

## Great Valley School District Equity Plan

**School Year I: 2023-2024**

**School Year II: 2024-2025**

**School Year III: 2025-2026**

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The Mission of the Great Valley School District is to ensure that every student is inspired and prepared to be a passionate lifelong learner and a productive invested participant in the local and global community.

**VISION STATEMENT:** Students will continually acquire and apply new skills and knowledge as they pursue personal and challenging goals. Students will demonstrate an understanding of, and actively participate in, the local and global community. Students will achieve the academic standards of the personally challenging program in which they are enrolled.

**BACKGROUND:** In Fall 2022, the Great Valley School District embarked on an equity review process, facilitated by the Delaware Valley Consortium for Educational Equity and Excellence (DVCEE). The DVCEE Excellence Through Equity Quality Review (the Review) provides a focused and detailed examination of educational equity in policy and practice at the district and school level, and the recommendations made in the Review serve as a guide for much of this plan.

### **DEFINITION of TERMS:**

**Equity** in education is defined as every student having access to the resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income. Equity differs from equality. **Equality** means that an individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities whereas equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances; resources are allocated accordingly to reach an equal outcome.

**Restorative Discipline:** Restorative discipline practices within the field of education are positive social interactions that create equitable and safe learning conditions. Engaging restoratively with students before, during, and following a disciplinary offense fosters student accountability, growth, and the opportunity to repair the harm.

**Disproportionality:** Disproportionality is the overrepresentation of a specific race or ethnicity identified in one or more of four areas: identification of a disability in general; identification of a specific race or ethnicity in a specific disability category; discipline; and placement.

**GVSD STRENGTHS:**

- Demographics and growing diversity;
- A focus on inclusion;
- Strong student-teacher relationships;
- A wide array of curriculum offerings and instruction;
- Special education support services;
- Recent work to expand a sense of belonging; and
- Shared community support for equity-related work, specifically around inclusion and belonging.

**GVSD NEEDS/AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

- There is an inconsistent understanding of the District's Equity Policy and the District's overall position on educational equity;
- There is a need for GVSD administration to embrace and consistently lead equity work with intentionality;
- A uniform equity-based professional development plan is needed to achieve the objectives and vision of the District's equity work;
- Policies and practices that guide the District's equity work need clarification;
- A consistent collection and analysis of data related to educational equity would enhance the administration's ability to ensure that there are not disparate opportunities and outcomes for students based upon their membership in a historically under-served population (e.g., by race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, family income).

**TIMELINE:** Completion of action areas identified in this plan will span a three-year period. Notations are made next to each individual objective area to provide more specificity to the timeline.

**Action Area #1: Developing and Enacting a Shared Equity Vision****Objectives:**

1a. GVSD will have personnel in place to support and evaluate the implementation of the District equity plan (YEAR 1).

**Action Steps:**

- The administration will hire a third-party equity consultant to provide leadership, coaching, and professional development as aligned with the Equity Plan.

- The administration will create a Core Equity Team to cultivate teacher leadership in each building and foster the development of the building-based teams led by school principals.

Functions of the teams include:

- Participate in DVCEE partnership for specialized professional development;
- Expand resource libraries to staff to facilitate discussion of topics in classrooms related to belonging and inclusion.
- Share knowledge culturally responsive educational frameworks and viewing differences among students as assets (e.g., [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework \(nysed.gov\)](https://www.nysed.gov/education/culture/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework));
- Design and facilitate professional development opportunities that support culturally responsive instructional practices and supportive school cultures;
- Periodically review data (e.g., academic, disciplinary) to ensure comparable performance for all identified groups of learners; and,
- Enhance communication to share efforts between District Office and schools.

1b. GVSD will develop and utilize a system for monitoring disparities in achievement among diverse learner populations (YEAR 1).

Action Steps:

- A structure for public reporting of disparate achievement and disciplinary outcomes will be developed by Cabinet-level administrators and shared with the leadership team.
  - All educational administrators will become adept at reviewing equity dashboards for monitoring disparities in academic achievement, higher level course representation, and discipline rates.
  - The administration will present to the School Board a revised Discipline Policy to align with best practices in restorative discipline and mitigating disproportionality (i.e., over-representation of marginalized groups receiving harsher discipline).

