

# **FNSBSD**

# **DIVERSITY, EQUITY,**

# **and**

# **INCLUSION**

# **PHASE II**

# **REPORT**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes an analysis of how the FNSBSD employees, school board, students, and families understand and articulate their perceptions of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) climate and efforts in the FNSBSD. The goal was to evaluate and discover specific areas of need and potential barriers to a more equitable and inclusive environment and recommend strategies for improvement. The primary departments addressed in this report are:

- Teaching and Learning Department
- Human Resource Department (Recruitment and Retention)
- Federal Programs Department
- Communications, Development & Engagement Department

The previous report (submitted Dec 2019) reviewed program structure options, best practices, recommended staffing levels, and community involvement efforts for effective DEI programs. The categories highlighted as essential characteristics in the previous report will be used as a standard of measurement to evaluate the FNSBSD's current DEI efforts and programs.

## EVALUATION PROCESS, PROCEDURE, AND LIMITATIONS

### THE PROCESS

Issues related to DEI are complex and require long-term and transformational actions, informed by ongoing reviews and discussions. RMG Consulting will provide an external view of the FNSBSD's DEI efforts. This equity analysis is intended to help FNSBSD leadership identify the degree of systematic equity or inequity that is present within the FNSBSD.

This examination will give feedback to provide the leadership with clear, accurate, and useful insights into the current DEI efforts and provide context for strategies to improve equitable outcomes. The goal is to understand how FNSBSD employees, students, and families perceive the DEI climate. Information in this report is from one-on-one interviews, NCBI community engagement sessions, the FNSBSD's Data Dashboard, and the FNSBSD's Climate Survey results.

### PROCEDURE and LIMITATIONS

A typical comprehensive DEI audit requires a team of investigators and approximately six months to one year to accomplish. Therefore, recommendations in this report must be considered within the context of time and depth limitations. The timeframe may have limited the extent to which participants were able to commit substantial thoughts, concerns, or suggestions regarding relevant DEI issues.

Due to the current analysis limitations, the FNSBSD has indicated commitment to continuing the evaluation process to gather more information, while integrating the recommended strategies to drive positive change within the FNSBSD's culture.

## THE METHOD

Data analysis and feedback from multiple interviews are shared in this report. The tool used to record and report this information is the SCORE Analysis. The **SCORE** Analysis is a SWOT-type analysis that addresses the **Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities**, and **Resistance** within an organization, which helps to shape **Equity goals** in DEI planning and implementation.

## EVALUATION DATA SOURCES and PARTICIPANTS

The primary sources of information used in this report are: The Data Dashboard, School Climate Survey, National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) community engagement sessions, and one-on-one interviews.

### DATA DASHBOARD

The FNSBSD's Dashboard is an information management tool that visually tracks, analyzes, and displays key performance indicators and critical data points to monitor the health of the FNSBSD in specific areas. The Dashboard is a great tool to support data-driven decision-making and provides community access to transparent data.

### SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS

The ED School Climate Survey (EDSCLS) is the ideal tool to evaluate DEI efforts. This climate data communicates the experience and perceptions of the students, staff, and parents.

### NCBI COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

NCBI is an international non-profit leadership development network dedicated to eliminating racism and other forms of oppression. NCBI and the FNSBSD's NCBI Team (Fairbanks Coalition Builders) conducted community engagement sessions and FNSBSD Professional Development sessions, Train-the-Trainer sessions, and one-day trainings in which caucus groups answered the various questions.

### ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Individuals were interviewed and asked a series of questions to obtain their perspective of the FNSBSD's performance in the area of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

DATA SOURCE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Data Dashboard	11 Measured Areas
School Climate Surveys	5,328 Students 1,561 Parents 681 Staff
NCBI Community Engagement Sessions	400+ Individuals
One-On-One Interviews	28 Individuals

## EVALUATION COMPONENTS AND BEST PRACTICES

In the previous report submitted in December 2019, essential characteristics and best practices were identified that must be in place and functioning effectively to have a successful FNSBSD-wide DEI program. This current report has evaluated the FNSBSD based on those elements.

## CONCLUSIONS

The FNSBSD has a demonstrated commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Through researching similar school districts, program essentials, and best practices, it is evident the FNSBSD has made significant investments and is well established in its efforts to provide an equitable education for all students.

