

Council for Diversity and Inclusion 1/28/2020 – Meeting Summary

The Council for Diversity and Inclusion met on January 28, 2020.

Council members are included below. Not all were present at this meeting.

Charles Lowery, parent	Charlestown Elementary School
Rob Goldstein, teacher	Charlestown Elementary School
Marshall Hoffritz, administrator*	Great Valley Middle 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
Jennifer Blake, administrator	District Office (facilitator)
Joanna Wexler, administrator	District Office (facilitator)
Regina Speaker Palubinsky, administrator	District Office (facilitator)

*replaces former member Colleen Guld from KDM.

The goals of the Council are:

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.

Dr Speaker Palubinsky shared with the Council that the district will be working with Bob Jarvis from the Coalition for Educational Equity at Penn to conduct an equity audit in the district this spring.

To assist in the work of the audit, the Council was asked to use the questions it developed in December (after examining district data) to help develop questions that might be used as prompts in the audit.

Council members broke into four small groups, with each assigned one of the Council's goals. Using the data they examined in December and the list of questions they created from that data, each group identified probing questions related to each goal area.

Goal #1:

- To what extent are students involved in after school activities broken down by race/ethnicity/gender?
 - How to increase participation?
 - What holds you back from participating?
- How does having teachers/staff of color impact students of that color? Language?
- Are our hiring practices in line with our values/needs to have a diverse teaching staff?
- Do you feel the staff gets to know your student/background?
- What is the real value of having a diverse teaching staff?
- How would your experience change if you worked with someone of a similar background?
- How does a teacher/student relationship impact school performance?
- Think of a teacher you feel close with. What makes that teacher different from others?
- Do we set the same post-graduation expectations for all students? Should we?
- How do we expose students to all possible post-graduation options?
- How do we engage every family?
- Do we have diverse representation on student councils, boards, etc.?
- Why do we not have more diverse representation?
- How do we foster a sense of belonging among higher-level courses at HS and MS?
 - How do students know benefits of AP/higher levels?
 - Do relationships with peers influence involvement in higher levels?
- How do different schools celebrate heritage/diverse backgrounds?
- Are there practices/cultures in place to perpetuate negative stereotypes or unfair practices?
- How does your home/experiences outside school effect your engagement in school?
- Does the district offer supports outside of school for students who need more support?
- What is preventing you from getting to know other people/expanding social circle?
- What traditions are hindering our mission for diversity?
- How can we educate on various celebrations and traditions?
- How can we face/overcome resistance to accepting diversity?

Goal #2:

- Are we communicating in a culturally aware/sensitive way?
- Do our hiring processes help to foster/promote an inclusive culture?
 - Do students see themselves in the teachers/staff?
- Are we being proactive/fast enough to adapt to our changing demographic?
- Do teachers have varying expectations of students of different backgrounds?

- What do we do that creates exclusivity?
 - Special events
 - Sports/clubs
 - Curriculum
 - Food served
 - Physical building
 - Language

Goal #3:

- How do students perceive how their race, gender, identity, SES, etc. affect their opportunities?
- What assumptions do “adults” make about students related to race/gender/identity/SES/etc.?
- How does #2 affect #1 and student experience?
- How does the curriculum offer opportunities to discuss issues of equity and social justice?
- How do our schools offer the chance for students to experience the broader world/broader perspectives?
- What traditions exist that perpetuate micro-aggressions?
- Is there a common philosophy around discipline?
 - How is that communicated and implemented?
- How consistently are restorative practices being used for discipline across levels?
- What opportunities do we offer the community to engage with the district around equity and social justice topics?

Goal #4:

- How can we achieve better representation in AP classes of diverse students (by percent)?
- How do we correct the problem of a disproportionate # of children of color being suspended/subject to discipline?
- How do we educate our teachers to recognize culturally insensitive curriculum and materials?
 - How do we educate the students to do the same?
 - How do we train students to speak out when they find it?
- How do we help the student body embrace and truly accept and include children who are different than them?
- How do we proactively ensure that “inclusive” materials are used in classes (reflective of our diverse population)?
- How do we encourage the students to speak up when they see a problem/an injustice? (in a constructive way)
- How do we ensure that all members of the student body know of all programs available to them (AP, honor roll, distinguished honors, Least Restrictive Environment, access/knowledge of what is achievable)
- How do we diversify the teaching staff so that all students see people in leadership who they can relate to?
- How do we make it ok to talk about race and other sensitive topics?
- How can we respond to members of the community that resist this work/diversity and inclusion?

- How do we educate the parents and community to be more accepting?
- How do we use our mission statement(s) to reinforce/support our position with parents and community (or students, etc.)? (ie., if their position is in opposition to our inclusive mission)
- How can we include educational materials (ie. Books) about gay marriage/ LGBTQ life in our curriculum?

These questions will be shared with audit team and will be used to shape some of the questions that are asked.

The Council reviewed set meeting dates for the remainder of the year:

- March 10, 2020
- May 5, 2020

The meeting adjourned.