

District DEI Task Force Meeting Summary

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

7:00pm-8:30pm

This was the first meeting of the newly formed DEI Task Force. The role of the Task Force is to monitor the progress of the DEI Plan/Initiatives that the Dobbs Ferry Board of Education approved, and that has been incorporated into the District's long-term Strategic Plan, which was adopted in 2018.

Dr. Lisa Brady facilitated the meeting and covered the following items:

1. Introductions
2. Review of District DEI Plan and some data points for 2021-2022
3. Current Challenges
4. Current Successes

There are 25 people on the Task Force. The Task Force is made up of students, parents, teachers, BOE members, administrators, and staff. The goal of the Task Force is to support the work of the School District and to help move the work forward. This is a safe space for everyone participating.

Introductions took place in breakout rooms and participants introduced themselves and talked briefly about what was on their minds right now about what's happening around DEI work in schools. In the larger group, Dr. Brady reviewed the District's DEI Plan recommendations that were presented to the community in November 2021. Overall, the District is making progress in many areas, and the plan will continue to unfold over time.

The immediate focus is on the most impactful activities:

- Students from the BIPOC peer program are facilitating the Reading Without Walls program at Springhurst this year. Over 30 teachers have signed up, and our DFHS students will be reading to classes throughout the spring.
- Dr. Brady would like to create a video of alumni, students, staff, and parent voices around their lived experiences. Our District videographer is working with the student and staff BIPOC committee. The DEI Committee recommended that this could also be achieved via the use of podcasts. Dr. Brady is going to follow up on this.
- Working on Communications Survey for families (scheduled for May, after the budget vote).
- Doing more with translation, but do not have funding or an exploration of options yet for a full-time solution.
- Creating a DEI Mission Statement is on the to-do list.
- Making the most progress on hiring/retention practices and revised the entire hiring manual (The manual outlines expectations for interviewing and hiring).

- Training all teachers at faculty meetings on anti-bias and hiring, as well as individual parents who will be sitting on hiring committees.
- All hiring committees are required to use at least 2-3 culturally responsive interview questions. There are 75 sample questions in the revised hiring manual.
- Diversifying staff is a strategic priority of the District.
- Staff affinity groups reaching out to new BIPOC hires.

Curriculum & Instruction:

- Dr. Darrell Stinchcomb, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Equity reviewed what was being discussed with teachers around DEI.
- Work done on building level in DEI committees.
- Preparing a Climate Survey for students and staff.
- Ensuring a welcoming and affirming environment is the focus this year.
- Providing PD for staff and administrators focused on LGBTQ since the staff has requested more training in this area.

Professional Learning:

- Most of our staff is ahead of other schools in DEI work so some of the more local PD is limited because our staff requires some more advanced topics. Most of the building-level PD is being done “turn-key” this year.
- Creation of building-level DEI committees has been accomplished and the committees are meeting regularly.

Current Challenges:

- COVID-19 impact
- Anti-DEI parent and community members
- Teachers and Admin unsettled by anti-DEI parents who confront them about political views, etc.
- Overload of Foil Requests regarding hiring and professional development

Next Steps:

- Tri-States visit on May 4-6 - focus is DEI
- Review progress
- Recommendations
- Next DEI meeting is on April 5th