



Our **vision** is to provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

Our **mission** is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships

Dear Families,

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District continues to be committed to building an inclusive culture for our students and families. As author and educator Patricia Vitale-Reilly writes, “We can cultivate family engagement in three ways: by building relationships, fostering communication, and engaging in meaningful collaboration.” That’s where we need you!

The district is working to set up a districtwide advisory to support our work and broaden our perspectives around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We would invite members to meet a few times a year with me, the Superintendent, and Dr. Dawn Bentley, our Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. If you are potentially interested in participating, we invite you to please read on.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District has experienced dramatic demographic shifts over the last decade. Our incoming kindergarten class is 4% African American, 28% Asian, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 8% Multi-race (non-Hispanic), and 52% white. This is a huge shift from 25 years ago when 92% of our student body was white. According to our 2018-19 student demographic data:

- 18.6% are multilingual
- 4.1% are English learners
- 16% are students with disabilities
- 10.5% are eligible for free/reduced lunch
- 27.1% are considered high needs (*students who are economically disadvantaged, English learners, former English learners, students with disabilities, or a combination of one or more of these categories*)

We believe that diversity is one of the key contributors to the high quality of our students' educational experiences here at ABRSD. However, being racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse does not automatically lead to strong relationships across these differences. This diversity also brings challenges like opportunity and achievement gaps, social isolation, hurtful comments, competition, and more.

In recent years, the district has been thinking proactively about the opportunities for growth that our diversity presents. Just a few examples of our work around DEI include:

- Training staff leaders to provide *Seeking Educational Equity Through Diversity (SEED)* professional learning for all of our educators and School Committee members,
- A review and expansion of our curriculum and literature K-12 that has resulted in a significant number of new resources to ensure that students see themselves in the books and materials they are using (mirrors), as well as understand the experiences of others who are different than they are (windows),

- Intentional outreach to universities to help recruit more educators of color, and many other efforts.

We recognize that a largely untapped opportunity exists to purposefully engage with our families and community members to learn more about how students and families experience our schools and to brainstorm ways we can continue to build inclusive school cultures that lead to more equitable learning opportunities and outcomes. We envision that this group will be comprised of a wide mix of families across each of our schools and levels- preschool through high school- so that we can think together about district-wide issues.

Some of the key functions we envision for our DEI Family and Community Advisory Group include:

- Serving as a source of ideas and information regarding student and family experiences related to cultural beliefs, race and racism, socioeconomic status, gender and sexual identity, disability, language, and more
- Engaging in dialogue to build upon shared values and to celebrate the diversity of our community, and
- Supporting our efforts to close gaps that exist in student opportunities and outcomes.

As we assemble this group, we will be selecting volunteers who have a strong commitment to the values of equity and inclusion, who possess strong collaboration and listening skills and a willingness to learn together and from others, the ability to commit to a few meetings per year over a few years, and the ability to contribute to district-wide thinking and school-based actions.

If you are interested, please complete [this brief form](#) by **Friday, October 4th** describing your interest and sharing any experience or perspective that would help to communicate how you meet the criteria above. We will hold our first meeting on **Thursday, October 24th from 6:30-8:00 pm**, with additional meetings to be determined.

We look forward to connecting with you soon,

Peter Light
Superintendent

Dr. Dawn Bentley
Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion