

Talawanda Diversity and Equity Plan

Our commitment and goal is to create a school climate that embraces diversity (i.e., variety by reason of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical appearance, social/economic class, family structure, all physical or developmental abilities, etc.) and supports personal or academic development. Our purpose is to teach our children and ourselves to live, learn, and work together in a vibrant, diverse, and intercultural world.

Using short-term and long-term strategies, our blueprint for shaping the future diversity actions of the district rests on five main steps:

- (1) Develop a diversity leadership team to administer the ongoing planning, implementation, and evaluation of the district's diversity actions.
- (2) Recruit, hire, and retain diverse teachers, administrators, and staff.
- (3) Increase the cultural proficiency of all teachers, administrators, and staff.
- (4) Increase outreach for the purpose of community engagement with parent/caregivers and community members of diverse backgrounds.
- (5) Increase student engagement with the diversity-change process.

(1) Maintain a diversity leadership team to administer the ongoing planning, implementation, and evaluation of the district's diversity actions.

- Create a culturally proficient environment where respect for all and responsibility to all are displayed.
- Understand and display cultural proficiency.
- Promote and model district/school values (e.g., acceptance, respect, compassion, honesty, integrity, personal responsibility, confidence, commitment to learning, including the other healthy supports identified in the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets).
- Provide diversity planning for professional development needs, curriculum changes (e.g., service learning programs), changes in student and classroom practices, and policies that address prejudice and discrimination.
- Plan, implement, and evaluate all district-wide diversity initiatives.
- Allocate and earmark a reasonable amount of funds to support the district's diversity initiatives as a measure of the district's level of commitment to increasing diversity and diversity-related initiatives.
- Communicate the District Diversity and Equity Plan and all diversity-related initiatives on the district's website and school publications.
- Communicate the district's work on diversity and equity to the community through the public media.
- District Team representation is chosen by the Superintendent and shall represent all buildings and all geographic areas of the district. Administrators on the team shall serve in a role as setting the agenda, planning meetings and reporting back to the Superintendent.
- District Team representatives will have a focus area related to the District Diversity and Equity Plan and can consult additional staff or stakeholders to aid their committee work.
- District Team representatives shall serve for two-year terms unless otherwise determined by the Superintendent.
- The District Diversity Team will report on a biannual basis to the Board of Education. The report shall include progress and updates on current work as well as any updates since the previous report. Supplemental materials to be shared will also be posted on the district website.

(2) Recruit, hire, and retain diverse teachers, administrators, and staff.

- Develop new partnerships with and recruit from multiple employment sources to access a diverse group of candidates.
- Review all current recruitment and hiring practices for unintentional or intentional bias or exclusionary practices.
- Create an internal networking/mentoring system to support new racially and ethnically diverse personnel.
- Create a list of community resources to support diverse community members, including school personnel, students, and families.
- Implement district-wide diversity training for all certified and classified staff.
- Ensure diverse representation on district and building level committees.

(3) Increase the cultural proficiency of all teachers, administrators, and staff.

- Define and actively share the understanding of “cultural proficiency” as: A way of being (engaged) in an ongoing life-long learning process of seeing cross-cultural differences and responding effectively and affirmingly, by demonstrating the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that enable people to work well with, be supportive of, and respectful toward different cultural practices and worldviews. “Cultural proficiency” demands continual self-reflection to achieve an environment in which every child, teacher/staff, and family feels connected, safe, and welcome.
- Provide professional development training (in relationship development) for all teachers and staff at least once a year. Provide cultural competency training for all new staff members during new teacher orientation. Additionally, provide an annual professional development schedule in cultural competency.
 - [Cultural proficiency/competency training should first allow individuals to get to know where they stand in regard to their own culture, beliefs, and values. The direction of this form of training provides the most benefit when it is based on where we are in the process of becoming more inclusive. To be effective in attaining diversity plan goals, it is essential for all staff to take ownership of change and diversity goals. A major part of diversity work is change, and some changes are uncomfortable and take time. Some of that work will result in periods of adjustment and possibly instances of resistance to change.]

(4) Increase outreach for the purpose of community engagement with parent/caregivers and community members of diverse backgrounds.

[The goal here is to make the schools inviting places to be through developing a parent/caregiver network, broadening formats for home and school interactions, giving parent/caregivers ideas for resources, and providing parent/caregivers with greater accessibility to our schools.]

- Schedule annual outreach meetings, and listen to community members.
- Provide information about the diversity within our school community, the cultures represented (i.e. calendar of holidays), and the resources available for collaborating with the school, perhaps with a community resource handbook, which could include educational, cultural, and social service resources relevant to parent/caregivers and community members.
- Develop effective ways to follow up with families who do not attend Open Houses to share information and find out their interests and needs related to helping their students succeed. Continually seek out opportunities to engage with families and minimize barriers (i.e. transportation, childcare) to the best of our ability.
- Develop resources to facilitate school staff involvement with families of diverse backgrounds (i.e. District forms in different languages, resource guides)
- Enhance the district's website (and other district/school communications) to be more inclusive, representative, and informative about diversity in our schools. Incorporate feature stories/profiles about our families and community resources in the monthly district newsletter. Offer connection to community groups/organizations who support the needs of families of diverse backgrounds.(eg. Oxford Multicultural Alliance, Family Resource Center)

(5) Foster student engagement with the diversity-change process.

- **The district recognizes that all faculty and staff have an impact on foster student engagement and student success. This includes all teachers, administrators, educational assistants, transportation, cafeteria staff, custodial staff, school resource officers, office staff, school nurse, school counselors, social workers, media center staff, etc.**
- **Annual professional development that centers on providing all staff with the skills and resources to teach and support all students and foster student engagement with the diversity-change process.**
- **District and building administration should provide consistent guidance and support to all staff regarding content, topics and relevant current events that surround issues of diversity.**
- Faculty and staff use approved screeners to determine students' needs in relation to the 40 Developmental Asset skills.
- Feedback from screeners is shared with relevant faculty and staff in order to strengthen relationships between teacher and students.
- Teachers and staff will provide opportunities that encourage students to make a personal investment in learning through the skills framed by the 40 Developmental Asset skills.
- Identify achievement gaps and non-academic barriers to learning and implement support systems and/or intervention programs to address growth.
- Provide annual professional development opportunities for teachers to evaluate the results of their students' needs on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets in order to develop supports for all students.
- Foster student diversity at MS and HS levels through student-led organizations to develop culturally competent student leaders.
- Develop and strengthen the Student Ambassador Program in all Talawanda buildings. Student Ambassadors will serve as liaisons and helpful assets for new incoming students.
- Develop and strengthen peer mediation programs in all Talawanda buildings to resolve conflicts that may include student concerns and needs around topics of diversity.
- Create and sustain district wide programs that cultivate students' understanding of their differences and commonalities with their peers.
- Maintain school programs and pathways that address a variety of learning styles of students as well as students' barriers within traditional education.
- Develop and evaluate district-wide anti-bullying programs and systems.
- Provide positive behavior support systems within all buildings to meet all the needs of a diverse student body, including a frequent evaluation of the efficacy of the existing PBIS models.
- Analyze advanced-placement/honors/gifted criteria for bias on the basis of socio-economic status, race, culture, gender, and/or disability condition.
- Implement and maintain alternatives to discipline that reduce the number of suspensions/expulsions and analyze our discipline data with concern for a bias on the basis of socio-economic status, race, culture, gender, and/or disability condition.

*The Diversity & Equity Plan is reviewed annually by the TSD Diversity Team.

**The TSD Diversity Team has quarterly meetings.

***During the 2020-2021 school year the TSD Diversity Team was developed.