

Norwood Public Schools

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Norwood Schools Highlights Student Participation in District-wide Cultural Proficiency Initiatives

NORWOOD -- Through a series of features over the coming weeks and months, Superintendent David Thomson would like to share with the community information regarding some of the training and initiatives Norwood Public Schools has undertaken to help further cultural proficiency and inclusion within the district.

Though many of the initiatives are aimed at advancing teaching strategies, curriculum and materials, several programs and activities over the past several years that address global competence and cultural proficiency have involved or been led by students.

In 2013, Norwood High School began offering the [Global Citizenship Program \(GCP\) Certificate](#). The program promotes global competence by fostering students' interest in

the world and helps them learn and practice thinking globally, communicating effectively and contributing responsibly. Through interdisciplinary coursework, face-to-face interactions, international travel and service learning projects, students are able to increase their global awareness and appreciation of diversity. Students who participate in the program are recognized with a Global Citizenship Certificate upon graduation, which is also noted on their college transcripts.

In 2017, Norwood High School began participating in [Challenge Day](#), an interactive program that involves approximately 100 students and several staff members. Participants were able to share their experiences and learn how to have conversations about difficult subjects, all of which aimed to promote and help students develop an appreciation for people's differences.

In order to expand the type of experience offered by Challenge Day to more students, Norwood High School implemented the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) [A World of Difference Institute Peer Training program](#). The school is currently in its second year of the program.

The peer training student leadership program focuses on having diverse groups of students lead their peers through curriculum that aims to create and sustain positive social change in their schools. The program's student leaders are chosen following an application and interview process and they then complete training sessions with the ADL. Students are trained to lead developmentally appropriate activities and discussions with their peers on bias-related issues pertaining to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion and other aspects of human diversity. The student leaders also learn strategies to address prejudicial behaviors when they occur.

Approximately 25 students were chosen as program leaders this year. The student leaders completed three full days of training and complete additional training sessions throughout the year. In the spring, they usually lead ninth grade students in A World of Difference Institute curriculum through interactive discussions and workshops. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshops were unable to take place in the spring of 2020 but the group did produce digital content for their peers. This year, peer leaders and advisers are planning a series of hybrid learning sessions for the ninth grade students.

"It has been great to see so many students over the past few years actively participating in programs like the Global Citizenship Certificate and leading their peers in learning about and addressing prejudicial behaviors," Superintendent Thomson said.

"By offering opportunities for students to learn about how to create inclusive environments or address bias when it occurs, we hope that they leave Norwood Schools as respectful and responsible global citizens who understand, appreciate and promote diversity in their daily lives."

To see an introduction to the ongoing district-wide training and initiatives, [click here](#). For information regarding ongoing training in culturally proficient teaching practices, [click here](#).

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