1c. GVSD will implement instructional frameworks and supports so that diverse learners have access to higher level course work and improved post-secondary outcomes (YEAR 2).

Action Steps:

- Cabinet-level leadership will work with building level administrators to ensure that students have equitable access to advanced level courses, after-school activities, and college and career transition services.
  - Continue to expand upon the supports offered through the multi-lingual academy, including proactive support to students such as mentoring, teaming, and networking opportunities.
  - Consider hiring a bilingual counselor for secondary programming.
  - Consider increasing family liaison supports at the elementary level.

- Investigate a comprehensive work-study program for students with significant interruptions to education.
- Offer students lunch and learn programs on careers and job opportunities in multiple languages, especially the most frequently spoken languages, as a part of a series on college and career preparation.
- Offer after-school busing options to support students' access to supports and programming.

1d. GVSD will develop a process to address hate speech and harassment among the student body that includes monitoring, accountability, and interventions (YEAR 1).

**Action Steps:**

- Create a coding system for reports of racism and/or harassment among students and staff.
- Train staff specifically on how to notice and intervene regarding instances of racism and hate speech. Expand this training to secondary students through the use of a structured program (5b).

1e. GVSD will communicate Board Policy 832 Educational Equity and any related policies to all stakeholders (YEAR 1).

**Action Steps:**

- Building-based equity teams will facilitate professional development related to policy and the definition of equity.
- Institute training for all staff related to implicit bias and/or cultural sensitivity.
- Leverage social media to consistently communicate action steps related to educational equity.
- Conduct quarterly meetings of the Council for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) to engage stakeholders in the progress of the District's Equity Plan.

**Action Area #2: Family and Community Engagement**

**Objectives:**

2a. GVSD will improve its capacity to partner with families of diverse backgrounds (YEAR 2 and YEAR 3).

**Action Steps:**

- Design evening events for families of students who receive special education and English Language Learner supports. These events provide mentorship and networking opportunities among families as well.
- Establish family mentor programs for new families to the District.

- Hire interpreters to be present during specific events (e.g., Back to School Night, Family-Teacher conferences).
- Conduct an audit of communication platforms to ensure accessibility in multiple languages.
- Ensure that the advertisements of all clubs and extra-curricular activities are provided in English and Spanish. Implement the use of a newsletter specifically for multi-lingual families.
- Conduct an audit of all fees related to activities and field trips that occur during the school day to determine the equitable nature of such fees.
- Standardize celebrations district-wide through the collaborative work of building-based equity teams;
- Consider sponsoring field trips that reflect the diversity of GVSD student identities to support hands-on learning experiences.
- Provide voluntary training to PTO members around implicit bias and the importance of diversity within parent representative groups.

2b. GVSD will improve its registration process to ensure timely and equitable access to entry and course selection (YEAR 2).

Action Steps:

- Schedule a family liaison and/ or bilingual counselor to meet with each new family to explain course selection and access to extracurricular opportunities.
- At the secondary level, create a course map for families that is shared at registration through the support of the family liaison.
- Host annual registration drives to ensure timely entry of new students to the District.
- Add activity busing to support after-school programming at all levels.

### **Action Area #3: Instructional Practices and Systems of Support**

#### **Objectives**

3a. GVSD shall engage in culturally responsive instructional frameworks that enhance the learning and inclusion of all students (YEAR 2 and YEAR 3).

Action Steps:

- Reinstigate the Read Aloud Series with books that focus on the diversity of the student population.
- Expand the shared list of District recommended age-appropriate books for teaching topics related to the changing diversity of the population.
- Survey families about grading and assessment procedures.
- Create a course mapping guide to assist families with understanding the academic trajectory and related outcomes for students.

- Provide opportunities for multilingual students to translate during student events, newscasts, or other circumstances. Consider recognizing students that serve in these roles with the Pennsylvania Seal of Bilingualism.

3b. GVSD shall enhance its tiered systems of support to enhance the learning of all students (YEAR 2 and YEAR 3).

