

JUNE 2019

EQUITY TASKFORCE REPORT



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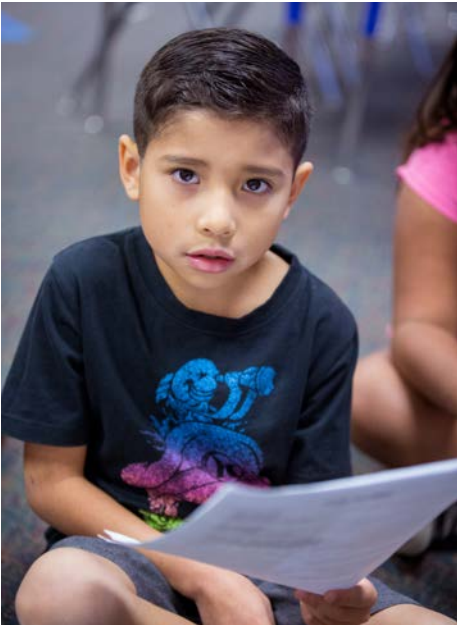
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A CALL TO ACTION OCT 2017



Riverside Unified School District is the 15th largest school district in California, serving nearly 42,000 students in 50 schools in Riverside.

On Monday, October 16, 2017, RUSD Superintendent Dr. David Hansen announced the creation of an Equity Task Force to address the opportunity and achievement gaps that exist within RUSD. A Task Force was convened that represented a cross-section of community, higher education, parent and advocacy groups.

"IT IS OUR EDUCATIONAL IMPERATIVE THAT DEMANDS THAT RUSD TAKE ACTION TO ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS ARE PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCELLENCE."

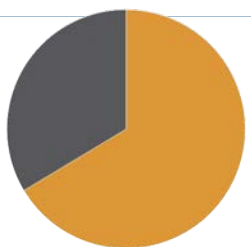
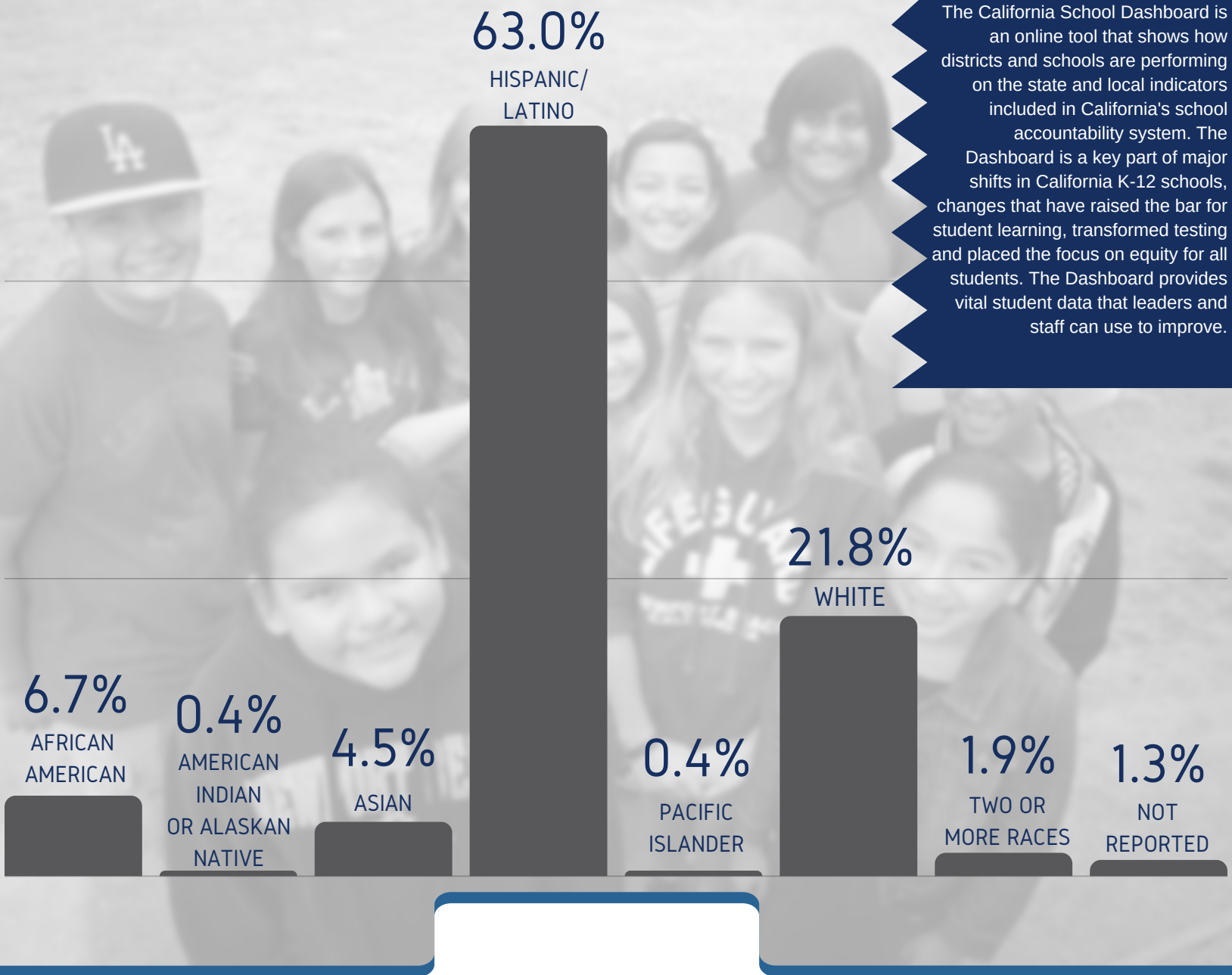
The team was charged to provide a focus and clear direction on the following two objectives:

