



**D97 VISION & EQUITY COMMUNICATION  
& ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

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KQ Communications

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction | 2

Teacher and Parent Survey Data | 3

Media Analytics | 9

Social Media Analytics | 9

Website Analytics | 10

Parent Focus Group | 11

Community Meetings | 13

Goals and Objectives | 15

Objective 1 | 16

Objective 2 | 17

Objective 3 | 18

Objective 4 | 20

# INTRODUCTION

Oak Park Elementary School District 97's School Board recently enacted an equity policy. In turn, the District leadership is charged with creating and implementing an equity plan to support the policy and keep the community and educators informed and engaged throughout.

To effectively do this work, D97 enlisted the support of KQ Communications to create a strategic communications and engagement plan to keep equity front of mind in the overall communication and engagement of all D97 outreach efforts. To inform this work, a variety of research was utilized, including:

- Teacher and parent survey data
- Media analytics
- Social media analytics
- Web analytics
- Parent focus group feedback
- Community meeting feedback

Throughout this process, we learned that parents, educators and community members have access to the information about D97 and opportunities to engage, but are not necessarily reading and/or acting upon it. This is causing misinformation to travel through word-of-mouth and also, a lack of diverse and engaged stakeholders.



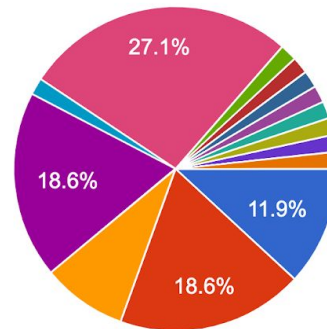
# TEACHER AND PARENT SURVEY DATA

## Teacher Survey: Engagement

Of the 544 Oak Park Teacher Association certified members this survey was made available to, 15.6% responded regarding their current engagement levels and communication preferences. Educators from all D97 schools were represented with the largest number of respondents (17.6%) being from Julian Middle, and the largest grade band represented was 7th grade (17%).

When asking specifically about the equity policy, we learned that while roughly 88% of those surveyed had a moderate to high level of awareness about it, less than half (48.2%) had been engaged in the process via the various community engagement meetings or 'Let's Talk' web opportunities before this survey.

Teachers indicated a broad range of factors for their lack of participation, including:



- Unaware
- Too busy
- No childcare options
- No transportation options
- The time of day the meetings were...
- Not interested in the topic
- I have participated in feedback or in...
- Waste of time

18.6% - Too busy

18.6% - The time of day the meetings were held

11.9% - Not interested in the topic

08.5% - No childcare opportunities

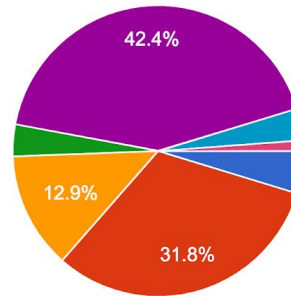
# SURVEY DATA Continued

Further, a few teachers referred to other reasons such as “not being heard” and “waste of time.”

To help us develop strategies to better engage teachers in the future, we asked how they would prefer to provide input. The breakdown is as follows:

**Moving forward, how would you most like to provide input in future decisions regarding an equity plan?**

85 responses



- Polls
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Community meetings
- Staff meeting
- Committee participation
- No one cares about the opinions of staff members

42.4% - During staff meetings

31.8% - Surveys

12.9% - Focus groups

04.7% - Polls

03.5% - Community meetings

03.5% - Committee participation

One teacher noted frustration stating, “no one cares about the opinions of staff members.”

# SURVEY DATA Continued

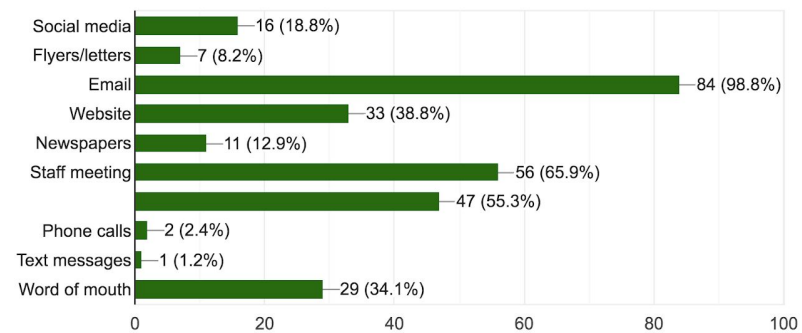
## Teacher Survey

Regarding district-wide information, such as updates on the equity plan, overwhelmingly, the main communication channel to reach teachers has been email (98.8%), followed by staff meetings (65.9%), principals passing the information along (55.3%) then the website (38.8%).

