



**Office of  
Superintendent of Schools  
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To the Editor:

I wanted to clarify a few points made in the Jan. 20 Our View, “2020 census: Population little changed,” which asks: “Why is the school district making such a big deal out of race and diversity? What has changed now vs. 10 years ago?” It also suggests the Grosse Pointe Public School System is “making race and diversity the pillars of its recently adopted three-year strategic plan.”

The GPPSS strategic plan provides a roadmap for the next three years, with cultivating educational excellence at the heart of our mission. While race and diversity, accompanied by equity and inclusion, serve as guideposts, the three focus areas below and their accompanying goals and objectives are the pillars, as clearly outlined at [www.gpschools.org](http://www.gpschools.org).

- **Curriculum, Instruction & Student Learning** – GPPSS will cultivate a robust and equitable educational community where all learners are empowered to reach their unique potential.
- **Global Competency, Real World Literacy & Readiness** – GPPSS will provide learning opportunities that allow students to acquire the attitudes, values, knowledge and skills that prepare them to be contributing members of society in the real world.
- **Family & Community Engagement** – GPPSS will develop and nurture strong connections among schools, families and the community to broaden opportunities for student growth and learning.

We are proud of our continuing work around race and diversity, as 21.63 percent of GPPSS students – more than a fifth – represent a minority race (Source: Michigan Department of Education 2020-2021 Racial Census Report). Moreover, diversity in our school system exists in myriad other forms, including ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status and political perspective.

Most importantly, we believe meeting the needs of every student in the five Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods is best achieved through equitable access and opportunity to our programs and services, from fostering and inspiring intellectual curiosity in our youngest learners, to empowering students of all ages to become leaders. By “equitable” we mean the process of ensuring that processes and programs are impartial and fair and provide opportunities for every student to reach their unique potential. Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that all students feel a sense of belonging.

While the demographic data for the broader community shared in your editorial may not indicate change, we as educators have experienced significant changes in the last decade. It is our responsibility to keep pace with and embrace those changes as we prepare students for the world outside our school walls and city borders and for the futures that await them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Jon Dean'.

Dr. M. Jon Dean  
Superintendent