DISTRICT EQUITY COMMITTEE UPDATE | 2020-2021

TIMELINE

- 06/19/20   Alumni and Community Petition Received by Board of School Directors
- 06/30/20   Board of School Directors Unanimously Votes to Create Equity Committee
- 07/20   Board Members Attend Equity Trainings Through PSBA
- 07/20   District Contracts with Adam Magerman for Equity Survey and Consulting
- 08/02/20   Screening and Discussion of "Walking While Black" with Community, Peace Center and District Attorney's Office
- 08/11/20   First Meeting of Equity Committee
- 09/11/20   Presentation from ADL "Understanding and Challenging Bias in Ourselves and Others"
- 10/20   Curriculum Advisory Committee Presented on Curriculum Equity Issues
- 10/20   Equity Survey Created and Distributed to the Community
- 10/20   Interviews Were Completed with Key Stakeholders in the Community
- 11/20   Equity Survey Data Consolidated
- 11/20   Student Equity Group Formed at the High School
- 11/20   Equity Subcommittees Formed for Presentations, Resources, and Policy
- 12/16/20   Equity Committee Met to Review Results of Survey and Begin Work on Mission and Vision of Committee
- 2/9/21   Presentation from PSBA on Equity to Committee

EQUITY DEFINITION

- The Pennsylvania School Boards Association defines **Equity** as "the just and fair distribution of resources based upon each individual student's needs. Equitable resources include funding, programs, policies, initiatives and supports that target each student's unique background and school context to guarantee that all students have equal access to a high-quality education."

- **"Pursuing Equity** requires that schools assess actions locally to overcome institutional barriers and create opportunities so that each and every child has the tools and supports necessary to achieve their highest potential. **Achieving Equity** ensures that students' identities will not predetermine their success in schools." (See PSBA Equity Statement, 2018)

- Equality in education is the goal. Equity measures are the means to realizing that goal.