When comparing that list to their preferred communication choices, a number of teachers (11.9%) preferred text messages over the current main communication channels.

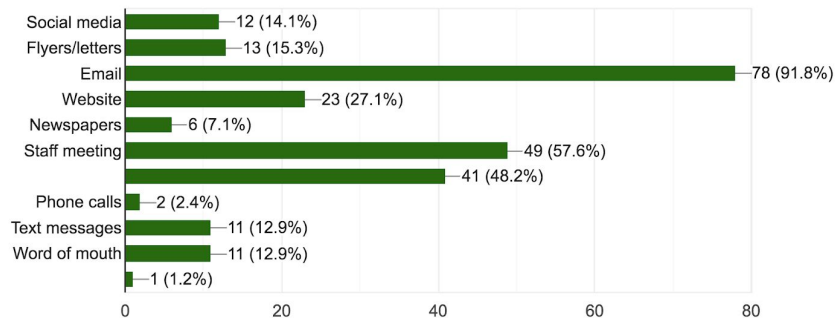
How do you currently receive district-level news and information? Please check all that apply.

85 responses



How would you like to receive district-level news and information? Please check all that apply.

85 responses

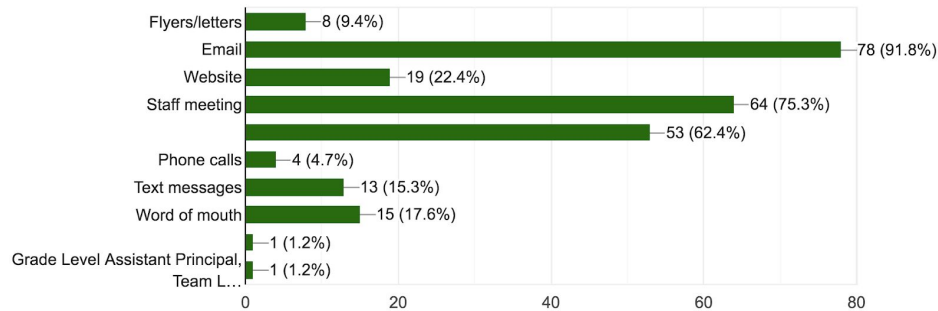


# SURVEY DATA Continued

The results for school-level information are similar, with a heavier emphasis on preferring to receive information via staff meetings (75.3%) and from the principal passing it along (62.4%).

How would you like to receive school related information? Please check all that apply.

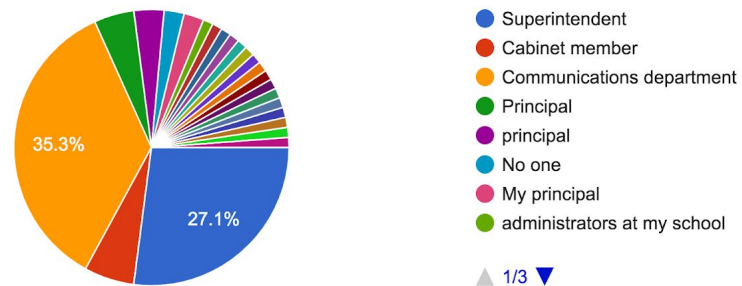
85 responses



Their most trusted source for information is the Communication Department followed by the Superintendent.

Who do you most trust to provide you with district-level information?

85 responses



# SURVEY DATA Continued

## Parent Survey

A total of 785 parents responded to this survey regarding their current engagement levels and communication preferences. Like the teachers, there was a high level of awareness about the equity policy, with 78.9% of respondents are aware of it, while only 21% had provided input about the equity plan until this survey. The primary reasons preventing their participation/engagement up to this point were:

- Too busy - 37.4%
- Unaware - 15.8%
- Time of day of the meetings - 12.9%
- Not interested in the topic - 6.9%
- No childcare options - 4.4%

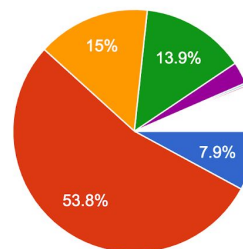
Other reasons included “no transportation options” and “nobody wants to hear what I have to say.”

While 89.8% of parents surveyed reported feeling welcome at their child’s school or a community engagement event, we still needed to address the fact that only 21% were engaged around this topic or had provided feedback before this survey.

To increase our levels of D97 parent engagement, we needed to learn how parents would prefer to provide input. The breakdown is as follows:

Moving forward, how would you like to provide input in future decisions regarding an equity plan?

786 responses



- Polls
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Community meetings
- Committee participation
- All of the above
- all of the above
- It doesn't matter. You're going to do...





## SURVEY DATA<sup>Continued</sup>

The majority prefer surveys (53.8%), which is expected considering this feedback was obtained via survey, followed by focus groups (15%), community meetings (13.9%) and polls (7.9%).

A few respondents referenced committee participation (2.9%) and one person said, “I’d like to write my own feedback and opinions. I find that surveys and polls are often misleading in the questions,” while others pointed to the “...need for a mix of engagement options.”

If a phone or in-person community meeting is held, the majority of the respondents would prefer that it be held on a weekday evening (55%), followed by weekend morning (13.7%) and weekday morning (11.6%).

Regarding district-wide information such as updates on the equity plan, overwhelmingly like the teachers, the main communication channel to reach parents has been email (98.2%), followed by principals passing the information along (37.2%), social media (35.2%) and website (29.4%). Notably, 27.7% of parents are receiving their information by word-of-mouth rather than a school or district source.

When comparing that list to their preferred communication choices, a number of parents also pointed to text messages (11.4%) as preferred over the current, main communication channels.



# MEDIA ANALYTICS

Looking deeper into the categories, the media relations efforts of the district have been strong, as no negative story sentiments were reported over the past year. Of the 80 stories with D97 mentions, 87.5% had a neutral sentiment and 12.5% would be considered positive. A full breakdown of the stories is listed in the appendix of this report. It's important to note that due to D97's positioning near a major city, the reach for some stories can be extremely high. For example, this Chicago Tribune story reached over 70,000 people.

# SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

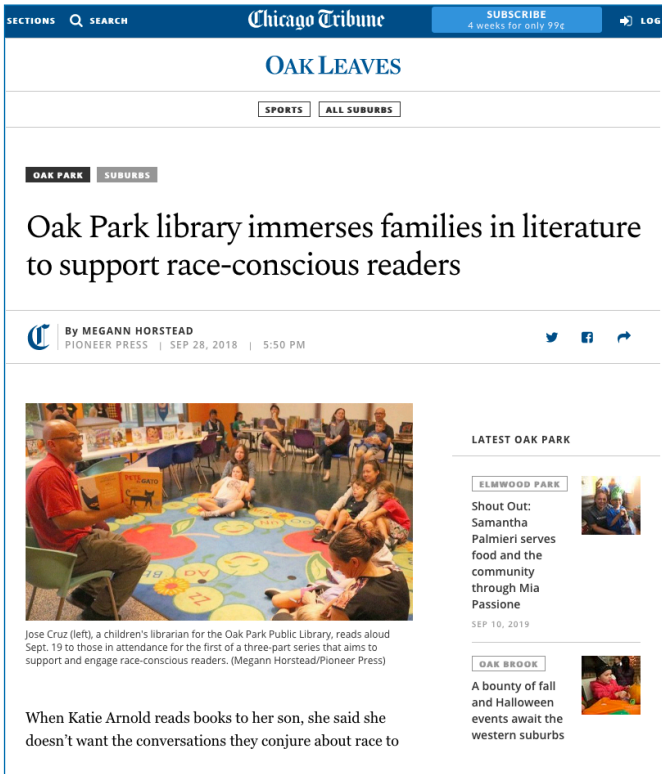
Social media also poses more opportunities for D97 to better engage parents. Of the parents surveyed, 35.2% listed social media as their main source of information but based on a review of the District's current sites, it seems they are not using D97 pages.

