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NEWS RELEASE

COSEBOC selects the Newton Public Schools as its inaugural Vanguard District to enhance work in diversity, equity, and inclusion

National nonprofit will partner with the Massachusetts school district to support the success and development of boys and young men of color

The [Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color](#) (COSEBOC) today announced the selection of the Newton (MA) Public Schools as its inaugural Vanguard District. The distinction is designed to recognize and deepen the school district's work in diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly to support the development and success of boys and young men of color.

"The Newton Public Schools have demonstrated a profound commitment to the COSEBOC mission of affirming the social, emotional, cultural, and academic development of boys and young men of color," said Ron Walker, Executive Director of COSEBOC. "We are thrilled to celebrate and support the work of Newton teachers, administrators, students, families, and community through a significant partnership as our first Vanguard District."

COSEBOC launched the Vanguard District program in part through funding from the Hewlett Foundation and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

Through the multi-year partnership, Newton Public Schools (NPS) will engage deeply with the COSEBOC team, beginning this school year. The Vanguard District program will include extensive professional development opportunities for educators, starting in the fall with the foundational 30-hour course, [COSEBOC Standards for Schools Educating Boys of Color](#). COSEBOC will also assist district officials with strategic planning and implementation of their work to promote equitable and inclusive schools, and provide leadership coaching for district and school-based administrators.

The Vanguard District partnership also includes opportunities to engage high school students through the COSEBOC Youth Ambassador Corps (CYAC), which is designed to help young people develop their leadership skills and voices to help lead change in their communities.

Mr. Walker said Newton was selected for this honor because the district has the key elements in place to accelerate and expand its work of building school communities that reflect the excellence of the boys and young men of color they serve.

Since it was created in 2020, the district's [Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (DEI) has partnered with school and central office leaders and community partners to advance the district's DEI agenda. In recent years the district has developed a new non-discrimination protocol, prioritized the hiring and retention of a more diverse staff, launched affinity groups for staff of color, provided culturally responsive professional development, and begun revising curriculum through an anti-racism lens, among other initiatives.

“As a school system, we know that some traditionally marginalized communities have greater barriers to belonging and connection in our schools, which can impact achievement,” said Dr. Anna Nolin, incoming Superintendent of the Newton Public Schools. “We are excited to join the COSEBOC community to access the training, resources, and expertise they provide to support boys and young men of color. The focus on writing and critical thinking about identity pushes excellence, literacy, and belonging, which is an excellent addition to the Newton Public Schools toolkit.”

“Newton Public Schools is excited to be selected as the COSEBOC Vanguard District and work in partnership with such a reputable organization and dynamic team,” said Kathy Lopes, NPS Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. “With the support of our DEI Department, school leaders and community partners, we believe this programming will broaden the work of our district as we continue to focus on addressing existing opportunity gaps and increasing equitable outcomes for all students.”

Since it was founded by Mr. Walker in 2006, COSEBOC has created a national learning community for leaders committed to the advancement of boys and young men of color. In addition to the Standards course, COSEBOC engages educators in professional development through the courses [D.R.U.M. \(Discovering Rituals, Understanding Manhood\)](#) and [Footprints and Footsteps](#). The organization also has hosted numerous virtual and in-person convenings to exchange ideas and expertise. For more information, visit www.coseboc.org.

The school district for the city of Newton, Massachusetts, serves nearly 12,000 students in 22 schools, pre-kindergarten through high school, including approximately 44% students of color. For more information, visit www.newton.k12.ma.us.

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