



Auburn

Enlarged City School District

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Strategic Plan

Mission Statement

The mission of the Auburn Enlarged City School District (AECSD) is to develop citizens that are capable of meeting the challenges of their future by providing equitable, fiscally sound educational opportunities necessary to develop confident life-long learners.



Inclusivity Statement

The Auburn Enlarged City School District believes that people work best when their unique voices are heard and valued, their authentic selves are accepted and nurtured, and their individual needs are addressed.

We are committed to providing an equitable environment where the social, emotional, physical, academic, and professional development of each person is supported through a multi-faceted lens of diversity, allowing for the affirmation of individuality. Through listening, learning, reflection, and purposeful action we are better able to cultivate awareness, model respect, and empower one another to become empathetic citizens with a global mindset.



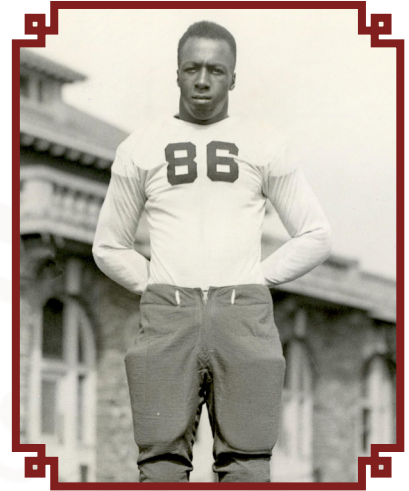
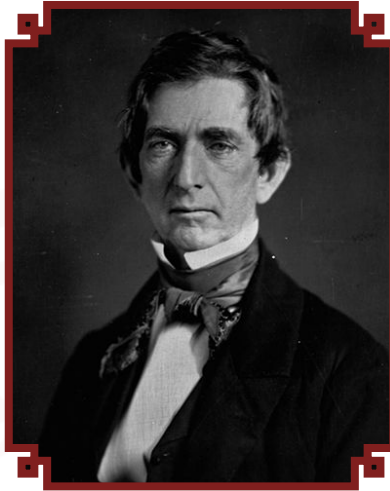
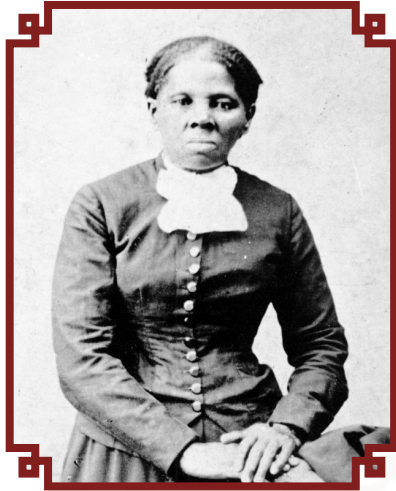
Historical Background

Communities in the state of New York have a strong connection to their historical past and geographic area, providing residents with a unique perspective on how diversity has helped shape each region. The City of Auburn is defined by its rich and diverse history and is an ever-changing microcosm of our greater society. In order to have an understanding of why we must undertake the important work of diversity, equity, and inclusion, we must first acknowledge our past endeavors and current needs. The school district encompasses and represents the City of Auburn and surrounding communities, and with its history in mind, the district strives to learn from the past and lead the community into a more progressive future.

Auburn, located in the serene and visually beautiful Finger Lakes region of Central New York, is sited on the northern tip of Owasco Lake. The sole city in rural Cayuga County, agriculture and dairy are big business for the county with 891 farms and increasing revenue from agricultural exports valued at \$65 million. Ranked number one in acres of soybeans and value of sales of grains, oilseed, dry beans, dry peas, county agriculture is also rooted in significant corn production. The City of Auburn complements the area's agricultural economic vitality with 18 farms and 69 "pick your own" near the city. The Saratoga Cheese Corporation built its facility in nearby Aurelius because the county is consistently ranked as one of the largest milk-producing counties in the state.

