

SD54 Equity & Inclusion Task Force

Meeting #1

February 16, 2021

1. Welcome and Introductions - Task force members welcomed by Superintendent DuRoss

***Introduction of Thais Perez as the Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion***

Introduction of the Steering Committee

Steering Committee

Dan Aguilar – Dean Keller

Julie Gorvett – Assistant Superintendent

Seika Kobari – Instructional Coach RAC

Erin Knoll – Associate Superintendent

Sonia McKenzie – Teacher Stevenson

Danette Meyer – Assistant Superintendent

Dilshad Patel – Assistant Principal MacArthur

Liz Perez – Psychologist Aldrin

Thais Perez – Equity and Inclusion Coordinator

Scott Ross – Principal Mead

Holly Schlicher – Principal Dooley

Magali Williams – Teacher Muir

2. Review of ***Steering Committee Role***

- Collectively facilitate the SD54 Equity and Inclusion Task Force
- Analyze District 54 Program Data to identify the main pillars of the work for the task force
- Determine any additional resources needed based on understanding of the district context
- Biweekly meetings from August 2020 to January 2021
  - Consultant support provided to steering committee
  - *Teresa Lance, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Innovation, U-46*
  - *Nita White, Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services, Valley View*
- Support the group in building capacity
- Develop shared understandings and common language
- Support the team in data and root cause analysis

3. Introduction of Task Force Members and ***Task Force Role***

- 48 members from 28 District 54 schools, board members, administrators and community members
- Explore the current organizational inequities that are preventing us from fully achieving our mission of Ensuring Whole Child Success.
- Promote a safe space and opportunity for staff and community members to share their experiences and perspectives.
- Recommend actions, strategies and best practices to promote inclusion and whole child success.
- Support authentic and real dialogue while respecting individual perspectives and their right to differ.

4. Recognition of ***Equity and Inclusion Ambassadors*** and Structure of Equity School Teams

- 250 additional District 54 staff members
- Explore the current organizational inequities that are preventing us from fully achieving our mission of Ensuring Whole Child Success.
- Promote a safe space and opportunity for staff members to share their experiences and perspectives.
- Support implementation of the Equity and Inclusion Plan by leading and participating in ***building-based Equity and Inclusion Teams***.
- Support authentic and real dialogue while respecting individual perspectives and their right to differ.

Discussion of structures and practices already in place that support equity and inclusion.

## **Draft Norms**

1. Use the words you have.
2. Experience discomfort.
3. Speak your truth.
4. Expect and accept nonclosure.
5. Listen patiently, listen actively, police your voice.

Task force members participated in the following activity:

### ***Acknowledge yourself as a cultural being***

- How do you identify yourself?
- When was the first time you noticed race? Elementary, Middle or High School?
- When did you become aware of your racial identity?
- How do you benefit from your racial identity?
- How do you suffer or miss out because of your racial identity?

**Educational Equity Definitions:** Which statement most resonates with you?

*Equity in education is raising the achievement of all students while narrowing the gaps between the highest- and lowest-performing students; and eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories. (Glen Singleton, 2015)*

*Equity is seeing someone differently in order to treat them fairly. (Edward Fergus, 2016)*

*Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria*

*a) Students must experience academic success*

*b) Students must develop or maintain cultural competence*

*c) Students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo (Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1994)*

*Challenge the normalization of failure: "Whenever you're in a school that has grown accustomed to the idea that certain kids from certain backgrounds are underperforming, are more likely to be in special ed, or are more likely to be disciplined," Noguera says, "after a while people simply think it's normal and nothing can be done about it." (Pedro Noguera, 2018)*

*For equity initiatives to succeed, we believe that educators must focus on shaping inclusive environments intentionally designed to foster a sense of belonging by honoring the dignity of each and every person. (Floyd Cobb, 2019)*

*Educational Equity means that every child receives whatever she/he/they need to develop to her/his/their full academic and social potential and to thrive, every day. And by thrive I mean academically as well as social-emotionally. Every child has a right to feel loved and cared for and to feel that they belong to a community. Emotional well-being is as important as academic success in this version of educational equity. (Elena Aguilar, 2020)*

### **How do these definitions add to my own understanding of educational equity?**

The task force members each entered three words to describe what equity means to them at [mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com).

Most used words: ACCESS, BELONGING, FAIR, OPPORTUNITY, INCLUSION

### **What are the tensions in trying to achieve these forms of educational equity?**

Tensions identified: FEAR, LACK OF UNDERSTANDING, DISCOMFORT IN FACING WHAT IS OCCURRING, DON'T WANT TO OFFEND THE MAJORITY, WHITE EUROCENTRIC FOCUS, COMFORT THAT WE HAVE DONE ENOUGH, LACK OF EMPATHY, FEAR OF SAYING THE WRONG THING, LACK OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Task force members watched the following video and noted the themes of the video

[https://www.ted.com/talks/melody\\_hobson\\_color\\_blind\\_or\\_color\\_brave/transcript?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/melody_hobson_color_blind_or_color_brave/transcript?language=en)

Participants received a copy of **Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation** by Floyd Cobb (Goodreads Author), John Krownapple