Here is the current rundown of D97's social outreach:

Social Media Audit			
Platform	Followers	Engagement	Notes
<a href="#">Facebook</a>	2,137 likes (^21% from 2018) 2,383 follows (^27% increase from 2018)	.2% (low)*	All positive engagement, though low
<a href="#">Twitter</a>	2,318 followers	.25% (low)*	Positive
<a href="#">YouTube</a>	208 subscribers	Avg. 300 views	--

\*Calculated using social engagement formula: [Social Buddy](#)

*The most commonly used social media source is likely the dozens of closed social media groups that are sharing district information, and in some cases erroneous information about the District.*



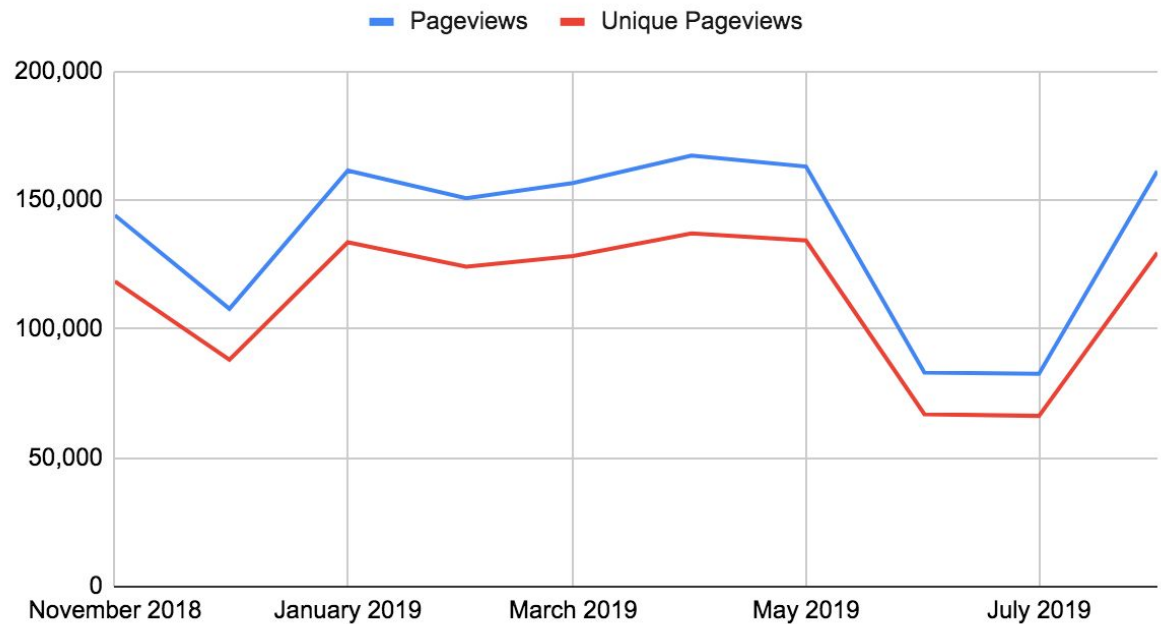
# WEBSITE ANALYTICS

According to the survey results, 29.4% of parents and 38.8% of teachers are currently using the website as their main source for information. It currently houses most of the details regarding district updates, such as those surrounding the equity policy. However, 24% of parents and 27.1% of teachers **prefer** it to be their main channel.

Overall, web traffic has remained steady outside of the expected dip during the summer months and holiday breaks.



### Pageviews and Unique Pageviews



# PARENTFOCUSGROUP

## Engagement

To ensure we had a strong understanding of the best ways to engage and/or inform parents, we also held a focus group with D97 parents. This focus group consisted of 12 randomly selected men and women: five African American, two Latinx and five Caucasian parents, representing all district grade bands and all schools except Mann Elementary and Brooks Middle.

Parents were asked about their and other parents' level of engagement around equity work, what engagement activities most interested them, and what are the key barriers to parent engagement. In terms of parent engagement, about half of the parents, mainly Latinx and African American, reported that they had attended PTO meetings where equity was discussed. Most said that they felt the meetings were "a lot of talk," they did not get much out of them, and they did not weigh in on equity. Their other reasons for not weighing in were that some felt that their children's needs were being met by the schools so they did not feel a personal need to weigh in, or that they do not feel heard and do not see change so they have decided to focus on taking care of their own child's needs. As one parent said, "I am focused on fighting for my child rather than the collective where I don't see data to show that movement is coming."