The following is a summarization of the information collected during the interview sessions and from the surveys with regards to the FNSBSD's commitment to its diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Five primary areas continued to surface throughout the process. Although these areas were not entirely deficient, strengthening them would enable the FNSBSD to achieve significant impacts. The highlighted fields are Leader and Staff Professional Development, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Curriculum, Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining minorities, Measuring and Benchmarking the effectiveness of DEI, and Communication and Community Engagement.

The following summarizes the key **Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities**, and **Resistance** within an organization, which helps to shape **Equity goals** concerning the organization's pursuit of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives.

Key **STRENGTHS** expressed by participants clustered around the following areas:

### **The commitment of Leadership to advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Although not one of the five highlighted areas, it is undeniably an area that must be acknowledged. The FNSBSD leaders are aware of the significance of DEI. They are actively committed to ensuring that equity is foundational and woven into every fiber of the FNSBSD's approach to equitable education for all. This focus is exemplified by placing Equity and Inclusion as one of the four priorities in the FNSBSD's SY20-25 strategic plan. This priority communicates that Equity and Inclusion are not only a strategic goal, but a priority and standard of operation in the delivery of services.

Participants stated that leaders had made a substantial commitment and investment of time and resources to the advancement of the FNSBSD-wide DEI efforts. They also expressed confidence in the ability of the Leadership Team to address DEI at a much deeper and systemic level. Leadership has demonstrated a commitment to reviewing and discussing the established programs, policies, and practices for the progression of DEI.

The Superintendent and School Board are open to receiving unfavorable feedback and criticism yet continue to stand firm on the FNSBSD's foundational statement of "*Equity for All.*" They have displayed a high degree of respectfulness and civility during public comments during the school board meetings' community comment section.

## 1. LEADER AND STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### **Key Strengths**

The FNSBSD does an exceptional job of providing professional development and guidance for its staff. The FNSBSD is fully invested in continued education for staff and has demonstrated a genuine commitment to improving in the area of DEI. Many have stated that the growth opportunities the FNSBSD offers is unmatched. The FNSBSD has trained a group of leaders in the NCBI process and has formed several NCBI teams to assist in promoting the DEI efforts.

The FNSBSD is providing training in restorative, social-emotional, culturally responsive practices. It is a significant achievement to have methods that address the student's physical, social, emotional, and mental health. Many are proud that FNSBSD is investing in educators and providing more tools to help them care for students and families. The FNSBSD has begun these practices with the desire to provide equitable care and education for each student, particularly those who traditionally have had less access to these services.

These practices are the core of offering equity to the student and families. Research has indicated that instituting these practices will result in providing safe spaces and welcoming environments for all students.

These practices demonstrate that the FNSBSD is taking a proactive approach to address behaviors and trauma instead of a reactive one. Many of this study's participants had examples of positive outcomes as a result of these practices.

### **Key Challenges**

Due to the lack of diversity within the District's staff and leadership, some leaders may feel uncomfortable being champions for DEI. Additionally, it was a general belief that most staff are not equipped to deal with issues regarding areas of race and discrimination, micro- and macro-aggressions, and cultural competencies. Many made the statement that although leadership is committed to expanding DEI, there appears to be a breakdown somewhere between the leaders' intentions and the experiences of the individuals that should benefit. Many believe they could further assist in the advancement of DEI if they were better informed and equipped as to how they could do so.

### **Key Opportunities**

There is opportunity for FNSBSD leaders to play a more prominent role in the DEI leadership and training sessions. Training will equip leaders to become DEI champions, setting an example for others to follow suit. Leaders taking a more prominent role in DEI efforts will help to establish a clear message that DEI is important.

There is an opportunity to elevate the importance of DEI by providing training to help all staff feel more confident in having conversations around DEI. Equipping staff will create an environment where DEI can be weaved into the day-to-day culture and will not only benefit the FNSBSD but have a positive impact on the community.

There is also the opportunity to quickly get new hires educated on the District's commitment to DEI by adding topics to the onboarding process. This will demonstrate to new hires that DEI is essential and how the FNSBSD will be more unified, effective when diverse and inclusive is fully embraced.