Over the past few years, Auburn's craft brewery enterprises have been nationally recognized as have several of the local and regional award-winning wineries. Just as importantly, Auburn, though small with a current population of 25,234, is a vibrant city rich in history, culture, and progressive social justice movements and the performing arts as evidenced by the Rev Theater Company and Auburn Public Theater. From The Seward House Museum to the Equal Rights Heritage Center, from the Cayuga Museum of History and Art and its Case Research Laboratory to the Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center, as well as the Tubman National Park a historical centerpiece complemented by historical notables interned at Fort Hill cemetery. Auburn often referred to as "History's Hometown," has a diverse legacy of national heroes who called Auburn home.

These individuals epitomize the basic staples of freedom which have informed generations of subsequent Auburnians. Influenced by the democratic principles of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people, their Founding Fathers laid a foundation for inclusion, equity, consent of the governed, and the importance of speech. Those steadfast principles now serve as the guiding principles for service to others. The Auburn community takes pride in those local individuals who enriched city life but also had the determination to influence national and global thinking as well as progressive civic action.



Auburn's initial roots were within the territorial domain of the Tuscarora, members of the Iroquois League, who settled the area until Europeans took over. And then there were:

- ◇ Harry and Kate Freeman, former enslaved individuals from Guinea, West Africa helped found and settle Auburn along with Col. John L. Hardenberg. Notably, the Freemans are acknowledged as establishing the first Black settlement called "New Guinea" in upstate New York.
- ◇ The city is also home to many other notable historical people, including New York Governor and Secretary of State **William H. Seward** who served as secretary under President Abraham Lincoln, and negotiated the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1868.
- ◇ **Harriet Tubman** who struggled diligently to bring enslaved people to freedom; served as a scout for the union army in the Civil War, and established a home for the aged.
- ◇ **Dr. Jerome "Brud" Holland**, the first African American to play football at Cornell University, earning All-American honors in 1937 and 1938 and eventually became ambassador to Sweden, as well as the first African American to serve on the board of the New York Stock Exchange.
- ◇ Lydia Ann Moulton Jenkins, the first female ordained Minister for Universalist of Ontario, who was a Doctor of Hydrotherapy, suffragette and temperance leader.
- ◇ Tah-gah-jute (aka Logan), chief of the Cayugas, a tribe within the Six Nations.
- ◇ Theodore Case, who in 1916 established the Case Research Lab in Auburn and went on to invent the Movietone sound-on-film system.

Executive Summary

The Auburn Enlarged City School District (AECSD) used planned change preparing the organization for new goals to develop its district-wide strategic plan and used a similar process for its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative. From the onset, the district shared its DEI philosophy and proposed direction to its educational community as well as with parents and community leaders. The formation of the DEI strategic plan was designed to be inclusive to enable a variety of ideas, concerns, and eventually a consensus for action. District personnel had the opportunity to participate on the task force; to join DEI book readings; to attend panel or one-on-one discussions with DEI leaders and raise questions or concerns.



This process recognized that listening to a wide range of opinions was a critical component to include divergent voices. With added personnel (DEI executive director and DEI consultant appointed in March 2022) and additional members invited to join the DEI task force for the 2022-2023 school year, the district will present the final draft DEI plan for BOE discussion and feedback during late May 2023. DEI staff will address board concerns and then incorporate appropriate BOE thinking in the draft document. The revised draft will be made available to the entire district learning community and community partners for discussion. After that process is completed, the district executive cabinet will have its final read with their resulting comments being incorporated in the plan for presentation to the BOE. The final approved plan will then be shared with district colleagues and community partners. At that point, the leadership of the elementary, junior high and the senior high school buildings will initiate specific measurable operational objectives for the 2023-24 school year. At that point, the district will witness the official kick-off of the district's DEI strategic plan.

This executive summary captures the overfall work of five 2022-23 DEI work groups and suitably frames the scope and purpose of the district's DEI plan. It is a basic primer that presents the district's goals with each building establishing specific objectives that strengthens that building's culture and community aspirations; identify in school "champions;" set doable timeframes; identify assessment protocols and develop subsequent actions to rectify unachieved objectives. As each school building's operational plan takes shape, it is understood DEI initiatives will reflect the building's institutional culture and neighborhood served. Furthermore, the plan will recognize the diversity of various student learning styles supported by student support services. It is important to recognize the cultural attributes that each student brings to her/his classroom in recognition of the NYSED's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework. Specifically, the two principles; Welcoming and Affirming Environment and Ongoing Professional Learning align with priorities two and four of this plan, which are on the next page.

