

DIGGING DEEPER INTO EQUITY: INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE IN BURBANK

THURSDAY, JUNE 23 AND FRIDAY, JUNE 24
BURBANK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
JOHN BURROUGHS HIGH SCHOOL
1920 WEST CLARK AVENUE
BURBANK, CA

MEETING AGENDA

We acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the [Chumash](#), [Tongva](#), [Fernandeño Tataviam](#), and First Nations on which we are learning, educating, and living.

DAY I: THURSDAY, JUNE 23

- 8:30 am **Breakfast.** Light breakfast will be available near the multipurpose room.
- 9:00 am **Convene Meeting.** Joel Knudson will convene the meeting with opening remarks, introductions, and an overview of the agenda. Superintendent Matt Hill will welcome the group to Burbank Unified School District. Participants will engage in a short interactive activity, followed by an update from Jill Baker about developments in Long Beach Unified School District since our March meeting.

SESSION I

Exploring the Burbank Equity Journey

As Burbank USD strives to ensure an excellent education for all students, it does so against the historical backdrop of discriminatory practices that include status as a “sundown town.” In recent years, the school board and district leaders have publicly committed to advancing equity through steps like a board-adopted anti-racist statement. Subcommittees on policy, instruction, social and emotional learning, and engagement are vehicles through which Burbank educators acknowledge the systemic barriers to progress and create the conditions for all students to thrive. This opening session will set the table for subsequent conversations with an overview of the Burbank equity journey.

Session Purposes. Foster a shared understanding of what the Burbank context looks like and how the district’s equity journey has emerged from that context. Explore the ways in which district and community characteristics shape priorities and strategies for advancing equity.

- 9:40am **Orientation to the Burbank USD Community and Its History.** A panel discussion among Burbank USD leaders will provide background on the Burbank community and its

history, while also describing the commitments and actions of district leaders to advance an equity agenda.

10:30am **Discussion about the Role of Context.** Having examined the ways in which Burbank’s efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion build from its history and the dynamics of the district and its community, participants will explore ways in which context shapes district priorities and decisions.

10:50am **Break.**

SESSION II

Selecting Instructional Materials that Reflect a Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

Required and supplemental reading lists for ELA classes often reflect longstanding traditions within public schools, but this reliance on tradition can limit student exposure to diverse perspectives while triggering damaging emotional responses among students due to racist language and biased points of view. In previous meetings, Burbank and other districts have shared steps they have taken to reflect on their reading lists and develop processes and policies to select materials that align with the district’s anti-racist commitment and vision for instruction and student learning.

This session will extend previous Collaborative conversations by examining evolving district approaches while also exploring the community responses and political fallout that can result from controversial decisions.

Session Purpose. Build deeper understanding of student experiences with instructional materials and how those shape district approaches to required and supplemental reading lists. Expose challenges and identify considerations for developing and implementing policies that seek to employ a new approach to selecting instructional materials.

11:00am **Stories from Burbank Students and Families and Responses of District Leaders.** Burbank USD’s decisions to revisit its required reading lists grew directly from concerns raised by students and their families about the distorted and sometimes harmful depictions of people of color presented primarily through the work of white authors. This session will begin with the personal accounts of students who describe the limitations of many traditional texts. These students will also reflect on the learning opportunities created through exposure to a wider range of authors and stories—including different races, cultural backgrounds, and other life experiences.

12:15pm **Lunch.**

1:00pm **Discussion About Possible Paths Forward.** Although districts have taken steps to revisit their policies and practices about reading lists, they still face the process of change management with educators, students, and families who may not understand or may have dissenting views about district decisions. Participants will break into small groups to consider strategies for building understanding and buy-in to new directions.

SESSION III

Addressing Hate Speech to Reduce Trauma, Foster Healing, and Promote Community Understanding

Incidents of hate speech on school campuses and in the broader community inflict trauma on students and threaten to undermine an environment in which all members of the school community feel welcome and have opportunities to thrive. Guidelines around language usage invite complex discussions around student identity and agency, and the discussions about them can create space for learning and community building. Students in Burbank have played leadership roles in framing and advancing important conversations in this area. Meanwhile, district leaders are navigating the use of restorative practices to foster healing and understanding among by members of the school community. This session will actively incorporate student voice to consider the ways in which students and educators set expectations for and respond to violations of respectful and affirming language use and patterns of behavior.

Session Purpose. Understand student experiences with hate speech and recommendations for addressing it. Introduce, unpack, and explore considerations for fostering restorative practices and promoting understanding within school communities.

- 2:00pm **Student Experiences with Hate Speech.** The session will begin with perspectives from students about the harmful language they have observed and experienced from peers and adults in and out of school, as well as the responses to those incidents. Drawing on these insights and examples from other districts, participants will consider approaches to curb damaging behavior and foster more welcoming school environments.
- 3:20pm **Break.**
- 3:35pm **Restorative Practices as a Pathway to Understanding and Healing.** The session will explore the promises of restorative practices and key considerations for designing and implementing those approaches within districts.
- 4:45 pm **Summary and Reflection on the Day's Discussion.**
- 5:00 pm **Adjourn for the Day.**
- 6:00 pm **Reception Followed by Dinner** at Castaway.

DAY 2: FRIDAY, JUNE 24

8:30 am **Breakfast.** Light breakfast will be available near the multipurpose room.

INTERLUDE

Reflecting on the Future Directions of the Collaborative

9:00 am **Discussion.** Collaborative staff continue to engage in a process of reflection and strategic planning. Part of this reflection is geared to understand how the Collaborative best leverages its strengths to meet pressing needs in the current California K-12 education landscape. It also takes place during a period in which the Collaborative faces potential budget reductions. The Collaborative staff wish to engage participants in discussion about how best to leverage the Collaborative's strengths in the months and years ahead.

SESSION IV

Preparing and Supporting Teachers to Foster Equitable Practices

Addressing a community's history and ongoing legacy of discriminatory practices, navigating issues of bias within a classroom, and implementing changes in policy and practice through instruction and interactions in the broader school environment require skills and mindsets among educators that may not have been fully developed in preservice training or even professional practice. The final session will focus on approaches to professional development that equip educators to bring a district commitment to equity to life in the school and classroom environments.

Session Purpose. Identify the competencies that teachers need to do equity-focused work. Explore approaches to building the skill, the will, and the support structures needed to do it effectively.

10:00am **Teacher Perspectives on Professional Development.** Burbank USD has employed the Facing History curriculum to provide training and support to the district's educators. A panel of teachers will share their experiences with equity-focused professional development, followed by examples and lessons learned about professional learning in other districts.

11:00am **Break.**

11:15am **Small Group Discussion.** Participants will break into small groups to explore considerations, promising strategies, and obstacles to effective professional development.

12:00pm **Lunch.**

1:00pm **The Role of the Statewide System of Support in Facilitating Teacher Learning Around Equity.** Building on key takeaways from the morning's discussions, participants will consider ways in which state funding streams that the supports provided by various state agencies might help foster learning at the local level.

1:45 pm **Summary and Reflection on the Day's Discussion.**

2:00 pm **Adjourn Meeting.**