



We are proud to bring your attention to the special 'Diversity' tab on the Valley Stream #24 School District website, where you will be introduced to individual members of the committee and learn about our vision for the role of *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* considerations in our classrooms and community. You can find it on the upper left navigation tab on the home page of the district, or you can access it directly at <https://valleystreamschooldistrict24.org/diversity-1>.

Recently, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee surveyed the experiences of our families in the quest to elevate fairness and bolster the educational journey of all students. As a community, we strongly encourage you to share not only through surveys of this sort, but in an ongoing manner, as we all want the best for our students, families, and the broader community.

Surveys are imperfect, yet important platforms to bring stories to the surface—stories that help us all listen and learn about the experiences of others. And though the committee's focus is to point to ways of improvement through acknowledging these stories, we also play a role in directing our community's attention to the meaningful, *intentional* work already under way by our educators to bring our diverse students, staff, and families together in a manner that celebrates and values their cultural backgrounds.

In fact, celebrating our successes as we seek to improve is critically important to building momentum for the positive long-term impacts of this work. Our inspiring teachers are working consciously to integrate the diversity of student backgrounds with instructional lessons that make learning personally relevant and impactful.

For example, students created presentations, videos, and posters about culturally impactful people of color. Kindergarteners worked on a poem about the tapestry of diverse family backgrounds in our community after first researching their own individual families and cultures weeks before. Students forged international connections through our i3 partnership virtual visits with students in Peru, Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, and Belgium. DEI themed poetry gardens have been sprouting up in all three buildings.

These few examples represent the importance of reinforcing the rich diversity of both our community and the larger world. They also offer the opportunity for greater connection, in many cases, between a student's personal experience and the point of the lesson, which studies show can have a strong impact on a student's motivation and learning performance.

One of the joys of being a parent is to watch your child interact with others. Have you ever quietly snuck a peek into a room where your child and her friends were playing together? The innocence, compassion, and generosity that is consistently demonstrated by young children is in many ways the point of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion considerations. Ironically, by observing our children we learn important lessons from them: kindness, tolerance, and an appreciation for the uniqueness of each individual's experiences and ability to contribute to the richness of our world.