- 1) Operationalize what Equity means for Riverside Unified School District and its staff, parents and students
- 2) Establish the framework to transform RUSD into a leading educational organization that readily addresses the achievement and opportunity gaps for all students



OUR STUDENTS

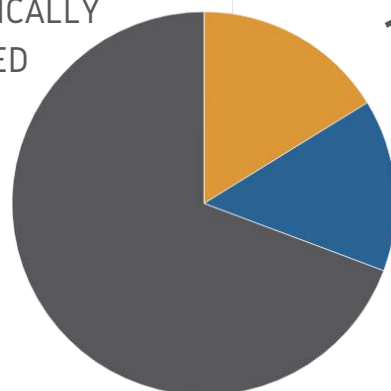
The California School Dashboard is an online tool that shows how districts and schools are performing on the state and local indicators included in California's school accountability system. The Dashboard is a key part of major shifts in California K-12 schools, changes that have raised the bar for student learning, transformed testing and placed the focus on equity for all students. The Dashboard provides vital student data that leaders and staff can use to improve.



66.4% SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED



8.1% STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



14.5% RECLASSIFIED FLUENT ENGLISH PROFICIENT

16.2% ENGLISH LEARNER

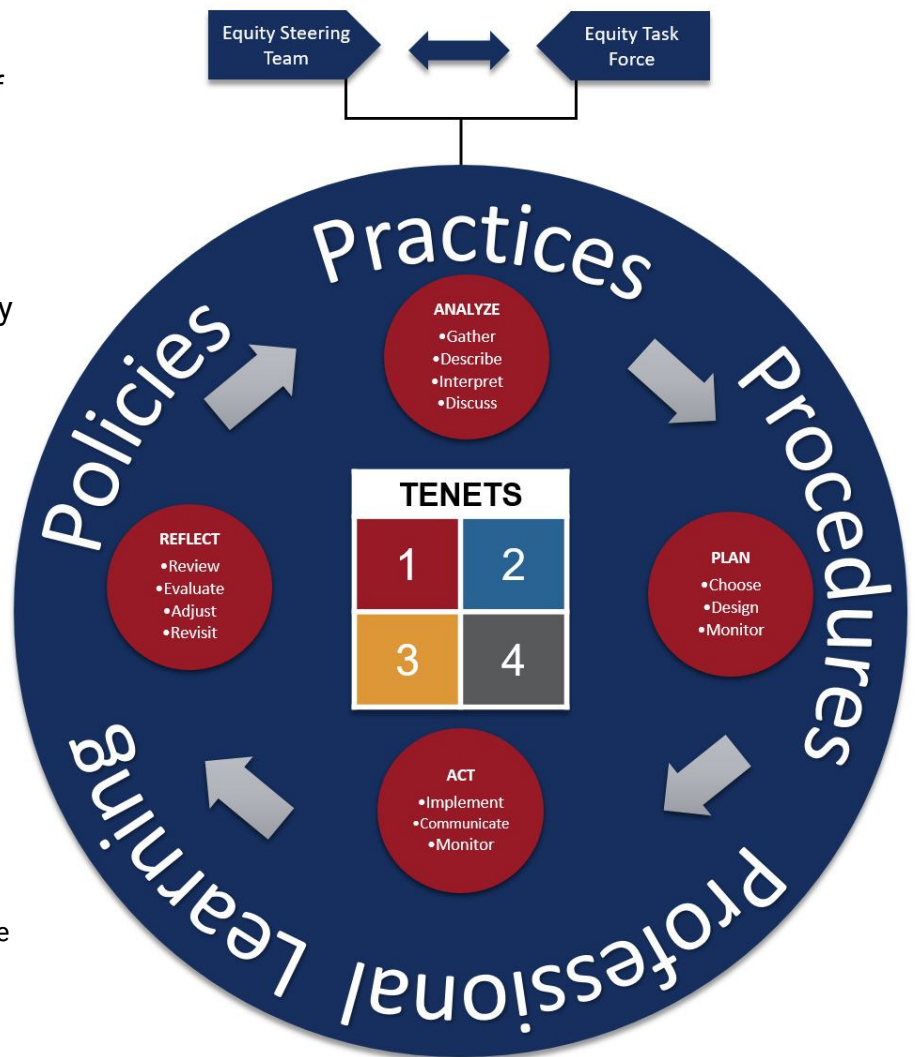
A SYSTEMIC APPROACH

RUSD is taking a systemic approach to addressing Equity in RUSD. Equity in itself is a multi-faceted problem, when not addressed. Our approach was to utilize a Cycle of Inquiry to address our gap. As indicated in the RUSD Guide for Instructional Direction, the Cycle of Inquiry is paramount to truly:

- Analyzing our data
- Planning effective next steps
- Acting on those steps
- Reflecting on what we did

Moreover, the Equity Task Force is guided by the work of the Steering Team. The Steering Team, comprised of RUSD leaders and staff, develops and executes the actions. Feedback and input is then garnered from the Task Force. Our approach addresses equity through entry points:

- **Policies** that mandate how we do business
- **Procedures** that denote the steps to achieve
- **Protocols** that are used both at district and site levels
- **Professional Learning** to impact a staff member's understanding and knowledge to better support our students



This comprehensive approach and Cycle of Inquiry framework is intended for maximum impact on students. As Dr. Michael Fullan suggests:

“There is only one way to achieve greater coherence, and that is through purposeful action and interaction, working on capacity, clarity, precision of practice, transparency, monitoring of progress and continuous correction. All of this requires the right mixture of “pressure and support”: the press for progress within supportive and focused cultures”

-Coherence, 2015

This is imperative to the success of ensuring access and equity for all students.

THE EQUITY TASK FORCE

The community of Riverside spans more than 300,000 residents. Riverside Unified School District values our families and communities. We have strong partnerships and have long many relationships with our community organizations, institutions of higher education and parent groups. RUSD is fortunate to live in a city that supports with all aspects of the achievement of our students.

