Socratic Circles to Support Racial Equity and Social Justice Classroom Discourse

District Name	District City, State	Student Population	Superintendent
Reynoldsburg City Schools	**Reynoldsburg, OH**	**7,238**	**Dr. Tracy Reed**

Connect And Commit
Building a Diverse Team and Identifying the Challenge

Challenge Statement
Teachers and students struggle to engage in meaningful racial equity and social justice discourse due to lack of comprehensive and inclusive curriculum.

Solution Concept
Create a model and resources to equip teachers to guide racial justice discourse to ensure the classroom is a place where all students feel seen, heard, and valued — centered in day-to-day instruction and student engagement.

The solution enables students, teachers, parents, community members to facilitate racial and social justice discourse in the classroom by utilizing scalable and adaptable Open Education Resources resources.

"The process was empowering. It was really amazing to develop the ideas together and see our ideas come to light."
- RCS Student

Inquire And Investigate
Conducting Research to Gather and Analyze Data

Understanding The Challenge
Today's student body is more racially diverse and more politically-engaged than previous generations. Teachers need support to effectively integrate racial equity and social justice into teaching and learning to connect with an increasingly diverse student body and engage all students in race consciousness.

Community-Centered Research
Bringing in diverse voices from middle school students to a police officer to a local council woman to build a commitment for racial equity in the district expanded perspectives and prioritized student agency and the parent experience. The team focused on creating the space to increase classroom and community understanding of historical context, racism, identity, and social justice issues at interpersonal, institutional, and/or systemic levels.

Identifying Goals And Outcomes
Teachers will feel more empowered to facilitate discussions of race/racism in collaboration with students and the community, understand students perspectives and create classroom cultures that support civil discourse.

Implement And Sustain
Supporting a Teachers and Students in Discussing Racial Equity

Supporting The Team
The team participated in teacher professional development using the Socratic Circle modules to gain a better understanding of implementation. After hosting multiple circles in their classroom, students began to lead the conversations. Through their excitement, the team decided to host a community Socratic circle on race and equity to hear community perspectives. Students participated in at least three classroom Socratic Circles before facilitating difficult discussions. Students' identity self-awareness, discussion and facilitation skills, knowledge of race and equity work, and their criticality in regards to anti-racism all increased.

Sustaining The Work
The district is building a model to sustain and grow the Socratic Circles across different schools. Ongoing implementation of the guidebook and teacher professional development will be scaled across districts.

Design And Develop
Creating Solutions to Address the Challenge

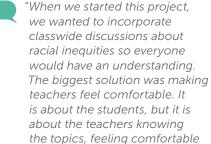#### Creating Community And Classroom Discourse Ideas
Students, teachers, community members, and staff members ideated and created three different solution ideas that addressed their priority problem. Their ideas included:

- Make a Difference Community-Based Project
- Student Curriculum Advisory
- Student-Led Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Events
- Equity Tool to Support Classroom Discussions in the Classroom

Designing A Solution
The team's decided on Socratic Circles as a powerful structure for supporting healthy discourse in the classroom and community. Resources included:

- Teacher Professional Development Modules on Socratic Circles for Discussing Racial Equity
- Teacher Guidebook and Implementation Planning
- Teacher Implement Socratic Circle in Classroom
- Students lead Socratic Circles in Classroom
- Students & Teachers Lead Socratic Circle with Community

"When we started this project, we wanted to incorporate classwide discussions about racial inequities so everyone would have an understanding. The biggest solution was making teachers feel comfortable. It is about the students, but it is about the teachers knowing the topics, feeling comfortable working with students, and accepting feedback."
- RCS Student