

Dear Superintendent Dr. Bein and members of the District 25 School Board,

We are a group of parents interested in being continually engaged in the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts of District 25**. We were happy to see the District's July 2020 Resolution Affirming the Elimination of Racial Injustice and the subsequent approved policy 1:32 on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). We heard the Board meeting on January 21 where Dr. Bein gave an overview of the upcoming efforts to implement this policy. We hope to see this topic discussed regularly during Board meetings and would like to see increased engagement from the District Administration and School Board and further opportunities to engage the community. Engagement from leadership matters and community engagement is essential.

Several of us participated in the **Diversity Advisory Committee** during the 2019-2020 school year. We found value in this first conversation about DEI in District 25 and are ready to continue the conversation and to work with you on action steps. In the meantime, we have been raising awareness by **having conversations among parents about how to be anti-racist**. This includes talking to our children about race and teaching them how to advocate for change. We believe it is important for all members of this community to become more aware and engaged in these important antiracist efforts.

We recently reviewed the draft D25 Strategic Plan and completed the survey. **We are happy to see diversity, equity and inclusion mentioned in several goals**. We believe there is an opportunity to further strengthen some of the goals and strategies mentioned in this Plan. Specifically, we would like to **see more focus on antiracism and a clearer connection between this Plan and the DEI** work D25 is doing in conjunction with the Illinois Commission on Diversity and Human Relations. We offer the following suggestions and are happy to work with the Strategic Planning Committee on revisions. We are also happy to have a conversation or answer any questions you or the Committee have before the strategic plan is final.

We look forward to your reply on how we can best work together to achieve our mutual goal of eliminating racial injustice in District 25 and to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategic Plan feedback:

Goal 1 - Student Achievement Goal: Broaden practices to ensure all learners are successful citizens ready for high school, college, career and life.

Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level

- Refine and expand our continuum of services to better **meet the needs of all students and reduce performance gaps** for low income, Black, Hispanic, and Students with Disabilities

COMMENT

It is not only through special services that you can meet the needs of students with performance gaps. In some cases, special services may be beneficial, and we fully support expanding needed services. However, those with performance gaps might also benefit from other actions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom daily. The District should think about how it can meet the needs of these students in as inclusive a manner as possible. Do not lose sight of asking why some groups are left behind and consider elements of systemic racism. Consider including a strategy that identifies inclusive efforts such as integrating culturally responsive teaching, a curriculum reflective of all learners and cultures, implicit bias teacher training, and assessment techniques that are inclusive of all learners. These would not be done under a continuum of services, but through the typical classroom instruction and would benefit all students. Dr. Bein’s January 21st presentation mentioned that D25 is starting DEI work in conjunction with the Illinois Commission on Diversity and Human Relations. It was mentioned that this work includes an audit of the curriculum. We strongly believe that work should be connected to this strategic plan in as many places as applicable.

Additionally, we believe this Goal should be connected to the District’s DEI Policy 1:32 which says in part,

“Arlington Heights School District 25 will design and implement a curriculum to embrace and support diversity and cultural competence within our learning community...”

Goal 2 - Learning Environment Goal: Create optimal programs, services and an environment that meets the needs of all learners.

Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level

- Foster a sense of belonging and mutual understanding by **cultivating diversity, equity and inclusion** in the pursuit of social justice, global citizenship, economic and environmental partnership.

COMMENT:

In addition to this goal, the District should consider cultivating diversity, equity and inclusion into everyday practice. As worded, this goal could suggest that it will only be done through special programs that cover ‘other activities’ like social justice, global citizenship, etc. Such a strategy is good to have but could also be strengthened by adding a strategy or goal focused on more daily actions such as: “Cultivate diversity, equity and inclusion every day, in every class, and through every interaction with the school community.”

This could lead to more strategies for implementing culturally responsive teaching, an inclusive curriculum, and the implicit bias and other DEI training the District is initiating in the DEI plan described on January 21st.

Goal 3 - Family and Community Goal: Strengthen family and community partnerships to enhance learning, teaching, and an exchange of human resources.

Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level

- Heal **external relationships and renew trust, respect and commitment resulting from the pandemic**

COMMENT:

We suggest adding 'and from racial injustice' or other similar terms to this strategy. This will connect this strategic plan with the District's commitment to eliminate racial injustice, made in July 2020. The strategy could read: "Heal external relationships and renew trust, respect and commitment resulting from the pandemic and from racial injustice." Families in this community are currently impacted by both of these issues. This addition should also tie the ongoing D25 DEI initiative to any further strategies and related SMART goals.

Goal 4 - Staff Goal: Attract, develop and retain high quality, innovative employees.

Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level

- Enhance staff **competitiveness with salaries, benefits and innovative staff incentives** (voice, collaboration, leadership, professional development) to grow, learn and fulfill our mission, vision, and goals.
- Heal **internal relationships and renew trust, respect and commitment resulting from the pandemic.**

COMMENT:

We would like to see a connection between this Goal and Strategy and the District's DEI Policy 1:32 which says in part:

*"...increasing inclusion of diversity actions in strategic plans and school budgets and executing on those actions, **including promoting diverse hiring practices...**"*

*This would help tie the Goal to the ongoing D25 DEI initiative, which should be connected here. We would like to **see funding for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion***

training for all teachers, administration, and staff as part of professional development. We would like to see that training turn into everyday practice and integrated into everyday interactions. We would also like to see specific mention of the promotion of diverse hiring practices in this Goal.

Goal 5

Resources Goal: Demonstrate stewardship by allocating resources effectively and equitably.

Strategies that need attention to achieve this goal at a higher level

- Address **time, space and aging facilities** to ensure an optimal learning and teaching environment.
- Develop **new financial strategies to respond to the changing nature of school funding and prepare for future budget projections** to continue to offer high-quality programs and services to our students and families.

COMMENT:

We would like to see a connection between this Goal and Strategy and the District's DEI Policy 1:32 which says in part, "Arlington Heights School District 25 will design and implement a curriculum to embrace and support diversity and cultural competence within our learning community, and invest financially to increase the diversity of our staff and recipients of our spending..."

We would like to see specific mention of funding for the District's current and future DEI efforts under this Goal.

These comments are submitted after review of the following documents and meetings. We look forward to continued engagement.

D25 Declaration to Eliminate Racial Injustice:

<https://www.sd25.org/cms/lib/IL01904427/Centricity/Domain/218/Board%20Meeting%207-16-20%20Resolution%20to%20Eliminate%20Racial%20Injustice.pdf>

[Policy-1-32 Diversity Equity and Inclusion August 2020.pdf \(sd25.org\)](#)

[\(1\) Board of Education Meeting | January 21, 2021 - YouTube](#) - DEI Presentation to Board

[Microsoft Word - DRAFT Arlington Heights District 25 Strategic Plan Jan 29 2021.docx \(sd25.org\)](#)