



Verona Public Schools

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Our overarching goal for DEI is to match our structure, procedures and actions with our purpose, vision, and core values, to create an environment of belonging for all students and for our entire school community.

March 14, 2022

Good afternoon members of the Verona Public Schools DEI subcommittees:

Following our Strategic Plan ([Strategy #2, Result #2](#)), the Verona Public Schools remain committed to our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts. We wanted to remind our learning community that we are committed to supporting our students who are marginalized with appropriate social, emotional, and academic programming; supporting our staff with engaging and meaningful curriculum and relevant professional development; and supporting our administration with current policies and regulations and consistent and continuous district support.

We wanted to provide you an update with our DEI work. Our DEI Administrative Team received three proposals to our [Request for Proposal](#) that we created in December of 2021 for (1) School Climate and Culture and (2) Hiring, Recruiting, and Retaining Staff. After the January 21, 2022 deadline, our DEI Administrative Team reviewed potential consultants and set up an interview with each group during the first week of February 2022.

After conducting the interviews, we recommended our top two consultants to our Interim Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Furnari. She met with the top two consultants to discuss their proposals in detail. Dr. Furnari then met with our Community Resources Committee to discuss the strengths of each of the consultants and how they could partner with the Verona Public Schools and support us with our RFP.

During our February 22nd Board of Education meeting, the consulting firm [Grand River Solutions](#) (GRS) presented its proposal regarding our Request for Proposal (RFP) to our Board of Education and members of our community. After that BOE meeting, our Community Resources Committee and I met with Mrs. Jody Shipper, Co-Founder of GRS, to make some adjustments to their proposal after receiving feedback from the community. Dr. Furnari will present a recommendation to the Board for its consideration at the next BOE meeting, which is scheduled for March 22, 2022. Start time is 7:00 p.m. As a friendly reminder, the public is always welcome to participate in our Board of Education meetings; we welcome your feedback.

Our Verona Public Schools DEI timeline is listed in the table on the next page. We are proud that we have been able to maintain our focus and to bring forward a group of professionals who would like to partner with us and address our RFP which calls for improving our: (1) School Climate and Culture and (2) Hiring, Recruiting, and Retaining Staff.

Verona Public Schools DEI Timeline Check-In

| Action | Date | Progress |
|---|---|-----------|
| Requested for Proposal | December 2021 | Completed |
| Join NJCEE Northeast | December 2021 | Completed |
| Identification of consultant | February 2022 | Completed |
| Attend workshops provided by New Jersey Consortia for Excellence & Equity (NJCEE) | December 2021 - June 2022 | Ongoing |
| Work with consultant(s) on DEI initiatives (data gathering, analysis, and making improvements to programs and processes). | March 2022 - June 2022 (and into the future). | Ongoing |

We are going to reconvene our subcommittee work during the last week of March (see below). Please see the table below for more information. Our plan is to meet in-person in the VHS Learning Commons. An agenda will be shared with our committees prior to each meeting.

| Date & Time | Committees |
|---|--|
| Tuesday, March 29, 2022 (6:30-7:30 p.m.) | Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment & Professional Development |
| Wednesday, March 30, 2022 (6:30-7:30 p.m.) | Community Outreach & Hiring, Recruiting, and Retaining |
| Thursday, March 31, 2022 (6:30-7:30 p.m.) | Educational Equity & School Climate & Culture |

We have created a Verona Public Schools [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion webpage](#). The webpage includes our mission statement, upcoming events, news, what we have accomplished, our DEI subcommittees, how this work is connected to our Strategic Plan, and our DEI Administrative Leadership team.

In closing, we thank you for your continued support as we move forward with our DEI initiatives this spring. We truly appreciate your willingness to partner with us as we continue to make improvements to our school district. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please be well and have a wonderful week.

Sincerely,



Dr. Charles R. Miller
Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment



Dr. Lydia Furnari
Interim Superintendent of Schools