### **Key Resistance**

Participants believe that with the FNSBSD being predominantly Caucasian, many staff members do not fully understand DEI, and resistance ensues. Many of this study's participants believe there is a great deal of unintentional resistance. Some resistance exists due to a few staff's aversion to change and reluctance to participate in new processes, while others are grounded more in fear of making mistakes when attempting to engage in DEI practices. There is the fear of a discussion becoming intense and then saying the wrong thing, using the wrong terminology, and being labeled. Many Caucasians may feel blamed and ashamed during DEI training, and some believe that merely talking about race will only stir things up. Likewise, minorities noted fear of being singled out or retaliated against for speaking out about issues of racial discrimination.

**It is worth noting that every minority that was interviewed or contributed input to this research stated that DEI training must be made mandatory.**

### **Key Equity Gains**

*The district can gain* an atmosphere where leaders are the DEI champions. *The district can gain* an environment where the goals set forth within the FNSBSD's equity and diversity strategies are consistent in every school and classroom. *The district can gain* a fully supported DEI professional development program that will equip each staff with the confidence and ability to promote DEI and to handle issues they are confronted with. *The district can gain* an environment free of bias, prejudice, discrimination, and any form of intimidation or violence. *The district can gain* the ability to identify what is needed to help staff establish a better understanding of the causes of inequities, disproportionate rates of school success, and biases. *The district can gain* knowledge of what is needed to train and support the development of strategies and action steps to overcome problems effectively, to have a place where each person is valued, respected, welcomed, and belongs.

## **2. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE CURRICULUM**

### **Key Strengths**

The Teaching and Learning Department staff have displayed a great deal of understanding of the value of DEI. The department staff have been examining ways to include DEI as part of the learning materials for students. The work in this department and the district in the area of DEI is equipping students to have a broader global world view through cultural proficiency, cultural pride, and culturally responsive teaching practices. Furthermore, the district has surveyed the community to determine what skill sets the community expects a high school graduate to attain and has begun the work of creating a profile of a graduate.

The curriculum committee has recommended adding an elective on Civil Rights and LGBTQ+ literature. The committee has included the community as part of the change process by soliciting feedback on each draft before the final draft goes to the School Board for consideration of adoption. The process has been very transparent, informative, and welcoming of community input, of which there has been a tremendous quantity.

### **Key Challenges**

Participants spoke of a strained relationship with some in the community, due to the FNSBSD's progressive stances on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and particularly its support for the LGBTQ+ population. Even when the FNSBSD utilized feedback through surveys to garner community input before deciding to include a subject, there was some backlash from members of the community, declaring the process was not transparent.

Others have stated that the district's curriculum needs to have more Diversity and Inclusion, particularly in the area of how American History is represented from a dominant Euro-American perspective. The contribution and mistreatment of people of color through slavery, colonization, and segregation is being minimized, misrepresented, or is simply missing from textbooks.

### **Key Opportunities**

Including diversity in the curriculum is essential. It gives students a full view of history and the world, which can positively affect them. An inclusive and diverse curriculum can empower underrepresented students, allowing them to experience higher self-confidence, which inevitably leads to more opportunities in the future. Reducing racial stereotypes and fostering cross-racial understanding is an important aspect in preparing students to be productive contributors to a global society. Evidence also shows that students who are exposed to diversity in the classroom are known to exhibit less racial prejudice.

The district has an opportunity to provide a curriculum where each student's identity is seen in a positive light. There's an opportunity to expand the aspects of diversity discussed in the classroom, with attention to historical and contemporary instances of institutional discrimination.

### **Key Resistance**

The district receives resistance internally and externally when it comes to incorporating DEI into the curriculum. There are groups in the community that believe the LGBTQ lifestyle, being forced on their children. Some staff mentioned feeling stuck between pressure from community members for embracing DEI as well as pressure from inside the FNSBSD for not fully embracing it.

It was also mentioned that some teachers can get trapped in a, “*This is how we have always done it*” mindset and are reluctant to change. There are some that believe school time would be better spent on academics than “non-academic” DEI initiatives, and that there is not enough time to adequately address DEI and cover the required subjects.

### **Key Equity Gains**

***The district can gain*** an environment where culture used in the curriculum shows respect and value for all students and families. ***The district can gain*** a curriculum that is consistent, cohesive, well-articulated, and differentiated by skill level, learning style, process, and is fully representative of the diverse perspectives and cultures represented in the FNSBSD. ***The district can gain*** disciplinary practices to reduce or alleviate trauma.

