



Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor
Spring 2021

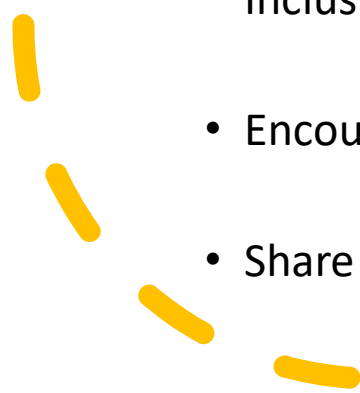
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Town Hall



Welcome!

Goals of tonight's Town Hall

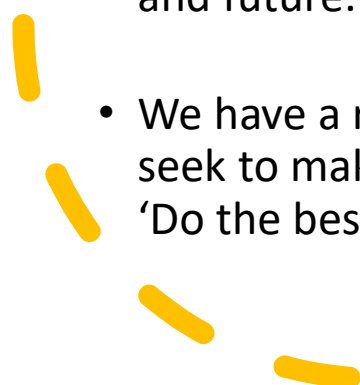
- Bring the whole community up to date on the work we have been doing this year around diversity, equity and inclusion
- Prepare our community for the April 21 Launch of the AWSNA Climate, Equity and Inclusion Survey
- Encourage all community members to get active in this work within the school
- Share our priorities for the rest of this year and into the 2021-22 school year





Why does diversity, equity and inclusion work matter at RSSAA?

- Everyone deserves to feel welcome, accepted and comfortable in their environment, and school (whether a student or staff member) is where so many of us spend most of our day. We say that our curriculum is consciously designed to meet our students – and this is part of that design.
- All of our students are best served by a school that fully prepares them for the world they are living into – one that takes up the hard conversations of our time and society, and one that solidly grounds them in a full understanding of our society’s past, present and future.
- We have a responsibility to recognize when we have not lived up to these ideals, and to seek to make the changes that help us do better in the future – To quote Maya Angelou: ‘Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.’





What does diversity, equity and inclusion work mean at RSSAA?

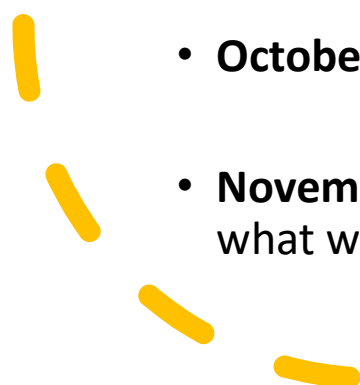
- Creating a strong community culture that is welcoming and affirming to all of our community members – students, families, faculty and staff – supportive of all cultures, religions, genders, sexualities, financial status and abilities.
- Focusing on our curriculum, community culture and climate, and policies and procedures
- Practically, right now, it means the work of our faculty, parent volunteers, College of Teachers, and Board





Summer 2020 – Board and College Task Force

- **June 2020** – Board and College created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force to provide energy to and support for this work in our community
- **July and August 2020** – Group worked on developing priorities and initiatives for the community
- **September 2020** - Initiatives presented to the Board and College
- **October 2020** – Approved in Board and College
- **November 2020 – Now** – Work has been progressing in three committees, and that is what we are reporting about tonight





2020-2021 School Year Work

Three Committees started their work in October after Board and College Approval

- DEI Committee A: Curriculum and Student Experience – expansion of the previous DEI Committee
- DEI Committee B: Creating a Warm and Welcoming Community
- DEI Committee C: Communications and Community Dialog



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee A: Curriculum and Student Experience

This committee is charged with ensuring that our curriculum and student experience is as diverse and inclusive as possible

- From our Early Childhood Program to Grade Twelve
- DEI Braided Curriculum across all subjects – a living document
- Centered in our place and time – so local and topical as much as possible, with the span growing larger as the children mature

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee A: Curriculum and Student Experience - Past

Examples of work achieved this year:

- Inclusion of the Braided Curriculum in the School Scope and Sequence
- Early Childhood Children's Book Library
- Support for Society Club in the High School
- Development of an African American Studies Curriculum

