



DEI End-Of-Year Recap for 2023-24 School Year

District DEI and Building Equity Teams Update

- A big focus of the work this year was on defining “culture” as lived experiences that are unique to all of our students, including students with disabilities. This has also been emphasized with families during Coffee Hours to ensure consistent messaging on the intentionality of the work being done this school year in defining culture. Building Equity Teams have met a minimum of 5 times for the 2023-24 school year to plan as well as provide resources and support to building staff. Each team this year has a minimum of 8 staff members present on them.
- The Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework from NYSED has been utilized for professional learning with principals, who lead their building equity teams with this framework as a guide. The Superintendent attended the Nassau BOCES workshop in August of 2023 titled, “What Board Members Want to Know About the New York State Education Department Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework” and turnkeyed this information with building principals who lead their Building Equity Teams.
- For the first time this year, we have engaged our students in the South Asian American Women’s Alliance contests that celebrate cultural diversity through art, essays, and math. Our students came in first place, second place, and received honorable mention!
- Building principals enhanced their DEI expertise by attending the NSBA Equity Symposium in Washington, DC in January of 2024, also attended by two trustees and the Superintendent (who are part of the DEI Committee), directly impacting leadership and educational practices within our schools. The building principals turnkeyed this information to administrators as well as to their Equity Teams. At the Equity Symposium, Alex Boyé was the keynote speaker who helped participants understand some of the experiences and challenges students are facing today, along with helping them to reconnect with their “Why” in their own journeys of supporting diverse students and their communities. The Symposium also had many breakout sessions, with topics ranging from an equity-centered approach to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to artificial intelligence and the future of learning (with an equity focus).
- Family Forums were created to support the celebration and appreciation of diverse cultures. Building Equity Teams led the planning and execution of this work this year. William L. Buck held its Family Forum on December 6, 2023 titled, “Every Scholar Eats Rice.” Brooklyn Avenue held its Family Forum on January 30, 2024 called, “Food and Dine.” Robert Carbonaro School also held its Family Forum on March 14, 2024 called, “Game Night”. Different cuisines from

around the globe were shared so that our community can come together and learn from each other. For Game Night, different games from cultures around the world were shared, as well as desserts from across the globe. All events had great family participation, and families as well as staff expressed satisfaction with the events. Pictures of all of these events are on social media and have been shared during Board Meetings.

- Disaggregated student achievement data from NY State Assessments were shared with the Board this school year in December of 2023, and with the DEI Committee in January of 2024. The data was also shared with building principals. Building principals have shared this with their teams and staff as well. Data-driven instruction, particularly when analyzing disaggregated data for student subgroups, helps us continuously pursue equitable learning outcomes for all.
- Each month, our building equity teams and principals have helped support the celebration of different cultures and holidays from across the globe. This year, parents have been invited in to share about their culture's celebrations too. Most recently in the month of April, a parent from William L. Buck School came in to share about Eid al-Fitr, and students learned about its connection to science by engaging in an activity on the phases of the moon. Learning about different cultures and holidays allows for there to be respect and understanding of diversity. This aligns with the DEI Board Policy that states, "Class instructional activities and extracurricular programs shall be designed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions that foster respect for diversity."
- In addition to authentically integrating culture into the curriculum, we have celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, and for the first time this year, Women's History Month. Students and staff engaged in a variety of standards-based and rigorous activities that allowed students choice to select people to study. Students presented their findings in creative ways, including through Google Slides, through a Wax Museum format, and by sharing their findings to other grade level peers in their schools. Parents were also invited to the events. The students have presented some of this work at Board meetings as well. Allowing our students to select the people they want to research, while expanding the opportunity to select people based on people they have studied in the curriculum, allows for students to truly be agents of their own learning. The entire process also allows students to appreciate diversity and the diverse talent that exists in our country and world.
- The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction attends monthly virtual DEI Leaders Network meetings sponsored by NYSED, and shares resources and planning support with principals to lead their equity teams.
- Our building equity teams and principals worked closely with library media specialists this year to design culturally responsive enrichment activities across all three schools. This effort extended to classroom activities that celebrated cultural diversity through creative student presentations throughout the school year.
- Our building equity teams and principals facilitated Unity Day activities to foster an environment of acceptance and inclusion across the district. These activities were shared on social media.
- This year, we had a partnership with Long Island University to support our teachers in professional development on providing instructional support and resources for students, inclusive of students with disabilities, to lead to equitable outcomes.
- Professional development on differentiated instruction was a focus all year to make sure every child in all subgroups receive high quality teaching and learning that leads to positive student outcomes. As a result, our mid-year NWEA assessment results have already shown 3 to 4