## **3. RECRUITING, HIRING, AND RETAINING MINORITIES**

### **Strengths**

Participants expressed hope and confidence in the FNSBSD commitment of increased diversity of staff, especially regarding African American and male representation. Several mentioned that the HR department has reached out to many agencies in the community to post job openings and has taken part in multiple job fairs to reach a higher number of diverse applicants.

HR created an Inclusion Diversity Action Plan (IDAP) Committee that is actively working to address the lack of staff diversity and identify ways to integrate DEI in the fibers of the FNSBSD. The group has created four very distinct goals to address DEI concerns and has begun strategizing ways to overcome the challenges and strengthen the areas.

### **Key Challenges**

Many participants commented on the lack of people of color on staff and that the staff demographics do not match the community or student populations. Additionally, the diversity in the district is mainly found in the support and lower-paid staff positions. Some believe that the absence of diversity appears to have created challenges to the advancement of some DEI initiatives and the attraction of diversity into the applicant pool.

### **Key Opportunities**

The development and promotion of DEI will help the District in providing an atmosphere where people of different ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations can feel a sense of belonging. A strong DEI program will foster an environment that is more attractive to prospective employees. Organizations that promote and communicate the importance of DEI have high minority application rates, which lead to considerably more minority hires.

### **Key Resistance**

The lack of diversity within staff has minority staff believing that the FNSBSD is not entirely committed to DEI. Participants mentioned that without a dedicated DEI advocate position to help the DEI work to move forward, attracting diverse talent will continue to be an elusive goal.



There are many opinions about diversity in hiring that create resistance, intentional and unintentional. Some of these views are:

- Underrepresented populations got their job because of their race or gender.
- Minorities must work harder than their peers and must prove themselves more before they are accepted.
- Qualified diverse candidates are not hired, because hiring committees feel they did not fit the established culture.
- Job descriptions seem to weed out minorities, and some job descriptions inflate the qualifications to include degrees that have s nothing to do with the job.

### **Key Equity Gains**

***The district can gain*** the ability to recruit and retain a diversified workforce where students can see staff that looks like them. ***The district can gain*** knowledge of identifying the challenges in achieving the goal of hiring and retaining diverse staff at all levels. ***The district can gain*** a vibrant training program to equip leaders and supervisors in establishing a workplace free of bias, harassment, prejudice, or discrimination that is safe and welcoming for all employees.

## **4. MEASURING AND BENCHMARKING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEI**

### **Key Strengths**

The FNSBSD has placed Equity and Inclusion in the SY20-25 Strategic Plan. Putting DEI at the forefront of the FNSBSD's priorities communicates the degree of importance the leadership places on DEI. The Strategic Plan and DEI efforts have many expressing excitement and hope that DEI is becoming a priority to drive culture change FNSBSD-wide. Embracing DEI as a district value sets the atmosphere for higher expectations.

Each department has created an Action Plan detailing how Equity and Inclusion will be integrated and increased in its programs and activities. This provides direction for each member to understand how their department or program will contribute to the FNSBSD meeting its overall strategic equity and inclusion goals.

The district has multiple sources of collecting DEI related data. Many of the programs and departments have substantial amounts of information to substantiate its necessity, benefits, shortfalls, and returns on investments. Below are just a few:

- The FNSBSD yearly climate survey is a source of information to highlight the current FNSBSD environment. Having readily available data each year for staff, students, and families can provide FNSBSD leaders with perspectives of each stakeholder group. This data also gives leadership insight into the effectiveness of the current initiatives and strategies.
- Team Optimizing Project (TOP)- The data from this survey provides leadership with information to increase staff engagement, improve work environments, and increase employee retention and success.
- FNSBSD's Data dashboard has a substantial amount of information. It provides many categories to select from, including race, gender, economic status, to name a few. The data dashboard offers the community an uncensored look into the FNSBSD's performance. This level of transparency is substantial and displays a high degree of honesty and openness.

### **Key Challenges**

Equity and Inclusion can be challenging to measure. There is a challenge to measure the effectiveness of programs promptly, make quick, adequate, and sustainable adjustments to deficit areas. Nevertheless, the district does an excellent job in the collection of DEI data and presentation of the information on the Data Dashboard. The Dashboard is an exceptional tool and very informative, but most importantly, it displays a high degree of transparency.



The School Climate Survey is another mechanism that is rich with information and allows the staff, students, and families to express their views of the District's performance. The challenge is showing the community that the information is not only being collected but used to make data-driven decisions.

