

Council for Diversity and Inclusion

10/29/19 – Meeting Summary

The Council for Diversity and Inclusion met for its first meeting on October 29, 2019. The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Superintendent Regina Speaker Palubinsky reviewed the mission of the Council:
 The mission of the Great Valley Council for Diversity and Inclusion is to recognize and celebrate the diversity of the growing Great Valley School District community in a way that maximizes opportunities to build an inclusive culture that positively impacts the experiences of all.

Guidelines for meetings were also reviewed and agreed upon by members.

Members spent time introducing themselves. Council members are:

Charles Lowery, parent	Charlestown Elementary School
Rob Goldstein, teacher	Charlestown Elementary School
Colleen Guld, teacher	K.D. Markley Elementary School
Dana Mohamed, parent	General Wayne Elementary School
Sarah Slaybaugh, teacher	General Wayne Elementary School
Lisa Phoenix, teacher	General Wayne Elementary School
Cristina Juisti, parent	Sugartown Elementary School
Ashlyn Llerandi, teacher	Sugartown Elementary School
Christina Ensling, teacher	Sugartown Elementary School
Shannon Maroney-Garrett, parent	Great Valley Middle School
Tia Jiles, parent	Great Valley Middle School
Ila Awasthi, parent	Great Valley High School
Diana Tiburcio, student	Great Valley High School
Kevin Fitzpatrick, staff member	Great Valley High School
Sharon Webster, community member	Great Valley Community Member
Victoria Morris, administrator	K.D. Markley Elementary School
Kyle Hammond, administrator	Sugartown Elementary School
Heidi Capetola, administrator	Great Valley High School
Jason Rasmussen, administrator	District Office
Abby Linderman, administrator	District Office
Karen Taratuski, administrator	District Office
Samantha Jouin, board member	GVSD
Jennifer Blake, administrator	District Office (facilitator)
Joanna Wexler, administrator	District Office (facilitator)
Regina Speaker Palubinsky, administrator	District Office (facilitator)

As part of a conversation around experiences related to diversity, members identified the following themes from their experiences:

- Reactions – Expectations exist for all
- Personal pride
- Passion
- Internal – questions that you ask yourself
- Diversity experience – opportunities for learning
- Negative experience – Positive outcomes
- Empowers
- Creates choices – powerful
- Depth of emotional response
- Experiences impact life choices

Goals for the Council are as follows:

1. Fostering a safe and healthy school climate where all students feel they belong.
2. Promoting an inclusive culture that engages and appreciates the diverse assets of students, families, staff and community members.
3. Encouraging and expanding the District’s conversations about topics related to equity and social justice.
4. Eliminating systemic inequities and disparities in student achievement and belonging in our schools.

Council members broke into small groups to address each goal above. They were asked to focus on the following questions:

- WHY is this goal important to our work?
- Identify the district data/information to be reviewed.
- Identify/describe the strengths that exist toward achieving this goal in our district
- Identify/describe the needs to be addressed to achieve this goal in our district

Feedback from each group was as follows:

Group 1/Goal 1:

Why

- Mental health
- Maslow’s needs (belonging)
- Feel loved, safe, free to speak and be heard outside of school
- Prepare them to be global citizens

District Data

- Comments on questionnaires
- Youth Truth
- Discipline Data
- Interviews (teacher, student, parents)
- Writing, Story telling

Strengths that Exist

- It exists in our community (groups, identities)
- Supports are in place (social services, ESL support, librarians)
- Olweus – involvement

- Social emotional curriculum? (is there a committee?)
- Open to learn/bring people together

Needs

- More diverse staff
- To be known in the community
- Resources where all are represented
- Staff training (what are our own bias? Do we feel we belong?)
- Finding out how to measure this goal
- Outreach to parents – community resources

Group 2/Goal 2:

Why

- Acknowledging culture, differences, and similarities

District Data

- Include other aspects/demographics in youth truth
 - Need data for students of all demographics (suspension, AP classes, etc.)

Strengths that Exist

- There is a desire to recognize needs
 - Some are open to learning
 - Interpretation services

Needs

- Low level comfort despite resources available
- Communication, accessibility

Group 3/Goal 3:

Why

- Equity is important to ensure all student have an equal opportunity to succeed
- Modeling for our children
- Narrative – safe environment for all thoughts, perspectives, etc.

District Data

- Multicultural events throughout the district
- Ethnic group (data) of children in our AP/Honors classes (gifted and clubs)
- PTO representation

Group 4/Goal 4:

Why

- Sets some students to be successful and not others
- Preconceived notions about students which leads to lack of belonging
- Systems perpetuate inequities and disparities

- Systems have potential to exclude
- School issues and systems reflect the larger society as a whole
- Timing of school events – can exclude many

Data Needed

- Achievement data by subgroups (grade, SES, racial, disability, etc.)
- What extracurricular activities and who participates – breakdown into subgroups
- AP class enrollment/access
- Higher level course enrollment stats
- Gifted enrollment
- Parent surveys and student surveys
- Resource allocation
- Gender and racial breakdown of staff

Strengths that Exist

- CST/CARE/STAR
- Realization of the challenge
- Systems to gather data
- Humans as resources

Needs

- CST – time to discuss and address needs
- Data rich – information poor, what does the data tell us
- Training on inequities and what they look like
- Each students end goal is different

The Council reviewed set meeting dates for the year:

- December 10, 2019
- January 28, 2020
- March 10, 2020
- May 5, 2020

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.