The Task Force is comprised of members from:

- Community Advocacy: NAACP, Latino Network, TruEvolution
- Higher Education: Riverside Community College, UCR, Cal Baptist
- Riverside County Office of Education
- Business Partners: Mayor's Office
- Parent Groups: AAPAC, DELAC, CAC, PTA
- Student representatives: From our own High schools

The Equity Steering Team is the working team to actually execute the work, delve into the issues and create the positive conditions for students. The team includes:

- Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Support
- Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
- Assistant Superintendent of Professional Growth Systems
- Director of Elementary Education
- Director of Secondary Education
- Director of Research, Assessment & Evaluation
- Director of Community Engagement & Extended Learning
- Director of English Learners & Professional Development
- Director of Curriculum & Assessment
- Director of Innovation & Learner Engagement
- Digital Learning Initiatives Coordinator
- Wellness & Engagement Coordinator
- School, Family, & Community Partnerships Coordinator
- Instructional Services Specialist
- High School and Middle School Principals

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.

— Coretta Scott King



DEFINING EQUITY

Over the last year and a half, the Equity Task Force convened to develop an operational definition of Equity for RUSD that provided the vision and driver for the annual actions. The Steering team leads the efforts in executing the actions. The Task Force then provides critical feedback and input on the progress of the actions, as well as considers any other ideas that would positive impact not only our students, but our overall system. This was the cornerstone and first step to begin the efforts and tackling the components of an equitable educational system for students.



Equity is accomplished when access is based on need, and every student is provided with what they individually require to learn and succeed to fulfill their academic and social advancement.



The following four tenets are the supports necessary to operationalize the equity definition in RUSD.

Eliminate disparities and inequitable practices

Implement inclusive practices and policies

Honor individuality with a focus on high outcomes for all

Guarantee respectful treatment where all individuals feel valued

2018-19 ACTIONS

1 Analyze, revise, and implement changes to homework policies.

PROCESS

- Committee contacted other districts for their policies, gathered research and consulted with Great Schools Partnership on current research
- Surveys were created based on research
- Surveys administered to students, parents and teachers

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

- Synthesize research and survey results
- Draft board policy
- Get stakeholder input on the policy
- Recommend board approval
- Seek early implementers in Spring of 2020
- Implement in 2020-2021

CURRENT STATE

A homework policy committee was convened. The committee gathered and reviewed current research and surrounding district board policies. Students, parents and teachers were surveyed on homework practices and beliefs.

2 Analyze, revise, and implement changes to mastery based learning.

PROCESS

During District meetings with Site Leadership Teams, Instructional Services, in collaboration with Research Assessment and Evaluation, developed a common understanding of what our District assessments are, why we give them and how to administer and analyze the results using the Cycle of Inquiry to improve instruction.

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The next steps for our work in Mastery Based Learning is to focus on instructional strategies that increase access for all students by removing barriers and maximize learning. Through the work we have planned with MTSS and Inclusive Practices we are focusing on providing teachers with tools in their toolboxes to help them present information in multiple ways and use a variety of methods to engage learners which provides more access to curriculum

CURRENT STATE

Mastery of Based Learning supports systems of instruction, assessment, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating mastery of knowledge and skills over time. It is important that all stakeholders are clear about what students are to learn, be able to do, and be like.

2018-19 ACTIONS

3 Analyze current site level practices in family engagement.

PROCESS

- Reviewed current family engagement research
- Consulted with Riverside County Office of Education, San Bernardino County Office of Education, and other agencies to assess practices.
- Utilized California Department of Education (CDE) Family Engagement Framework and Parent Teacher Association National Standards for Family-School Partnerships to define best practices.
- Partnered with California State University San Bernardino to create family engagement baseline.
- Developed Family Engagement School Site inquiry to review family engagement practices and conducted one-on-one empathy interviews with principals
- Meetings were conducted between October 2018 - April 2019.

CURRENT STATE

Site-based family engagement practices were assessed to determine strengths, challenges, and resources required to provide and sustain equitable family engagement activities. Practices varied greatly from site to site.

