

**McFarland School District
Equity Update School Board Report**

November 21, 2022

Principles Guiding This Work

1. Accepting institutional responsibility for diversity, equity, and inclusion:

- a. As guided by the School Board priority to “embrace opportunities for diversity and address challenges of equity,” as well as the Board-approved [Inclusive Curriculum Statement](#) and the [Anti-Racist Resolution](#) (policy 2105.01).

2. Examine the system’s impact on families and students:

- a. Listen and believe: We must provide multiple ongoing opportunities for our students and families to share their experience and be involved in decision making. We must believe what they say, especially when it is hard to hear. We must connect what we learn to guide our strategic planning with ongoing feedback during implementation.
- b. Data analysis: We must review our data on an ongoing basis to quantitatively assess the impact of our system on all students, especially marginalized students.

3. Stay focused and be strategic:

- a. Moving forward thoughtfully together: We will build a foundation with common definitions and a shared understanding of our current practices and their impact on students and families. We recognize that this is an ongoing process by prioritizing where to start and doing it well with clear goals, expectations, and support for all staff.
- b. Actions address a variety of levels from schoolwide systems to individual student support and opportunities.

Highlighted Updates Since June 2022 (for previous updates, please see the pages later in the document)

1. **District Equity Coordination and Leadership:** The district created two-year equity leadership positions beginning in the 2021-22 school year including a Equity Coordinator role (in addition to an administrator’s existing contract), and a K-5 and a 6-12 Equity Teacher Leadership positions (in addition to their full time role). Following the resignation of the Equity Coordinator, Melissa Pfohl (Director of Teaching and Learning) and Aaron Tarnutzer (Superintendent) have served in this role. The District continues to explore options for future equity leadership including, but not limited to, new full or part time positions or contracting with a consultant.
2. **Student Voice/Leadership:** In addition to providing a safe space through the many groups (NCOS mentoring circles in grades 3-12, IMMS People of Color Union, MHS Black Student Union, United Against Hate, Unified, Multicultural Club, IMMS and MHS GSA, MHS Girl Up), administration has collaborated with the MHS social justice clubs to develop a plan to address equity issues at MHS.
3. **Addressing Hate Speech:** Meraki Consulting (Percy Brown Jr. and Dr. Rainey Briggs) met with MHS students, provided training to MHS staff, and are scheduled to present to all MHS students information regarding the use of hate speech. We are looking to expand this work to IMMS. This work is the result of feedback from MHS students involved in the social justice clubs. These presentations are in addition to the building level bullying and harassment staff and student training that occur annually.
4. **Equity Leadership Training:** Natural Circles of Support staff have provided two sessions of equity leadership training for building equity leaders. There is another training scheduled for February. The focus of these training is to build leadership skills in teacher equity leaders across the district and to plan for actions that will improve our systems and student’s sense of belonging based on what our students are telling us.

5. **Staff professional development for culturally responsive instruction:** In collaboration with the Center for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning, staff in grades K-2 are engaging in culturally behavioral tutorials and staff in grades 3-12 are engaging in a binder study of culturally responsive instructional strategies. In addition, over 20 staff members are engaging in coaching regarding the use of these strategies. These efforts represent the most coordinated intentional equity focused professional development that the District has engaged in as it involves the entire district and has accounted for sustainability. In addition, a K-5 Teacher Study Group has been formed to study how to make our positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) systems more culturally responsive.
6. **Welcoming Student Voices Teacher Study Group:** This TSG is unique as the members include staff and students learning together. It is an opportunity for K12 staff to build on their knowledge of equity and diversity practices by collaborating with high school students. Students, staff, and NCOS leaders will work together to read excerpts from 3 books and discuss what our learning means for our schools and communities. The goal of the “Welcoming Student Voices” TSG is to end the year with tangible plans to improve our own professional practice and our students’ experiences in our schools.
7. **Parent Equity Leadership:** Planning continues for the formation of a parent equity council. Steps taken thus far include researching the structure of these groups and collaborating with local equity leaders. In December a planning session will be held with interested parents with a goal of having our first meeting in January of 2023.
8. **Inclusive Curriculum:** In addition to ongoing inclusive curriculum efforts, the District has implemented a policy regarding materials reconsideration that is grounded in our District’s committee to inclusion and equity and has recently created a flowchart to guide staff when they are selecting supplementary resources, particularly those that address sensitive topics. This flowchart will be shared with staff in the coming weeks.
9. **Village Partnerships:** The District regularly collaborates with the Village of McFarland and their equity work Efforts are underway to create a council to oversee this work that includes representatives from the village, district, and community.

