

# **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion & Equity Task Force**

**District Advisory Council  
May 11, 2021**



Thank you for inviting this conversation to DAC!



# Presentation Outline

- Defining Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
- Transformational or Transactional
- Upon reflection...
- Prior to - and Beyond Equity Task Force (ETF)
- Equity Task Force
  - First year outcomes
  - First year experiences
  - Looking forward
- Questions

# Definitions

- What do these words mean to you?
  - Diversity
  - Equity
  - Inclusion
- CVUSD [definitions](#)

# Transformational or Transactional?

- True DEI work is *transformational* - which is harder, takes more time, goes deeper and yields longer lasting cultural change with greater impact - than transactional.
- *Transformation* is a series of steps that get an organization to a place, but never end. There is no finish line. The work must be proactive, intentional, and continuous.



# Upon Reflection...

- The launch of “Equity Task Force” was a signal of hope for many - rightfully so
- Although the first 15 ETF volunteers are passionate, seek to serve, are action oriented and desire to advocate on behalf of all marginalized communities, we needed time to form, share and organize
- The vastness of equity work needed for all our marginalized communities requires multiple fronts and cross collaboration
- With that, a brief summary of *equally meaningful DEI efforts beyond ETF* is important to this presentation

# Equity Task Force Members

Name	Role	Self-Reported Race and/or Ethnicity
Ana Alvarez	Employee	Costa Rica-Citizen of the world
Alysia Flamer	Parent	Black is what I call myself but African-American is fine
Azaybath Gonzales	Parent and Employee	Mexican / Latin / Hispanic
Mia Greenidge	Student	Black/African-American
Isaac Huang	Employee	Asian- Chinese American
Manas Khatore	Student	Indian - South Asian
Nadia Lucero	Employee	Mexican, Chicana, Latinx
Sandra Martínez-Galvan	Employee	Latinx
Jacques McClendon	CVUSD Parent/Community Member	African American
Roshnee Moorthy	Student	South Asian/ Indian
José Luis Pino	Former CVUSD Parent/Community Member	Latino (preferred), Hispanic, POC
Déjà Townsend	Employee	Human, Nationality: American, Ethnicity: African-American or Woman of Color
Catherine Xu	Student	Asian-Chinese American
Ava Zasloff	Student	White/Caucasian, Jewish

# Prior to - and Beyond - Equity Task Force

(a few examples)

- THRIVE Conejo
- Special Education District Advisory Council (SEDAC)
- Adelante Comunidad Conejo
- Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Clubs
- Parent of Transgender Youth
- Unity Conejo
- District English Language Advisory Council (DELAC)
- Students with Unstable Housing
- Justice in the Classroom
- Diversify our Narrative
- 805Resistance
- LGBTQ+ Working Group

# Students with Disabilities

- Collaborated with THRIVE Conejo to re-establish Special Education District Advisory Council - much of what is below is the result of SEDAC efforts and input
- Hired Teacher on Special Assignment-Inclusion Specialist to support with developing inclusive opportunities for all students with IEPs, but specifically those in our specialized programs
- Collaborated with Wonder Preschool to provide inclusive opportunities for preschool age students
- Established Unified Sports teams and games across all three comprehensive high schools and two comprehensive middle schools
- Intentional shift from central office special education leading to school site leading for students with disabilities
- Created co-teaching opportunities in the general education classes
- Ensured all families of students with a disability had equal opportunity to participate in school choice process
- Influenced the LCAP and SPSA process to be reflective of students with disabilities and highlight strategies for inclusion
- Introduced Universal Designs for Learning to all CVUSD teachers and administrators
- Included special education staff on the health curriculum committee
- Launched Buddy Program - connecting high school age students and students with disabilities to promote positive interactions and social bonding
- Ongoing professional development with site administrators to strengthen their leadership capacity for special education