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

A baseline was determined for site level family engagement practices.

4 Review Success Indicator data points (SBAC and ELPI) to identify barriers to success for student groups.

CURRENT STATE

The Research, Assessment and Evaluation (RAE) Office analyzed the 2017-18 summative academic achievement results of all student groups within RUSD. The analysis included all Indicators released on the California Dashboard.

PROCESS

The RAE office utilized the Cycle of Inquiry in the analysis of the 2017-18 California Dashboard. The team closely scrutinized both the Status (current year results) and Change (past years results) to ascertain any trends and patterns for student group outcomes. Student outcomes in the lowest performance level (Red) were noted. Any student group with outcomes in the Red category were flagged, with attention paid to the total number of indicators with this level of performance result. Additionally, downward trends were identified by indicator and student group even if the overall results were not in the lowest performance category. Downward trends constitute "red flags" and could lead to future poor performance.

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

Significant achievement gaps exist for two of RUSD's vulnerable student populations - Students with Disabilities and students categorized as Foster Youth. Students in these two groups continue to achieve at the lowest performance level (Red) as measured by the California Dashboard. Particularly, in the Dashboard Academic Indicator, Graduation Rate, Suspension, and the College/Career Indicator. Additionally, five student groups should be watched carefully over the next one to two years, as their outcomes in key Indicators are exhibiting downward trends and are close to the lowest performance level (Red).

Recommendations for improvement include increasing teacher knowledge of differentiated instruction, such as Universal Design for Learning, through teacher professional learning. Also, comprehensive student supports in academics and the social-emotional dynamics of school should be put into place. This could be accomplished through a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework.

2018-19 ACTIONS

5 Audit and analyze specialty student programs.

CURRENT STATE

The Research, Assessment and Evaluation (RAE) Office analyzed the demographic makeup of a number of key specialty school programs within RUSD. The analysis included the following programs: Riverside STEM Academy (RSA), Core Knowledge schools, Custom Schools (Personalized Learning), Project Lead The Way (high school programs), and Dual Language Immersion schools.

PROCESS

The RAE office leveraged our student information system (Aeries) to obtain demographic information for the specialty programs under study. The team closely reviewed the demographic breakdown of each program at each school where the program is being implemented. Those results were compared to the overall demographic makeup of the school in an attempt to gain an understanding of any differences between the specialty program and the overall school.

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The resultant data confirmed that for four out of the five specialty programs under study the demographic makeup of the program mirrored the demographic makeup of the school, within 5 to 6 percentage points. This may be due to the manner in which RUSD implements specialty programs. That is, the programs tend to be implemented on a school-wide basis, are deeply integrated into the fabric of the school, or purposely target certain student populations. The one exception to this was at Riverside STEM Academy (RSA). The overall RSA student population is not close to the overall demographic makeup of the district. It is overly skewed toward Asian and White students. This reality has been addressed through a redesign of the recruitment and lottery process for RSA. The new process was put into practice for the 2018-19 school year.

Recommendations include continuing to implement the redesigned lottery process for RSA and utilizing an "equity lens" when building, recruiting, expanding and/or implementing new specialty programs.

6 Revise RUSD mission and vision statement to reflect equity value and belief system.

CURRENT STATE

The RUSD Board of Education values the extraordinary learning experiences for students. The RUSD Mission and Vision read as shown on the right.

PREVIOUS MISSION:

We expect exceptional learning every day that leads to lifelong success.

PREVIOUS VISION:

We will inspire students to take advantage of life's opportunities in a global society by preparing them academically.

PROCESS

Over the 2018-19 school year, the staff, families and students engaged in various surveys and focus groups. The data assisted in developing an updated and renewed mission, motto and tagline.

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The Mission, Motto and Tagline were revised to reflect the values of the Board of Education.

UPDATED MISSION:

Riverside Unified School District provides engaging, innovative, and equitable learning experiences for all students.