June 2022 Update to Families

Dear McFarland School District Families,

As we approach the end of the school year I am excited to share an update on the work accomplished during the 2021-22 school year related to educational equity and share some of our next steps for the 2022-23 school year and beyond. You can see a similar update that was shared with our school board in June of 2021 [here](#). We have a lot of important things to celebrate and a lot of important work ahead of us, including increasing student, parent, and community voice and engagement in this process. We welcome your questions, wisdom and support.

Thank you!

Aaron Tarnutzer, Future McFarland Superintendent

Principles that Guide this Work

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2. Examine the system’s impact on families and students:

- a. Listen and believe: We must provide multiple ongoing opportunities for our students and families to share their experience and be involved in decision making. We must believe what they say, especially when it is hard to hear. We must connect what we learn to guide our strategic planning with ongoing feedback during implementation.
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3. Stay focused and be strategic:

- a. Moving forward thoughtfully together: We will build a foundation with common definitions and a shared understanding of our current practices and their impact on students and families. We recognize that this is an ongoing process by prioritizing where to start and doing it well with clear goals, expectations, and support for all staff.
- b. Actions address a variety of levels from schoolwide systems to individual student support and opportunities.

Common Definitions

- **Educational equity** means systems are set up so that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income. (WI DPI)
- **Culturally Responsive Practices** is an approach to teaching that recognizes the value of learners’ cultural beliefs and practices and draws upon them to inform instruction, enhance learner self-advocacy, and bridge learners’ home and school experience.

Updates and Next Steps

- Systemic Change
 - Our goal has been to call all of our EC-12 staff into this work and expand upon the pockets of staff who have already begun their equity journey individually.
 - Six District staff members and two partners from our WPP-CIG grant participated in a CESA 2 book study of the book *Collective Equity*. We will take this learning into our Strategic Planning process as we consider how to set clear goals and outcomes for our equity work and build a system that is more equitable for all students and staff.

- Each building has formed Equity Action Teams that have and continue to analyze the system's impact on students and families through data analysis and work toward building goal areas.
- Five District staff participated in the [Dane County Equity Consortium \(DCEC\)](#) with year long learning regarding Awareness of Self, Awareness of Organizational Culture, Awareness of Practices.
- We created a District Equity Team including teachers and administrators from each building to share information and coordinate work.
- **Next steps:**
 - Tie our equity work into our District Strategic Plan process that is underway and embed our beliefs about diversity, equity and inclusion into all we do.
 - Continue to clarify what our vision and goals are, so that our work is intentional and targeted toward systemic change for our students, staff and community..
- Wisconsin Partnership Program Community Impact Grant (WPP-CIG) with Natural Circles of Support
 - \$1,000,000 over five years to be spent in partnership with [Natural Circles of Support](#) (NCOS).
 - This 5-year project aims to make substantial lasting positive impacts on the social emotional health and academic success of African-American/Black students enrolled in the McFarland School District. We are halfway through the second year of the grant.
 - The grant has 5 goal areas - mentoring circles for students, empowering staff leadership teams, engaging in District-wide inquiry, developing and implementing seminars and communities of practice, engaging families and the community.
 - This year we expanded Mentoring Circles to students at WIS and continued the Circles already in place at IMMS and MHS. NCOS staff also engaged with the CEPS Equity Team.
 - Each building has formed staff leadership teams that specifically work with NCOS. These teams are an avenue to share what is surfaced in student conversations and to provide staff an opportunity for leadership as we work to respond to what we hear from students.
 - **Next steps:**
 - Build staff ownership in facilitating mentoring circles.
 - Provide seminars for staff leaders.
 - Explore and expand family engagement.
- Equity Leadership Positions
 - This year we created three part time roles to help coordinate our equity work. The Equity Coordinator and K-5/6-12 Teacher Equity Leaders provide coordination and a unified focus for the work happening across the District.
 - Their primary work this year was related to staff development on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning.
 - These positions were created as a temporary step (2 years) as we explore creating full-time role(s).
 - **Next steps:**
 - Based on advice we have received from our own professional learning, it is essential that any new/additional roles are well designed including having a clear purpose and support.
 - Continue to define our goals before we would be ready to create position descriptions and hire full-time positions.
 - Include student and community voices in our process.
 - Consider the budget implications of this/these positions.
- Staff Professional Development
 - We developed a partnership with the [Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning](#)
 - All EC-12 staff participated in a book study of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning - 4 sessions spaced over the school year.