percentage points higher growth this school year than at the same time last year. This is for all subgroups of all learners.

- This year, we began the creation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework to provide behavioral and social/emotional support to ensure all students receive support needed to succeed.
- Rohan Murphy, a motivational speaker, came to all three schools to speak about inclusivity, sharing his experience as a child growing up with a disability. This assembly held at every school showcased inclusivity, goal setting, self-acceptance, and appreciation of diversity.
- Our staff have undergone professional development to seamlessly incorporate student culture into the existing curriculum. This training started with principals, and principals have worked with their Equity Teams on it. One specific approach has involved identifying and acknowledging diverse individuals from history and science who have made significant achievements relevant to the subjects being studied. This approach ensures that recognition is not limited to specific months but becomes an integral part of the curriculum itself, providing a more authentic and continuous learning experience.
- Building Equity Teams and principals have promoted classroom activities that allow students to share about their culture in creative ways.
- Building Equity Teams and principals have discussed ways to review the master schedule to allow students with disabilities to mainstream into classrooms where appropriate, to provide equitable teaching and learning opportunities.
- Building Equity Teams and principals have focused on data-driven teaching and learning to ensure that all students receive support, interventions, and enrichment, and to carefully analyze least restrictive environment as a priority where appropriate.
- Staff receive monthly resources from the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction regarding cultural themes, holidays, and activities. The building teams have shared monthly themes and activities with families and students.
- The Building Equity Teams and principals worked on creating an inclusive work environment by planning ways to celebrate staff cultures and holidays.
- The teams and principals continuously review curriculum to authentically celebrate and honor diverse people in history and to integrate it within units of study, rather than only in isolation.

Enhancing Recruitment Efforts to Diversify Candidate Pool

- For the first time ever, our district entered a partnership with the HBCU of Howard University to ensure that all teaching and administrative vacancy postings are sent to students at Howard University.
 - Howard University extended an invitation to us to attend a job fair in Washington, DC. Dr. Karakas and Dr. Comis attended this on April 10, 2024. Dr. Comis represents his building's Equity Team. We were the only district in the tristate area, which includes NYC, to be present at the Fair. It showcases our commitment to hiring diverse talent. The event offered us the opportunity to speak about Valley Stream, the diversity present here, and all the incredible staff and families we have. Candidates were blown away by what Valley Stream 24 has to offer, and the fact that we were able to spread the word about Valley Stream 24 to such a

strong candidate pool speaks volumes. There is an article in the Herald on these efforts, and this was also posted on our social media pages.

- We have expanded our recruitment efforts to seek diverse talent by partnering with over 30 colleges and universities. This now also includes Iona University, New York University, and Columbia University.
- For the first time this school year, our district attended the Nassau BOCES Diversity Fair on Saturday, March 9th to recruit candidates from diverse backgrounds. Administrators from our district attended to seek highly qualified and diverse candidates.
- Also for the first time, our district attended the Jericho School District Teacher Recruitment Fair on Saturday, March 2nd that welcomed culturally and ethnically diverse candidates. Administrators from our district attended to seek highly qualified and diverse candidates.
- A recruitment video was posted on our district website by the Superintendent, emphasizing the diversity present at Valley Stream to all candidates who are seeking employment. The video showcased the highlights and program offerings in our district.
- For the first time, we have been posting on Indeed for job vacancies to expand our hiring to diverse candidates across the tri-state and local area who may not always look on OLAS. This is specifically for positions such as cleaners, clerical workers, teaching assistants, etc.
- The administrative team has received support on implicit bias when recruiting, including on screening of resumes.

