



TUFSD District Equity Team

October 22, 2020

Recommendations



Promoting equity + racial justice in Tarrytown

- ❖ Administrative training, coaching, and consultation
- ❖ BOE training and engagement
- ❖ Foundational professional development in all buildings
- ❖ Training specifically for curriculum administrators
- ❖ District equity committee

The Tarrytown District Equity Team

The Tarrytown District Equity Committee (DET) began meeting during the 2019/2020 school year with the explicit purpose of promoting community that shares a language and commitment to equity and racial justice; affording representative stakeholders a voice in school/district climate; serving as an accountability mechanism for monitoring and addressing disparities in attendance, achievement, discipline, access, opportunity, and lived experience in the district; and auditing current curriculum, resources, policies, and practices for bias.

The Tarrytown District Equity Team

The DET engaged in critical self and collective reflection, capacity-building, shared narrative and experience, and reviewed best practices and research on promoting equity and racial justice from districts around the country.

Leveraging the brilliance of the community, the team settled on 5 top areas to design recommendations for the district. Over a number of months, the team fleshed out the ideas to be presented to you this evening.

The DET will be forming sub-committees in each of these 5 areas to ensure there is a structure and support to operationalize the goals below.

Summary of recommendations

1. District **communication** will be equitable in practice and clear about our commitments to equity and racial justice.
2. **Curriculum** will be analyzed, developed, and implemented, through a Culturally Responsive-Sustaining lens.
3. We will focus our **recruitment, hiring, and retention** efforts on increasing our most underrepresented populations (with specific attention to BIPOC and LGBTQ+ staff) so young people see themselves and a spectrum of diversity reflected in the staff and leaders who serve them.
4. **Professional development** will center values of equity, inclusivity, and justice, and ensure all staff who serve our students have engaged in critical self-reflection and activate an equity lens.
5. The brilliance of **student leaders** will be leveraged as an essential driver for the district's commitment to equity and racial justice.

Communication

District communication will be equitable in practice and clear about our commitments to equity and racial justice.

Equitable communication efforts

- ❑ Ensure that leadership, the BOE, and DET clearly and consistently communicate the TUFSD equity mission and operationalize that mission through *how* we communicate. Support classroom teachers to ensure equitable communications on class content and parent roles. Afford English and Spanish equal priority. Expand translation and interpretation services.

Communication about equity

- ❑ Capture and share the story of the equity work in TUFSD so the community as a whole is aware of our efforts and process. Ensure equity is on the agenda for every Board of Education meeting and we set up a schedule for equity committee members to provide updates. Highlight the work on the district website and also provide the community resources.

Curriculum

Curriculum will be analyzed, developed, and implemented, through a Culturally Responsive-Sustaining lens.

What can happen immediately?

- Create a tool to use to audit curriculum and a process for using the tool. This is something the DET could draft. The NYU Metro Center CRE Scorecard could be modified.
- Formalize a process to ask students to share how they feel our curriculum is currently equitable and where it is not.
- Identify how student equity leaders can elevate curriculum efforts.
- Evaluate and determine opportunities to incorporate resources that offer different perspectives and voices such as The 1619 Project, Reading/Thinking like a Historian , Choices and PNW SS/ELA into our secondary curriculum. Department heads can convene teams to read these source documents, analyze them, and identify where in our curriculum they could best be elevated.

What can happen in the long-term?

- Curriculum audits become a regular and ongoing process that includes analysis, revising, and redeveloping of curriculum while reconsidering sourcing and materials.
- Ensure student participation in curriculum development.

Recruitment, hiring, and retention practices

We will focus our recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts on increasing our most underrepresented populations (with specific attention to BIPOC and LGBTQ+ staff) so young people see themselves and a spectrum of diversity reflected in the staff and leaders who serve them.

What can happen immediately?

