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Lafayette school district approves racial equity policy

By Pippa Fisher

Lafayette School District has unanimously adopted a board policy focused on racial equity.

The vote was taken at the Feb. 2 special meeting of the school board. It has come out of the district's ongoing broader work on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. Each school in the district has an active DEIB committee. The work has been in progress since the first DEIB committee formed in 2017 at Burton Valley Elementary School, but according to LafSD Governing Board President Rob Sturm, the work to get a policy adopted ramped up this past year. "I would say that work has accelerated and been more focused and proactive."

Acalanes Union High School District adopted a racial equity program last summer. Sturm says that while there wasn't coordination with AUHSD, his district leveraged the high school district's policy and approached it as a starting point, adapting it to fit the LafSD. "An extraordinary working group did the heaviest lifting in collaboration with the district, producing the LafSD policy and plans," he said referring to the team of volunteer parents.

The policy identifies six areas - school climate and culture, curriculum and instruction/student engagement, staff capacity, community and relationships, systems, policies and administration, and accountability.

Sturm says that passing the racial equity policy was an important step for the district and he's proud of the board's unanimous and enthusiastic adoption. "Now we must hold ourselves and our district fully accountable to prioritize and timely execute on the worthy commitments that we made."

Expressing great confidence in the partnership of the DEIB task force, school DEIB committees and the broader support from the community, Sturm says he anticipates making strides to do and be better.

"It's a moral and educational imperative that our school community warmly embraces, celebrates and understands different identities, backgrounds and experiences, and that we enable all students to feel safe, valued and comfortable being their full selves," says Sturm, adding, "Our ongoing work will mean leaning into difficult conversations; however, I trust our ability to do so with courage and respect."

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