Vision 2030 and Equitable Outcomes for All Students!

- Vision 2030 is our district's new vision to be innovative and cutting edge. This vision involves all stakeholders in its creation. Ray McNulty held his professional learning sessions in November 2023 and again in February of 2024 to support our district in the rollout of Vision 2030. I have also supported administrators with Vision 2030 at our IAC meetings.
- Equitable outcomes require the allocation of resources to meet the needs of all students in our district, with a specific emphasis on meeting their needs in the 21st Century. The Board of Education has recently approved the redesigning of one classroom in each building to meet 21st Century classroom demands, that will prepare our diverse students to collaborate, think critically, share about themselves, and be in an environment that will enhance their learning experience.
- Vision 2030 recognizes that students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may have limited access to educational resources and opportunities. To ensure equity, the vision includes initiatives that have been shared with the Board and greater community, such as targeted financial support of resources such as learning labs, after school programs, and the newly approved extended summer program hours that will support innovative and supportive learning opportunities.
 - The extended summer program hours came after a community survey was sent out to families and staff, and as a result, allowed the Board of Education to approve a 5 hour summer program during days in July instead of the traditional 3 hour summer program. The extension of the summer program will provide added intervention and enrichment for all of our students, including our students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, our students with disabilities, and our students in need of additional intervention.

- An emphasis is placed on access to technology that is supportive of student critical thinking. Our classroom redesign process will also provide access to technology and resources in the classroom that are cutting edge. By providing access to technology and resources, Vision 2030 will help to level the playing field and create equal opportunities for all students to excel.
- As part of the commitment to preparing students for the demands of the 21st Century, Vision 2030 recognizes the importance of multilingualism in an increasingly globalized world. Recently, the Board approved the proposed budget that will expand Spanish to grades 3 and 4, in addition to the current offering of grades 5 and 6. This expansion not only provides students with the opportunity to become proficient in a second language but also equips them with a valuable skill that is advantageous in the job market. By offering language programs that go beyond the basics, Vision 2030 ensures that our students are well-prepared to engage with a diverse and interconnected world, enhancing their future career prospects.
- Vision 2030 continues to promote diversity and inclusion in the curriculum. It will encourage culturally responsive teaching practices, multicultural education, and the celebration of diverse perspectives and experiences in a creative way where technology enhances this learning and sharing opportunity. Creating Canva presentations during cultural research projects and having pen pals from across the globe in a digitalized way, are just two examples of this work in action. This approach not only fosters a sense of belonging but also prepares students to thrive in a globalized world.
- Vision 2030 is committed to providing inclusive education for students with disabilities. It includes the concept of assistive technologies and specialized support services to accommodate diverse learning needs. Should a bond also be brought forward to the community, as planned, it would also include accessible facilities. Moreover, professional development for educators has already taken place this year on inclusive teaching strategies and differentiation, ensuring that students with disabilities receive the necessary support to reach their full potential. Additionally, with the addition of a new 8:1:3 classroom in our district, our district has come out with a clear plan to provide staff with professional development and support on how to integrate students into our district and how to successfully teach students with diverse needs. This is to ensure that all students reach their fullest potential.
- A concept for integrating culture in a creative way with Vision 2030 will be to continuously transform our school halls into interactive cultural exhibits. These spaces can feature multimedia displays, QR codes, and even augmented reality experiences that allow students to virtually explore artifacts, stories, and traditions from around the world throughout the school year.