- Forty-five District staff members and two partners from our WPP-CIG grant participated in a Binder Study that dove into the instructional strategies from Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Next year, all staff will participate in the binder study, and some staff will begin to work in consulting cadres with members of CCRTL to improve their CLR practices in classrooms.
 - Over the next 4-5 years, our goal is for 60-80% of our instructional staff to participate in a consulting cadre.
- Parent Engagement: Parent Equity Council
 - This is a specific goal area for our WPP-CIG grant with NCOS and there is a need for community and parent engagement outside of the specific goals of the grant as well.
 - We have consulted with the Monona Grove School District about their Parent Equity Council.
 - We need to define the purpose and goals of the group broadly (which can be revisited and refined once the group(s) form).
 - **Next Step:**
 - Forming this group is long overdue. It is a priority and will be formed during the next school year.
- Student Engagement
 - In addition to expanding the Mentoring Circles to students at WIS that was mentioned previously, we have created several new student groups and empowered those that exist at the middle school and the high school (e.g. We are Many-United Against Hate, People of Color Union, Multicultural Club, GSA, BSU, Connect Club).
 - Middle and high school students provided feedback on whether they saw themselves and others represented in the English/Language Arts curriculum via a survey similar to the survey conducted last year for social studies curriculum.
 - Students attended the Dane County Social Justice Youth Forum (April, 2022) with keynote speaker Dr. Rainey Briggs and students from surrounding Dane County High Schools.
 - Students shared their experiences with the MHS Equity Action Team
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Continue Mentoring Circles at WIS, IMMS and MHS.
 - Students and staff are co-planning School Development Days and educational themes around microaggressions, hate-speech, mental health, and inclusion for the 2022-23 school year.
- Community Engagement
 - District Staff connected with the Village Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee including a presentation in October of 2021 and we have included a student representative on the village DEI committee who is also part of the MHS Equity Action Team.
 - The District partnered with McFarland Equity Project (MEP) on the Living History Equity Walk, as a part of “Winter Wonderland in the Village”
 - The District hosted and co-planned a [Domestic Terrorism Event](#) (January, 2022).
 - District administration has participated in meetings with MEP including a March 2022 meeting where an overview of our work this year was shared.
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Continued yearly updates to the community.
 - Formation of a Parent Equity Council as mentioned above.

Thank you for taking the time to read this!

June 2021 Update to the School Board

| Focus Area | Updates and Next Steps |
|--|---|
| Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation of a webpage on our district website highlighting our equity work (LINK) ● District Equity Snapshot summarizing key efforts related to creating a more equitable school environment and system was published on our website and shared with the School Board and K-8 Parent Teacher Organization (LINK) |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Natural Circles of Support ● McFarland Equity Project: Education Subgroup presented to the School Board about their work and future goals (LINK) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next step: MEP ongoing collaboration with administration/School Board ● McFarland Village Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next step: Joint Village Board and School Board meeting June 28, 2021. ● Dane County Equity Consortium ● The Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning ● Wisconsin RtI Center: K-12 Representatives attended a 5 day series of workshops called “Building Culturally Responsive Systems” provided by the Wisconsin RTI Network to build our knowledge, examine our systems, and develop an implementation plan (LINK) ● We Are Many United Against Hate: MHS became a charter member of this organization |
| Examining Our System’s Impact on Student’s and Families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual data review process that includes a quarterly data disaggregation ● Ongoing collaboration and mentorship through Natural Circles of Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next step: Expand Natural Circles of Support to K-12 ○ Next step: Connect the high school Black Student Union with IMMS circles ● Next steps: Creation of staff/student climate surveys and a Parent Equity Council |
| Coordination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Created equity positions: Equity Coordinator, K-5 and 6-12 Teacher Equity Leaders ● Creation of building level equity teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next step: Creation of a K-12 equity team to share across buildings ○ Next step: Coordination and planning with Natural Circles of Support with administration and building equity representatives this summer. ● Established definitions of “educational equity” and “culturally responsive practices” |
| Policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family Handbooks: Response to hate speech or incidences of hate/bias added to the district family handbooks for the 2021-22 school year (LINK) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next step: Implementation of Hate Speech protocols in building ○ Next Step: Gather feedback from students and families on the policies in the family handbook ● Policy 2210: Curriculum Development updated to include “by including student voices in both the development of new curricula and the evaluation of existing curricula, and an emphasis on critical thinking skills, especially in the history curriculum.” ● Policy 2105.01: Adopted District Resolution in Support of Diversity and Equity. |