Priorities

- 1** Recruitment of a culturally and ethnically diverse teaching staff and retention of all teachers.
- 2** Professional learning to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 3** Celebrating cultural, ethnic, and shared community aspirations that will empower student self-worth and positive recognition of a student's learning potential.
- 4** Foster a safe, welcoming, and affirming school environment that supports and empowers the social emotional well-being and collegiality among staff and students.

These overarching themes poignantly address critical issues that will enhance student learning and staff-to-student relationships.

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Recruitment and Retention

The Auburn Enlarged City School District (AECSD) is a well-defined complex educational community. The district consists of several school buildings, five elementary, a junior high, and a high school.

Each school is shaped by the neighborhood served and where a diverse range of enrolled students live. The Auburn Enlarged City School District is dedicated to the pursuit, development, and retention of dynamic individuals who will provide learning opportunities to meet the needs of all of our students. With this approach, district personnel can be engaged and maximize their full potential. The district is committed to recognizing all staff as unique individuals, who make valuable contributions towards achieving district goals. Furthermore, the district is also committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining diverse, well-rounded staff who facilitate lifelong learning that is rigorous, relevant, and results driven.



Goals

AECSD will define and expand internal leadership career ladders and advancement opportunities annually whereby employed staff can further develop and contribute to the vision and mission of the district as evidenced by bargaining unit titles, job descriptions, certification and position requirements, job fair flyers, and materials.

AECSD will provide orientation for newly hired employees to facilitate their successful transition into employment and provide ongoing professional learning and internship opportunities for its employees annually as evidenced by calendars, agendas, and session materials.

AECSD will explore strategies that may have the potential to empower high school student pathways to a variety of educational careers, especially teaching. Such strategies may include job shadow days, (non) credit-bearing courses for senior students as an effective option, civil service options, etc. An initial planning meeting was held on December 1, 2022, with at least 3 follow-up meetings to be convened by June 30, 2024, as evidenced by meeting agendas and minutes.

Goals	Action Steps	Educator (s) Responsible	Start Date	Timeline or Due Date	Resources	Desired Outcomes
Career Ladders	Implement Recruitment and Retention Plan	Personnel Department	September 2023	September 2023 - June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendars • Agendas • Session Materials • Job Posting via district-wide emails • OLAS 	Expand internal career ladders and advancement opportunities
New Hires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Teacher Orientation: Bus Tour • Mentoring Program • Summer Professional Learning Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel Department • Curriculum & Instruction Department 	August 2023	September 2023 - June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR-S Framework • DEI Resources 	Create awareness and education on the CR-S Framework and various DEI initiatives in the district
Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auburn Junior High School: - Job Shadowing • Auburn High School: - Child Psychology Class: Internship opportunities - Cayuga 101: Internship Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District-Level Leaders • Office of Curriculum & Instruction • Cayuga Community College Leadership • High School Building Administrators • Work-Based Learning Coordinator • Guidance Counselors 	September 2023	September 2023 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Cayuga Community College • Community Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing internship opportunities • Providing college credit courses towards teacher certification

2 Professional Learning to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

The district will develop and provide job-embedded professional learning sessions to appropriately train staff to create or strengthen an awareness around diversity, equitable teaching practices, and providing inclusive environments.

Goal

The district will continue to provide professional learning opportunities for all staff. Through a collaborative relationship with district-level administrators and building leaders, the district will develop and plan to implement professional learning focused on DEI to meet at least 25% of the staff by June 30, 2024. Any newly hired staff will have professional learning opportunities after being hired during the district's New Teacher/Staff Orientation, through the mentoring program, and other onboarding opportunities. This goal will be measured by providing all participants with a survey at the completion of each session.