UPDATED VALUES:

Community, Engagement, Equity, Excellence, Innovation, Well-being

The Mission and Values are then realized throughout the organization.

2018-19 ACTIONS

7 Engage students in order to identify their needs.

PROCESS

LCAP and Equity Student Forums were held jointly.

The following questions related to equity were asked:

- Does that staff at your school (teachers, counselors, administrators, and others) treat everyone fairly, regardless of differences?
- Do your teachers help you see more than one point of view?
- Do you see pictures, artwork, and books at your school that represent you and your friends?
- How do your teachers demonstrate high expectations for all?
- How does your school help people feel welcome on campus?

Forums were held at all RUSD High Schools. A diverse group of students representing the make-up of each individual high school participated. Students were broken into groups and asked questions by a staff member while another staff member noted the responses.

Additionally, students in 8th, 10th, and 11th grades received the survey through their RUSD email accounts. They were given the opportunity to respond to the survey either on their own or through their social science classes.

CURRENT STATE

Student voice and input had been gathered through the LCAP Survey, but specific issues and experience to equity had not previously been collected in this uniform fashion.

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The results for both the student forums and survey can be found in Appendix B and C.

8 Implement embedded professional development for students, teachers and principals to increase cultural proficiency.

Current State

Previously, RUSD staff has participated in various Cultural Proficiency professional development opportunities. These professional development opportunities were singular and not accessed by all RUSD staff. In partnership with UC Riverside, RUSD has thirty-four staff members from across the district (including certificated, classified, and management) who are being trained to as equity leaders. These thirty-four individuals will serve as trainer of trainers and will work in small teams upon successful completion of their training to build capacity throughout the district, particularly at our schools.

PROCESS

UC Riverside is working with RUSD to develop a monitoring system to gauge the impact of these efforts.

NEXT STEPS

A second cohort of 30-40 individuals will be trained. This cycle until we have successfully developed a systemic infrastructure to reinforce practices and behaviors that are culturally proficient. Our goal is to build a multifaceted approach to building our collective capacity to be more culturally competent and we will continue to explore approaches that support sustainable change.

2018-19 ACTIONS

9 Task Equity Steering Team to guide and implement efforts across the district.

CURRENT STATE

The Equity Steering Team is a newly organized structure of RUSD staff to lead the efforts equity. The district did not have an Equity Task Force or team of community members to serve as the dedicated partnership to equity actions in the district, previously.

PROCESS

Using methods and strategies from the American Productivity and Quality Center, The Carnegie Foundation, the Cycle of Inquiry, the Steering Team developed the strategy of a feedback loop to the working group of the Steering Team to the Equity Task Force.

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The Equity Steering Team is a necessary and vital component of ensuring that the actions take place and that the work becomes embedded in the systems of the schools and districts.

10 Reconvene Equity Task Force on a quarterly basis to reflect on and monitor actions taken through the year.

CURRENT STATE

This is the first time that a dedicated Equity Task Force was convened for RUSD. It has elevated the urgency and community involvement to the degree on garnering targeted input on specific actions associated with access, disproportionality and equity in our schools and district.

PROCESS

Quarterly meetings were held to provide updates and gather feedback on the 2018-19 actions.

FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

- Maintain the function and structure of the Task force.
- Determine ways to get more regular meeting attendance from Task Force members. We will reach out to current organizations to assure their participation on the 2019-20 school year.
- Streamline the Task Force membership list.
- Increase outreach and updates to community and parent groups.

CLOSING

"When a flower
doesn't bloom you
fix the environment
in which it grows, not
the flower."

-Alexander Den Heijer

Our district's work of equity is urgent, long-term and systemic. There is no quick fix to ensuring access and equity for all of our students. It requires all of us working together to a common purpose. Together with our Board of Education, staff, families and community, we are thoughtfully analyzing our system and addressing equity from all aspects. Our work is not to change our students or communities but to look at ourselves and find ways to adapt to better serve our stakeholders.



