

Community Conversation
March 22, 2022
Responsible, Resilient, Empowered Learners
Increased percentage of students open to and accepting cultural diversity

Overview: On March 22, 2022, the Board of Directors held a Community Conversation with student representatives from the district high schools. Following that event, Board members held a debrief conversation, reviewed all feedback, and developed a Board determination articulating the Board's vision for the district.

This effort directly aligns with the 2021 NTPS Strategic Plan, specifically:

- **Goal Two: Responsible, resilient, empowered learners:**
 - Every student will feel safe as an empowered, responsible, and resilient learner, open to and accepting cultural diversity and perspectives, and empowered to advocate for and pursue their own educational passions.
 - **Outcome C:**
 - Increase opportunity for student voice.
 - **Outcome D:**
 - Increased percentage of students open to and accepting cultural diversity.

Event: The Board of Directors invited more than 130 high school student representatives from North Thurston High School, River Ridge High School, Timberline High School, and Envision Career Academy to participate in the Community Conversation (held at the Koval Center from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.). Participants listened to a presentation from Character Strong, enjoyed lunch, and engaged in a facilitated table conversation. The table facilitators led small-group discussions on a variety of topics for in school culture, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Fostering a sense of belonging and a culture of inclusion.
- Recognizing what is going well at school and what can be improved.
- Exploring the impact of bias and the lived experiences of students of color.

Following the Community Conversation, the Board engaged in a work session to review the notes from the table facilitators and discuss what they heard from students.

Board Determination:

As a result of the Community Conversation, the Board's Determination is as follows:

1. The Board confirms that Goal Two of the 2021-27 Strategic Plan is an important goal for us to achieve. Further, the Board confirms that Outcomes C and D are important, measurable outcomes to attain.
2. Students want a high-quality and diverse teaching staff.
 - The Board directs the superintendent to continue to recruit, employ, support, and retain a qualified workforce reflective of our diverse student population. The superintendent will also continuously develop a workforce of culturally responsive staff, reflective of the Four Pillars of Professional Practice.

3. Students want to engage with staff, teachers, school leaders, and feel more connected to their school community.
 - The Board recognizes that the relationships students have with their peers and teachers is key to students experiencing a sense of belonging. The Board directs the superintendent to continue to seek out and incorporate authentic opportunities for student voice and to develop and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for each student.
 - The Board recognizes that expanding the club offerings at our high schools has provided more opportunities for students to connect to their school community; yet, coming out of the pandemic, we need to strengthen our student's connection to their entire school community and create opportunities for students to connect with students from different perspectives and lived experiences. Therefore, the Board directs the superintendent to ensure a connection between various clubs through the Associated Student Body for each secondary school. Further, the Board directs the superintendent to conduct an annual review of student activities/clubs at the district level.
 - The Board directs the superintendent to continue to expand the Community Café model to support student and family engagement with North Thurston Public Schools.

4. Students want an authentic relationship-building experience within their advisory course.
 - The Board recognizes that the high schools are in year one of implementing the social emotional learning curriculum, Character Strong. The Board directs the superintendent to continue to develop opportunities for teachers' professional development on Character Strong and culturally responsive teaching practices. Further, the Board directs the superintendent to continue to provide opportunities for staff and students to provide feedback on advisory, accept responsibility for implementation of the feedback, and to develop a system of response.

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