Action Steps	Educator(s) Responsible	Start Date	Timeline or Due Date	Resources	Desired Outcomes
New Teacher Orientation: Bus Tour	Dr. Renee Burgess	August 21, 2023	August 21, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework (CR-S) • School bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour of seven schools and neighborhoods • Knowledge of Auburn's historical aspects • Knowledge of the CR-S Framework • Providing training to all new teachers
Mentor/Mentee Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Renee Burgess • Shannon Dunbar • Babette Valentine • Michelle Kolceski 	September 18, 2023	September - June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas • Sign-in sheets • Frontline reports • PowerPoint Presentations • Google Classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an awareness and educating both mentors and mentees on the CR-S Framework, various DEI topics, ENL, and Special Education • Providing training to all new teachers
Staff Development Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Renee Burgess • Independent Consultant 	October 20, 2023	October 20, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint Presentation • Shared Resources 	Providing training to all staff
DEI Workshop Series	Dr. Renee Burgess	January 2024	May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-in sheets • Frontline Reports • PowerPoint presentations • CR-S Framework 	Providing training on the CR-S Framework and other topics related to DEI



3

Celebrations to enhance and empower community building and belonging

A school building is a collection of varying cultures localized to that area. A school district is then the gathering of those varied cultures into one overarching community. The AECSD is committed to celebrating all of these different cultures that come together to form our educational community.

AECSD shall focus on celebrating student and staff successes and achievements.

Members of the district's educational community will work to establish welcoming and affirming environments at each school building; foster nurturing relationships with students and families, and highlight, represent, and affirm each student's identity and cultural influences.

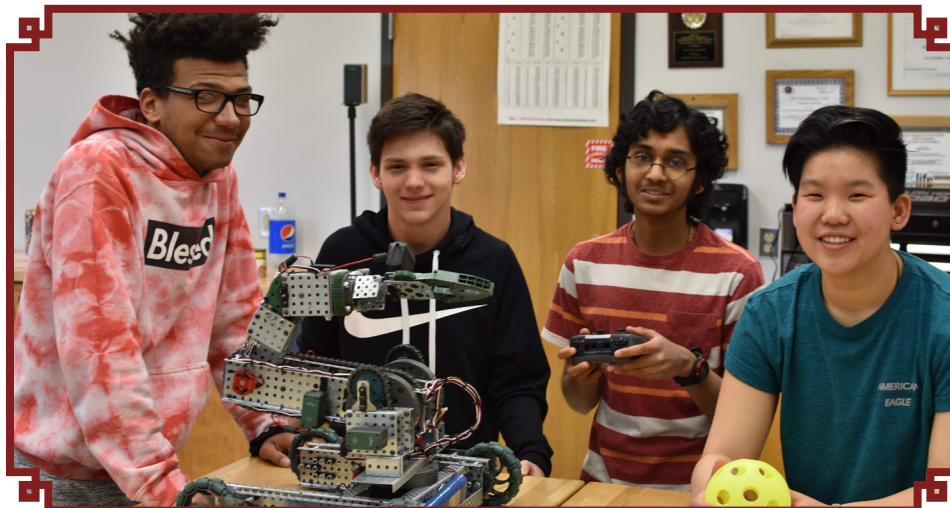
Each school building has the opportunity to utilize various incentive platforms and staffing, such as PBIS and PTO's to establish celebratory activities that spotlight the culture and accomplishments of the entire building community. Additionally, each building has the opportunity to leverage its technology resources and social media presence to spotlight the culture and accomplishments of its respective buildings on a scale that is more visible to the community.

Goal

By September 30, 2023, all eight district buildings will have a plan to utilize at least one appropriate space in their building to showcase the accomplishments of its students and staff every month beginning at the start of the 2023-24 school year. This will be measured by a monthly walk-through tool implemented by the Executive Director of DEI from October 2023 through June 2024.



Action Steps	Educator(s) Responsible	Start Date	Timeline or Due Date	Resources	Desired Outcomes
Each building identifies a space to showcase accomplishments and celebrations of all students	Building leaders	September 2023	September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical spaces TV Monitors Bulletin Boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least nine different showcases during the 23-24 school year Culturally diverse highlights of students, staff, and the larger community Evidence of heritage months being celebrated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk-Through Tool Reviewed by the DEI Task Force Walk-Through Tool Reviewed by each building's Admin Team, PBIS Team, or Student Support Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Renee Burgess DEI Task Force 	September 2023	September 2023	Walk-Through Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least nine different showcases during the 23-24 school year Culturally diverse highlights of students, staff, and the larger community Evidence of heritage months being celebrated
Monthly Walk-Through Tool	Dr. Renee Burgess, building leadership, and members of PBIS	October 2023	By the 30th of each month from October 2023 to June 2024	Walk-Through Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity in celebration of students Culturally diverse highlights of students, staff, and the larger community Evidence of heritage months being celebrated



