

# WCASD Equity History Timeline

## “Building Capacity to Increasing Access”

### 2004-08

- The West Chester Area School District joins, as one of 15 chartering districts, the **Delaware Valley Minority Student Achievement Consortium (later named the [Delaware Valley Consortium for Excellence and Equity](#))**. This is an organization managed by the University of Pennsylvania.
- The West Chester Area School District began its partnership with Pacific Education Group (PEG) to train administrators, school board members, and teacher leaders in [Beyond Diversity](#). This professional development helped to support a common understanding of the role of racism in the roots causes of the minority achievement gap. *Beyond Diversity* training also introduced the school district to the [Courageous Conversation](#) protocol that supports interracial dialogue.

### 2008-09

- The District Equity Leadership Team (**DELT**) was created to coordinate equity initiatives across all elementary, middle and high schools.
- Building Equity Leadership Teams (**BELT**) were formed at all WCASD schools, and all members received training from PEG in *Beyond Diversity* and *Courageous Conversations* protocol.

### 2009-10

- *Beyond Diversity* and *Courageous Conversations* training became required professional development for the WCASD New Teacher Academy for all incoming teaching staff.
- **BELT** members began providing professional development for all staff to build the capacity that would support the removal of the barriers hindering minority achievement.

### 2010-14

- In 2010, WCASD established minority achievement gaps goals for its students' performance on state tests.
- In 2014, Pennsylvania legislators eliminated the reporting of disaggregated data (breaking down data into subgroups such as African American, White, Asian, Hispanic, Low Income, Special Education, and English Language Learners) and instead, combined data for all of those groups into one group called, “historically underperforming.” WCASD continued to track its own disaggregated data in an effort to better evaluate student progress, find deficits, and close gaps.
- In 2010, **Young Men and Women in Charge** (YMWIC) is founded with the support and collaboration of the school district. This mission of YMWIC is to empower economically disadvantaged youth to excel in STEM careers. Housed in the West Chester Area School District, YMWIC offers access to academic tutoring, mentoring, alliances with colleges and universities, and corporation partnerships to advance student achievement.
- In 2011-12, in order to sustain our staff training program, our equity leaders who had been trained by the Pacific Education Group took a year-long course to become certified *Beyond Diversity and Courageous Conversations* trainers for our schools.
- The district began to conduct major initiative meetings in Spanish.

- In 2013-14, the district created a Supervisor of Equity position to oversee the district's Equity work.
- The WCASD Community Leaders group, comprised of African American, Latino, and diverse religious leaders, formed in 2014 in an advisory capacity to provide input and direction on the work with Equity. The group continues to meet and participated in focus groups during the Equity Quality Review conducted in 2020.

## 2014-17

- The district's comprehensive plan is revised to include "Closing the Achievement Gap" as goal area one.
- The Supervisor of Equity is tasked to monitor this goal with achievement gap data.
- The Class Rank system at the high schools is eliminated because it sorts rather than cultivates student success. Class Rank has been shown to be a barrier to access for all students.
- The high schools dissolve the "Basic Level" to improve minority students access to higher level courses. This aligned with School Board strategic planning goals of access to upper level courses for all students regardless of race and income levels.
- The Padres Latinos parent group is formed for Spanish speaking families across the district to improve outreach and communication. The group was formed as a way to communicate with non-English speaking families, typically not engaged with district initiatives. Participation of Spanish speaking families increased once this group was formed.
- The school board establishes goals for minority hiring. In 2014, the district interviewed seven candidates of color; in 2020, it interviewed 79. In 2014, it hired one of the seven candidates of color; In 2020, it hired 10 of the 79 interviewed. **In that time frame, the percentage of professional staff of color increases from 5% to 7% while the African American student population decreases from 6.5% to 4.8%**

