

## **Diversity Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes January 8, 2016**

Dr. Plano welcomed everyone to the Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting. He welcomed the representatives of the School-Based Diversity Action Teams. Representatives from these teams will be attending the DAC meeting every other month starting this month. Everyone introduced themselves and checked-in with the group by sharing where they were and what might they have been doing on January 8, 2000.

Dr. Plano reviewed the agenda for this meeting. Dr. Plano spoke about how the Diversity Advisory Committee had discussed the need for the School-Based Diversity Action Teams. He reviewed the School-based Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion with everyone. Team representatives were here today to talk about the school's commitment to diversity and share their work-in-progress.

Dr. Plano asked that each school post a PDF version of their Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion on their school's website, which will include their action plans/strategies to date. He noted that each school team might decide whether or not to publish the names of the Diversity Action Team 2015-16 members. This level of transparency affords their school communities to be aware of these representative groups. Dr. Plano wanted these Commitments posted in the next two weeks.

Representatives of the School-Based Diversity Action Teams then shared their work as described below.

### **Islander Middle School**

The Islander Middle School's School-Based Diversity Action Team consists of 13—members, six staff and seven parents. They met three times since the beginning of the school year. Their first step was to get to know each other and to discuss the meaning of *diversity*. They then came up with their goals:

- Supporting the diversity and inclusion in the community
- Bringing students together with adult supervision
- Helping teachers and students gain skills to have difficult conversations
- Mediating conscious and unconscious biases

The Islander Middle School's School-Based Diversity Action Team Diversity Team will work in four areas to create a plan for implementation in Spring, 2016.

1. Daily Diversity Announcements - Develop a pool of morning announcements for students/teachers to possibly read –all dealing with the topic of diversity and inclusion.
2. Student Focus Groups - Develop a set of questions that we may want to ask students about diversity.
3. Staff Engagement Group - Develop ways to engage staff more deeply in understanding issues of diversity and the relevance it has on their daily interactions with students.

4. Parent Involvement Group - Develop ways to engage parents in concepts and conversations around the concepts of diversity.

A meeting scheduled for February 1<sup>st</sup> will look into the actions and progress of the four groups.

### **Mercer Island High School**

This is the second year for the School-Based Diversity Action Team at MIHS, which started last spring. The School-Based Diversity Action Team consists of two parents, seven students, three certified staff, two classified staff and two administrators. They met six times for ninety minutes each time this school year. They created norms and a safe space to talk about their own biases. They have tried to make the meetings organic. They have done several activities together to explore issues like understanding privilege and have read several articles together.

They had a ninety-minute diversity training for the entire staff with Ben Ibale. The staff was fully engaged and gave feedback indicating they wanted to know more about how to have these difficult conversations with students. The School-Based Diversity Action Team came up with a teacher survey which was taken by all the teachers. The team is meeting at the end of January to look at the results of the survey. The team is also planning to do a student survey through the BRIDGES class.

### **Island Park Elementary School**

The School-Based Diversity Action Team consists of parents, para-educators and teachers, and the school Principal. They have met three times this school year. They have been gathering books about diversity to be read by teachers and students, including teachers reading aloud. They sent out a survey to their students on this question: *What does Diversity mean to you?* They received a variety of answers. There were students who seemed to understand diversity and students who did not.

As a team they have decided to respectfully navigate the stories on the news with the students. They spoke about the 4<sup>th</sup> grade unit on Traditions in the *Mondo* bookshop curriculum. The fifth-grade poetry project started last year will continue to explore diversity. The diversity team teachers are reading *Excellence through Equity* by Dr. Pedro Noguera. The School-Based Diversity Action Team is discussing how they can extend this to the entire staff, so they can have these respectful conversations more widely.

### **West Mercer Elementary School**

The School-Based Diversity Action Team consists of para-educators and teachers, and the school Principal. They met twice this school year. They are looking over the School's Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. The School-Based Diversity Action Team has been trained by Ben Ibale and in their meeting they have discussed their take aways from the training. They have talked about bringing Ben to do a whole staff training. They have been reading about diversity together. The team representatives shared an interesting graph on the

student population in their school, which shows an increase in students who identify themselves as being from two or more races and a comparative decrease in the white population. The school needs to be prepared for these changes. There are more ELA students at this point than ever before. The School-Based Diversity Action Team wants to put structures in place to create common practices across the building for welcoming new families and students, as well as embracing the changing demographics.

### **Lakeridge Elementary School**

The School-Based Diversity Action Team consists of teachers and para-educators, and the school Principal. The school Principal is new, so it is taking her some time to get to know the staff. They have had two meetings so far. They are focusing on their school community. The School-Based Diversity Action Team and the entire school staff have attended training with Ben Ibale. Just before the holidays they had a winter breakfast for the staff and each staff member shared one of their family traditions for the holidays. They are doing the Second Step anti-bullying curriculum and a Poetry Project on diversity with the students.

There was not much time left after the presentations by School-Based Diversity Action Teams regarding the agenda topic around data. Dr. Plano asked everyone to email him their thoughts on what data they believe school teams need to examine and address in order to remove obstacles and barriers confronting diverse student populations. Several members asked about discipline data. Dr. Plano noted that the school teams have recently looked at discipline data as a requirement of the state, and he will bring that info to the next meeting.

Dr. Plano further stated that we will start the next Diversity Advisory Committee with agenda items 5, 6 & 7, which could not be covered during this meeting due to insufficient time.

Present: David D'Souza, Sophy Yang, Julie Ogata Ciobanu, Ed Holmes, Ana Simoes, Kimberly Frederick, Jolene Cook, Robin Wilt, Dr. Gary Plano, Wayne Perryman, Simmi Kher, Aisha Jumaan, Karen Glantz, Carol Best, Amy Kerby, David Hoffman, Kathy Shaner, Jenny McAlaine, Brooker Cartwithen and Erica Hill

Absent: Qian Wang, Ivy Suzuki-Jaecks, Ruth Saunders, Tahmina Watson, Steve Pellerine, Alex Hart, Eunyoung Kim, Pam Charney