

Diversity Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2016

Dr. Plano welcomed everyone to the Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting, including the representatives of the school-based Diversity Action Teams. Dr. Plano reviewed the agenda.

Norms and Agreements Revisited

Dr. Plano presented a cohesive and blended set of norms and agreements based on input at the last meeting. Discussion followed and the DAC agreed to the following norms:

- a. Keep focus on students
- b. Come with the expectation to learn something
- c. Listen for understanding
- d. Accept and celebrate differences
- e. Display mutual respect
- f. Keep an open mind
- g. Accept and expect non-closure
- h. Embrace discomfort without judgment
- i. Speak your truth without attacking others (for example, use “I” statements instead of “you” statements)
- j. Say “ouch I am feeling uncomfortable” when needed
- k. No recording of the meeting without mutual consent.

DAC Charter

The group reviewed its Charter and discussed the proposed revisions. There was consensus to adopt the proposed revisions with the following changes.

- In the second paragraph, replace the words “a growing” with the words “an increasing number”
- In the second paragraph, delete the phrase “(also referred to as ‘mixed’)”
- In item (3), replace the word “unleash” with the word “liberate”

School-based Diversity Teams

Representatives of the school-based Diversity Action Teams shared information about their respective activities regarding diversity.

Island Park Elementary School

- Teachers will spend time with Dr. Pedro Noguera on March 23.
- Training of staff will occur with Ben Ibale, Human and Civil Rights Coordinator at Washington Education Association on April 20.
- On April 26, Taproot Theater will present two plays about bullying.
- A school-wide survey was conducted on “What does Diversity mean?”
- Students are creating a school-wide display of the word Diversity where letters stand for D – Different, Individuals V – Valuing, E – Each other, R – Regardless of, S – Skin color, I – Intellect and age, T – Talents and religion, Y – Your gender and self identity.
- Students are creating a school-wide display of “We are more than a picture” – Students draw their hands and there are pictures of the students in the center and five things

that tell about them on the fingers. Every class will put it together such a chart and then it will be displayed in the school.

- Fifth graders are studying 12 poems by Langston Hughes, Firebird – Ballerina Misty Copeland.
- There have been some student discussions with the school counselor and principal about “what does ‘gay’ mean?”

Mercer Island High School

- March 9, BRIDGES classes will have a lesson about privileges. A similar lesson was done with staff and was well-received. In this lesson, students will read various statements about privileges and tally the ones that resonate with them followed by discussion questions.
- March 16, BRIDGES classes will have a lesson about “dropped out or pushed out.” Students will be provided with various scenarios and encouraged to look at things with a more diverse and global lens.
- March 16, staff will have a “profile of a student” activity during its meeting where they will identify what is closest to their high school experience. This activity is to encourage thinking about equity and how staff can support students.

Some discussion followed and Rev. Perryman recommended that the movie “Race” be shown at the high school.

Lakeridge Elementary School

- Taproot Theater will address bullying through its plays for students.
- Ben Ibale’s training for staff will focus on implicit biases.
- During the national Black History Month, each class was asked to work on the topic.
- 4th graders are working on autobiographies.
- 3rd graders are studying Northwest Cultures. They are being asked deep questions and it is amazing to hear what they say.
- Planning to do a school-wide survey on diversity, as done by Island Park.
- Students cut out tracings of their hands and wrote about what makes them special and unique. These cut-outs were then put together in the form of the school mascot.
- Students are learning the Second Step curriculum to build empathy among one another.
- Staff watched the “TED Talk” called “The Danger of Single Story.”

Some discussion followed about religion and how parents and teachers can use these moments as teachable moments.

West Mercer Elementary School

- Staff has shared ideas about diversity during its staff meetings, including a graph of demographic trends. The Diversity Team will bring more stories about diversity to staff to help expand awareness and learning.
- The school Diversity Team was inspired by Ben Ibale’s talk about inclusiveness.

- The Principal is developing a welcome strategy for students who join mid-year, such as:
 - Classroom students know a new student is coming
 - Having a welcome from the class when that student arrives
 - Having a Parent packet to take back
 - Student must have personal physical space.
- Staff are building classroom libraries so students can access books on diversity in their classrooms, such as “Last Stop on the Bus.”

Some discussion followed. Robin Wilt suggested that parents have an opportunity to buy sweatshirts and yearbooks as part of the welcome packet, since these items were made available to current students and families and before new families moved into the district.

Islander Middle School

The school’s four subcommittees have been meeting and working together.

- During the national Black History Month, the group on morning announcements have been announcing everyday the contributions of African Americans.
- In the classroom pilot groups, a pre-assessment was done, conversations about race and ethnicity were held and students were taught basic vocabulary.
- From the surveys conducted, the teams learned that they need to look at issues through the lens of a middle-school student.
- Staff will attend the presentation by Dr. Pedro Noguera on March 23.
- Staff watched the “TED Talk” called “The Danger of Single Story.”
- On February 8, Eric Davis from Bellevue College spoke to staff about diversity.
- 80 students went on a field trip to the Seattle Art Museum.
- The art curriculum has been designed to include diversity projects.
- A parent survey has been designed but due to technical difficulties it has not been implemented yet.

The meeting ended with Dr. Plano reminding DAC members of the special session with the Dr. Pedro Noguera on March 23 at 4:15 p.m. at the high school library.

Present: David D’Souza, Sophy Yang, Eunyoung Kim, Ivy Suzuki-Jaecks, Ana Simoes, Tahmina Watson, Alex Hart, Jolene Cook, Robin Wilt, Dr. Gary Plano, Wayne Perryman, Simmi Kher, Aisha Jumaan, Carol Best, David Hoffman, Kristin Kim, Kathy Shaner, Tani Lindquist, Henterson Carlisle, Leslie Scheurich and Erica Hill

Absent: Julie Ogata Ciobanu, Qian Wang, Ruth Saunders, Steve Pellerine, Ed Holmes, Kimberly Frederick

Next regular meeting: Wednesday, April 6, 2016 (11:30am-1:30pm)