Parents were asked what would help them more actively engage around equity, such as providing input and attending meetings on the topic. One parent's recommendation was to have smaller, classroom-size discussions versus large, district-wide community events. Some other parents said they wanted to have the meetings focus on how feedback is being used to develop action plans and to hear about implementation and results now, not just what is projected in the future.



## PARENTFOCUSGROUP Continued

The engagement activities that most interested the parents across all races/ethnicities center around transparency and getting a better understanding of how things work on the classroom level. While a parent who was also a teacher said it was not an ideal activity from her professional perspective, a few parents noted that they had observed their children's classes and it was eye-opening to see teachers struggle with classroom management. One key suggestion was for teachers to have mandatory bias training and refreshers on how to diffuse situations. As one parent said, "schools should be transparent about things that are going on in the classroom so if things are going on in the classroom, the parents can support the pieces to the puzzle." A few parents said that they want to see the school and teacher data that shows, for example, the distribution of African-American male students in teachers' classes, teachers' record of attending bias trainings, and discipline data for boys of color. One parent described this interest as wanting data "beyond the score card" so they know more about the inequities, what to work on and how they can help

All parents indicated lack of time as a major barrier to attending and/or participating in engagement activities. They expressed openness to options such as phone conferences, surveys and polls that would allow them to weigh in from home.

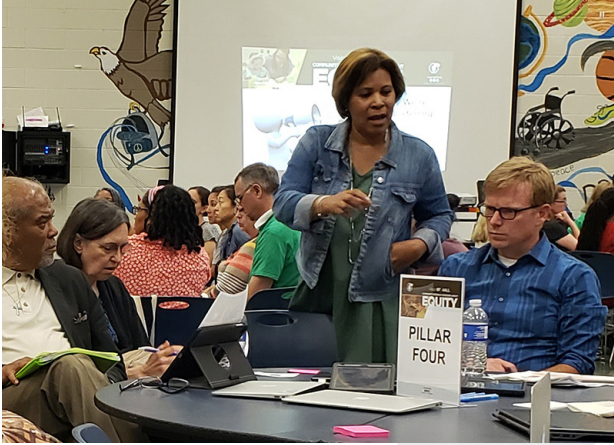
### **Communication**

Similarly to the survey feedback, the parents listed emails, website and social media as their main sources of information. The majority (eight) were most aware of or consistently read emails coming from their school principal. With regard to preferences, Emails were preferred, followed by text messages.

For those who mentioned social media as a source of D97 information, the most referenced platforms used were Facebook (six) and Twitter (three).

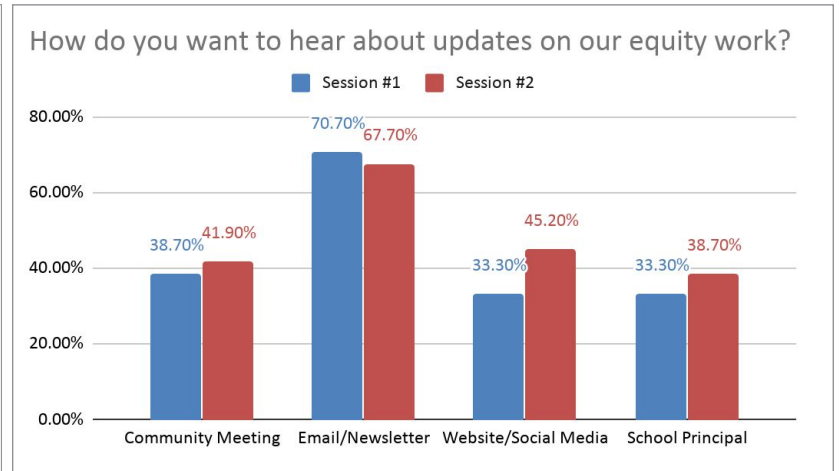
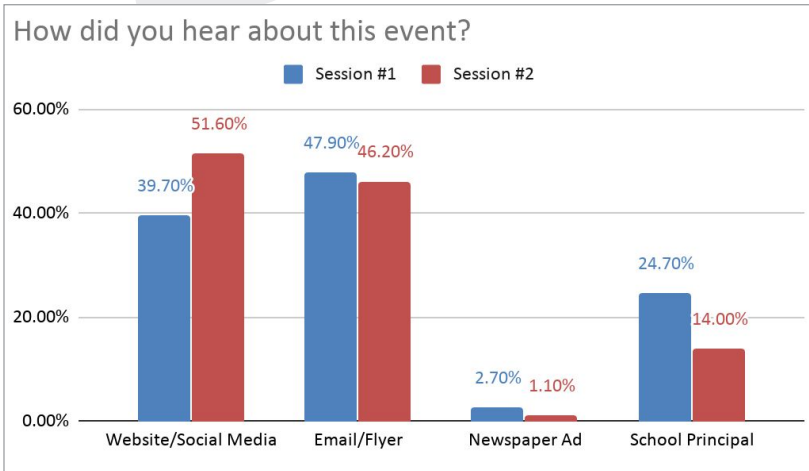