Additionally, many of the equity-based programs have benchmarking systems built in but they are not all being measured consistently or presented collaboratively. The district faces the challenge of not having a standardized method to gauge the effectiveness of the various DEI programs and efforts or a standard for communicating the consolidated results.

### **Key Opportunities**

The FNSBSD is accomplishing a great deal in the areas of DEI, however it is not being widely communicated. This leads to the belief that there is nothing being achieved. Evidencing DEI can only elevate the awareness of the district's DEI efforts. Presenting data can foster trust, satisfaction, commitment, and can strengthen the FNSBSD's reputation in the community. It can also garner support and involvement. This data is essential for engaging stakeholders, strengthening staff commitment, securing additional resources, and advocating for further change. Having a standardized method to measure results would not only allow for a consistent way of collecting data and viewing data, it would also enable results, efforts, and shortfalls to be identified and communicated in a more precise manner.

Having an active DEI measuring system would allow the FNSBSD to communicate results at the same level of transparency as the Data Dashboard. It would give the FNSBSD leaders hard data to describe the effectiveness of the DEI programs.

### **Key Resistance**

Although there was no clear resistance to measuring and benchmarking DEI, it should be noted that when it is recorded and promoted it has the potential to create additional resistance internally and externally. Equity often does not "feel fair", although most people are okay with the concept of equality. The thought of one group receiving more resources can make some feel the process is unjust and can cause resentment.

The very topic of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has a way of evoking emotions, both good and bad. Although data can substantiate the need to provide more and demonstrate positive outcomes, feelings can override those facts. Some individuals do not trust data when presented. They believe that the data is or will only be manipulated to corroborate a forced agenda. The district is likely to continue to experience resistance until the concept of "Equity for All" is fully understood and embraced.

### **Key Equity Gains**

***The district can gain*** the available data to demonstrate the effectiveness of programs and communicate the value and return on investment. ***The district can gain*** the ability to observe the evolution of diversity initiatives and their subsequent impact on all areas of the school FNSBSD. ***The district can gain*** available data on quantified outcomes that will allow the leadership to make adjustments accordingly. ***The district can gain*** methods to quickly identify and address areas of inequity in student success and participation, examining data by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, disability, and English language proficiency. ***The district can gain*** a continuous feedback loop to analyze programs, practices in schools, staff, students, and family behaviors that will allow for effectively addressing discrepancies and building trusting relationships.

## COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### **Key Strengths**

Several participants stated that the FNSBSD's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is not only a statement, but it is also a model to be emulated throughout the community. The FNSBSD provides many services to underprivileged students and also connects them and their families to service providers in the community. The FNSBSD has done a great job of creating cultural awareness that is displayed in the art and pictures around the district. The FNSBSD is connected to the community in many aspects and through various programs. The district has also begun including indigenous land acknowledgments at the beginning of meetings.

### **Key Challenges**

The FNSBSD is one of the most progressive organizations in the community around the topic of DEI. However, the district's views are not completely embraced by the entire community. Fairbanks community members have very divergent opinions about how and what the FNSBSD should teach as well as who it should partner with, and who it should not. Many in the community criticize the district's efforts, and while others expect the district to fix all the DEI societal and community issues that are brought into the schools. The FNSBSD is continually challenged with negative feedback while striving to provide equitable treatment to its very diverse population.

Culture and identity are significant if not sacred to many. Many groups look to the FNSBSD to honor and uphold their cultural values and feel their values are being compromised or misrepresented by the district. The FNSBSD is put in a double bind because some cultures, values and beliefs are in direct conflict with others. Even so, these groups demand that the FNSBSD's leadership honor their culture and denounce the others.

As for family engagement, the FNSBSD has the challenge of helping parents overcome the shame of being unable to participate at the desired level due to a variety of reasons, socioeconomic status being one of these. There is also a constant challenge to integrate and reach parents that are themselves in crisis. Many stated that the barriers that some students are facing, their parents may also suffer. There remains the challenge of how to engage and connect with underrepresented groups to give them a voice.

### **Key Opportunities**

The FNSBSD is accomplishing significant progress in the areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Many in the community were unaware of the many programs, policies, procedures, and practices that the district has implemented. Because of this unawareness, there is the belief that nothing is being accomplished. The district is one of the leading organizations in the community in the area of DEI. The District has the opportunity to create awareness of its DEI efforts.