Braided Curriculum

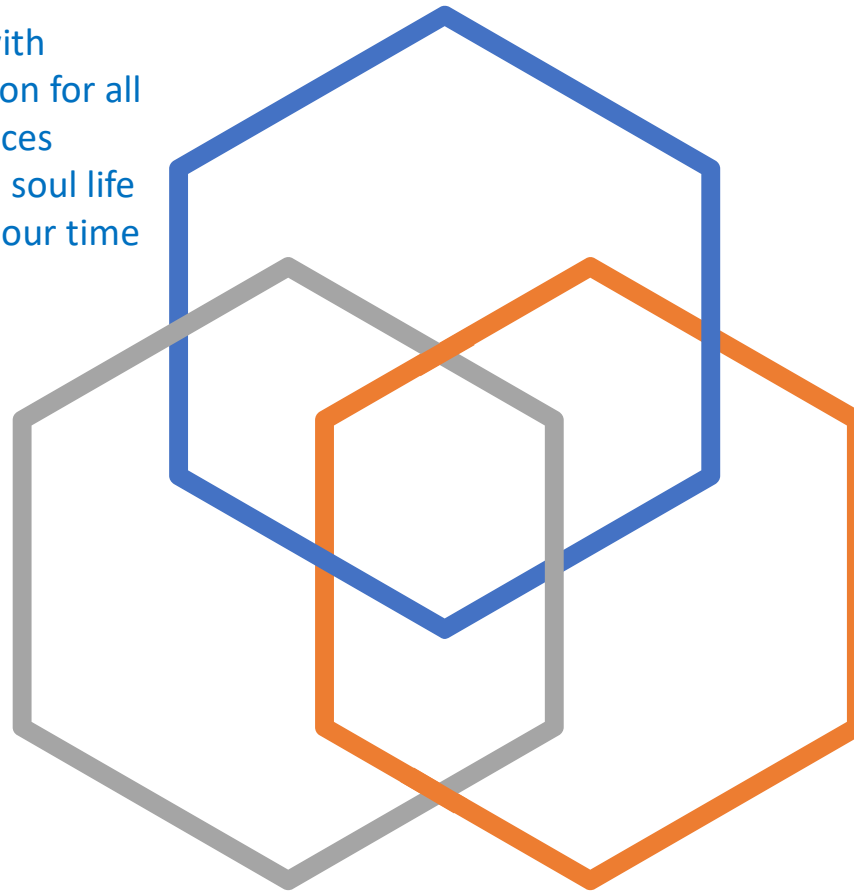
Working to ensure that our Curriculum, from Early Childhood through High School, is interwoven with compassion and respect for all; respecting diversity, promoting equity and creating inclusion.

Approaching all subjects with

- Compassion and inclusion for all
- Respect for all experiences
- Care for the feeling and soul life
- Deep understanding of our time and place

Arts and Humanities Subjects

- Teaching communication skills and multiple perspectives
- Fostering reflective, caring, conversations
- Lifting up of marginalized voices
- Understanding of the other



Math and Science Subjects

- Using a phenomenological approach, that teaches observation
- Focusing on environmental and ecological learning, in a place-based approach that includes native knowledge
- Developing problem solving skills and strategies
- Learning to overcome initial assumptions
- Understanding mistakes as learning opportunities

Two examples:

Grade	Respect, Child Dev., Soul care, Service	Main Lesson - Block Inclusions	Social Studies - Blocks and additional subjects	Performing Arts, Music, Class Play	Visual Arts Handwork, Art	Science, Environment	Math	Language Arts	World Languages
Grade Four	The power of words & actions to hurt & heal Outreach	Maps, directions, Inca, Aztec, Maya, Norse myths; First People stories; Local History	Local History : Underground Railroad; African American History; Native American tribes in the immediate area. Norse Myths. Local geography	Strings, recorder, singing; team building through parts and harmony, local history related music; The Legend of Turtle Island Ojibwe	Embroidery and cross stitch – discussion of history and origins of women’s craft and utility work. Include native American quillwork and beading	Zoology, elephant circle story	Fractions, factors, long ÷, double digit x	Verbs, Contrasting lives, Kalevala	Spanish, German

In fourth grade the focus is on ensuring that the local history and local geography blocks are inclusive

Subject	Grade Nine	Grade Ten	Grade Eleven	Grade Twelve
<p>History</p>	<p>Revolutions I & II – Inclusion of variety of world revolutions including possibly Green Revolution, Iranian, and others. History of Art I & II; 20th-c. history, technology. Conscious inclusion of a wide range of cultures and approaches</p> <p>20th Century History: WWI & aftermath, Great Migration, Holocaust voices; Technology, labor, Civil Rights Movement. Arc of individual freedom</p>	<p>Inca, Maya, Aztec, Mesopotamia, Near East, Egypt, China; Americas; Greece; emphasis on HOW history is written. South & Central Americas: names colors, gender, enslavement or not, poems, festivals</p> <p>Enslavement & its long-term impact on the enslaved & slave holders; Way it shaped the world we now live in through superiority/inferiority lenses.</p>	<p>Asian and African History (topics such as colonialism, enslavement, rights of women), in those cultures). 2018– 19: Laos, Iran, Turkey, Israel, Zimbabwe, and South Africa with mostly 20th century issues.</p> <p>Music history (before & after Beethoven), including influence of African American music and world music</p>	<p>World development; history of architecture; colonialism: perspectives and consequences; Christopher Alexander A Pattern Language, The Timeless Way of Building, The Nature of Order Jonathan Hale, The Old Way of Seeing</p> <p>Turkish German refugees & immigrants; MLK’s journeys to Berlin (Michael King)</p>

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee A: Curriculum and Student Experience - Present

This committee is currently working on:

- Supporting the Braided Curriculum and African American Studies Curriculum through the process of becoming part of the School Scope and Sequence
- Development of a First Peoples' Curriculum – in the same way as the African American Studies Curriculum
- Creation of a Classroom Presentation and Speakers program for the 2021-22 School Year

