

*Norristown Area School District
School Board of Directors*

*Resolution
For
Diversity Strategic Plan*

Developed by the Cultural Proficiency Planning Committee

Recognizing that the Norristown Area School District's School Board of Directors places high value and is committed to equity, diversity and multiculturalism,

Be it resolved that all members of the School Board of Directors are fully committed to supporting the District Diversity Plan as developed by the Cultural Proficiency Planning Committee and its work to enhance and unify all within the District and educational system, and

Recommends that future School Boards of Directors reaffirm this resolution on the first Monday of December, following the annual School Board reorganization.

(School Board President)

(Date)

Introduction

Research shows the importance of cultural proficiency as providing a comprehensive and systemic structure for educating all students. Through the lens of cultural proficiency, an effective vehicle in cross-cultural settings is perpetuated to address issues of inclusion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, faith, ableness, socio-economics, and language acquisition (Lindsey 2009).

According to Hanover Research (2014), critical strategies and findings to enhance cultural proficiency include:

- *Culturally competent schools incorporate considerations of diversity into practice and policy at the institutional and individual levels. Culturally competent schools strive to actively promote a culture of inclusiveness and acceptance,*
- *Cultural considerations must be incorporated into institutional-level policies and practices in order to support diverse students and grow cultural competency at the classroom level. School-wide cultural competency is based on reforms in the following areas: school culture; school policies; professional development; and community involvement.*
- *While approaches to staff development vary, research suggests that a multi-pronged approach is most effective.*
 - *The promotion of diversity and equity in school and district-level policies and practices;*
 - *Engagement with key stakeholders, through surveys and focus groups, to garner feedback on district's cultural environment;*
 - *The promotion of hiring practices that reflect a commitment to diversity;*
 - *The provision of professional development opportunities and resource materials focused on core areas of diversity promotion;*
 - *An administrative commitment to supporting cultural competency development and diversity promotion;*
 - *Improved academic achievement for **all** students.*
- *For cultural competency to have the strongest impact on student performance, it must be incorporated into individual-level teacher practices.*
- *To foster the development of staff cultural competency, districts may benefit from conducting a cultural audit.*

The Norristown Area School District is committed to inclusion and valuing all. Listed below are members of the Cultural Proficiency Planning Committee that contributed to the development of the Diversity Strategic Plan.

DIVERSITY MEETING ATTENDEES

Name	Affiliation
Addison-Williams, Karen	21 st Century Program Coordinator
Ashe, Shea	School Board Member
Brenner, Charles	Vice Principal - NAHS
Cole, Mylia	Community Stakeholder
Cole, Stephanie	Principal – Musselman Learning Center
DeMinico, Dana	Teacher
Deminsky, Patricia	Supervisor – Reading/Eng/SS
Dormer, Christopher	Assistant Superintendent
Dunston, Jodi	Vice Principal – NAHS
Christine Fleming	Vice Principal – East Norriton Middle School
Fernandez, Jeanette	Principal – Gotwals Elementary
Freeman, Donna	Teacher
Hadrick, Duperly	Gear Up Program
Hadrick, Ernest	NAACP Representative/Community Stakeholder
Harper, Taneeka	Teacher
Houseal, Jill	Community Member/Parent
Jaramilo, Christopher	NAACP Representative
Jones, Hakim	Truancy Abatement Specialist Community Stakeholder
Kirksey, Rachel	Principal – Whitehall Elementary School
Knudsen, Julie	Supervisor of Pupil Services
Long, Mark	Director of Information Services
Mason, Louis	School Board Member
McGriff, Detrick	Vice Principal – Stewart Middle School
Milligan, John	NAACP- President Community Stakeholder
Moore Williams, Barbara	Consultant
Odenthal, Nan	Grants and Public Relations Manager
Ordonez, Susana	Parent
Ovington, Karen	Assistant Business Manager
Pennypacker, Britta	Supervisor – ESL
Platts, Yvonne	Communities That Care
Poncheri, Nicole	Principal – Cole Manor Elementary
Puckett, Kari	Asst. Director of Human Resources
Queenan, Carla	Principal – Roosevelt Campus - NAHS

