

Climate and Culture Plan Follow Up



12/11/24, Presented by Jennifer Cenatiempo, Ed.D.

**“One’s vision is not a
roadmap but a compass.” —
Peter Block**

Vision

Empower students and staff to embrace their individual strengths in a safe, supportive environment that fosters a love of learning while pursuing their full potential.

Mission

Green Township School District educates every student to become a confident and caring life-long learner who communicates effectively and contributes positively to the evolving needs of society. The district, in partnership with the community, promotes academic excellence and equitable opportunities for all students.

Dr. Ken Greene addressed Dignity, Engagement, and Individualization as a positive mechanism for change.

These meetings provided participants with opportunities to share their thoughts regarding the student experience at the Green Township School District. As part of a comprehensive Climate and Culture Initiative within the district, Dr. Kennedy Greene facilitated these sessions to generate conversation, promote reflective inquiry, and consider current structures that may impact the school experience for our students. Through this work, we explored pathways to achieve our mission as a school community.

Session 1

Tuesday, March 12th

Equity

- Remains a central goal and our north star ... excellence through equity. It can be defined as creating the conditions in schools and classrooms where children can develop their own uniqueness.
- It can be measured by the reduction of achievement gaps academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and/or physically.
- It can be activated by reducing or eliminating barriers as much or even more than providing supports.

Session 2

Tuesday, April 9th

Dignity

- Dignity can be defined as the equal value and worth of each human being in all our diversity
- Unlike respect, it is neither given nor earned, it cannot be lost or taken
- We can choose to honor each student's dignity through validation, acceptance, appreciation, and fair treatment.

Session 3

Tuesday, May 7th

Engagement

- Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught.
- Disengaged students exhibit lower grades and test scores, less involvement in student activities, chronic absenteeism, and higher behavioral incidents. Often, the longer students stay in school, the less engaged they become.
- Engagement can be improved with effective classroom practices based on neuroscience and modern psychology.

Session 4

Tuesday, June 11th

Individualization

- Identifying the essential force that drives each of us
- Constructing a deep understanding of each person's unique and distinctive qualities
- Supporting the development of innate talents into functional strengths through skill and knowledge building in inclusive environments

Planned Action Steps to Support a Positive School Climate and Culture, **23/24 Stakeholder Training and Education**

- Provide Additional Training and Awareness to support all stakeholders understanding of NJ ABR Act's with an emphasis on creating a respectful school environment.
- We already are engaged in this work, but we tend to have every few people attend our events.
- We will work to plan and implement events to gain attendance and support the positive school climate and culture.
- Continue to promote Parental Involvement via on site events, trainings, and dialogue sessions

Planned Action Steps to Support a Positive School Climate and Culture, 23/24 Communication and Engagement

- Continue to engage in the Quality Communication with Stakeholders
 - This is a district goal that we have received feedback on in terms of the website not being user friendly. Possible update of the communication methods utilized by the school is required.
 - Focus on Supporting Positive School Climate via Communication as a tool and resource.
- Strengthen Feedback Mechanisms with additional opportunities for stakeholders to give input on their family's experiences with the school district

Planned Action Steps to Support a Positive School Climate and Culture, **23/24 Policy Review and Analysis**

- Request a full review of HIB Policy and Regulation 5512 at the Board of Education Level.
- There are additional policies and regulations in place in other districts that may be reviewed for possible consideration to clearly express our commitment to creating a positive school climate and culture.

Planned Action Steps to Support a Positive School Climate and Culture, **23/24 Student Engagement**

- Work to further develop Student Leadership Programs.
- Encourage additional student-led initiatives, in line with the ABR Act, to promote a respectful and inclusive school culture.
- Provide additional training and support with Second Step Character Education and Conflict Resolution Programs: Strengthen conflict resolution programs, as per ABR, to help students express and resolve issues constructively.

Planned Action Steps to Support a Positive School Climate and Culture, **23/24 External Resources and Supports**

- Contract with Ken Greene with the scope of the work as follows:
 - Community Conversations on Equity-Related Topics
 - Planning Meeting on Equity-Related School Activities
- The learning would focus on a fresh approach to what has become known as “DEI” by focusing on the operational elements of dignity, engagement, and individualization. Each session will include a brief content presentation followed by large group debriefing and discussion. Five sessions will be planned for approximately 60 minutes each.

24/25 Resources and Supports

Suggestions to enhance equity for all children

- Education in unconscious bias, need to get beyond defensiveness and blame
 - ❖ Universal Supports – Greater Access to Mental Health Supports and Academic Supports for all students
- Market future community conversations differently, follow up with information
 - ❖ Increase communication clarity and provide options for input and attendance such as virtual and survey data
- School focus on student programming (e.g., talent identification, engagement strategies)
 - ❖ Increase opportunities for parents to be on site and a part of the school experience

24/25 Resources and Supports

Suggestions to enhance equity for all children

- Identify techniques to come from a place of “unconditional positive regard”
 - ❖ Positive behavioral interventions through consistency and heightened communication
- Develop a district-wide common language for our values and positive behaviors
 - ❖ Character education program evaluation
 - ❖ Planned adoption of new materials or enhanced training of existing materials to occur in the 24/25 school year

24/25 Resources and Supports

Suggestions to enhance equity for all children

- Survey parents about what they are comfortable sharing regarding their child's talents, interests, strengths, uniqueness, etc.
 - ❖ Challenge in balancing mandates, curriculum, and standards against talent and interest based learning opportunities. Clubs, sports, and activities can provide an important balance
- Help support parents with reinforcing these lessons with their children at home
 - ❖ Building up content on the website for parents to access and sending home resources such as SEPAG monthly content
- Engage parents in school activities that involve their children while also providing an adult learning opportunity
 - ❖ Back to school night training and other relevant parent contact opportunities

The work of supporting a positive climate and culture is a journey of many steps.

Together we will work to support the success of all students and staff members by engaging in a process that engages all stakeholders and aligns with our mission and vision for the Green Township School District!