

THE RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DIVERSITY TASK FORCE

Final Report presented to the Board of Education on May 25, 2019.



OUR PURPOSE:

The Wooster Board of Education formed the Diversity Task Force to address the lack of diversity among the district's faculty and recommend strategies to increase diversity and inclusivity in every facet of school life. The Task Force began meeting in 2017 and concluded their work with a series of recommendations in June 2019.

AREAS OF FOCUS:



RECRUITMENT & HIRING



CURRICULUM



SCHOOL CLIMATE

The Task Force recognized three focus areas: Recruitment & Hiring, Curriculum and School Climate. A subcommittee was formed to research each area and worked independently on tasks to determine recommendations to accomplish the Task Force's vision.

RECRUITMENT & HIRING ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Established new, more comprehensive guidelines for recruiting.
- Expanded our attendance at recruitment fairs to more diverse universities like Central State and Cleveland State.
- Created a brochure for incoming candidates that highlights elements of diversity in our community and schools.
- Attended, and will continue to attend, professional development training in the area of diversity recruitment, including NemNet training and sensitivity training for our HR department.
- Formed a direct partnership with The College of Wooster's Education Department to meet all education students annually and discuss the value of working in the Wooster City Schools and living in Wooster.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Have the Board of Education give an annual update to the community introducing new employees, highlighting diverse candidates when applicable and giving data on staff retention.
- Continue to gain professional development training around the area of diversity recruitment such as NemNet's Diversity Recruitment training.

THE RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DIVERSITY TASK FORCE

► CURRICULUM

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Through research, determined that children's literature enables young people to envision and emotionally connect to events and life experiences that may be the same or quite different than their own, allowing them to relate to characters and events and to not see them as "the other" or different.
- By examining how K-12 school districts and universities approach professional development, it came down to working with diverse student populations, particularly with socioeconomic diversity (i.e., the Bridges Out of Poverty program).
- Learned how textbooks and curricula across WCSD are updated, evaluated and selected.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Encourage the district's grade bands to read a common book, which would build on two past WCSD literacy-focused events – Wonder and Reading Under the Lights – that have been successful.
- Facilitate ongoing discussions connected to diversity. After any staff development or training, enact brainstorming among participants.
- Offer a new elective course, "Civil Rights and Tolerance," for the 2019-20 academic year.
- Make community service a requirement for graduation. The district will not implement this recommendation at this time due to capacity.
- Continue to support the Leader in Me Program across the district.



► SCHOOL CLIMATE

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Wrote a "Welcoming Everyone" policy that was formally adopted in February 2019 by the Board of Education.
- Ensured visitors to WCSD understand the values of the school and its community by adding the following to the Wooster Athletic Welcome sign: "Proper sportsmanship is both necessary and expected. That means everyone is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity which requires each of us to be kind and generous."
- Conducted a districtwide student survey for grades 3-12 regarding their educational environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Make all student athletes and families aware of the OCC Bylaws and the Athletic Director to emphasize them. Also change the "Parents and Fans" header in the OCC Bylaws to "Families and Fans" to be inclusive of all types of families.
- Ensure robust mental health resources are in place throughout the school system and strengthen partnerships with community resources.
- Share the survey results found in the Final Board of Education Report on May 25, 2019.

THE DIVERSITY TASK FORCE MUST STAY ACTIVE AND ENGAGED TO MAKE A LASTING IMPACT ON THE WOOSTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT.

- The co-chairs and facilitator will meet three times per year.
- Task Force invited to meet with the board annually to receive an update on its recommendations.