Rodriguez, Angel	Teacher
Rodriguez, Joseph	Vice Principal – ESTLA
Rohricht, Anne	Chief Financial Officer
Roth, Ed	Principal - NAHS
Samuels, Janet	Superintendent
Skoczynski, Mark	Principal – Marshall Street Elementary
Smith, EJ	Vice Principal - NAHS
Smith, E. Pearl	Former School Board Member
Smith, Jason	Principal – Paul V. Fly Elementary School
Spink, Christina	Principal – East Norriton Middle School
Stein, Chris	Vice-Principal – NAHS
Stoczko, Sondra	Principal – Hancock Elementary School
Taylor, Carmina	Parent Advocate – Montgomery County
Taylor, Christina	Principal - ESTLA
Thompkins, Jennifer	NAACP Youth Leader
Vargas, Wendi	Director of Human Resources
Walls, Martina	Principal – Stewart Middle School
Wharton, Ericka	Parent/Community Stakeholder
Williams, Jim	Community Stakeholder
Yellowtail, Amber	Community Stakeholder

District Mission Statement:

The Mission of the Norristown Area School District is to provide comprehensive educational programs to prepare all students to become productive, responsible, creative citizens. Norristown Area School District provides a well-developed, full day educational program for all students in all grades, including the necessary support services.

Policy Statement:

The Board of School Directors, administration, faculty and staff of the Norristown Area School District are committed to creating and maintaining a school community that embraces the educational principles and practices that recognize diversity as essential to the success of a democratic society and ensures that all students are high achieving, socially and ethically responsible, self-directed and productive, through a higher performing, unified and aligned learning community.

To this end, the Board of School Directors and District employees are committed to providing an environment that:

1. Respects the individual regardless of economic status, race, color, national origin, heritage, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability or disability.
2. Strengthens, builds and supports a staff that embraces the diversity of the District.
3. Honors and respects cultural and language differences.
4. Respects the personal rights of others.
5. Affirms the rights of others to seek and maintain their own identities with dignity.
6. Encourages positive relationships with and among community groups.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop regulations that will implement and further the commitments set forth in this policy.

The Norristown Area School District Cultural Proficiency Planning Committee has established the following Goals and Actions – Five Year Plan: 2016-2021

Goal #1 Staff

All employees will increase knowledge and practices related to cultural proficiency as measured by the cultural proficiency standards and rubrics within five years.

Actions

- Administer cultural proficiency survey to all employees annually.
- Establish and train a teacher leader group that will learn, practice and lead cultural proficiency activities at the school level.
- Develop and communicate characteristics of culturally responsive districts, schools, and teachers to all staff.
- Require professional development in cultural proficiency for all current and new employees annually.
- Embed evaluation of learning and self-reflection related to cultural proficiency after all professional learning sessions.
- Include cultural proficiency expectations in all walkthroughs to examine current practices.
- Establish criteria and expectations for the inclusion of cultural proficiency in all professional development sessions (both district and school based).
- Create and expand opportunities to learn through online resources to implement cultural competency.
- Incorporate cultural proficiency as part of employee evaluation.
- Develop an audit to monitor effectiveness of plan implementation and achievement of goals.

Goal #2 Families and Community Engagement

Create partnerships with every family and community member to ensure all are included in educational experiences as measured by increasing participation in district and school activities 5% per year for five years.

Actions

- Build two-way, intentional directed and comprehensive communication and engagement systems with families and community partners.
- Increase cultural proficiency of Parent Club Council members through quarterly training offerings.
- Increase Parent Faculty Club membership to be more diverse and representative of our community.
- Survey community and parents through multiple formats and media to determine needs and concerns.
- Establish pathways for community members to gain “cultural capital” - the skills necessary to successfully navigate the school system.
- Develop school-based networks to support family and community involvement to improve student outcomes.
- Examine and develop criteria to be included in parent organization by-laws (Parent Faculty Club, Parent Club Council, etc.).
- Develop a school-based, shared, decision-making model to include parents and community stakeholders

Goal # 3 Hiring and Retention of Staff

Increase the hiring and retention of professional staff members that are more reflective of our multicultural and diverse student and family demographics as measured by application, hiring, and retention statistics to increase the percentage of diverse staff members by 1% per year for five years.