# English Learners

- Ensured there is bilingual staff at every school site to create a positive communication relationship between the schools and families
- Recruited and hired increased Spanish speaking staff (Conejo Elem Principal, School Counselor, School Psychologists)
- Provided mental health services parent presentation in Spanish
- Presented, in Spanish, “top tips” for rising 6th grade families and 9th grade families on how to support their child’s successful transition to the next grade span
- Bilingual paraprofessionals are strategically assigned to assist English Learners in classrooms in the areas of math and literacy development
- Implemented Project 2Inspire, a parent engagement course where parents learn about the complexities of the American school system and how to support their child in school
- Developed the Multilingual Parent Leadership Program, a trainer of trainers program for English Learner Parents to provide parent informational seminars
- District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) shifted to being led in Spanish, rather than English, which has increased participation

# LGBTQ+ Students

- Parent of a transgender youth reached out to collaborate on how CVUSD can create affirming schools and better prepare staff to support LGBTQ+ students
  - From this collaboration, Gender Diversity Training was planned and provided to all principals, school psychologists and several Elementary school sites. Training includes:
    - Public school legal responsibilities
    - Review vocabulary/terminology
    - Importance of pronoun and name recognition
    - Examples of how to create an affirming environment
  - We fully recognize much more training/support is needed - will occur in August 2021 with all teachers
- Joined Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs at three high schools to solicit student input on future staff training, to solicit their voice on school experiences and to convey support to our community
- Increased access to gender neutral restrooms
- Provided two BreakThrough parent/guardian informational workshops on how to support your LGBTQ+ student
- Updated School Success Plan process
- Created an LGBTQ+ working group
- Engagement in the California Healthy Youth Act curriculum exploration and selection

# Students with Unstable Housing

- Connected students/families directly with community agencies and resources for support with accessing temporary housing, rent relief, food share, and child care
- Provided students and families with basic needs including clothing, shoes, toiletries, and backpacks filled with school supplies, via the Conejo Closet
- Provided personal/individual support with the enrollment process, and connected families to school site liaisons for ongoing needs
- Assisted with transportation to and from school
- Provided personal/individual support to focus on student access and success

# Equity Task Force: First Year Experiences

- “Positive experience where we as a group were able to develop a comfort level with one another and have open and honest dialogue to support the overall mission of the task force. What some may not understand is that relationships and group dynamics needs to be formed where trust and understanding is built. The work itself can not be addressed until this has been formed.”
- “Being on the Equity Task Force has been a challenging and exciting experience. As part of the ETF, and specifically working on the curriculum subcommittee, our work has included goal setting, brainstorming practical ideas to move us toward great equity and inclusion, and collaboration with district staff and teachers to share ideas and make changes.”
- “First year experience is overwhelming with how the emphasis on making teachers or staff go outside of their comfort zone is “outrageous” yet expectations for students is to change their mindset and growth to challenge themselves. The status quo is very much ingrained and this year is just the start to chipping away the status quo.”

# Equity Task Force: First Year Experiences

- “Within this first year of the ETF, I felt heard and noticed. The Equity Task Force gave me an opportunity to share my opinions and ideas with other passionate people who wanted to make change. Being able to participate as a student in these meetings with rich discussion gave me confidence that the community and school district was ready for action.”
- “It is important to understand that ETF is an advisory group. Our role is to try to illuminate areas that may be blind spots for the district and assist by sharing ideas, suggestions, and personal experiences. Also, by helping with research and communication. Any accomplishments are achieved through collaboration with district staff, teachers and students. That work has begun in earnest this year.”
- “Being on the equity task force this year was a very eye-opening experience. I feel that I've been able to share some of my own experiences, while also learning a lot from hearing about other's stories. Participating has allowed me to see our district in a different light and expand on some of the issues I have personally noticed while also recognizing some that I hadn't before. While participating and knowing that we as a group have been making progress was positive, I also feel that there have been negatives in realizing the reality of focusing on deep-rooted equity-related issues in our community. While there is still a lot to be done, I am glad to be part of the task force knowing that we are working towards implementing change in the district and community.”

