DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

YEAR IN REVIEW

DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

2020/2021
MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT

Over the past 10 years, the cultural diversity of the student population in Downingtown Area School District has more than doubled. Recognizing that a truly inclusive environment is vital to the wellness and success of all students, teachers and staff, DASD has worked to better serve our diverse population by focusing on improving equity and inclusion, district-wide. To be completely inclusive, all individuals within the district must feel safe to express ideas, dreams and dialogues. Hate, disrespect, intimidation and intolerance have no place in our district or in our community. There must be equal access to and opportunity for everyone to contribute fully.

Creating a positive, inclusive and diversity-driven district takes time, patience and skill. In DASD, teachers, staff and students work together to create an environment where individuals can successfully pursue their academic goals and dreams without the interference of negative experiences caused by microaggressions (subtle actions/words that express prejudiced attitudes toward others) and bigotry (obstinate or intolerant devotion to one’s own opinions and prejudices). The administration, teachers and staff play a key role in creating and modeling an inclusive environment. All DASD employees must foster a sustained and long-term commitment to change and progress that recognizes diversity and multiculturalism (the inclusion of multiple ethnic groups). We must acknowledge that many individuals have complex identities in which their experiences have been based on, including gender, race, color, creed, sexual orientation and ability and we must respect these differences.

At DASD, we work to ensure that every student is encouraged to succeed and provided the means to reach their highest potential. By focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion and how they directly relate to overall student mental health and wellness, we will address structural and procedural barriers to full inclusion within the district. Effective school-wide strategies that align wellness, inclusion, diversity and equity empower all students to meet their individual and unique goals.

Sincerely,
Justin Brown

Justin Brown joined DASD in January of 2021 to help address the growing DEI needs of our school community.

Justin is a well-known author, speaker and diversity instructor in the field of education. Previously, Brown worked in student affairs at West Chester University. He earned his M.A. in Student Affairs from Indiana University of PA, where he created the Diversity Awareness Program (D.A.P), a program dedicated to educating institutions about the importance of diversity.

Justin Brown, M.A.
Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
DASD teachers, staff and students are committed to creating an environment where individuals can successfully pursue their academic goals and dreams without the interference of negative experiences caused by microaggressions and bigotry.

The administration, teachers and staff, play a key role in creating this inclusive environment. They must foster a sustained and long-term commitment to change and progression that acknowledges diversity and multiculturalism. We must acknowledge and be aware that many individuals have complex identities in which their experiences have been based on gender, race, color, creed, sexual orientation and ability.

Together, we can build a kinder, more compassionate community.

DID YOU KNOW? Chester County is the ancestral home of the Lenape people, who occupied this land for thousands of years before Europeans arrived. As more and more European settlers began encroaching on their land, the Lenape people were systematically, and in many cases, forcefully removed. Eventually, most were driven as far west as Oklahoma, where they merged with the Cherokee Nation. Learn more about the Lenape people at Lenape-nation.org. We are privileged to live and work on the land we now occupy and wish to acknowledge the Lenape people and their land.
DASD DEI Mission

Our mission is to ensure DASD provides a culture of inclusivity and empathy, fostering educational equity that can grow, flourish and reach beyond the DASD community.

DASD DEI Vision

Downingtown Area School District will ensure a culture of inclusivity and educational equity. We will strive to take an empathetic approach with our district while creating an environment and culture that investigates core issues and recognizes all cultures and backgrounds.

In order to foster a positive environment, the Downingtown Area School District will not tolerate bigotry, bullying, gender-inequities, homophobia, misogyny, racism, transphobia or xenophobia (fear/hatred toward people from foreign countries). Hate has no place in the district or in our community. We encourage upstanding citizens to support our “Good Neighbor” community.

Core values are delivered through the district’s instructional vision via rigot, engagement, and agency.

