

# Ravenna School's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force Presents Community Report

*Report details task force timeline, subcommittee recommendations, and next steps for making the district more diverse, equitable & inclusive.*

(May 19, 2022, Ravenna, Ohio) – Superintendent Dr. Laura Hebert presented the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force Community Report on Monday, May 19 at a 6 p.m. open community meeting.

The report explained that the goal of the task force is to make the Ravenna School District more diverse, equitable & inclusive overall. The presentation detailed members of the DEI Task Force and their credentials, a timeline of how the task force has used its time over the 2021-2022 school year, the three subcommittees, the subcommittee recommendations, and a variety of action steps designed to make progress moving forward.

“I am very thankful for everyone who joined us this evening to hear about the work that went into these action items,” Hebert said. “Ravenna School District is lucky to have so many who want to make the district a better place.”

Every month from August 2021 through May 2022 the task force met with the ultimate goal of providing recommendations to the district. The meeting schedule was as follows:

- August 2021: Organizational Meeting
- September 2021: Creation of Vision Statements for Subcommittees
- October 2021: Diversity Training led by Kent State University
- November 2021: Diversity Training led by Kent State University
- December 2021: Review of Existing Board Policies to frame future work
- January 2022: Creation of Recommendations and Action Steps to support Board Policies
- February 2022: Creation of Recommendations and Action Steps to support Board Policies
- March 2022: Creation of Recommendations and Action Steps to support Board Policies
- April 2022: Finalization of Recommendations, Action Steps and proposed Timelines
- May 2022: Presentation to the Community and Board of Education

Each of the three subcommittees, which included Curriculum, Hiring & Retention, and Professional Development, created a vision statement and provided a list of action steps which will be presented and reviewed by the Board on Monday, May 23. Each committee provided a list of initial actions.

The **Curriculum Subcommittee**'s vision is “We will ignite our students’ and community’s transformative educational experience by elevating our curriculum to embrace the diversity of our students. We will instill a passion for lifelong learning and creativity into all aspects of our students’ lives.” The Curriculum Subcommittee’s initial recommendations are:

1. Create a schedule for curriculum review and evaluation for all content areas and all

grade levels. (This includes the arts and specials areas). This also includes the libraries in each building. Communicate this to the teachers and review the curriculum through the DEI lens.

2. View acceleration placement as well as gifted services/ advanced classes through the DEI lens.
3. Reestablish small groups at the high school and middle school that provide a safe environment for students to share personal stories to build their confidence.

The **Hiring & Retention Subcommittee's** vision is "We will ensure the success of all students and meet the needs of families and community members through the intentional recruitment, hiring and retention of a diverse, inclusive, and culturally competent group of faculty members."

Hiring & Retention Subcommittee's initial recommendations are:

1. Recruit a diverse and highly qualified staff.
2. Ensure members of the interviewing panel have taken part in the equity/equality and bias training before participating in an interview.
3. Analyze and, if necessary, revise the hiring practices to ensure alignment with the goals of the DEI Task Force.
4. Create and promote a positive culture that is conducive to the retention of a diverse and inclusive staff.

The **Professional Development Subcommittee's** vision is "To support and empower staff to develop their use of inclusive, culturally responsive practices to intentionally recognize and serve all children holistically." Professional Development Subcommittee's initial recommendations are:

1. Analyze existing discipline data (PBIS, referrals, suspensions) to develop a proactive toolkit including a comprehensive SEL curriculum, building competency in therapeutic rapport rooted in Handle with Care values and develop alternative discipline measures restorative in nature.
2. Review student code of conduct and dress code through the DEI lens while continuing to grow and expand PBIS programming in buildings and district wide.
3. Decrease the number of lost instructional hours of students due to exclusionary consequences and discipline.

In addition to presenting the recommendations to the board, next steps following the presentation include:

- Create a Ravenna Education Association DEI Standing Committee to monitor implementation progress of Curriculum recommendations.
- Integrating these recommendations into the Strategic Planning Process (set to begin in July 2022).

- Create a monitoring tool to be used by District Administrators to ensure progress in the areas of Curriculum, Hiring and Retention, and Professional Development.
- Reconvene Task Force in May 2023 to review implementation progress of all recommendations and assess opportunities for improvement.

“While the action items that we have listed tonight are important, they are just the beginning of the work that still needs to be done,” Hebert said. “As we approach our next steps, my goal is to continue to build momentum around the goals of the task force, so we can ultimately make Ravenna School District a more diverse, equitable and inclusive district.”

Members of the DEI Task Force include:

- Dr. Laura Hebert, Superintendent, Ravenna School District
- Dr. Amoeba Gooden, Facilitator, Kent State University
- Pamela Nation Calhoun, School Board Member
- Pat Dennison, School Board Member
- JaCari Parks, RISE/Ravenna High School Administrator
- Susan Huth, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Ravenna School District
- Jessica Haynes, Director of Special Services, Ravenna School District
- Ben Ribelin, Director of Human Resources, Ravenna School District

### **Some Information About Ravenna Schools**

Ravenna City School District serves over 2,200 students between seven schools in Ravenna, Ohio. The mission of the district is to provide an enriching, educational experience to all students within a safe, stimulating environment; and to promote the ideals of individual responsibility, civility and academic excellence as the foundation for both personal growth and honorable citizenship. Learn more at [www.ravennaschools.us](http://www.ravennaschools.us) or call 330.296-9679.

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