



DEI RECOMMENDATIONS

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



March 2024

Overview

During the 2021-2022 school year, the VCS Strategic Planning Committee developed a 5-year plan to move the District forward in a clear direction. This plan is used to annually set goals for the district and within each building. The focus areas identified through that work are:

CULTURE	Create a welcoming, safe and inclusive community where all members are valued, and the wellness of each individual is at the forefront.
LEARNING & INSTRUCTION	Develop comprehensive processes and systems that positively impact all students' academic success.
STUDENT SUPPORTS & OPPORTUNITIES	Maximize student supports and opportunities so every student can achieve their full potential.

An outcome of VCS Strategic Planning was the formation of a VCS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. This committee includes members from the school as well as the wider Victor community. It was formed to create recommendations that connect our Strategic Plan focus areas to the goal of cultivating a sense of belonging for all (inclusion). We will accomplish this goal by ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity and access (equity), while seeing differences as strengths (diversity).

DEI in VCS

Diversity

In a safe, positive, and nurturing environment, we will explore, embrace, and celebrate both our own and others' differences. These differences encompass various aspects such as race, economic status, religious beliefs, culture, physical appearance, gender, sex, political affiliations, and more. It is acknowledged that these differences are fluid and may intersect. We affirm that no single culture or identity group holds superiority over another.

Equity

Equity is the guarantee of universal access to all of the District's resources and opportunities in order to ensure that all members of the school community have what they need to be successful. Equity necessitates intentionality by identifying and correcting inequities wherever they may appear; deliberately supporting marginalized groups, and removing obstacles.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the representation of diverse perspectives and complex identities within the entirety of school life (curriculum, decision-making, problem-solving, staffing, social life, etc...). Inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation. Inclusion provides a true sense of belonging and the means for all voices to be heard.

These definitions were collaboratively developed between the VCS DEI committee and reviewed by the VSHS Student Diversity Club using the NYS Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework and the NYSED website.

Culture



Culture: Create a welcoming, safe and inclusive community where all members are valued, and the wellness of each individual is at the forefront by fostering an inclusive and equitable community that empowers all stakeholders to value diversity.

Sense of Belonging

Assessing Climate & Culture	Routinely assess the climate, culture and sense of belonging across the District and within each building through a variety of platforms. • Develop strategies to communicate findings, ensuring transparency and public access to information. • Respond to areas of need by developing action plans embedded in annual building and district goals.
Cultural Celebrations & Community	Identify gaps and needs in order to improve alignment of district-wide traditions and cultural celebrations, PK-12. • Annually develop action plans with identified strategies to ensure that all in our school community feel welcomed, valued and affirmed.

District Policies & Regulations

Code of Conduct	Conduct a review of the VCS Code of Conduct, ensuring diverse input. • Revise the VCS Code of Conduct to incorporate research-based best practices. (i.e. restorative practices, positive behavior interventions and preventative supports). • Annually review discipline data (infractions and responses) across buildings and the region to ensure equitable practices.
Policies & Regulations	In alignment with the BOE Policy Review Process, develop a procedure to review and revise related District practices so that they are equitable and inclusive.

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Community Awareness

Exposure & Learning

Develop ongoing communication with the community focused on diversity, equity and inclusion that will educate and empower.

- Plan and implement learning opportunities for the greater school community focused on topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Communicate progress on DEI initiatives.

Staff Recruitment, Hiring & Retention

Recruitment

Develop a comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan that seeks a diverse applicant pool.

- Identify internal and external barriers to recruitment of a diverse applicant pool.
- Partner with local colleges and universities to maximize recruitment strategies.
- Expand the reach of advertising and develop a system to monitor the trends in these efforts.

Hiring Process

Develop an equity-oriented interview and hiring process to reduce implicit bias.

- Provide training for interview committees and systemize the processes for conducting interviews.
- Create consistent questions and rubrics for committees to assess candidates.
- Engage interview committees in a post-interview reflection.

Retention

Create a system for ongoing analysis of staff retention data in order to address barriers to longevity.

Learning & Instruction



Learning and Instruction: Develop comprehensive processes and systems that positively impact all students' academic success by ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum through the alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development.

Professional Learning

Annual Learning Plan

Align the annual VCS Professional Learning Plan with the NYS Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education framework to engage educators in professional development related to these areas.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum, Instruction & Materials

Develop and implement a timetable to continue the development and refinement of a guaranteed, viable and culturally responsive core curriculum pK-12.

Assess the extent to which curriculum and instructional materials represent, value and affirm students' cultures and identities.

- Implement processes to audit and refine current curriculum, instructional materials and school or classroom libraries.

Instructional Practice

Culturally Responsive Instruction

Implement culturally responsive instructional practices that include:

- A focus on student learning and academic growth for all students.
- Cultural proficiency in which students deepen the understanding of their own and other's cultures.
- Socio-political awareness or critical consciousness, in which students solve relevant, real-world problems rooted in their local community.

Provide opportunities for student voices to be honored, both in classrooms and within the larger school community.

Student Supports & Opportunities



Student Supports & Opportunities: Maximize student supports and opportunities so every student can achieve their full potential through equitable access, responsive programming, and social-emotional learning.

Ensuring Access

Equity Audit	Conduct an equity audit to gather information about students sense of belonging, district systems and the current state of access to support opportunities across all populations. • Develop action steps based on the findings of the audit to address areas of need.
Access	Develop processes for the annual analysis and sharing of district participation and enrollment data, including sub-groups. Consider the following: • Extracurriculars (athletics, performing arts, clubs, honor societies, etc...). • Courses (Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment, academic support, art pathways, work-based learning, etc.). Develop action steps to address barriers to access and participation.

Student Achievement

Achievement Data	Develop processes for the annual analysis and sharing of District data, including student achievement and commencement /post-graduation outcomes. • Develop action steps to improve achievement for all students.
Academic Programs & Opportunities	Review current processes for enrolling students into academic programs or opportunities, including acceleration, intervention services, special education and other supplemental supports. • Develop action steps to improve equitable access or inappropriately disproportionate representation.