



PRESS RELEASE

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Cherrissa M. Gibson Named Director of Equity, Diversity, and Education by Pennsbury School Board

(FALLSINGTON, PA – July 16, 2020) The Pennsbury Board of School Directors appointed Cherrissa M. Gibson, Ed.D. to be the District’s new Director of Equity, Diversity, and Education during the public School Board meeting held on July 16, 2020. Dr. Gibson, currently an Assistant Principal at Pennsbury High School since 2013, will serve in this newly-created position, effective immediately.

The Director of Equity, Diversity, and Education is responsible for coordinating and guiding all efforts to define, understand, assess, foster, and cultivate equity among the District’s students, faculty, and staff. This position will serve to enhance educational programs to promote equity as an essential element of the mission of the Pennsbury School District. This position will also further develop programs, services, and initiatives designed to ensure the recruitment and successful retention of faculty and staff.

“Dr. Gibson truly impressed the interview team with her knowledge, experience, and the well-conceived entry plan that she presented,” said Superintendent Dr. William J. Gretzula. “Stakeholders included School Directors, Central Office administrators, and school Principals. Their comments afterwards included observations about Dr. Gibson’s clear passion for pursuing and supporting equity and diversity in Pennsbury, her non-judgmental approachability, her depth and breadth of knowledge, and her grasp of the data behind this important work. Dr. Gibson has also led the delivery of professional development related to cultural proficiency here in the School District. As one committee member put it, Dr. Gibson takes a scholarly approach to the work, yet is approachable.”

In her new role, Dr. Gibson’s primary duties and responsibilities will be to:

- conduct a process to analyze systemic policies and practices to ensure implementation and allocation leading to rigorous academic achievement for all students;
- develop a mission, vision, and action plan that focuses the District’s equity work in a manner that is inclusive, transparent, and measurable;
- work closely with the Directors of Elementary, Secondary, and Special Education in adopting inclusive pedagogies and curricula that include the study of race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, religion, and their intersections;

- design and provide professional development that enhances cultural proficiencies for all staff, students, and members of the community;
- facilitate community-based educational opportunities including broad, stakeholder groups;
- collaborate with the Human Resources Department to promote the recruitment, employment, and retention of a workforce reflective of District demographics;
- work with colleges and universities for the placement of student teachers in the Pennsbury schools with a focus on diversity;
- assist educators in creating culturally-supportive learning environments that ensure high expectations for the academic achievement of all students;
- promote extra-curricular activities that focus on equity and diversity for students and encourage student attendance as such activities;
- support the District's Title IX Coordinator for student/parent inquiries;
- work in collaboration with the Director of Student Services in relation to Act 44 and the completion of the Civil Rights Report;
- participate in the Board Policy Committee in relation to the adoption and implementation of Board Policies that involve equity, diversity, and the prevention of discrimination and harassment of students and staff;
- and support Federal program coordination (Title I, II, III, IV) to ensure equitable distribution of appropriate resources.

During the past two years at Pennsbury High School West, Dr. Gibson served as the Acting Principal for two consecutive spring semesters while Principal Lisa Becker was away on educational sabbaticals. During this time, she developed flexible and supportive practices for students and staff to maintain continuity of instruction during the COVID-19 school closure through distance learning. She also coordinated the supervision and evaluation of approximately 150 professional staff and 50 support staff, evaluated and administered instructional programs, oversaw scheduling, organized student activities, student discipline, financial management, and facilities management. She also coordinated office management and communication with parents. In addition, she analyzed data related to the PA Future Ready Index and supervised four assistant principals in coordinating and evaluating instructional resources and programs related to state data reporting.

Dr. Gibson came to Pennsbury in 2013 from the Bristol Borough School District, where she served as an Assistant Principal at Bristol Borough High School. Prior to that position, she was the Dean of Students at Snyder-Girotti Elementary/Middle School, also in Bristol Borough. She has taught at the elementary level in the Bristol Borough, Central Bucks, and the Central York school districts. Dr. Gibson also served as Head Girls' Basketball Coach for Bristol Borough School District and Head Women's Basketball Coach for Bucks County Community College. She was inducted into the Bensalem High School Athletic Hall of Fame in 2011.

Dr. Gibson recently earned her doctorate in K-12 School Leadership from Gwynedd Mercy University, with a dissertation focused on “Social-Emotional Learning Through a Cultural Lens.” She holds a Master’s degree in Educational Leadership from Edinboro University as well as a Master’s degree in Teaching & Curriculum from the Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Gibson earned her Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Elizabethtown College. She is professionally certified for Principal K-12, Elementary K-6, and English 7-12.

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