- ❑ Create a TUFSD framework for Search, Hiring, Development, and Retention. The DET can help to draft this. Examine and reflect on how to retain BIPOC staff and how to provide leadership opportunities.
- ❑ Review & update interview questions and scenarios used to elicit candidate's understanding of and commitment to promoting equity and CR-SE. What does equity mean to you? And how, in your role, will you further the district's goal to be an anti-racist organization?
- ❑ Consider hiring committee representation and include diverse members, including stakeholders (families, students, and staff) and community members. Provide opportunities for working parents to participate in different ways (ie: creating banks of questions to use).

What can happen long-term?

- ❑ Commit to hiring teachers who will reflect the diversity of our community. A measurable, tangible outcome example is that one of the next 5 hires (20%) should be BIPOC.
- ❑ Examine our approaches to hiring to deconstruct how our efforts to diversify can be more impactful. Specifically, note how BIPOC community connections and networks can support future efforts.
- ❑ Develop ways to foster an environment attractive to BIPOC and LGBTQ+ educators. Consider what specifically about TUFSD communicates that BIPOC and LGBTQ+ staff can thrive here, what affinity spaces are available to support development and community, and what opportunities exist to promote equity and inclusivity in the workplace.

Professional development

Professional development will center values of equity, inclusivity, and justice, and ensure all staff who serve our students have engaged in critical self-reflection and activate an equity lens.

- ❑ Effective professional learning opportunities will:
 - ❑ Build self-reflection and awareness of how our actions confirm or confront inequity;
 - ❑ Build our equity lens;
 - ❑ Go beyond building awareness to bridge the distance between our intentions and our impact;
 - ❑ Give teachers techniques and strategies to use in the classroom for a more equitable impact upon students and learning; and
 - ❑ Create safe and trusting spaces for open discussion of issues of equity.
- Professional learning opportunities in this area must be consistent and methodical. Learning opportunities must be available to teachers, building staff, administrators, central office staff, Board members, bus drivers, food service staff, technology staff, and more.

What can happen immediately?

- Continue ongoing mandated formal training for all leaders, teachers, and staff. Use the feedback from these trainings as data to analyze how the community is processing information and building capacity. Set ongoing learning plans as a result.

What can happen long-term?

- Identify Equity Ambassadors who would be staff members serving as a support to building colleagues who are having difficulty or questions as they develop.
- Create a structure for ongoing sharing of best practices, such as dedicated time in faculty meetings and department meetings.

Student equity leader development

The brilliance of student leaders will be leveraged as an essential driver for the district's commitment to equity and racial justice.

Actionable items related to developing student equity leaders are offered below.

- ❑ Cultivate and identify student leaders. NYU Metro Center can work with the student equity leaders 4 times during the 2020/2021 school year.
- ❑ Increase the number of students on the DET. Invite alumni back as well.

What can happen immediately?

- Seek out student leaders interested in fleshing out ways to improve the environment at Sleepy Hollow High School. Reach out to existing student activities, clubs and organizations to help raise awareness of opportunities. Reach out to students of parents on the equity committee and/or younger siblings of students who have been involved. Intentionally seek out and cultivate students who have not self-selected as leaders and use this as an empowerment opportunity. Student group announcements should be in English and Spanish, and reach out to teachers who can help reach out to more students.

What can happen long-term?

- Offer continuous cultivation and identification of leadership in young people.
- Leverage student equity leaders to provide mentoring to younger children.
- Grow the impact this work can have with students influencing curriculum, working directly with leadership, serving as a student representative on the Board of Education, or students developing a community climate survey.

DET members share their experience

Jack Weidner, Sleepy Hollow High School Student

Katie Scully, Parent

Sharon O'Grady, Assistant Principal, Washington Irving School

Next steps

- ❑ The DET forms sub-committees to operationalize the work in the immediate term.
- ❑ The DET and district leaders work to craft an *equity policy* to propose to the BOE.
- ❑ The DET will take a deeper dive into district-wide data points and set some goals for transformation.
- ❑ Foundational professional development sessions continue in November and December.
- ❑ In January, the administrative team will convene to analyze the data from the foundational professional development sessions within and across the schools.
- ❑ Quarterly updates from DET members to the BOE.