

March D&I Stakeholder Meeting Notes

Pillar 2 - Recruit, attract, and retain highly qualified potential teachers to diversify our applicant pool, and retain a diverse faculty and staff that reflects the demographics of our students.

There were 8 people (2 staff members, 1 board member, and 5 community members) present for our Tuesday, March 15th D&I Stakeholder Focus Group meeting. We began the meeting at 6:00.

We began by going over the norms and goals for the meeting. We expressed that the goals of the meeting were to communicate what our program has done, is doing, and next steps. We also communicated that another goal of this meeting is to get input from our school community so that we can produce 2-3 action items to focus on for the next school year.

We discussed the issues of teacher retention across the country, and we discussed the declining numbers of teachers entering the teaching profession.

The meeting officially ended at 7:08, but we stayed after for casual conversation. We took notes from the meeting, and from the notes came 4 possible action items. Some of the thoughts expressed in the meeting were:

- Why is equity not included and defined in our vision?
- Diversity is the acknowledgement of differences but values are the same.
- Society is having a hard time figuring out diversity and inclusion, so it will also take us time to figure it out.
- It was asked, "What is the direction of the program?"
- What are we doing to intentionally recruit a larger applicant pool?
- Leadership Academy has produced teacher leaders and future administrators, but has it created a system where we promote from within instead of looking for the best candidate?
- How do educators who want to work in Wylie ISD who are outside of the community get into Wylie ISD? The perception of Wylie ISD is that it is a tight-knit group of people and it is hard to break into. How do we capitalize on programs that we have to grow our own staff while looking outside of Wylie for highly-qualified candidates?
- Wylie looks different today than it did 10-20 years ago.
- How do we use our resources and how can we change our systems and process to bring in more applicants?
- Where is the demographic data? How do we explain the need for this based on data?
- We have had potential community members do not want to move to Wylie because they see that there is limited diversity among our staff, from our school board to our educators.
- How do we brand hiring and retention in a way that we can see an increase in the diversity of our applicant pool?
- How do we find a balance between recruiting kids from within our district to come back as teachers vs. hiring from the outside?
- We talked about our grow-your-own para program.
- Can you work on building affinity groups or identifying affinity groups for our teachers to join?
- Can we create childcare opportunities for our staff?
- Can we bring students and/or parents to recruiting trips with us to share why we need great teachers in Wylie?

- A comment was made that nothing was being accomplished in the meeting, but another participant stated the importance of slowing down so that all thoughts and perspectives were included.
- It was asked, "What does D&I have to do with HR, hiring, and retention."
- It was asked, "Why are we making this all about race?" We communicated that this was not entirely about race at all. We talked about the growing concern of the teacher shortage around the country, and the need to increase our applicant pool so that we can hire the best teachers.

Possible Action Items

- 1 – Revisit the colleges and universities that we recruit to see if they are meeting our needs.
- 2 – Work to build deeper relationships with more colleges and universities so that we can build more pipelines with future educators
- 3 – Establish our 'Adopt-a-Teacher' program so that we are providing support to first- and second-year teachers.
- 4 – Create 'Why Wylie' recruitment videos featuring our students, staff, and families.