



Opportunity · Unity · Excellence

Sent via a ParentLink email on July 17, 2021

Good afternoon,

This is Dr. Dan McGarry, Superintendent of Schools, contacting you with an important update regarding our *Upper Darby Rising* initiative. Over a year ago, I announced a goal and a plan to form a community advisory committee. This committee will serve as a vehicle for effective community input and solutions-focused collaboration. I am happy to report that we are now announcing the second phase of *Upper Darby Rising*.

Before I get into the next steps in this initiative, I wanted to share the following information with you.

What is *Upper Darby Rising*?

The Upper Darby School District created its equity plan in 2018. Since then, there has been some progress but a lot of work still needs to be done to ensure excellence with equity across our district. As the Superintendent of Schools, I announced an initiative to form a community advisory committee that would develop guidepost principles for taking concrete, inclusive actions and building trust with the district and among the various groups and stakeholders with the goal of bringing the community closer together.

Click for a video to learn more about [Upper Darby Rising](#).

What *Upper Darby Rising* is not.

- A political platform for individual members
- A voting body making policy decisions
- An advisory panel attempting to push one belief system over another

What did Phase One of *Upper Darby Rising* involve?

Last school year we hosted seven (7) *Upper Darby Rising* forums from December until March. This vital initiative engaged more than 435 families in discussions about what we do well as a District and where there are opportunities for improvement. We heard from parents, students and many others and appreciate their participation, candor and support in helping to make the Upper Darby School District area an even better place to learn, work, and live. Click [here](#) to review the forum reports and below to review the final reports.

- [Upper Darby Rising Final Report](#)
- [May 25, 2021 Upper Darby Rising Public Review](#)

What is the Next Phase of *Upper Darby Rising*?

In our next phase we plan to create a Community Advisory Board of 12-15 members who will help:

- synthesize the lessons learned from the community dialogues
- develop the Excellence with Equity detailed action plan
- monitor implementation and 'course adjustments' as needed
- assist with communicating status updates to the various stakeholder communities

The *Upper Darby Rising Advisory Board* will work to bring the community closer together through proactive problem solving. The members will be a diverse group including parents, residents, educators, business owners, neighbors who do not have children attending our schools, and partners in education, public safety, and community culture.

The Advisory Board will represent as much as possible the age, racial, ethnic, social, gender and sexuality, and economic diversity in the District and Township.

What does the commitment to *Upper Darby Rising* involve?

Members of the Advisory Committee will be required to participate in five (5) community sessions a year. Members will be focused on inclusion, problem solving, and community-building ideas.

What is the timeline?

- Our team will meet with each interested community member throughout the months of August and September.
- We will formally announce the *Upper Darby Rising Advisory Committee* by the end of September.

- We will announce Committee meeting dates and future public meetings after the formation of the Committee not to exceed 5 public events a year.

How can you get involved?

If you are interested in being considered or recommend someone from the community for this important initiative please do one of the following:

- Send an email to the following address: upperdarbyrising@upperdarbysd.org with your name, phone number, address, and a brief summary of your desire to participate.

Or

- Call us at 610-789-7200 and ask to speak with one of the following members of our team:
 1. Supervisor of Equity, Ms. Melissa Figueroa-Douglas
 2. Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Equity, Dr. John Council
 3. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Daniel McGarry

Or

- Send us a letter with your address, name, phone number, and a brief summary of your desire to participate to 4611 Bond Avenue, Drexel Hill, PA, 19026; Attn: Superintendent of Schools, Daniel McGarry.

How can ALL support the *Upper Darby Rising* initiative?

1. Stay up-to-date on *Upper Darby Rising Advisory Committee* communications and news. The Committee will send out communications to community members and stakeholders from time to time throughout the school year. They may, at times, ask for your input, feedback and support regarding specific projects and/or areas of concern. Please be sure to stay engaged!
2. Be an ambassador for the Advisory Committee. Share the updates with your neighbors. Engage more community members in the mission to improve our schools and community.

Thank you for your continued support in moving this very important initiative forward.