# COMMUNITY MEETINGS

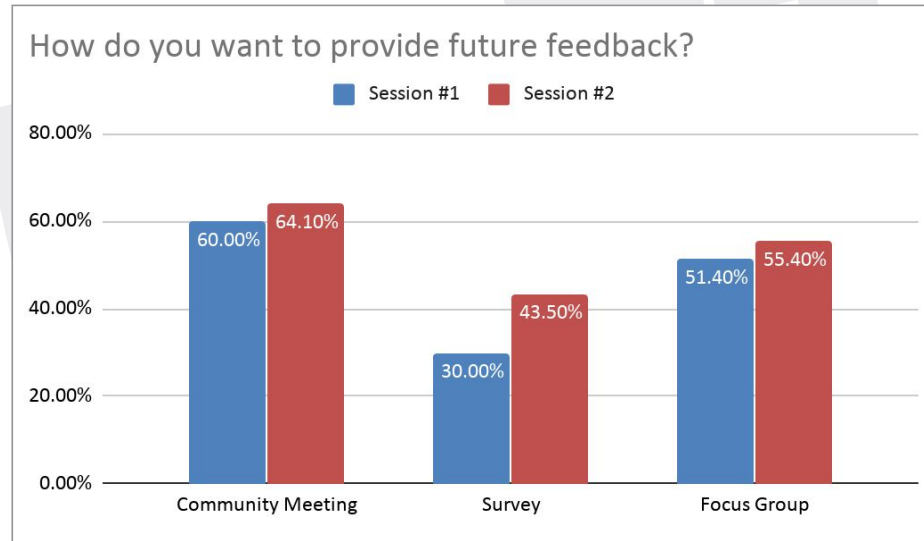
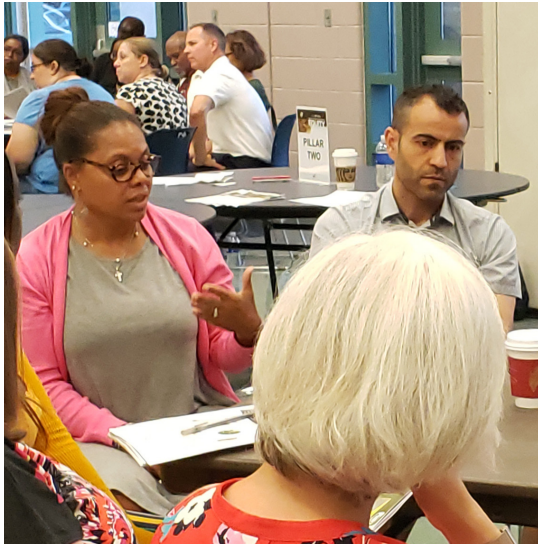


During a round of August community meetings about equity, the District was able to attract a larger and more diverse pool of participants by removing attendance barriers (e.g., transportation and childcare), asking school leaders to directly reach out to parents and leaning on community partners to share the information through flyers and social media posts.

At those meetings, we also asked parents about their communication/engagement experiences and preferences. A total of 75 attendees completed the survey during Session One and 94 completed it during Session Two. This time, community meetings were highly ranked, as expected due to the fact that we were at a community meeting. However, focus groups ranked high again, similarly to the surveys. Here are the specific outcomes:



# COMMUNITY MEETINGS Continued



# D97 COMMUNICATIONS/ENGAGEMENT PLAN



## GOAL:

To keep parents informed and engaged about plans and activities meant to create a positive learning environment for all D97 students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child.

