

"Inlustrate Orbem"

POSITIONING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) PRACTITIONERS AND INITIATIVES FOR SUCCESS

Sonja L. Taylor, Ed.D.

Assistant Head of School

CHARLOTTE
LATIN
SCHOOL

DEI initiatives in my school are _____.

I responded this way because _____.

Key Questions Shaping Today's Agenda

DEI? OMG! WTH?

Our school doesn't have a DEI leader. Are we doomed?

How can I tell when my community is *really* ready to do this work?

What are the absolute "must do's?"

You don't know my school! How do we manage pushback?

What does success look like?





A meeting of the Concerned Parents' Association, which fought against desegregation in Charlotte, in 1969. (Courtesy of the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library)

How have local and regional historical events informed your school's DEI narrative?

WHY FOCUS ON HISTORY?

- History influences culture.
- Culture informs socialization.
- Socialization shapes our values and beliefs.
- DEI work requires cultural shifts that often work against our socialization process.
- Cultural shifts call for intentional strategies that consider human emotion and natural resistance to change.

Intentional work is grounded by common language.

DIVERSITY
(Representation)

Who is present within or absent from our school community?

INCLUSION
(Quality of experience)

To what extent are invited persons able to participate?

EQUITY
(Access)

Who is able to gain entry and obtain the needed supports to remain and thrive in the community?

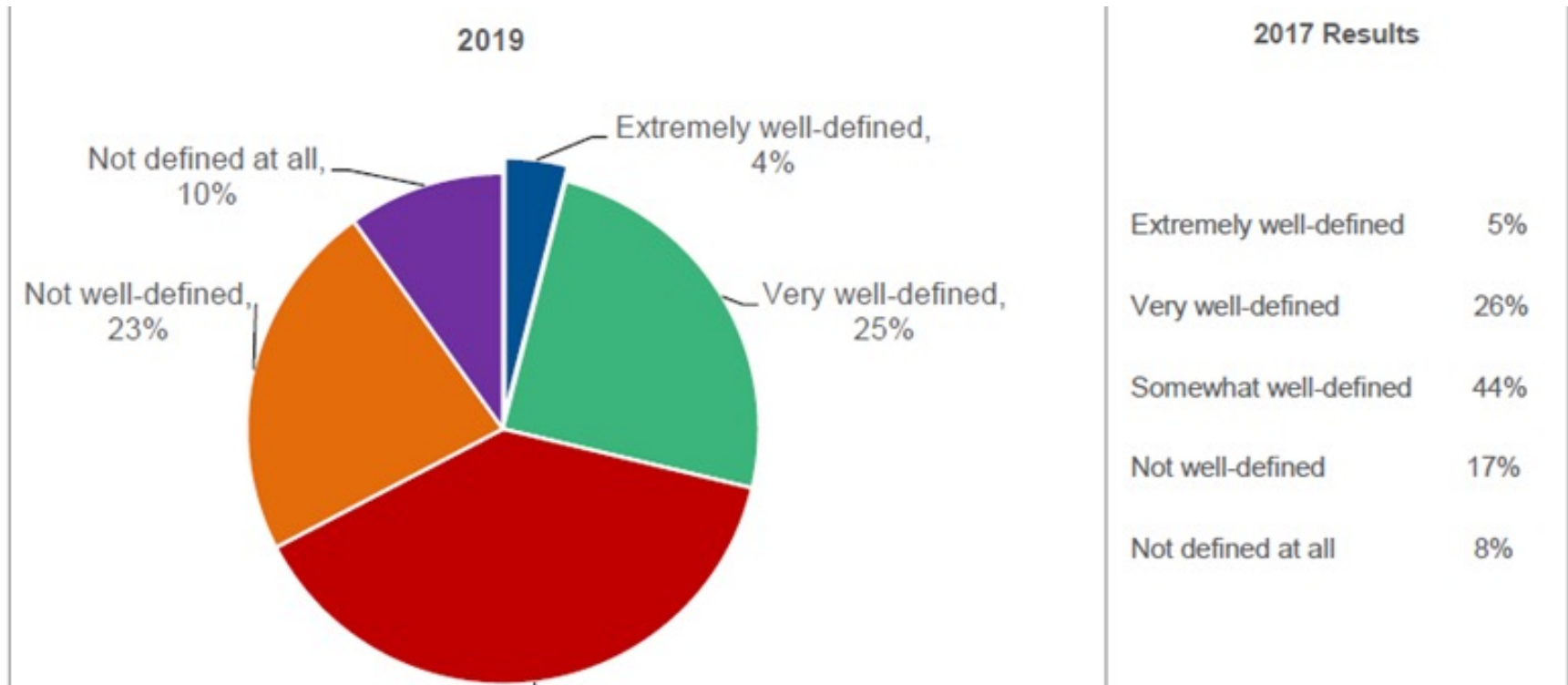
JUSTICE
(Response)

How do we prepare for and respond to situations that threaten our sense of community?

BELONGING
(Safety)

Is our campus climate safe (emotionally, psychologically, etc.) for all to show up authentically?

How well defined are your duties and responsibilities as your school's diversity practitioner?



Source: 2019 NAIS Diversity Practitioners' Survey

WHAT ARE YOU HIRING OR CHARGING A LEADER TO DO?

A MODEL PROCESS IN ACTION

What are your challenges?

What do you know for sure?

What are the hidden challenges?

- Internal data
- Climate assessments
- Peer school comparisons
- Surveys
- Focus groups

What resources do you need?

What did you learn from studying your community?

Who will be accountable?

- People
- Programs
- Professional development
- Funding
- Planning

What does success look like?

How will you measure it?

Is success sustainable beyond any one individual?

- Practices
- Policies
- Re-evaluation
- Curriculum
- Community

Communicating your “why”

- Mission aligned
- Board supported
- Data informed
- Clearly defined goals and expectations for all community members
- Reasonable timelines for measurable progress
- Mechanisms for needed adjustments

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PREPARED COMMUNITY

Informed

Everyone knows and can effectively articulate the “why”

Notions of tokenism or deficit-driven language from stakeholders are countered with facts.

What is your message?

Supportive

Members embrace their role(s)

The DEI Director is not solely responsible for this work.

Who are the team members?

Engaged

All are invested in personal and professional growth

Community members are expected to be culturally competent and actively working toward proficiency.

How are you educating and holding others accountable?

AN EXERCISE FOR TRUSTEES AND SCHOOL LEADERS:

CAN YOU AFFORD TO IGNORE DEI WORK?

- Are you able to honor your stated mission?
- Can your student enrollment be effectively managed?
- Are you able to attract and retain faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and retain existing members who value DEI?
- Are your alumni - especially those from underrepresented and historically marginalized identities - actively engaged?
- Is your curriculum culturally relevant and preparing students for global citizenship?
- Are your faculty and staff culturally competent and working toward cultural proficiency?
- Are you managing risk effectively?
- What do your customers (current and former students, parents) say about the school?
- How might you leverage an authentic commitment to DEI to build academic, corporate, and community / outreach relationships?
- To what extent is the current political climate affecting campus culture?
- What is the school's reputation in the city and community, beyond your "usual" customer base?

QUESTIONS?

WANT TO CONTACT SONJA?

EMAIL:
sonja.taylor@charlottelatin.org

