The temporary, part-time positions, superintendent Aaron Tarnutzer said, are intended to be temporary stepping stones as the district moves toward creating a full-time, dedicated position. But the district has work to do first, Tarnutzer said, including finding the funds to support an additional position and building the necessary support structure.

“I have learned in this work, which it’s a hard thing to accept, is that you need to be very slow, intentional, but patient, because there is a sense of urgency for this work,” Tarnutzer said. “We need to move too fast, you’re not going to have the impact that you’re hop- ing for.”

The part-time positions include an equity coordinator along with a K-1 and grades 6-12 teacher-equity leaders, which focus on training teachers on cul- turally and linguistically responsi- sive teaching and learning.

“Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learn- ing is a practice that recognizes that students have differing expe- riences or knowledge and uses those experiences and back- ground knowledge to shape how the classroom experiences,” in practice, that means find- ing out more about the student before making assumptions, said Anne Nichols, the high school’s associate principal, who is also serving as the district’s equity coordinator.

“Culturally responsive teach- ing is about looking at the kids in our classrooms, and saying, ‘What is your history? What is your background? Who are you?’” Nichols said.

“Then, as a teacher saying, ‘How are you learning? How are you going to validate who you are? I’m going to say you are good enough where you are, I’m going to affirm who you are. Then I’m going to build and bridge so that you can continue to grow and be success- ful in a multitude of ways in addi- tion to where you are comfort- able,’” she continued.

Her role as equity coordinator, Nichols said, is working with dis- trict and building administrators to create a sustainable program that teaches staff about diversity and what it means to teach to dif- ferent cultures. That can mean socio-economic standing, ability, race, gender, sexual orientation, among other things.

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