# Equity Task Force: First Year Outcomes

- Requested all principals and counselors participate in required training on DEI- this work has begun with 7 sessions so far with principals
- Created a central [confidential/anonymous reporting](#) option for students and families who do not feel comfortable making reports of discrimination to their school site administrators (created in November 2020)
- Wrote equity-centered interview questions and requested these be added to staff interview process (added as of March 2021)
- Expansion of staffing recruitment efforts to attract diverse candidates
- Communicated to our community that use of racial slurs will not be tolerated ([message from Superintendent occurred in March 2021](#)) and solidarity with Asian-American Pacific Islander (AAPI community after Atlanta shooting ([message from Superintendent in March 2021](#)))
- Core literature - required at least one book written by a diverse author and diverse protagonists - this will occur for the 21/22 school year
- Strong encouragement to move forward with Ethnic Studies course, which will occur in the 22/23 school year

# Equity Task Force: First Year Outcomes

- Established collaborative meetings with Instructional Directors and secondary Principals to discuss the importance of teaching about diversity
- Requested Black Student Union (BSU) club that originated at WHS this year, expanded to the other high school campuses (as of April all three comprehensive high schools have a BSU)
- Created opportunities for middle school students to access the high school BSU clubs
- Provided required professional development on gender diversity (all teachers scheduled for August 2021)
- Made resources available to families, students and colleagues on how to address incidents of discrimination and racism, how to support LGBTQ+ students, how to prevent ableism, how to be an ally in diversity, equity and inclusion (new [DEI webpage](#) launched in November 2021)
- Provided a memo to secondary teachers about the importance of not using the “n-word” when reading certain literature (e.g. To Kill a Mockingbird) and how to be sensitive to the hurt this word causes (Memo provided to teachers in November 2021)
- Engaged with LGBTQ+ students on safe access to restrooms at school (survey sent to students in high school GSA clubs in March, follow-up meeting with students in April for dialogue about needs)
- Participated in LGBTQ+ working group



# All Principals and Central Office Administrator Equity Training

- Structure:
  - Small groups (5)
  - 75 minutes/month (eight sessions this year)
  - Read and discussed DEI related education-based research articles
  - Discussed existing structures/experiences within CVUSD
  - Engaged in self reflection and self awareness, and practiced perspective taking from that of a marginalized individual/group/community - ascertaining our beliefs or belief systems.
  - Role played scenarios to practice equity leadership skills

# Feedback from Administrator Equity Training Series

“These trainings have led to a lot of self-reflection. They have caused me to pause and look at things from a different angle. The thought of doing nothing terrifies me. Our students, my children... deserve for us to take action.”

“Great discussions around perspectives and the reminder to always put ourselves in others’ shoes. I continue to reflect on making sure I use every opportunity to advocate for every single student here, whether it is placing diverse access to books in our school and classrooms, or being aware of my words, so that I do not communicate biases about anyone.”

“This training has been outstanding. I'm not only reflecting on my own personal leadership for equity but am also thinking of ways to engage my staff in this important process.”

“It made me reflect on the possible cultural and diversity detours we are making. Although the intention is wonderful, there is a fundamental need to shift mindsets and overarching practices that will make lasting change.”

“They were very powerful, yet uncomfortable - really makes you examine how you have treated people in the past. Ashamed of staying quiet when others were using stereotypical words or comments. Having the bravery to confront is important to me now.”

“Multicultural literature benefits all students and specifically gives voice, role models, and values the experiences of diverse students. It also gives an opportunity for the class to engage in discussions about diversity, perspective taking, and the value of difference. It is a reminder to me that without any formal training, good intentions cannot be enough and our role as leaders is to fill that void.”

“I appreciated the scenario discussion today, therefore, any opportunity to work as a team on how best to handle tough situations moving forward is extremely helpful.”

“The student perspectives on how the multicultural literature impacts them personally really hit home. Especially the idea of seeing themselves as “normal people”. In addition, I took away how this allowed teachers to create those bonds and relationships with students.”