There are opportunities to raise the level of consciousness in the community around DEI issues. The FNSBSD has the chance to deepen the relationship with diverse community partners. The FNSBSD could partner with individuals and organizations to provide training, feedback, and brainstorming. Partnering with various stakeholders interested in DEI and engaging them in dialogue and collective learning can improve innovation, decision-making, and action. These collaborations will strengthen the community's commitment to the success of the FNSBSD's DEI effort and turn community supporters into active advocates.

The District has an unmatched opportunity to engage family members from the cultures within the FNSBSD and community to become partners in the multicultural DEI communication efforts. This partnership could be an opportunity to strengthen relationships with students and families to become a voice for the diversity message and to equip them to become DEI advocates. These partnerships could be a visual representation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

### **Key Resistance**

It was mentioned that some staff is resistant to the District's approach to DEI because there is a conflict between communicating their personal beliefs, the beliefs of the community group they identify with, and the FNSBSD positions.

Some stated resistance because some cultures have elaborate celebrations and events, while others have nothing and feel left out, so they refuse to celebrate or participate. There are other voices in the community that view DEI as a forced agenda and are opposed to it. They believe the FNSBSD is overlooking them or their group and are pushing a “*liberal agenda*.” Some fear that Caucasian students are being overlooked in the efforts to celebrate minorities. At the same time, many minorities think the district is not doing enough. Minorities feel that cultural celebrations once a year is not the best way to embrace DEI and that having a month to celebrate only highlights the fact that the group is not yet a part of the mainstream.

### **Key Equity Gains**

***The district can gain*** strong community ties that will give the FNSBSD the ability to show that partnerships and participation are significant, and the model of inclusion. ***The district can gain*** the opportunity to build upon the existing trust and relationship with the community to reach students and families more effectively. ***The district can gain*** partnerships that will strengthen support for the DEI efforts and open doors for more connections with the community and families. ***The district can gain*** the opportunity to communicate significant value to students and families when they see people that look like them, their language displayed, and culture acknowledged. ***The district can gain*** an opportunity to lead the community and demonstrate through words and deed the true essence of the Golden Heart City.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

DEI best practices must be deliberately integrated and evolved until they become standard operating procedures in the day to day functions. It is crucial to have a system that continually evaluates those programs or processes through a DEI lens.

The FNSBSD has put significant effort into fulfilling its commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. there are areas that, with some minor adjustments, would allow the FNSBSD to achieve more favorable outcomes and desired results. RMG Consulting believes that with an FNSBSD-wide commitment and implementation of the recommendations outlined below, the FNSBSD could become an example of DEI best practices that others will seek to emulate.

Based on this data, RMG Business Consulting has proposed the following action items as “recommended next steps” for the FNSBSD to consider. These recommendations take into consideration the strengths of existing programs and initiatives while also acknowledging the challenges, opportunities, and resistances that were communicated during this process.

The highlighted fields are *Leader and Staff Professional Development, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into the Curriculum, Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining minorities, Measuring and Benchmarking the effectiveness of DEI, and Communication and Community Engagement.*

# 1. Leader, Staff, Teachers, and New Hires Professional Development

## Professional Development

To have a successful DEI program, each member should believe that equity work is non-negotiable and must be part of the DNA of the FNSBSD. This work requires a systemic shift, and DEI must be embedded in every part of the system to be sustainable. Therefore, training takes a broader approach to create an environment to dismantle inequitable and unfair systems.

Throughout the auditing process, the question of mandatory versus voluntary training continued to arise. RMG Business Consulting believes if the FNSBSD states that DEI is crucial, then DEI training should be made mandatory. Mandatory training communicates significance. Making DEI training voluntary sends the message that the desired outcomes are merely suggestive. Therefore, the recommendation is to create a list of required foundational classes and have additional voluntary training options available.