Action Steps:

- Ensure consistent instructional frameworks in literacy and mathematics for all learners, including students who receive special education services, to allow for greater access to and inclusion in core instruction.
- Analyze special area structures to ensure greater inclusion of students receiving special education services.
- Analyze data and effectiveness related to ESSER grant-funded support positions; this specifically includes mentoring at the secondary level and utilization of targeted, small group instructional practices as supplements to core instruction.
- Review and, where necessary, revise evaluation procedures for gifted and special education services to ensure compliance with best practices for diverse learners.

#### **Action Area #4: Engaging in Self-Reflection and Professional Learning**

##### **Objectives:**

4a. GVSD will use equity-focused leadership in all planning efforts (YEAR 2).

Action Steps:

- Incorporate components of the Equity Plan into administrator goal development.
- Incorporate a focus on developing an equity mindset for personal and professional growth in administrative leadership retreats.
- Add the equivalent of one full Act 80 Day for Equity.

4b. GVSD will ensure that administrators are consistently referencing specific aspects of educational equity in teacher observation and evaluation protocols (YEAR 3).

Action Step:

- The administration will create a walk-through tool to support the clinical observation of culturally responsive teaching practices during the teacher evaluation process.

4c. GVSD will incorporate equity-focused strategies into teacher and staff professional development (YEAR 2 and YEAR 3).

Action Steps:

- Provide job-embedded professional development that focuses on differentiated instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy.
- Provide professional development in inquiry-based learning models and the impact of holding high expectations for all students.
- Provide professional development in strategies to create culturally inclusive classroom environments.
- Provide trauma-informed care professional development to all staff.

4d. GVSD will create opportunities for new staff to be educated in equity practices (YEAR 2).

Action Steps:

- New teacher induction will include training on the District's Equity Policy, Equity Plan, and related efforts in these areas.
- New hires of diverse backgrounds will have the opportunity to learn of the District Core Team and possible affinity groups.

#### **Action Area #5: Classroom Culture and School Climate**

Objectives

5a: GVSD will work to create welcoming and inclusive schools with metrics to assess and evaluate the experiences of all stakeholders for continual improvement (YEAR 2).

Action Steps:

- Continual professional learning with Responsive Schools frameworks to enhance belonging and inclusion, K-8.
- Conduct a climate survey with stakeholder groups.
- Finalize the strategic mental health plan and expand availability of mental health first aid training for students.

Objective 5b: GVSD will create spaces and supports for students who experience racism, hate speech, and/or harassment (YEAR 1).

Action Steps:

- Building-based equity teams will continually monitor data related to incidents of racism and harassment.

- Create safe spaces and tools for students and staff to report their experiences regarding hate speech, racism, and experiences of harassment.
- Provide training to students in “Speak up at School” or a similar program.
- Provide coaching and mentoring opportunities to students in the equity student leadership group at Great Valley High School to continually develop their leadership skills in creating equitable schools.

### **Action Area #6: Hiring and Retention**

Objective 6a: GVSD will recruit diverse staff as commensurate with its increasingly diverse population (YEAR 1).

Action Steps:

- Maintain and/or enhance standard interview questions related to equity and inclusion.
- Institute a video options for round 1 screening of applicants whereby interview questions related to educational equity are incorporated into the process.
- Ensure diverse employees are present on hiring panels.
- Continue partnerships with local colleges and universities for student teaching and hiring pipelines.

Objective 6b: GVSD will retain diverse staff and create inclusive working environments for employees (YEAR 2 and YEAR 3).

Action Steps:

- Administrators will become familiar with policies related to discrimination, harassment, and Title IX procedures, and they will take all matters of racism and harassment seriously.
- Human Resources will create a feedback loop with new hires through mentoring opportunities.
- Administrators shall continue to use climate assessment data of staff to ensure inclusive and harassment-free working environments.
- Leverage greater GVSD community as recruiters and share hiring updates so that they can be a part of the larger strategy of recruitment and retention.
- Establish regular meeting opportunities to engage with and nurture current district educators of color to better understand unseen barriers/challenges that diverse educators may be facing in the district to support retention efforts.