

COMMUNITY IMPACT SYMPOSIUM: RACE, JUSTICE, AND EQUITY

How can our schools help build more just, equitable, and inclusive communities?



The Community Impact Symposium, a collaboration between Close Up and the National Network of Schools in Partnership (NNSP), brings together students from across the country in Washington, DC, to develop a shared vision of youth leadership, schools as civic hubs, and community engagement. The Symposium asks participants to grapple with a pressing central question: ***How can our schools help build more just, equitable, and inclusive communities?***

Through engagement with experts and collaborative inquiry into their own schools and communities, students will consider their individual and collective responsibilities and agency, identify equitable practices in community engagement, and explore how the voices of other community members might shape their efforts to work towards justice. Finally, students will develop specific vision statements and action plans related to their own schools and communities, and present those plans to teachers, administrators, and other participants in the NNSP Conference.

Sample Washington, DC, Schedule

Saturday (1/28)

8am - Breakfast (early arrivals only)
African American Museum (early arrivals)
12:30pm - Lunch, Welcome, and Orientation
2:00pm - Homeroom Discussion
3:30pm - Equity in Community Engagement Panel
4:45pm - Debrief and Reflection
6:00pm - Dinner and Social Activity
9:30pm - Student Lounge
11:00pm - Room Check

Sunday (1/29)

8:00am - Breakfast
9:00am - Deliberation
10:30am - Community Engagement Workshop
11:30am - Facilitation Training
12:30pm - Lunch and Neighborhood Exploration
2:30pm - Envisioning Community Leadership
4:00pm - Action Planning and Leadership
6:00pm - Dinner and Social Activity
9:30pm - Student Lounge
11:00pm - Room Check

Monday (1/30)

8:00am - Breakfast
9:00am - Develop Vision Statements
10:30am - Homeroom Discussion
11:30am - Finalize Presentations
12:00pm - Lunch and Presentations
2:30pm - Departures

Key Components

Homeroom Groups: Students will take part in daily discussions, debriefs, and feedback sessions with their homeroom, a core group of students led by the same instructor each day.

Equity in Community Engagement Panel: Students will learn from school leaders about best practices in community engagement and social impact as well as innovative approaches being employed by schools nationwide.

Community Engagement Deliberation: How can students more meaningfully engage the broader community in community engagement projects and program? Students will identify obstacles to community participation, consider strategies for involving more stakeholders, and develop proposals.

Community Engagement and Facilitation Workshops: Students will practice strategies and tools for understanding community issues, such as asset and power mapping, and skills for engaging multiple stakeholders and community members in solving community concerns.

Envisioning Community Leadership: In their homerooms, students will collaborate with peers to develop a shared vision statement that expresses how schools like theirs and students like them can help build more just, equitable, and inclusive communities.

Planning for Community Engagement and Leadership by School: Students will build on their experiences in the Symposium to develop specific plans of action for their schools and communities. These plans of action are distinct from calls to action; instead of saying "you should," students pledge "WE will."