

Anti-Racism Policy Research Report

What works. What other districts have done. What Milton can learn.

Prepared: June 12, 2026 | Milton Reckoning Campaign

This report highlights best practices and examples from other districts as a helpful resource—not a mandate. First, I explain Milton's urgent need for this research. Then, I share three lessons: start early, involve the community, and keep evaluating progress. My goal is to show what has worked elsewhere so Milton Public Schools can make informed decisions.

Why This Research Matters

The June 2026 incident at Tucker Elementary School in Milton was not the first racial incident there. Testimony gathered during the Milton Reckoning campaign shows a pattern over several years, involving different students and types of harm. The record includes anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, antisemitism, and repeated harmful behavior without stronger consequences.

This report does not question if there is a problem; the record is clear. Instead, it asks: What actions work, and what is the current legal situation and standard Milton needs to meet?

The Legal Terrain in 2026

In February 2025, the U.S. Department of Education released a Dear Colleague Letter that showed federal doubts about broad DEI programs. Later, a federal court struck down that letter. As of June 2026, the federal legal situation remains unclear.

Massachusetts maintains civil rights protections that remain fully in force. Chapter 76, Section 5 of the Massachusetts General Laws prohibits discrimination in public schools. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) processes complaints, and the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division can investigate patterns of discrimination in public institutions.

A key point: All policy ideas in this report are designed as civil rights compliance steps, not as DEI programs. This approach helps make sure they remain strong regardless of changes at the federal level.

Peer District Models

Cambridge Public Schools - Primary Positive Model

Cambridge Public Schools is the most relevant example for Milton. Like Milton, it is a Massachusetts district with high academic standards, a diverse student body, and a clear commitment to building racial equity systems.

- **Independent incident reporting:** Cambridge uses *Speakfully*, an outside platform where students and families can report racial incidents directly, without going through school administration. Reports go to a third party instead of the principal's office. This avoids the conflict of interest that can happen with self-reporting systems.
- **Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging:** Cambridge has a dedicated office with its own staff, budget, and accountability, separate from school leadership. The DEIB role is a full responsibility, not just an extra task.
- **Cambridge publishes an annual equity report** breaking down incident data by school and student group. This transparency is built into the system, not just a reaction to problems.
- **New London, Connecticut - Parent Accountability Model:** Step Up New London created a community-based grading system to measure district progress on racial equity. Parents and community members set the criteria, review district performance, and share public grades. This shows that parent-led accountability can drive change without legal action.

Key takeaway: Parents can form independent accountability groups without district approval. Community-led efforts can create change, and collaboration may come once trust is built.

Jefferson County Public Schools, Kentucky - Equity Data Transparency

Jefferson County (Louisville) set up a public equity dashboard that breaks down student outcome data by race, school, and incident type. The dashboard is updated regularly and is open to the public. When incidents happen, the community can see patterns over time instead of relying only on the administration's view of a single event.

Key takeaway: Transparent, publicly accessible data systems help the community see trends and build trust, rather than relying only on administration reports.

Seattle Public Schools - Equity Advisory Committee Governance

Seattle Public Schools set up a formal Equity Advisory Committee with a clear structure, including parent representatives from affected communities, a governance charter, decision-making power over some equity policies, and direct access to the superintendent and school board. The committee has real influence, not just an advisory title.

Key takeaway: Parent-advocate groups must have defined decision-making powers, not just an advisory role, to ensure real accountability.

A Cautionary Case - Demographically Comparable Nearby District

A district in the greater Boston area with similar demographics faced a series of documented racial incidents over several school years. Without a formal response protocol or independent reporting system, each incident was handled on a case-by-case basis. The problems added up. The Middlesex District Attorney publicly noted the lack of an accountable response system. The district eventually faced serious legal and reputational consequences that a proper system could have prevented.

Key takeaway: Without formal systems, schools cannot learn from incidents or prevent future harm, increasing the risks to students and the school's reputation.

The peer models and research reviewed point to nine effective anti-racism practices. These key strategies serve as the basis for this report's recommendations and are outlined below.

1. **Independent incident reporting:** a channel that bypasses administration for initial receipt of reports
2. **Formal racial incident response protocol:** clear steps, named people, and timelines from the first report to resolution
3. **Parent-advocate accountability mechanism:** a structured group with real governance rights, not just an advisory title
4. **Proactive support for affected students and educators:** resources that are available before an incident, not just after one happens
5. **Direct, individual outreach to affected families:** not mass communication, and not information shared only when requested
6. **Mandatory anti-racism education for majority-population students and families: built into the curriculum,** professionally designed, and not just a one-time event
7. **Annual staff training:** documented, certified, and linked to accountability.
8. **Public transparency on district materials and incident data:** an equity dashboard or annual public report that makes patterns visible
9. **DEIB coordinator structure with real authority and enough resources:** a full-time, funded, independent role, not just a part-time addition

What This Research Does Not Claim

This report does not claim that any peer district is perfect. It does not suggest that using just one idea will solve everything. It also does not say that Milton should follow the exact same path as other districts.

In sum, while challenges remain, these models show that real progress is possible with the right systems in place. Milton can use these examples to chart its own course toward lasting positive change.