## Leaders

- Training should be provided to leaders to equip them to promote, drive, and guide the FNSBSD DEI initiatives. Examples of leadership training are:
  - One day NCBI training
  - Leading Courageous Conversations
  - Social-Emotional Self-care
  - Unconscious bias and how they affect recruiting and hiring
  - Creating and Fostering an Inclusive Climate
  - Utilizing School Climate Data to develop improvements and training opportunities (Develop professional development classes based on addressing Climate Survey results)

## All Staff

- NCBI training on a variety of diversity, equity, and inclusion topics. NCBI will help to facilitate a common language and understanding of the FNSBSD's intentions around DEI.
- Provide DEI training throughout the school year for all staff. Create a training catalog of online and in person classes and facilitators to cover a multitude of topics. Examples topics are:
  - Courageous Conversations
  - Effective interventions (relating to bullying, discrimination, bias, and hate speech)
  - Unconscious bias and microaggressions
  - Gender identity and expression
  - Sexual harassment
- Develop opportunities for cross-cultural conversations.
  - Conduct open DEI forums discussions
  - Conduct fishbowl discussions of DEI topics

## Teachers

- Provide Social-Emotional self-care training for educators.
- Proficiency training on Restorative, Trauma-Informed, Culturally Responsive, and Social-Emotional Learning Practices to expand the knowledge of how to address the challenging behaviors seen inside classrooms stemming from stress or trauma in student's lives outside of school.

## New Hires

- New hire onboarding workshop that includes DEI topics such as:
  - Understanding the FNSBSD commitment to DEI
  - School Climate (School specific)
  - NCBI ½ Day training
  - Additional classes added from the DEI training catalog (determined by leadership)

## 2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Curriculum

- Conduct a full review of the curriculum and teaching using a DEI lens to address and answer the following questions:
  - Are educators (perhaps unintentionally) teaching from a lens that keeps “Eurocentric” as “normal” and everything else as deficient?
  - What perspective and identity are most prevalent in the curricula materials?
  - Is there an aspect of a given curriculum that seems to be problematic or insensitive?
  - What process will you take to adapt, change, or even omit anything that might not align with your commitment to elevate and honor diversity?
  - How are other elements like customs, gender, sexuality, religion, language, dress, and styles of celebration talked about in the classroom?
- Integrate opportunities to weave Inclusion and Diversity into an age-appropriate curriculum and staff professional development (FNSBSD IDAP objective 3.1).
  - Design and communicate clear, concise visions and goals for ongoing in-service training that addresses DEI curriculum and educational practices
  - Expand the aspects of diversity discussed in the classroom (privilege, class, gender, race, ability, sexuality, etc.), with attention to historical and contemporary instances of institutional discrimination
  - Continue to offer the inclusion of race and diversity topics into the curriculum
- Explore including material such as the 1619 Project Curriculum to appropriate grade levels. This matter re-examines the 400 years legacy of slavery in America.
- Provide teachers and librarians with training and guidelines for reviewing the existing curriculum for DEI sensitivity.
- Ensure the curriculum review committees represent the diversity and inclusion that they seek to incorporate.
- Create a mechanism for students to provide immediate feedback on curriculum discrepancies that are identified.

## 3. Recruiting, Hiring and Retention Procedures, Practices & Policies

Create an office or position whose primary focus is to advocate for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- Create a staff position whose primary function is to promote, lead, and coordinate FNSBSD-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts
- The DEI Officer should report directly to top leadership, similar to the Title IX position. It would be beneficial to place the person/ position under the supervision of the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent.

### Recruiting and Hiring

- Add to the website’s employment page and employment material a DEI statement such as, ***“We do not just accept difference - we celebrate it, we support it, and we thrive on it for the benefit of our employees, our students, our families, and our community.”***