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee A: Curriculum and Student Experience - Future

Work this Committee will be taking up in the coming 2021-22 School Year

- Continuation of all of this year's work around keeping our curriculum as relevant and topical for students as possible – including support for High School clubs and student groups
- Development of the next curriculum plans – Latinx, Southern Hemisphere, immigrant and LGBT+ history
- Support of Faculty and Administration in expanding our curriculum for support of RSSAA expectations around student-to-student interactions and communication

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee B: Creating a Warm & Welcoming Community

This committee is working to ensure that our school climate, policies and procedures are supportive to all students, families, faculty and staff

- From first inquiry to graduation – all aspects of a student and family experience of the school
- From application to retirement – all aspects of a faculty or staff member experience of the school
- Using a variety of tools to gather the information we need and to help us understand what work our RSSAA Community needs to do together to best serve our children

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee B: Creating a Warm & Welcoming Community- Past

Examples of work achieved this year:

- Study in the College of Teachers – *How to be an Antiracist – Ibram Kendi*
- Study and Conference attendance in the Early Childhood Faculty Circle
- Planning for the AWSNA Climate, Equity and Inclusion Survey launch – TOMORROW – April 21
 - Nationally Benchmarked – 1000's of schools around the country
 - Waldorf School Benchmarked – 42 schools currently taking it
 - Regional Benchmarked – to Midwestern Independent and Midwest Waldorf Schools
 - Current Parents, MS and HS Students, and Faculty/Staff AND Recently past Parents, Students and Faculty/Staff will all be surveyed.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee B: Creating a Warm & Welcoming Community- Present

This committee is currently working on:

- Launching the AWSNA Climate, Equity and Inclusion Survey – TOMORROW – April 21, and then making the most of the data to understand what it tells us about our community and school
- Development of a RSSAA School Wide DEI Audit – possibly using a tool from the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, an educational non-profit supporting independent schools on the East Coast.
 - This will be shaped by the data from the AWSNA Survey
 - This will be driven by an audit subcommittee – with members from our community and outside
- Starting a Community Wide DEI Book Club – first meeting May 11, 9 am on Zoom – Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee B: Creating a Warm & Welcoming Community- Future

Work this Committee will be taking up in the coming 2021-22 School Year

- Supporting Faculty and Staff with expanding RSSAA Expectations and Support for Student-to-Student Interactions and communication – expanded to include diversity, equity and inclusion topics and expectation
 - Set of expectations around communication – as we do in the social media area – what is simply not acceptable in our community
 - Direct conversation and education about these issues woven into our curriculum, especially in the middle school and early high school – like we do Cyber Civics
 - Teacher led conversations, in our classrooms, about critical current events, with explanation and grounding in what is happening – to help overcome the presence of social media in forming student senses of what is acceptable.
- Expansion of our recruitment work of both faculty/staff and students/families from diverse backgrounds
- Expansion of funding for faculty and staff training and professional development

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee C: Communications and Community Dialog

This committee is working to ensure that we are communicating well about these issues and our progress both within our RSSAA Community and to the wider world outside

- Website and all electronic platforms and communication
- Printed marketing and admissions materials
- School Handbooks, policies and procedures
- Community communication on our DEI work – Town Halls, reporting and updates to the community

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee C: Communications and Community Dialog - Past

Examples of work achieved this year:

- New Website Page with focus on our work and how to get involved
- Developing Process for regular community reporting and accountability – Town Halls twice a year – October and April
- Planning for the AWSNA Climate, Equity and Inclusion Survey launch – TOMORROW – April 21

RSSAA New Website Page on our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Work

[https://www.steinerschool.org/about-
us/dei.cfm](https://www.steinerschool.org/about-us/dei.cfm)



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee C: Communications and Community Dialog - Present

This committee is currently working on:

- RSSAA Community Statement – A new statement of our commitments and work in this area – one that can reflect and receive the support of the whole community.
- Supporting the AWSNA Climate Survey and the School wide DEI Audit processes

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee C: Communications and Community Dialog - Future

Work this Committee will be taking up in the coming 2021-22 School Year:

- Examining how we keep the community informed and engaged with all of the work taking place
- Communication and sharing of results from the AWSNA Climate Survey
- Participation in the RSSAA DEI Audit – with a focus on a sub-audit of School Communication platforms and materials



How can Community Members be involved?

- Participation in the AWSNA Climate, Equity and Inclusion Survey – The Survey will be available for the next ten days.
- Still seeking additional people for the three Committees, this work takes people and the more community members the better, ideally you are interested in taking action!
- Partnership in responding when concerns and problems arise – Who can you talk with?
 - School Administrator – Siân Owen-Cruise
 - Any Coordinator – Abby Kurlfink, Peggy Wilson, Laura Shope
 - Parent Council Co-Chair – Sara Deon
 - Board Members – Elizabeth Head, Heather Rindels