- **Academic Rigor** - Students are challenged to take risks, to think critically, and to reflect through application and problem solving that foster deeper understanding and individual growth

- **Student Engagement** - Students are actively invested in relevant and intentional instructional experiences that inspire them to apply and extend their learning

- **Student Agency** - Students are empowered, through voice and choice, to take ownership of their learning with guidance, support and accountability

**EVALUATION**

Continuously evaluate our personal commitment and development in the areas of equity, cultural awareness and integrity

**ELIMINATION**

Eliminate educational inequities by providing equitable access to services, school resources and learning opportunities

**ELEVATION**

Elevate our community-wide mutual respect for others and active partnership through open communication, collaboration and actions
K-6 INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

We want Downingtown Area School District to be an inclusive and diverse place for learning where all students and staff are accepted. Kindness begins with me. I will / I will learn to:

- Take responsibility for my choices and actions.
- Show respect to everyone with my words, actions and body language.
- Use kind words.
- Accept and include people who are different from me.
- Treat others the way they want to be treated.
- Use safe language (not scary or threatening).
- Use empathy to imagine how others feel.
- Be an active listener.

7-12 INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

DASD has a commitment to respect one another. We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. We commit to creating a safe, equitable and inclusive learning environment for all that is built on a diverse foundation of self and mutual respect. We will cultivate a civil environment that is free from physical, psychological or emotional harm to others and ourselves.

Inclusivity begins with me:

- I am responsible for my actions and choices.
- I will show courtesy and respect in my language, demeanor and actions.
- I will actively listen, not just hearing but listening with understanding to hear other points of view.
- I will acknowledge everyone’s individual differences by demonstrating empathy and patience.
- I will refrain from insulting or using disrespectful, dismissive or humiliating language and actions.
- I will be an upstander and not a bystander.
- I will celebrate the worth and dignity of everyone, regardless of status.
DEI and the state of DASD’s mental health and well-being are directly connected. Best-practice diversity and inclusion programs recognize mental health and well-being as a diversity issue.

Student Wellness

Students spend a significant portion of their time in school making choices related to academics and personal interactions. Positive mental and emotional well-being plays a significant role in supporting student learning, academic success and overall health and wellness. Schools that are inclusive and foster the whole child are better able to meet the wellness and academic needs of all students. Effective school-wide strategies that align wellness, inclusion, diversity and equity empower all students to meet their individual and unique goals.

Staff Wellness

Promoting overall wellness and addressing diversity, equity and inclusion is critical to creating an inclusive school culture that supports the overall well-being of staff. School-level equity teams focused on strategies to foster inclusive working environments support positive mental and emotional well-being. Inclusive working environments promote positive school climate and coping strategies to address the everyday challenges, both in the classroom and in the community.

Community Wellness

School communities committed to meeting the academic and wellness needs of their students must recognize and design opportunities where positive mental health and emotional well-being can be fully integrated with diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Doing so raises awareness, promotes positive attitudes and encourages behaviors essential for student success, both in and outside of school. A diverse and inclusive learning environment promotes the well-being of the entire school community.
The purpose of the DASD Cultural Equity Task Force (CETF) is to ensure equity for students, staff and families by eliminating bias and inequities in our classrooms and in our schools. The CETF supports enacting policies, procedures and practices that are both culturally responsive and culturally sustaining.

The **CETF** adheres to the following responsibilities:

- Actively identify and eliminate all forms of bias, discrimination and inequity within the district
- Review policies, procedures and practices to ensure equity across all levels
- Seek stakeholder input and engagement to better support needs of the school community
- Use data and trends to improve services
- Respond directly to incidents within the district that affect equity in the DASD community
- Propose events, initiatives and programs to enhance district climate and culture
- Ensure all diversity events, initiatives and programs fit the district's missions and goals
- Attend regular CETF meetings and subcommittee meetings
## 01 | POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Lead with fairness, equity and inclusion into all of the policies, programs, operations and practices</td>
<td>Created a rough draft equity policy for the district</td>
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## 02 | OBSERVABLE MESSAGING

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<th>PURPOSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discover and share materials and programming across our DASD buildings that promote the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion</td>
<td>Created questionnaire and items to consider when opening a building/classroom to ensure diverse representation of all students</td>
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## 03 | STUDENT SUCCESS

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<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities that promote a greater understanding of student identities, multiculturalism and inclusion within our school district, and to work toward eliminating inequalities, inspire and prepare our students for higher levels of personal and social responsibility, and post-secondary success</td>
<td>Created the rough draft “Level Up Program for Fall 2021”</td>
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## 04 | STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

