

6.17.15 Diversity Advisory Committee

Introductions were made, including new members Kimberly Frederick and guest Kathy Middleton.

Fifth grade students' poetry was shared with the group and Dr. Plano noted that it is published by the district (on the district's website). Some of this work was directly related to the conversations of this committee; that our students' personal narratives are important to understanding and appreciating diversity.

Rev. Perryman pointed out that the challenges described by the adults in this group about when they were young, still are happening to kids today. He described that this should not surprise schools/educators and that we should not be educating our students solely based on crises that have happened, but instead should be a natural part of the education program. Dr. Plano reminded the group that the lessons associated with these poems is now a part of the district's elementary curriculum.

Dr. Plano announced that Dr. Pedro Noguera would be coming to speak to the staff on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. in the MIHS Performing Arts Center. Dr. Plano has been talking to parents about how this needs to be a broader message throughout the community and has included the diversity initiative with his Superintendent's Advisory Committee, which also includes a member of the Clergy. He has also talked about this with the Parent Edge. Kathy Middleton, co-chair of the Parent Edge, provided some background information on the group and their work. The group has engaged in this topic and is looking into their third speaker being more about racial diversity and equity. The group discussed the challenges in bringing this topic to the community in a way that attracts a broad cross section of the community. There were many good suggestions about reframing the conversation in order to appeal to a wider audience.

The group moved on to reviewing the Superintendent's recommended changes to School Board Policy 2020. The Superintendent is recommending to the Board that the concept of diversity, as written in fundamental number 6, be separated into its own fundamental number 7 - "*Foster diversity, inclusiveness, and equity with a focus on respect and acceptance of every student.*" There was general agreement that the language works well. The DAC made other slight changes to fundamental 3 by adding the concept of "empathy," and adding "safe" to fundamental 1. Assuming the Board approves these changes at their study session on June 25, 2015, the Superintendent will provide his interpretation of what fundamental 7 means, as well as changes to the other fundamentals, to the DAC in September.

The group also reviewed the draft doctrine of school-based Diversity Action Teams. Some of the wording was discussed. Rev. Perryman spoke to the need for a full-time director of diversity for the district. There was discussion about why the Superintendent feels he needs to lead the effort at this time. Rev. Perryman also

suggested adding words like “*the staff and school board*” when describing the “district” in the last paragraph.

What has yet to be addressed through this committee is the development of an “Equity Policy.” This policy will be developed through this committee, the Superintendent’s cabinet, the Leadership Team, and the School Board. Other districts’ policies will be reviewed as models in order to avoid unnecessarily redundant work.

Sophy brought up that even when the school does some of these things to engage families at home, not all kids bring it home or follow through. She points out a recent assignment where there was a Dr. Martin Luther King- assigned discussion between a student and her/his parent. Sophy points out that if the teacher does not notify the family as to the importance of this assignment, it might be missed all together.

Dr. Plano pointed out that Simmi Kher will be assisting him next school year as a consultant to this committee as well as being named the district’s civil rights compliance coordinator. He thanked the entire committee for their time and commitment to our collective efforts to improve the quality of our education with the help of this committee and wished everyone a pleasant summer vacation.

Present: Tahmina Watson, Steve Pellerine, Ruth Saunders, Kimberly Frederick, Sophy Yang, Kathy Middleton (guest), Julie Ogata, Dr. Gary Plano, Ed Holmes, Wayne Perryman, David D’Souza, Kristin Kim, Simmi Kher, Mark Roschy, Ivy Suzuki-Jaecks, Eunyoung Kim, and Aisha Jumaan.