

To the EVSC community and families:

In June, the EVSC Superintendent Dr. Smith wrote a letter to the community following the killing of George Floyd, which included the following:

***"It is an honor to serve as the superintendent of the EVSC because we believe in the promise of every child – and we embrace every child as part of our core mission. We strive to end all forms of oppression by promoting educational equity. We are far from perfect, but we do have the courage to admit we must be better, and the will to continue to work with our community toward that end. This quote from Promise54 perfectly sums up our ultimate goal, "Equity is reached when we have removed the predictability of success or failure that currently correlates with any social or cultural factor."***

Since this letter was published, the EVSC has dedicated itself to turning these words into actions. Upon reflecting, we believe it is necessary to acknowledge that racism and inequities exist within our district. We know this because we can predict outcomes for some students based on race and other cultural factors. The goal of the EVSC is to ensure all students achieve their potential. Therefore, we will continue to strive to create a learning environment that eliminates barriers to learning and fosters each child's success.

In the EVSC, we have created a framework to support the development of the whole child, GAIN - Growth in Academics through Innovation and Neuroeducation. The goal of GAIN is to maximize each student's potential by creating supportive, academically challenging, culturally inclusive, and equitable learning environments. To achieve this, we must recognize the critical role our students' culture plays in creating equitable learning environments. The environment in which learning takes place can and does contribute to the achievement gaps that continue to exist in education. These gaps cannot be closed, all students cannot achieve, until this is addressed. The EVSC acknowledges the need to create culturally responsive schools to close these gaps and ensure every student reaches their potential.

#### **The EVSC's actions to date:**

- Fall 2008: The EVSC's Chief Diversity Officer began providing professional development and training in Culturally Responsive-Positive Behavior Interventions and supports, targeted training to district and school leaders to improve the cultural proficiency of educators and an understanding of their implicit biases
- Fall 2013: Began implementation of Culturally Responsive- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
- Summer 2016: District-wide training and implementation of Restorative Practices
- Fall 2019: Developed equal opportunity schools to increase all student groups access and enrollment in advanced placement courses
- Winter 2020: Surveyed students in grades 6-12 on equity and race
- June 2020: Teaching Tolerance Social justice standards added to SEL blitz giving students to share more about their culture during connecting activities

- June 2020: Established a Reopening Equity Team team consisting of educators and community leaders to develop guidance for schools

**Plans for the 2020-2021 School Year:**

- Summer 2020: Provide resources to school administrators and teachers to advance their knowledge and understanding of their own culture, biases, and understanding of culturally responsive instruction
- Fall 2020: Partner with a consultant to guide the development and action steps for the The EVSC & Community Equity Team
- Fall 2020: The EVSC will form an EVSC & Community Equity Team consisting of educators and community leaders to help co-create the EVSC Equity Plan
- Fall 2020: Commit to a talent search for a Chief Diversity/Equity Officer
- Fall/Winter 2020: Through The EVSC & Community Equity Team, engage students, families, and community members using online platforms, surveys, and other opportunities to provide input
- Fall/Winter 2020: Complete the GAIN Manual Cultural Proficiency unit and share with district leadership
- Fall/Winter 2020: Establish metrics the EVSC will utilize to evaluate and monitor the impact of the EVSC Equity Plan
- Winter/Spring 2021: The EVSC Equity Plan finalized and submitted to the school board for approval

As part of our conversations and reflections since June, members of the Equity Reopening Team stated, *Education is the foundation for providing access to life, liberty, and the personal pursuit of happiness. However, this is not the reality for most people of color.*" The EVSC is committed to working alongside our community and families to ensure each and every student has access to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Sincerely,

The EVSC & Community Reopening Equity Team