THE MEANING OF EQUITY
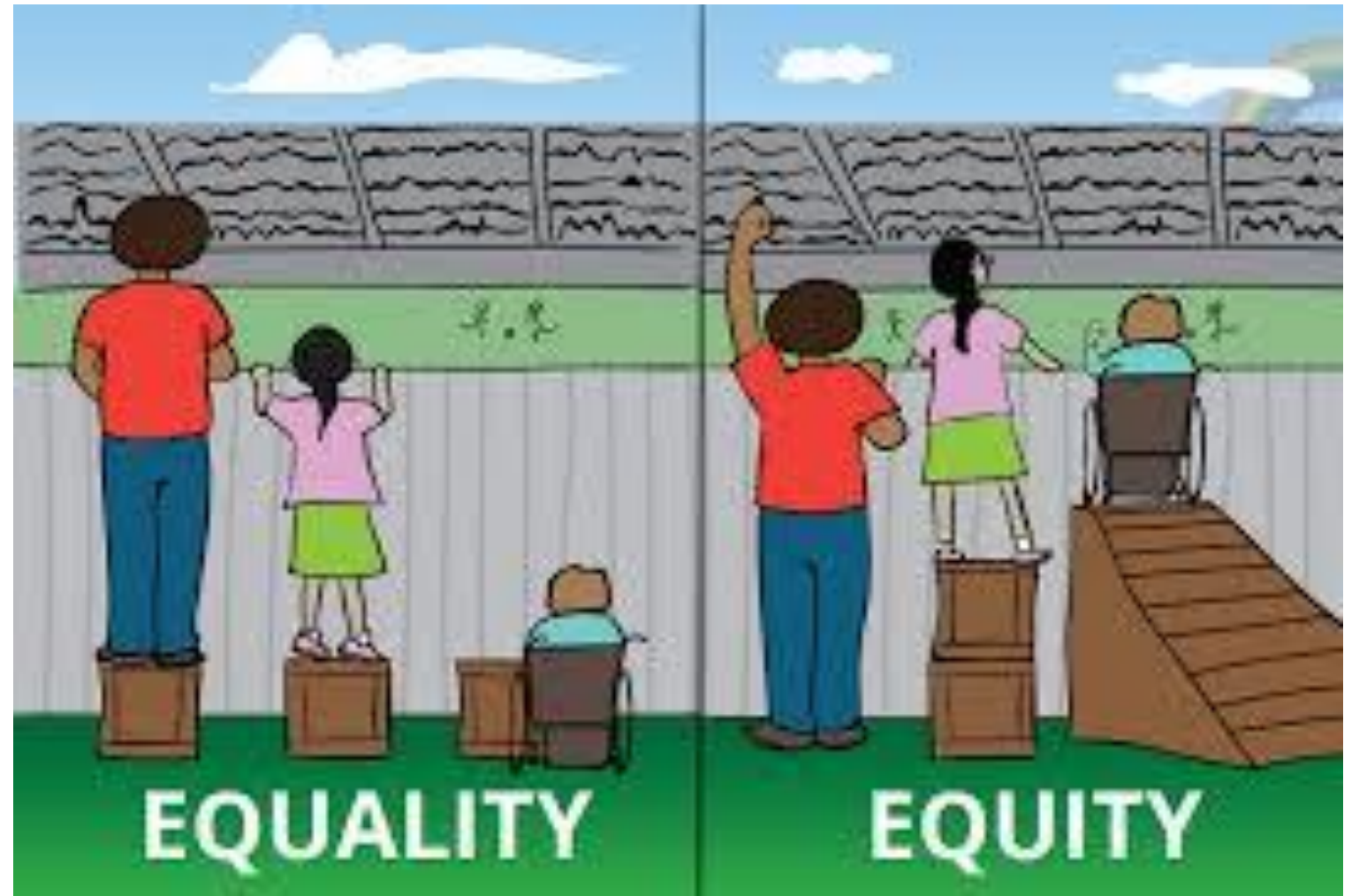
COMMITTEE VISION

- The NHSSD Equity Committee will lead the community's efforts in establishing equity as a foundation of district operations, in order to establish policies, protocols, and procedures that affirm the voices and meet the needs of all students and employees. Our goals include, but are not limited to, raising students who are culturally competent and prepared for the world beyond New Hope-Solebury; creating an inclusive, diverse, and welcoming workplace and positive school culture that empowers students in a safe classroom environment; maintaining policies and procedures that prevent and address bias and discrimination; supporting ongoing professional development in equity practices and bias reduction; and maintaining an updated, fact-focused K-12 curriculum that reflects and upholds these ideals.

COMMITTEE MISSION

- The New Hope-Solebury School District Equity Committee is comprised of a cross-section of stakeholders who strive to create an equitable learning and working environment for all members of the district community. We know that bias and discrimination around race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, individual learning needs, socioeconomic status, and other identity related factors, adversely affect student achievement and mental health and impede district success. We will partner with families, students, administrators, faculty, and the New Hope-Solebury community to identify and remove institutional barriers and promote a safe space for all to thrive socially, academically, and emotionally.

A HISTORIC LOOK AT EQUITY

GOALS OF THE COMMITTEE

- Further developing a curriculum which is representative of the diverse cultures, experiences, literature, and accomplishments of the varied cultural, ethnic and religious groups which comprise our community and nation.

- Establishing educational programs and resources which represent the diversity of our school, nation and global community.

- Creating policies which ensure that all our students, faculty, staff and community members are provided equal opportunities to be partners in the educational process and which actively seek to embrace diversity and equity.

- Forming professional development for our faculty and staff which enhance cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of diverse students, families and communities.

- Implementing hiring practices which enhance the diversity of the educators working with our students and provide students with opportunities to be enriched through an educational experience more representative of our national and global diversity.

- Utilizing community building practices which celebrate diversity and actively address incidents of bullying, marginalization and discrimination.

- Fostering relationships with diverse communities within the school district to enhance outreach, collaboration and connections to further student and family connectivity to the school district and student performance and engagement.

- Establishing processes and procedures to ensure that all students are afforded equal opportunities for learning and are provided the building blocks necessary to ensure their success throughout their education in our school district.