# Equity Task Force: Looking Forward

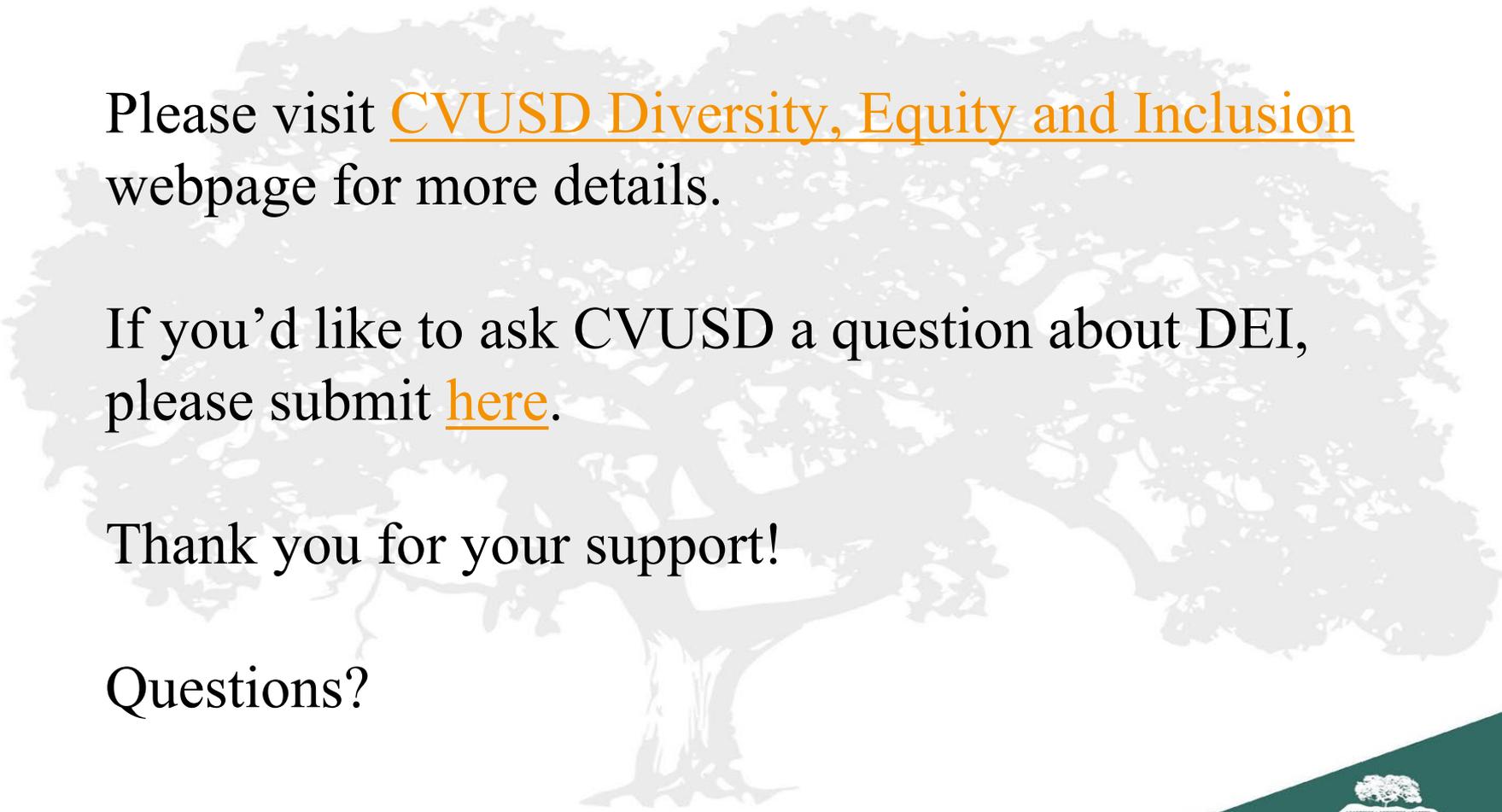
- Continue to advocate on behalf of marginalized communities by engaging with CVUSD staff - with specific actions identified
- Create more opportunities to be public facing with community to provide updates
- Contribute to professional development with CVUSD staff
- Create opportunities to engage directly with families to solicit more voices
- Continue to hold accountable changes within CVUSD towards equity
- Analyze first year structure- propose adjustments to increase engagement and effectiveness
- Collaborate with existing DACs and other groups/organizations



Thank you to our parent-partners, community-partners,  
students and colleagues for all of your support and  
efforts.

Diversity, equity and inclusion requires a coalition.





Please visit [CVUSD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) webpage for more details.

If you'd like to ask CVUSD a question about DEI, please submit [here](#).

Thank you for your support!

Questions?