## 2017-2018

- A play-based Full Day Kindergarten begins in part to support minority achievement. Prior to 2017, a separate full-day class was held for low-income students, many of whom were Latinx or African American. Reading scores were averaging about 57% proficient in the separate program. After one year of integrated play-based Full Day Kindergarten, approximately 87% of students are reading at or above grade level.
- The district's Homework Policy and Guidelines are revised with a sensitivity that recognizes how homework can be a barrier for low-income families.
- The district institutes Local Effectiveness Measures (WCASD assessment measures such as student attendance and percent of minority students enrolled in upper level classes) as a means to measure minority students' access to all district programming.
- Beyond Diversity Training is provided to all staff, including support staff and custodial staff twice a year, with an overview provided for all inductees.
- The K-12 Local Assessment Committee creates a district-wide assessment philosophy and framework that moves beyond the biases and limitations of state testing.
- Student Equity Teams begin forming at middle and high school levels. Student sessions on culture and diversity are held.
- Local achievement gap effectiveness measures are written as part of school board, superintendent, and district goals. **Enrollment in honors and accelerated course for students of color has increased from 15% to 26% at high schools, and from 26% to 34% in the middle schools in the past four years.**

## 2019-Present

- The district's comprehensive plan is revised with goal area one becoming "Access to District Programming" as a means to improve minority and low-income student achievement.
- Specific **BELT** goals are created across all elementary, middle and high schools to improve stakeholder ownership.
- School-based Equity Action Plans are implemented to target areas of growth as indicated by Local Effectiveness Measures.
- District Administrators are provided professional development on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as it relates to the Danielson Model of Teacher Evaluation.
- District Administrators are provided professional development on what is known as "[microaggressions](#)."
- District level Equity Team workshops are conducted to improve coordination among each building's BELT.
- Four new Affiliates are trained to conduct Beyond Diversity Training.
- The Equity Update, a district newsletter for staff, is established to highlight and share the work being done in each building and to provide additional resources to staff.
- The Middle School Leveling Committee is formed to improve leveling practices in support of minority achievement.
- Padres Latinos, along with district officials, meets monthly with Spanish speaking families to discuss topics related to school and to answer questions. Padres Latinos meets monthly to engage Spanish speaking families with the schools. It provides updates to the families on district initiatives and programs.
- Diversity Speaker Justin Brown, a Resident Director at West Chester University, provided a presentation to staff in our elementary schools.
- Spanish For Educators courses are created for teachers and support staff.
- The Spanish Call Line, providing translation services for our families, expanded at the elementary level.
- Classroom observations are conducted to highlight elements of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and to determine areas of growth.
- The African American Literature course became a high school "elective" for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.
- [Dr. Tyrone Howard](#), Director of the [Black Male Institute](#) and Professor at UCLA, provides professional development to school Equity Teams and [Multiple Tiers of Systems and Support Teams](#).
- Teachers are provided professional development on [Culturally Responsive Pedagogy](#).
- Teachers are provided professional development on microaggressions.
- Beyond Diversity Training is provided to untrained staff twice a year and an overview is provided to all inductees.
- Effective measures (2017 to 2020) show significant increases in children of color taking higher-level courses.
- Effectiveness measures show increased attendance rates for children of color.
- Effectiveness measures show significant decrease in discipline rates for children of color.
- School board authorizes a Quality Equity Review (only district in Chester County to do so), to be conducted by the Delaware Valley Consortium for Excellence and Equity. The draft report will be completed in early July 2020.

Our goal is to eliminate institutionalized racism in our schools. We spent a considerable amount of time working internally to build systemic training for all staff so they can help each other identify microaggressions in our schools. We want our staff to be able to hold courageous conversations about race. We want our staff to be able to facilitate conversations with students and parents

about race.

The work is hard, and after 16 years, we are barely above the water line of the iceberg. There is much more work to do, and we will continue to do so.

**This summer (2020), we are:**

1. Rescheduling our work with Dr. Tyrone Howard, Director of the Black Male Institute from UCLA. (Session was canceled because of the pandemic closure.) He will be working with our management team.
2. Reviewing the findings from the Equity Quality Review conducted by DVCEE.
3. Updating our school board goals based on findings in the report.
4. Continuing with our second year of curriculum updates to include more diverse literature.
5. Updating our Achievement Gap data to set new goals for the 20-21 school year.
6. Updating our website so information is easily accessible for our community.