4 Foster a Safe, Welcoming, and Affirming Environment

The Auburn Enlarged City School District strives to establish, and implement a framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion by prioritizing the social and emotional well-being and collegiality among district staff members, teacher-to-student, and student-to-student relationships. Data-driven decision-making will provide a consistent multi-tiered system of support that will ensure academic, behavioral, and social-emotional achievement. By creating safe and engaging environments that foster citizenship and wellness, students will be college and/or career ready.

Goal

By June 2024, AECSD students will respond that they feel safe in school with a 5% increase as measured by the annual Student Voice survey results from 2023 (Elementary: 87.2%; Secondary: 50.5%).



Action Steps	Educator(s) Responsible	Start Date	Timeline or Due Date	Resources	Desired Outcomes
Focus Groups	District and building-level leaders	Fall of 2023	Fall of 2023 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Students • Questions 	To have a qualitative approach to the data on students safety
Professional Learning sessions for teachers	Curriculum & Instruction Department	October 2023	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR-S Framework • Exit surveys for participants 	Increase social, emotional, and physical safety for students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis of the ratings of the NYSED Rubric • Standard 4.1.a: Learning Environment 	District-level leaders	Summer of 2023	August 2023 - June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline • NYSED Rubric 	Analyze and create professional learning sessions for teachers and staff
Educating students on the surveys	District and building-level leaders	February 2024	February - March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio Announcements • Visual Announcements • WeVideo • Classroom Visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining safety for students • Importance of student voice
Student Groups: - Student United Way at AHS - Restorative Student Groups at AJHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Renee Burgess • AHS Admin & Staff 	September 2023	June 2024	TBD	Student involvement and leadership development
Mentoring Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Renee Burgess • Admin Teams 	Winter of 2024	June 2024	TBD	Student development

2022-2023 DEI Task Force Members

Brianne Batis, Assistant Principal at Herman Elementary School

William Berry, Jr., DEI Consultant

Dr. Shereasa T. Braxton, Assistant Principal at Casey Park Elementary School

Dr. Reneé Burgess, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Instruction

Sarah Cupelli, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel

Allison Fennessy, English Teacher at Auburn High School

Karen Foos, Fourth Grade Teacher at Herman Elementary School

Prin Furst, Science Teacher at Auburn High School

Anne Herrling, Literacy Instructional Coach at Herman Elementary School

Kelley Horbal, Math Teacher at Auburn High School

Michelle Kolceski, Director of Early Learning and ELL

Lindsey Kurak, Assistant Principal at William H. Seward Elementary School

Julie Liccion, Family & Consumer Sciences Teacher at Auburn High School

Amanda Maher, Third Grade Teacher at William H. Seward Elementary School

Melanie Maher, Graduation Coach at Auburn High School

Amy Mahunik, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Jaelyn Malone, Teaching Assistant at Auburn Junior High School

Holly Maltese, Fifth Grade Teacher at Genesee Elementary School

Nicholas Musso, Math Instructional Coach at William H. Seward & Genesee Elementary Schools

Sarah Passarello, Principal at Genesee Elementary School

Jeffrey Pirozzolo, Superintendent of Schools

Jonathan Roberts, Principal at Casey Park Elementary School

Tonya Russell, Special Education Coordinator Grades 7-12

Joseph Sheppard, Technology Teacher at Auburn Junior High School and Auburn High School

Lynn Stock, School Counselor at William H. Seward Elementary School

William Tenity, District Substitute and Community Member

Gisella Vieira, Student Representative

Jillian Witchey, Secretary at Genesee Elementary School

The district will maintain a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force that meets once a month over ten months of the year to review, assess, and update the DEI Strategic Plan. An updated DEI Strategic Plan will be rolled out for the 2024-2025 school year.