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<th>2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS</th>
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| • To be representative of our school communities and provide inclusivity and belonging to our student bodies  
• To offer resources, support and a sense of community that is responsive to specific needs and cultural considerations | • Evaluated current offerings  
• Made recommendations related to existing clubs  
• Examined needs across buildings  
• Created student interest survey |
## 05 | RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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| Create an employment destination for diverse viewpoints, talents and perspectives of the community who we serve both academically and professionally | • Created an exhaustive list of recruitment strategies to be implemented in fall 2021  
• Updated recruitment brochure and materials |

## 06 | TRAINING

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<th>2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS</th>
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| Provide training, knowledge and resources focusing on cultivating abilities of equity literacy to individuals and institution | • Curated training resources for website  
• Created a three-year comprehensive training plan recommendation |

## 07 | PARENT OUTREACH

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| Gather parents and guardians with diverse perspectives, skills and experiences to provide a forum for their voices and ideas, moving toward a more inclusive and culturally responsive district | • Curated a list of resources on DEI website  
• Hosted two free parent events |

## 08 | WEBSITE

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<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize DASD website to share DEI data, events and resources</td>
<td>DEI website created and updated to highlight relevant information</td>
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09 | DISTRICT DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

**PURPOSE**
Communicate diversity, equity and inclusion updates to stakeholders

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
Created and distributed 10 website newsletters, with three focusing on CETF subcommittee work

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10 | DISTRICT CLIMATE INTERVENTION TEAM

**PURPOSE**
Help DASD create and maintain a plan to provide a welcoming climate for all members of the community

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
• Evaluated and recommended changes to DASD’s restorative practices manual
• Participated in a “train the trainer” session to be able to facilitate restorative circles for students

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11 | EQUITY ASSESSMENT

**PURPOSE**
• Evaluate current data and identify equity assessment areas in need of revision
• Develop equity assessment tools which are consistent between students, parents, teachers and staff
• Distribute and encourage participation in equity assessments
• Evaluate and share assessment results

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
• Members of the subcommittee evaluated 2019 data from building audits
• Upon evaluation, it was recommended that the district utilize the YouthTruth survey to gather future equity data

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12 | SOCIAL MEDIA

**PURPOSE**
• Create and utilize DASD Equity social media accounts to share DASD diversity initiatives in DASD
• Utilize DASD social media platforms to celebrate DEI initiatives and events

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
• Created @DASDequity Twitter and Instagram accounts
• Created five social media campaigns focused on DEI-related groups
**13 | MEETING MINUTES**

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<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Record CETF monthly meeting minutes and share with team</td>
<td>Meeting minutes were created for all five CETF monthly meetings and shared to DEI website</td>
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**14 | BENCHMARKING**

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<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research comparable school district DEI initiatives to evaluate resources and opportunities in DASD</td>
<td>Members evaluated 15 school districts and added additional resources to DEI website</td>
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**15 | YEAR IN REVIEW REPORT**

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<th>PURPOSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Work with school administrators to collect DEI initiative and event information from individual buildings • Collate information into final report</td>
<td>Data gathered and Year in Review report created</td>
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**16 | ACADEMIC RESEARCH & AUDIT**

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<td>To promote the emotional, social and academic well-being of all students, staff and community members through the focus on diverse perspectives and inclusive behaviors by providing equitable resources, content and practices</td>
<td>• Members audited current social studies curriculum and assessed areas of needed improvement from a cultural lens • Members made recommendations for improvement which will be considered during future scheduled curriculum writing</td>
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### 17 | LITERATURE SUBCOMMITTEE

**PURPOSE**
Broaden our audience, build background knowledge in order to forge a common community understanding

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
Hosted a community book event to discuss equity and diversity in relation to literature with participant-selected texts.

### 18 | DIVERSITY CALENDAR - 12 MONTHS OF DIVERSITY

**PURPOSE**
Help DASD to highlight all traditions, celebrations and holidays that are observed by our students, staff and within the DASD community

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
Created 12-month calendar with complementary resources to assist the community in learning more about the holidays and celebrations.

### 19 | COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OUTREACH

**PURPOSE**
- To bridge resources for DASD families and community and educate through active engagements, partnerships and resources
- This group aims to create partnerships and connections with individuals in the community

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
The group held two social media DEI contests with 12 participants. Over $750 was raised from the community. Prizes were awarded to five participants.

