



End-of-Year DEI Committee Report (May 7, 2025)

Advancing Culturally Relevant Teaching and Learning

Throughout the 2024-2025 school year, our district made significant strides in promoting culturally responsive teaching, innovative learning practices, and community engagement. Our principals actively participated in training on utilizing AI to enhance lesson differentiation, ensuring that culturally responsive practices are woven into daily instruction. This training, facilitated through Model Schools, will continue in the upcoming year.

Spanish and Challenge Programs Our Spanish program expanded to grades 3-6, enriching students' linguistic and cultural understanding. Additionally, our Challenge program now serves grades 4-6, while our Enrichment for All initiative ensures that every K-6 student has access to enriching experiences. Our dedicated staff has been instrumental in providing rigorous and inclusive instruction, equipping students with critical skills and a global perspective. The programs have run very smoothly, with parents and staff greatly appreciating the offerings we are providing to all of our students. Dr. Conte also continues to attend monthly meetings at the State level to provide resources that honor culture in the classroom and shares these resources with all staff.

Strengthening Recruitment Efforts to Support Hiring

We continue to maintain high levels of collaboration with our recent recruitment partnerships:

- Howard University – Ensuring job postings reach their talented candidate pool (we actually had candidates mention our attendance at Howard as a reason for applying to our district, diversifying our candidate pool).
- LILTA (Long Island Latino Teachers Association) – Attracting more Hispanic educators to apply for open positions
- Nassau BOCES Expanded Certificate Fair – Expanding our hiring reach
- Indeed postings – Broadening access to job opportunities for a diverse pool of applicants. We received candidates that applied for administrative positions from various backgrounds and locations, highlighting our district's commitment to diversity and innovation.

We have successfully expanded our candidate pool, while always maintaining a rigorous hiring process to hire the most qualified candidate for every role. This is in alignment with our District goals and Board priorities.

Cultural Events and Celebrations Throughout the Year

Our district celebrated and hosted a variety of cultural and heritage events, fostering inclusivity and appreciation of diversity. These included:

- Hispanic Heritage Festival
- No Place for Hate Day (Unity Day)
- Diya Making Activity (Diwali Celebration)
- Italian Vocabulary Day (Italian Heritage Month)
- Cultural Arts Assembly
- "Ring in the New Year" Night (Celebrating Global New Year Traditions)
- Roots and Rhythm Fashion Show
- Multicultural Night at RWC, featuring the South High School Dance Club
- Ruby Bridges Celebration Day
- Autism and Neurodiversity Acceptance Month Activities
- Henna Design Workshop
- Living Wax Museum celebrating Black History Month at BAS
- Rohan Murphy assemblies across the district, inspiring students with his story of perseverance
- Upcoming Marion Blumenthal Lazan assembly, where grade 6 students will hear her impactful Holocaust survival story
- Musical performances including student cultures and backgrounds

William L. Buck School has also been recognized as a No Place for Hate School this year, once again showing the powerful work our staff engage in to ensure inclusivity for all.

Academic Excellence

Our students demonstrated notable growth in mid-year NWEA assessments, mirroring last year's double-digit gains in ELA and Math. Our district also excelled on the NYSED State Assessment report card, with all subgroups earning a level 3 or 4 in Core Academic Achievement, outperforming the state average by nearly double digits in all subjects. End-of-year assessments are ongoing, and we anticipate continued positive trends.

Community Engagement and Inclusion

Our schools made deliberate efforts to engage families and also recognize cultural diversity, including:

- Use of translators for parent conferences and testing
- Message boards displaying holidays and cultural messages

- Alternate lunch locations for students observing Ramadan
- Vegetarian lunch options for students who may not eat meat for religious or personal reasons
- Increased outreach to families regarding chronic absenteeism and academic progress
- Mid-year parent-teacher conferences to support ongoing support and collaboration
- Culture nights and family forums continued this year in all buildings

Professional Development, Collaboration, and Facilities Improvements

Principals continued to lead Equity Teams, incorporating the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework into school practices. Cultural events and family engagement were prioritized to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment.

With the \$500,000 grant secured from Assemblywoman Solages, our inclusive playground project is nearing completion. We have also installed new water filtration systems at each school, ensuring access to fresh drinking water. We also plan to increase student safety and redesign more classrooms across our district.

Alignment with Vision 2030 – Innovating for the Future

Vision 2030 continues to guide our district's efforts in equitable, innovative learning environments:

- With Vision 2030 pilot projects, our students created prototypes to develop an prosthetic arm using coding, and collaborated with Northwell Health on this project! This is just an incredible showcasing of not just innovation, but also inclusion at the heart of the work we do. These pilot projects will be showcased to our community, and we will expand on this work next school year.
- Classroom redesigns – Three integrated and self-contained classrooms have been redesigned to support 21st-century learning, focusing on critical thinking, collaboration, and inclusivity. Our budget has propositions to expand at least an additional one classroom per school.
- Exploring AI tutors – Investigating AI-powered tutoring to bridge academic gaps and provide targeted student support. This is now in our budget for 2025-26 to have one ABii robot pilot per school.
- Global cultural learning – Expanding tools such as Canva and global pen pals to foster cultural connections among students.
- Expanding our 8:1:3 program – We continue to support our new 8:1:3 program while bringing in additional students in to our school district next school year as well.
- Departmentalization- Administrators have worked with their staff on departmentalization in grade 6 to support all students' individualized needs in math, science, reading, writing, and social studies. This will also allow them to transition to the VSCHD in an even more seamless way.

Looking Ahead

Our district remains committed to advancing equity and inclusion, supporting academic growth, and fostering an innovative learning environment. As we analyze the end-of-year assessment data, we will

continue to fine-tune our approaches to meet the needs of all students. Next year, we will build on our successes by further expanding our Challenge and Spanish programs, enhancing our RULER emotional intelligence initiatives, and maintaining strong community connections through cultural events and family forums.