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2020-2021

- Administering a Survey to Community on Equity
- Professional Development on Equity Issues
- Policy Review
- Curriculum Review
- Comprehensive Equity Audit for the School District
- Presentation and Programs
- Resources

Administer Survey to Community on Equity

- Subcommittee Established to Work on Development of Survey
- Survey Developed in Collaboration with Adam Magerman, Gestalt, Inc.
- Allowed us to Gather Information on Experiences and Perspectives from Community on District Approach to Equity
- Interviews were also Conducted as a Part of this Process

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON EQUITY ISSUES AND CONCERNS

- Delaware Valley Consortium on Equity and Excellence
        with University of Pennsylvania
- Professional Development Programs Within the School District on Equity
- Partnerships with ADL, PSBA, and Peace Center for Programming and Presentations

POLICY REVIEW

- Equity Policy Subcommittee
- PSBA Equity Policy Framework
- Analyze Other Policies for Equity Concerns

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

- Complete Equity Reviews as Part of the Annual Curriculum Review Process
- Examine Programs and Materials Utilized in Curriculum Through a Diversity Lens
- Conduct Curriculum Audit through Mid-Atlantic Group
- Continue to Enhance Curriculum Through Integration of Resources and Materials Which are More Representative of Diverse Cultures and Experiences

EQUITY AUDIT

- Equity Audit through University of Pennsylvania
- Equity Audit through Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium
- Review District Policies, Procedures, Programs and Curriculum Through an Equity Lens

PRESENTATIONS AND PROGRAMS

- Established Subcommittee
- Identifying Groups and Speakers who Can Help to Educate Students on Equity Issues, Concerns and Experiences

RESOURCES

- Established Subcommittee
- Identifying Resources for Teachers, Students and Community on Topics of Equity and to Provide Additional Information on Equity Related Topics and Experiences

STUDENT EQUITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Equity Survey

Methodology

- Survey launched on October 1st 2020 and closed November 1st 2020

- Two survey components:

    - Web-based survey (783 total responses)
        - Offered to all community members
        - 41 multiple choice questions with 9 opportunities to elaborate
        - Incentivized by offering a chance to win 4 Amazon gift cards

    - Phone interviews (50 total interviews)
        - Sample taken from survey respondents who consented to follow-up interview
        - Semi-structured interview method
        - Themes developed from interviews, and used to inform survey data (presented in italics in the presentation)

Demographics

783 Total Respondents (+50 community interviews)

Gender / Gender Identity
- 70% Female
- 27% Male
- 3% Prefer not to self-identify

Race / Ethnicity
- 83% White or Caucasian
- 1% Black or African-American
- 3% Latin-X, Hispanic or Mexican
- 7% Asian, Asian-American or Pacific Islander
- 3% Mixed-Race
- 3% Other

Political Affiliation
- 56% Liberal
- 18% Moderate
- 26% Conservative

79% currently live within the NHS school district

Household Income
- 3% Less than 30K
- 4.5% 30K to less than 50K
- 4.5% 50K to less than 75K
- 8% 75K to less than 100K
- 13% 100K to less than 150K
- 43% 150K or more
- 22% Prefer not to answer

Relationship to Community
- Current student- 131
- Parent of current student - 302
- Teacher / staff - 81
- Alumni- 104
- Parent of former student - 122
- Community Member - 248
- Local business owner – 22

Religious Background
- Christian- 45%
- Jewish- 10%
- Muslim- 0% (0 respondents)
- Sikh- 0% (1 respondent)
- Hindu- 1%
- Buddhist- 1%
- Atheist- 10%
- Agnostic- 9%
- Nothing in particular- 12%
- Don't Know/Other- 12%

Perceptions of the NHS Community

- **In general, people have positive perceptions of NHS and are very satisfied with the community.**
  - 91% of respondents report being very satisfied with living in the NHS community
    - 50% of Black respondents reported being satisfied*
    - All other population segments reported similar satisfaction
  - 90% reported high levels of belonging
  - Only 16% reported ever wanting to leave the NHS community (16%)
  - 96% of participants feel safe in the community
    - 50% of Black respondents reported feeling safe*

- **However, many recognized areas of improvement within the NHS community**
  - 67% of respondents felt NHS was "welcoming"
  - 37% feel that other community members are impacted by inequities in their daily lives
  - 58% have heard of instances of prejudice toward other community members
    - 100% of Black respondents have heard of instances of prejudice
    - 76% of religious minorities have heard of instances of prejudice

- **Overwhelming support for increased DEI efforts in the community**
  - 90% of respondents feel that it was important that the NHS community actively works to ensure the equitable treatment of all community members
  - 84% agreed NHS community needs to improve their DEI efforts

Experience of prejudice in the Community

- **Respondents reported very few personal experiences of prejudice or inequities.**
  - 9% self-reported personal experiences of prejudice
    - 100% of Black respondents and 28% of Asian respondents reported experiencing
prejudice
  - 8% of community members report personal impact of inequities in the community
    - 100% of Black and 67% of Asian respondents reported personal impact of inequities
  - 87% say they/their children are treated equitably at school