### 20 | EVENTS

**PURPOSE**
Create and support DEI-related Zoom events

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
Hosted six community events with 350+ attendees, including parents, students, staff, alumni and community members.
DEI BY THE NUMBERS

YEAR IN REVIEW 2020/2021

DASD STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

105.5%
10-YEAR INCREASE IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF STUDENT POPULATION

2020/21 CULTURAL EQUITY TASK FORCE DATA

174 COMMUNITY RESOURCES PROVIDED AT WWW.DASD.ORG/DIVERSITY

198 TASK-FORCE MEMBERS

400+ COMMUNITY EVENT PARTICIPANTS

EVENT        #
IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING  87
PARENT VOICES           46
REUNION PARA PADRES     43
LISTENING SESSION       96
COMMUNITY BOOK READ     30
TEMPLE GRANDIN AWARD CEREMONY 101

2020/21 DEMOGRAPHICS

- ASIAN - 16.4%
- MULTI-RACIAL - 3.6%
- BLACK - 2.8%
- WHITE - 71.8%
- HISPANIC - 5.2%
- OTHER - 0.2%
Kindness is a powerful tool that actively engages students, teachers, administrators, families and communities in creating a culture of compassion, acceptance, unity and respect.

Kindness Week in DASD includes brainstorming ways to show kindness, reading books that promote kindness, inclusivity, anti-bullying, respecting differences and sharing of kindness notes with both staff and students.

Continue to help kindness grow in our community!
DAY WITHOUT HATE

This April, DASD students joined students nationwide to celebrate a Day Without Hate.

Day Without Hate is a student-led, grassroots organization that promotes non-violence, respect and unity within our schools. Born in response to the 2007 Virginia Tech tragedy, the goal of the day is to tell the community that violence and prejudice will not be tolerated in schools. When students unite and put differences aside, they can become a part of something bigger than just themselves.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The purpose of Making Connections is to create connections between African American teens and local law enforcement through ongoing community-based activities and conversations. The hope is that the meaningful relationships fostered in this program will lead to stronger foundations for the future.
ADDITIONAL RECOGNITIONS

Students decorated Kindness Rocks which will be placed in the Kindness Rock garden at Broad Run Park.

Monthly Door Decorating to celebrate Black History Month, Autism Acceptance Month, Kindness Month, Immigration Heritage Month, School Spirit/Senior Send Off Month.

The students and local police of Making Connections hosted a Food Drive which gathered 1,552 lbs of food and nonperishable items for local food banks.

A Student Taskforce, along with faculty advisors and administration, engaging in inclusive language in the school environment discussions and action efforts.

40+ faculty member participation in “Stamped” Book Reading discussion and reflective professional goal work.

$750 raised from community in support of DEI Creative Connections Contest.

Social media Pride Month recognition.

BELOVED COMMUNITY PROJECT

Students chose construction paper to match their skin tone and cut out a hand, which were used to display the school’s diversity.

STUDENTS GATHER DONATIONS

Students across the district gathered food donations in honor of MLK Day and Black History Month.

Schools planned and hosted a Club and Activities Fair designed to highlight all of the diverse and unique clubs and opportunities available for DASD students.
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT CELEBRATES
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February 2021

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

DASD CELEBRATES
Womens History Month

Women's History Month
Parent Video Submission
AUTISM AWARENESS & ACCEPTANCE MONTH

DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT CELEBRATES
AUTISM AWARENESS & ACCEPTANCE

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS AWARDS

Featuring Autism Acceptance Month Creative Connections Contest Award Presentation by
DR. TEMPLE GRADIN

MAY 21
7:00 - 8:00 PM

AUTISM IS
ACCEPTANCE GROWING!
JEWISH AMERICAN & ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH
Set in the heart of Chester County, Downingtown Area School District is a twenty-first century district with the idealistic warmth and charm of a small town. As a close-knit yet diverse community of over 13,000 students, and as the seventh largest in PA, DASD students are challenged, engaged and inspired through a multitude of academic opportunities, passionate educators and innovative teaching methods. DASD values collaborative learning and critical thinking while remaining focused on student wellness and serving the whole child. Boasting some of the top schools in the state and nation, we are proud of our tradition of excellence.

**ABOUT DASD**

Contact  
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WWW.DASD.ORG/DIVERSITY

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Downingtown, PA 19335