APPENDIX A: PTA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS*

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has published an assessment guide with the standards shown below. The standards provide a framework for guidance on successful collaboration between families, schools, and communities. The RUSD Equity Steering Team will use this framework to standardize family engagement practices throughout RUSD sites.

1 - WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

2 - COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

3 - SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

4 - SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

5 - SHARING POWER

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

6 - COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

*The information for Appendix A was adapted from the *PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide, 2008*. More information can be found at www.pta.org.

APPENDIX B: LCAP STUDENT FORUM RESPONSE SUMMARY

LCAP and Equity Student Forums were held jointly. The following questions related to equity were asked:

- Does that staff at your school (teachers, counselors, administrators, and others) treat everyone fairly, regardless of differences?
- Do your teachers help you see more than one point of view?
- Do you see pictures, artwork, and books at your school that represent you and your friends?
- How do your teachers demonstrate high expectations for all?
- How does your school help people feel welcome on campus?

Summary of Student Forum Responses

- Students described both formal and informal ways they feel welcome on campus including friendly greetings and groups such as Link Crew.
- Students remarked on their perception that some students are treated more favorably than others. Students in AVID or AP classes and those involved in sports were perceived as being treated more positively.
- Students described specialty programs such as Heritage and Legacy as highlighting different cultural groups.
- Students expressed their thoughts that certain teachers demonstrated consistently high expectations while for other teachers, higher expectations were reserved for AP classes and for students in AVID. Students also suggested that there were times when the expectations seemed too high and the load can become too much due to the overall amount of homework and assignments.

APPENDIX C: STUDENT EQUITY SURVEY RESULTS

The following are the results of the Student Equity Survey. The answer options are as follows:

A) Most of the time B) Some of the time C) Never D) I do not know

	Prompt	A	B	C	D	Count (n)
1	I am accepted as a valued member of my school community.	49.47%	28.34%	4.16%	18.03%	1,708
2	My teachers encourage me to learn about people with various cultural practices	34.64%	44.67%	10.26%	10.43%	1,706
3	The staff at my school treats everyone fairly, regardless of differences.	53.26%	33.80%	5.35%	7.58%	1,701
4	Bullying is taken seriously and action is taken immediately at my school.	41.29%	33.71%	8.88%	16.12%	1,700
5	My family feels welcomed on campus.	57.62%	16.72%	2.47%	23.19%	1,699
6	I feel comfortable talking to my teachers when someone is treating me unfairly.	30.97%	36.01%	19.88%	13.14%	1,705
7	I feel comfortable asking for help when needed.	43.02%	44.72%	10.02%	2.23%	1,706
8	My own perspective is valued in school, even if it is different.	34.63%	40.33%	7.23%	17.81%	1,701
9	My teachers have high behavioral and academic expectations for all students.	64.45%	27.43%	1.65%	6.47%	1,699
10	My teachers give extra support to students who speak different languages.	41.30%	18.16%	3.88%	36.66%	1,702
11	The staff at my school treat all students with respect.	54.61%	35.35%	346.00%	6.58%	1,703
12	The people who volunteer at my school look like me.	11.89%	24.43%	21.66%	42.02%	1,699
13	I see pictures, artwork, and books in school that represent my friends and me.	16.07%	31.43%	27.25%	25.25%	1,699
14	My teachers help me to see more than one point of view.	48.77%	38.48%	5.23%	7.52%	1,702
15	I feel physically safe in my school.	51.76%	34.11%	7.33%	6.80%	1,706
16	The teachers at my school look like me.	14.78%	25.98%	31.09%	28.15%	1,705
17	All of the holidays that students celebrate are represented equally.	37.72%	30.90%	8.40%	22.97%	1,702
18	I feel emotionally safe in my school.	38.71%	36.42%	13.49%	11.38%	1,705
19	The teachers/staff at my school care about me for who I am.	48.09%	26.98%	4.16%	20.76%	1,705
20	My family feels comfortable asking questions or getting information at the school.	65.81%	16.69%	2.93%	14.58%	1,708



RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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