## OBJECTIVES:

1. To increase the overall number of engaged parents in D97's efforts around equity by 10% by May 31, 2020.
2. To ensure at least 50% of parents of under-represented groups are engaged in D97's efforts around equity by May 31, 2020.
3. To reach 5% social media engagement on D97's Facebook and Twitter pages by May 31, 2020.
4. To ensure 75% of parents are moderately to highly aware of D97's vision and equity plans and activities by May 31, 2020.



# D97PLAN Continued

## OBJECTIVE #1:

To increase the overall number of engaged parents in D97's efforts around equity by 10% by May 31, 2020.

# 01

Objective

Strategy	Tactics	Notes	Benchmark	Goal	Timeline
To focus engagement/ input around a common campaign - MyD97	Surveys (quarterly)*	The surveys would have some similar questions to gauge participation growth and measure sentiment and awareness throughout	15% participation	25% participation	Trimester beginning October 2019
	Focus Groups*	Focus groups would be held quarterly to provide feedback/ input on current progress	1 parent focus group	1 focus group per quarter	Trimester beginning October, 2019
	Polls via text (quarterly)*	Quick polls would be sent randomly for updates on district topics in need of immediate feedback	N/A	10% participation	Trimester beginning October, 2019
	Community Meeting Attendance*	**Community feedback meetings would be held in the evening as small groups at each school on a quarterly basis (e.g. feedback sessions, info updates, cultural awareness sessions, datawalks, phone webinars, etc.)  BLT members would facilitate the trimester meetings	40 participants per mtg	Avg 100 participants per session	Trimester meetings beginning October 2019
	MyD97 Leaders	**Parents would apply and be trained to train other parents at their schools around cultural competency	N/A	1 parent per school trained around equity-related issues (\$1000 stipend per selected parent)	Training begins in August 2020

# D97PLAN Continued

## OBJECTIVE #2:

To ensure at least 50% of parents of under-represented student groups are engaged in D97's efforts around equity by May 31, 2020.

# 02

Objective

Strategy	Tactics	Notes	Benchmark	Goal	Timeline
To provide safe spaces for affinity group conversations**	MyD97 MatchUp**	Every parent of black/brown children new to the district will be matched up with another parent to assist them in navigating the district and ensuring their participation at mtgs and in surveys/focus groups/polls	N/A	75% participation from all parents of black/brown children	Matching completed in November 2020
	Coffee with Carol	Dr. Kelley will host a coffee chat each month with randomly selected parents within a specific affinity group.	N/A	1 coffee chat per month/ 5 parents per month	October 2019 & ongoing
	Polls via text (quarterly)*	Quick polls would be sent randomly for updates on topics specific to certain affinity groups	N/A	10% participation	Quarterly beginning October 2019
	Demographic Questions**	Demographic questions will be included in all surveys and community meeting sign-ins to better track which voices are being heard	N/A	50% participation from all under-represented groups	Ongoing

# D97PLAN Continued

## OBJECTIVE #3:

To reach 5% social media engagement on D97’s Facebook and Twitter pages by May 31, 2020.



Strategy	Tactics	Notes	Benchmark	Goal	Timeline
To launch the MyD97 Campaign	Social Media video challenge	<p>Every month people create/post their own “MyD97” video to highlight the uniqueness of the District (e.g. a unique student, project, fact, etc.) and upload them to the District website.</p> <p>The District will choose one to highlight each week on its social media pages</p> <p>NOTE: Three professionally shot videos to be created and used to promote recruitment participation</p>	Avg 410 views per 8 months	Avg 1000 views per 8 months	October 2019 & ongoing
	MyD97 Update	**Social media share/update about progress in one area of the vision/equity plan (e.g. training, restorative justice technique, etc.) and people check in about how they’re making it work at their school	N/A	N/A	October 2019 & ongoing

