

To: Board of Education

From: Angelique Nedved, assistant superintendent, teaching & learning
Kevin Harrell, executive director, student services & special education

Re: District Equity Focus: Part II

Date: October 20, 2016

Background:

Lawrence Public Schools' district and building administrators began book study discussions in 2005 to explore issues of racial achievement disparities as evidenced by our achievement data including graduation rates. The book, "Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools," by Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton served as a guide for these discussions. The school board contracted with Glenn Singleton, the book's author, and the Pacific Educational Group (PEG) to provide professional development and technical assistance with the district's efforts. Through its Framework for Systemic Equity/Anti-Racism Transformation, PEG helps school districts address racial educational disparities, become aware of institutional racism, and develop strategies for closing achievement gaps.

Since 2009, the school district has been hosting Beyond Diversity seminars for all staff to attend. Nearly 1,500 teachers, support staff members, parents, and community partners, including all teachers new to the district, have participated in Beyond Diversity training through Lawrence Public Schools. Beyond Diversity addresses the systemic thinking, proactive utilization of the Courageous Conversation tools and protocol, and the adaptive process needed to effect change.

Starting in the spring of 2011, each high school and all elementary schools initiated E-Teams, school equity leadership teams. These teams consist of eight to ten racial equity leaders who have completed the Beyond Diversity seminar. The E-Teams participate in additional professional development activities designed to prepare staff to develop and guide the implementation of their own school's Equity Transformation Plan.

In 2014-2015, the district reached out to community partners to enhance its annual educational celebration associated with the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The "One Dream" celebration in January now includes cultural presentations and awards recognizing multiple races and ethnicities including students, teachers, staff, and community leaders for upholding Dr. King's ideals through their own service, personal growth, humility, integrity, courage, citizenship, compassion, perseverance, vision, culturally relevant teaching, and equity leadership.

Current Report:

Along with these highlights, this report will include the following:

- Timeline of USD 497 equity journey
- Results achieved