- **This impacts people's perceptions of inequities in the community**
  - 83% of respondents feel that NHS is a bubble that makes it easy to avoid issues of diversity and social equity
    - *Interviewees often mentioned their worry that because most community members were comfortable, they may not be motivated to engage in equity work in NHS community*
  - People feel that there are inequities in America (89%), yet to a lesser extent NHS (70%)
  - 43% of respondents did not think social identity impacts how their children are treated
    - 100% of Black respondents and felt SI impacts how their children are treated
    - 81% of religious minorities felt SI impacts how their children are treated

How do community members engage in bias reduction?

- **Almost all respondents are willing to engage in conversations about diversity and equity and have already worked on reducing their own biases.**
  - Most people report investigating (94%) and working to eliminate (94%) their own biases
    - *When asked how people investigate and eliminate biases, the answers vary widely in content and depth. The comments range from "I do not work on this because I am not biased" to "I read about and listen to the struggles of others" to "I actively check my behavior in the moment"*

- **Although still relatively high, people are less likely to work on eliminating bias in the community (75%) compared to working on eliminating their own biases.**
  - Among population segments, students report engaging in community work the least (60%)
  - This number is higher for Black (100%) and Latin-American (81%) respondents.
  - Also higher for religious minorities (83%)

Parent Perceptions and Behavior

- **Parents are comfortable talking to their kids about different social identities (average 94% agreement), and think it is important to do so (average 95% agreement)**

- **However, there was greater variability in how much parents expose children to other social identities**
  - 66% of parents expose children to different social identities in the media they show their children (average 66% agreement),
  - 80% talk to their children about different social identities

- **Although parents think it is important to discuss social identity, they felt that it was comparatively less appropriate for teachers to do so (74%)**
  - This number is much lower for conservative respondents (23%)
  - *Interview data suggests that there is a degree of distrust in how teachers are discussing these topics*
  - *General weariness of an "agenda" or "bias" toward personal viewpoints*
  - *Teachers who were interviewed expressed fear of backlash from parents when they teach and/or address issues of DEI*

NHSSD Environment

- **Majority of respondents said NHS is not diverse**
  - 70% of respondents felt NHS was not a diverse learning environment
  - Contact with other social groups is one of the most critical factors in development and expression of bias.
    - Gaertner's Contact Hypothesis
  - *Interviews cited lack of diversity as a central problem both in how DEI issues have been handled in the past and in how the school/community is preparing students to leave NHS*
    - *i.e. cultural competence*
  - *In order to overcome the lack of diversity, interviewees frequently mentioned the need for NHSSD to create opportunities for students to engage with other communities outside of the district, in authentic ways*

- **Mixed results when asked about how students are treated**
  - 78% felt NHS is safe and welcoming to all students
  - 50% felt that all students are treated equally

- **A small majority believe there are inequities at NHS (64%), leaving a considerable segment of students, parents and teachers don't think there are inequities**
  - This mirrors the results of the community at large
  - *These results are in contrasts to many student and parent interviews that illuminated the persistent experience of prejudice among students. This ranged from self-reported incidence of racism and anti-Semitism to bullying students with mental health issues and body-shaming*

- **36% of respondents have reported either experiencing prejudice or their children experiencing prejudice at school**
  - *52% of religious minorities reported experiencing prejudice in school*
  - *100% of Black, 58% of Mixed-Race and 67% of Asian respondents reported experiencing prejudice in school*
  - *This number is high and is supported by many of the interviews with students*
  - *In addition to explicit experiences of prejudice, interviews of students also revealed their experience of "invisibility"*

Attitudes toward Equity Education

- **There is overwhelming support for creating a more inclusive and equitable curriculum**
  - 88% felt that curriculum should reflect the increasingly diverse US population
  - 12% agree that focusing on creating anti-racist puts NHS at risk of losing its highly ranked status.
  - 77% of respondents felt multicultural education should start in Elementary School

- **Bi-partisan support for anti-racist education**
  - 89% support teaching student's anti-racism policy and beliefs.
  - 85% support the funding of bias and anti-racism trainings for teachers

- **Many expressed the need for public benchmarking**
  - *Many interview and survey comments asked how we are going to benchmark and measure progress.*
  - *Many also wanted transparency with benchmarking and accountability.*

QUESTIONS