## D97PLAN<sub>Continued</sub>

# 03

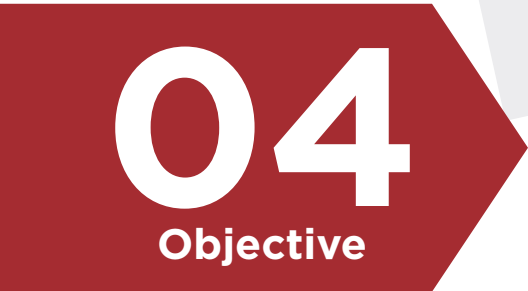
Objective

	MyD97 Shoutout	*Day of shouting out your favorite D97 educator who helps to make a difference in the education of ALL children	N/A	10 shoutouts per week	October 2019 & ongoing
		Social Media Takeover as a reward for one of the Shoutout educators. They could post on the D97 page in stories to highlight “a day in the life”.			
	Social Media Ambassadors	Parents who are willing to voluntarily share district updates and other information	N/A	10 ambassadors per school	October 2019 - training November 2019 – ongoing posting
	MyD97 Student -- social media frames	Frames made available so parents can use it for their Facebook profile pages and highlight their students	N/A	N/A	October 2019 & ongoing
	MyD97 Toolkit	A toolkit of collateral materials for staff and parent leaders to discuss equity, such as fact sheets, conversation prompts, powerpoint presentations, flyer templates, digital banners	N/A	N/A	Completed October 2019

# D97PLAN Continued

## OBJECTIVE #4:

To ensure 75% of parents and educators are moderately to highly aware of D97’s vision and equity plans and activities by May 31, 2020.



Strategy	Tactics	Notes	Benchmark	Goal	Timeline
Utilize the MyD97 Campaign	District-wide campaign launch  Audience: Teachers/ Parents	Video/launch announcement sent to parents and shared in classrooms - renewed focus on equity	N/A	1000 video views on the launch date	October 2019
	*Weekly e-Newsletter  Distribution to all parents and educators	Includes: **(1) latest updates/progress on the vision/equity plan/links to the tracker (2) important dates (3) a MyD97 blog entry from one student and one teacher (4) ONE FAQ related to the process to obtain various services and opportunities for students (NOTE: A complete list of FAQs will consistently live on the website)	32.2%	35%	October 2019 & ongoing

## D97PLAN Continued

# 04

Objective

	<p>Making MyD97 Better Award</p> <p>Audience: Teachers/ Parents</p>	<p>People will nominate staff on-line who are doing their part to remove bias. A winner is selected each month, posted on the website and given a gift card</p> <p>Promotional ads will guide people to the web site for the stories</p>	(current web hits per month)	(goal web hits per month)	October 2019 & ongoing
	<p>**MyD97 Accountability Tracker</p> <p>Audience: Teachers</p>	<p>**All schools will be given one critical, equity-related goal and spend the first 10 minutes of the staff meeting discussing measurable progress and solutions</p> <p>Schools will post this progress on their websites</p>	N/A	Overall goal of 75% of aware teachers	November 2019 & ongoing
	<p>Demographic Questions</p> <p>Audience: Parents</p>	<p>**Demographic questions will be included in all surveys and community meeting sign-ins to better track which voices are being heard</p>	N/A	50% participation from all under-represented groups	Ongoing
	<p>MyD97 Progress Tracker</p> <p>Audience: Teachers/ Parents</p>	<p>**A progress tracker will be updated on the D97 website each week with the latest activity regarding equity for all</p>	N/A	N/A	November 2019 & ongoing
	<p>State of D7</p>	<p>A mini-press/Video conference announcing the work / the state of the district focusing solely on equity; streamed live on website</p>			November 2019

## D97PLAN Continued

# 04

Objective

Use increased school to home communication	Require all elementary teachers to have a group touchpoint with all parents a minimum of once a week & individually once a month	Group can be a group email, newsletter, etc.  Individual could be a note home, text, email, phone call, etc.	N/A	100% of elementary teachers	October 2019 & ongoing
	Require all middle teachers to have a group touchpoint with all parents a minimum of once a week & individually once a quarter	Group can be a group email, newsletter, etc.  Individual could be a note home, text, email, phone call, etc.	N/A	100% of middle teachers	October 2019 & ongoing
	Language translation support provided for schools as needed	Online translation services	N/A	N/A	October 2019 & ongoing

\*INTEREST SHOWN FROM COMMUNITY, PARENT OR EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

\*\*IDEA GENERATED FROM COMMUNITY, PARENT OR EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

DRAFT

