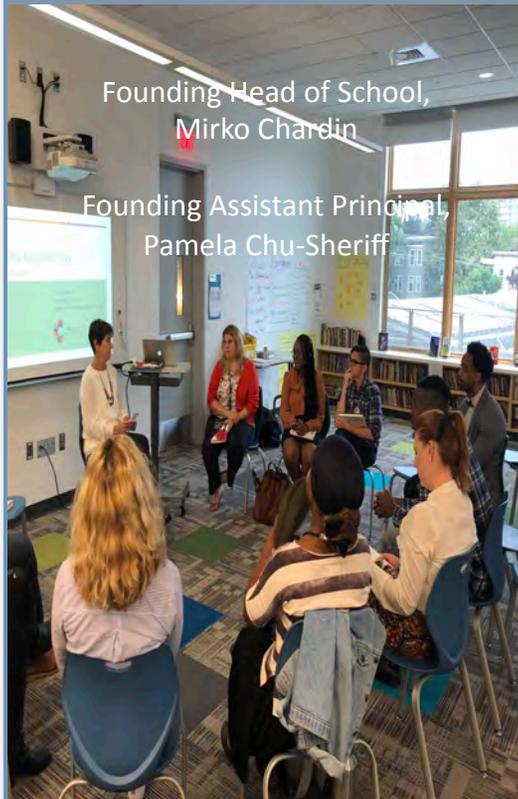


CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

at

Putnam Avenue Upper School



Founding Head of School,
Mirko Chardin

Founding Assistant Principal,
Pamela Chu-Sheriff

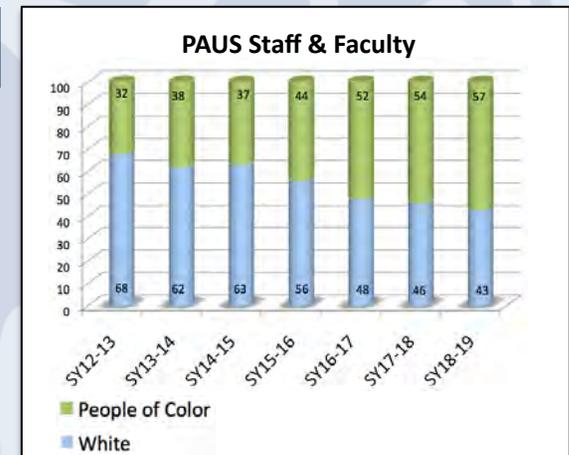
Going Beyond Access

Impact Over Intentions

According to Dr. Beverly Daniels Tatum, “the work is not about intentions; it’s about impact.” One of the ways that we address the question of whether or not we are valuing impact over intentions is through restorative practices. Restorative Practices are a range of approaches— affective statements, affective questions, impromptu conferences, Tier 1 Circles, Tier 2 Restorative Circles, and Tier 3 Restorative Conferences—that aim to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and restoring relationships. Since its inception, our office referrals have been reduced by half and suspensions have been cut by two-thirds. It is important to note that restorative practices work in concert with a range of strategies that we have incorporated into our practice, including: staffing, cultural proficiency professional learning, student engagement, relationship building, and objective-driven instruction.

Learner Visibility

Drawing on Dr. Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot’s work on voice, value, and visibility, we ask the question, “Can all students see themselves reflected in our work?” We have been committed to actively recruiting faculty and staff who represent and reflect the diversity of our students; and, for the last 3 years we have had a faculty and staff which is more than 50% people of color. Learner visibility has also been the frame for us to consider how we are including windows and mirrors in our curriculum as well as on the walls of our classrooms and the hallways of our building.



Authentic Relevance

Authentic relevance, derived from Dr. Christopher Emdin’s Reality Pedagogy, asks us to consider: Is the work authentically relevant and how do we know? This requires that we must know and work in conjunction with both our students and their families. Two ways we do this are through our school-wide **advisory system** (which includes: a core-value focused portfolio, an organization system, independent reading goals, and Story of Self) and **family engagement** strategies (which include: rolling conferences, Community Conversations on Identity & Diversity, Annual Back to School Night & Community Cookout, and International Potluck & Report Card Pick Up).



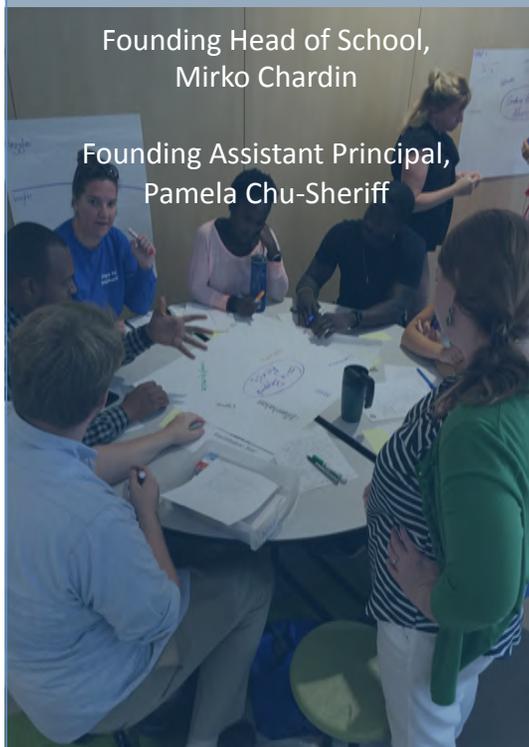
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Professional Learning

At Putnam Ave. faculty and staff participate in layers of professional learning opportunities:

- Staff Meetings (which have focused on foundational texts such as Glenn Singleton's *Courageous Conversations about Race* and Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*)
- Staff Intensives (choice offerings including: DESE's Inclusive Practice Academy; Design Thinking; Race, Gender, & Intersectionality; Restorative Practices through Cogenerative Groups; Neurodiversity & Cool Teaching Staff)
- Common Planning Times three times a week
 - Instruction & Learning (examining student work, instruction, and data)
 - Student Support (strengths-based, inquiry approach to supporting all students; grounded in restorative practice)
 - Team Time & Logistics (time to plan and build the team)
- School-level department time focused on ambitious instructional strategies and making thinking visible

This work is reinforced through walkthroughs, modeling, informal observations, and coaching.