- Collect data from all hiring managers interviewing and examine hiring records to determine if there are diversity discrepancies and evaluate:
  - The number of diverse applicants that have applied and resumes not selected
  - Those interviewed but not hired
  - Those hired but not retained long term.
- Continue to utilize the Inclusion, Diversity Action Plan (IDAP) committee to evaluate the recruiting and employment process to identify and remove barriers and ensure the District is identifying, attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse pool of qualified staff (IDAP Goal #4).
  - Objective 4:
    - 4.1- Review job descriptions to evaluate any unintended barrier.
    - 4.2- Review all existing job skills tests and assess relevance, consistency, and potential discriminatory impact.
    - 4.3- Increase the skills and knowledge of hiring committees.
    - 4.4- Identify opportunities for applicants to seek and receive feedback and their application and/or interview to improve their ability to succeed in the future.
    - 4.5- Develop a diverse applicant pool.
- Collaborate with colleges that have high minority populations to share job openings.
- Create a pool of diverse individuals to assist in the evaluation and hiring process.
- Develop a long-term recruitment plan and promotional tools to attract diverse and culturally competent candidates:
  - The FNSBSD can partner with Affinity Groups (NAACP, VFW, PFLAG, minority, faith groups, Native Corporations, etc.) to host hiring workshops
  - Develop recruitment material and video that communicates the FNSBSD's commitment to hiring diverse and culturally competent candidates (IDAP Goal 2.3, 2.4)
  - Develop a recruitment team to assist and support recruitment efforts
- Explore the possibilities of partnering with University of Alaska in developing a “Grow Your Own” teacher program. The program could operate using the same concept as JROTC and ROTC programs. The FNSBSD could identify a cadre of teachers, retired teachers, administrators, community members, city leaders to serve as mentors, recruiters, counselors, workshop facilitators to assist in the program.
- Increase the representation and participation of diversity at all hiring levels.
- Coordinate with the military to promote and support the Troop to Teacher Program.
  - Coordinate with the military to provide employment support for military members preparing to transition out
- Explore the opportunities of Teacher Exchange Programs.
  - Develop partnerships with other similar schools to establish an exchange program
  - Prepare a team of teachers that are interested in participating in an exchange
- Create a marketing campaign focused on hiring diverse applicants.
  - Show how teachers matter and the impact they have on minority students and the community
  - Explain why prospective applicants should choose the education field
  - Include messaging about the district’s goals and vision for diversity recruitment
  - Give the campaign a compelling name and slogan

### **Retention**

- It is recommended that FNSBSD leadership create a trauma-informed self-care plan or process for employees. While introducing restorative, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and social-emotional learning practices, it is vital to provide trauma-informed and social-emotional self-care for providers. When dealing with and addressing individuals in trauma, it can trigger negative emotions, old memories, and past hurts, resulting in vicarious and secondary trauma for providers.

- Create a Sponsorship Program for newly hired employees to help with onboarding. New employees can receive one-on-one contact with an FNSBSD identified sponsor that can assist with transitioning into the FNSBSD. The new hire from out of state will receive a sponsorship packet, including items such as information on winter preparation, community information, schools, local shopping, realtors, and house hunting information. The sponsorship program goal is to ensure that a new employee's transition is as smooth as possible for them and their family.
- Create an award or recognition process for staff who have excelled in areas of DEI

#### **4. Measuring and Benchmarking the effectiveness of DEI**

- The District would benefit by establishing a procedure to evaluate the FNSBSD's programs through a DEI lens. This procedure would measure and benchmark the DEI effectiveness, equitability, and impact.
  - Use existing data related to topics such as student discipline, students in AP courses to identify and remedy issues of inequity
  - Examine visual diversity representation throughout schools (hallway and classroom presentations).
- Provide alongside the Data Dashboard, the strategic plan, and action steps to address the deficit areas. The information would outline the actions taken to address the shortfalls in the Climate Survey. This process will demonstrate to climate survey participants that the data is being used to address deficit areas to create a safe and equitable environment.
- Utilize the Climate Survey Tools to formulate action plans to address shortfalls highlighted in the Climate Survey.
- Include DEI as an evaluated topic in leaders' evaluations.

#### **5. Communication and Community Engagement**

- Publish an annual DEI document to communicate climate, ongoing efforts, progress, and success stories.
- Conduct an annual community-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Symposium. Partner with the military, university, city, borough, and others to co-sponsor an event. The event would share information, resources, and build allies. This event has the potential to create deep and long-term partnerships with diverse organizations and institutions to increase outreach opportunities for administrators, faculty members, staff, and students.
- It would benefit the district to have a DEI staff position to connect with the community for relationship-building across racial groups, lead community engagement initiatives, and participate in forums or events to communicate the FNSBSD's commitment to DEI.
- Create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion webpage dedicated to information, resources, training, and cultural events. This webpage could be accomplished by rededicating and broadening the scope of the Fairbanks Coalition Builders (NCBI) page. The new page could:
  - Feature the FNSBSD's programs and resources in a consolidated location to highlight the efforts and progress towards meeting the FNSBSDs DEI goals.
  - Create more opportunities and avenues to communicate the FNSBSD's DEI strategic goals to parents and staff.
- Internal staff communication is vital for many reasons. The FNSBSD should explore practical ways to inform internal FNSBSD staff on situations before communicating externally with the community.