Actions

- Include questions related to cultural proficiency in all interview processes.
- Train existing Human Resources and all staff who participate in interview and selection processes to apply culturally proficient practices.
- Actively recruit diverse candidates for all job opportunities.
- Analyze and review hiring practices annually to ensure that they support goals linked to creating a more diverse staff.
- Establish internal and external networking/mentoring system to support racially and ethnically diverse personnel.

- Organize and maintain future teacher clubs in the comprehensive high schools.
- Recruit and interview NASD alumni who have degrees/certifications in education.
- When feasible, develop a process of selecting diverse staff to serve on all district and school committees.

Goal # 4 Culture, Climate, and Safety

All buildings in the Norristown Area School District will create a climate of belonging and will ensure the emotional, physical, social and intellectual safety of all students, staff, and parents, and community members as measured by implementing one of the National School Climate Standards per year for five years.

Actions

- Design and provide techniques and strategies to build positive relationships between students and staff to increase a sense of belonging.
- Define and communicate a shared vision and plan for promoting a safe, supportive and respectful school environment.
- Ensure all school rules, policies, procedures, and handbooks reflect fairness, equity, and acceptance for all students.
- Develop criteria to ensure the appropriateness of all activities, publications, and communications.
- Post informational and directional signs in multiple languages, including native languages of students and families attending individual schools.

Goal # 5 Students

Engage and include students reflective of the district's demographics in the district diversity change process as measured annually by participation rate and the number of policies and practices influenced by student perspective and input.

Actions

- Intentionally recruit and include a cross-section of students in planning student activities (i.e. - assemblies, special cafeteria meals, etc.)
- Facilitate student focus groups and student forums to inform and influence building and district level decision-making processes.
- Identify and develop student leaders from diverse groups in all schools - elementary, middle, and high schools - to participate in the district diversity change process.
- Promote student-created content celebrating the diversity of our schools through a variety of digital and print media.
- Include student representatives on the District Cultural Proficiency planning

committee.

- Create a student panel to inform curriculum development and the selection of instructional materials.
- Complete an exit interview with graduating seniors and any students leaving the school district regarding their experience in the district.
- Collect perceptual/survey data annually from multiple specific student groups - academically struggling students, students with frequent discipline, etc.
- Increase collaboration among all district schools, promoting district-wide events such as spirit week, field day, community service, educational projects and campaigns, etc.

Goal #6 Curriculum and Instruction

Ensure culturally sensitive and relevant instructional materials and practices are used effectively by all educators to provide meaningful learning experiences to a diverse student body as measured annually by classroom observation and student achievement data.

Actions

- Evaluate curriculum materials using Teaching Tolerance tools as part of the five year curriculum cycle in all content areas.
- Design differentiated learning activities that accommodate all learners.
- Develop set of criteria by which to measure and monitor the appropriateness of all teaching and learning based activities.
- Develop and implement an instructional unit for each grade level that provides explicit cultural proficiency learning.
- Develop a list of approved resources that teachers may access to enhance and enrich core instruction, including materials available in native languages.
- Require all high school students to complete a multicultural course as a requirement for graduation.
- Develop explicit and embedded cultural proficiency lessons and activities at each grade level.
- Embed cultural proficiency standards into the curriculum development process as part of the five-year curriculum cycle.

Appendix

School Board Policy 103.2

Diversity

Works Cited

Hanover Research. 2014. 1700 K Street N. W. 8th Floor Washington, D.C. 20006.

Lindsey, Randall, Kikanza Nuri Robins, and Raymond D. Terrell. 2009. Corwin, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA. 91320.

Norristown Area School District Board Policy 103.2 – Diversity. Adopted - June 23, 2008.