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| Staff Professional Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multiple professional development opportunities including 80 district staff members who participated in a book study of <i>How To Be an Antiracist</i> by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi ● Identified professional development at each building for teachers, implementation varies by building and may or may not include support staff. Due to COVID-19 this PD ranged from 1-4 hours with focus on identity development ● Developed a comprehensive plan for all staff for the 2021-22 school year regarding culturally responsive practices (using Dr. Sharroky Hollie’s text) with mixed K-12 learning groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next steps: Implement K-12 book study and develop an ongoing professional development for future years. |
| Curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social Studies Curriculum Review Cycle included an analysis of a student survey (grades 9-12) reflecting on the inclusiveness of the curriculum 6-12 (note: students provided feedback on the survey prior to implementation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next steps: Student feedback on ELA Curriculum during 2021-22, and subsequent areas as curriculum review cycle progresses. ● Curriculum review process includes assessment of the inclusivity of the curriculum as a part of the process ● Inclusive Curriculum Statements is a regular part of curriculum meetings. ● Teams are expected to review literature choices and to make revisions to be more inclusive with support from the library media specialist and literacy coordinators. ● Bystander training provided to all students K-8 as part of the Second Step Curriculum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next Steps: Develop a K-12 scope and sequence to ensure the K-8 Second Step and 9-12 Curriculum to ensure it is specific to racial anti-bias, microaggression, and implicit bias education as directed by the School Board Anti-Racist Resolution. ● Next step: Explore what is meant by “Diversity days” in the Anti-Racism Resolution and develop plans for implementation. |

Reference Information

Community Impact Grant to Support the Social-Emotional Health of K-12 African American Students (5 year grant, beginning 2020-2021), goal areas:

- Lead Mentoring Circles for Students
- Empower a Staff Leadership Team (including aligning this project)
- Engage in District-wide Inquiry (including student/family voice, data review, strategic planning)
- Develop and Implement Seminars and Communities of Practice (collaboration, co-learning, support)
- Engage Families and the Community

District Anti-Racism Resolution Goal Areas: ([Resolution](#), [Action Plan](#))

- District unequivocally condemns racism and hate speech and embraces our responsibility to stand against racial injustice
- Professional development (minimum of 4 hours) for all staff related to racial anti-bias, anti-microaggression, implicit bias, and bystander information
- Policy revisions including [Board Policy 2210 Curriculum Development](#) to include student voices, [Policy 0141.1 Student Representation at Board Meetings](#) to ensure representations reflects the student body
- Delivering an inclusive curriculum that reflections historical diversity of all persons including marginalized peoples’ history

- Hold “Diversity Days” for K-12 students
- Support the Black Student Union working with younger students in the district
- Provide developmental appropriate racial anti-bias, anti-microaggression, implicit bias, and bystander intervention training to all students
- Ensure that items for sale at district fundraising events are fully representative of the school community
- Actively encourage and welcome all students, parents, families, and residents to voice ideas/concerns to the school board

Additional Information:

- [Building Equity from the Ground Up with Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson podcast](#)

Common Definitions

- **Educational equity** means systems are set up so that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income. (WI DPI) ** Note - based on the annotation on the BCRS slide, this came from CCSSO, 2017
- **Culturally Responsive Practices** is an approach to teaching that recognizes the value of learners’ cultural beliefs and practices and draws upon them to inform instruction, enhance learner self-advocacy, and bridge learners’ home and school experience.