

**Mercer Island School District #400  
Board of Directors Meeting**

**March 23, 2017**

**Full Governance Process Monitoring – Board Policy 2020 | Fundamental 7**

*Fundamental 7: Foster and embrace diversity, inclusiveness, and equity with a focus on respect and acceptance of every student.*

This is the second full governance monitoring of Fundamental 7 since being adopted. The board approved the Superintendent’s Interpretation of Fundamental 7 on December 10, 2015. This report used a Mixed Method approach, noting both qualitative and quantitative indicators of measurement.

The leadership team used the Superintendent’s Interpretation of Fundamental 7 to prepare the following monitoring report and is organized into the three themes of diversity, inclusiveness and equity.

**QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS**

Numerous quantitative factors were considered to highlight implementation of Fundamental 7.

The team first considered the demographic changes of the Mercer Island School District. Below is a chart of the student population by race over the last six years.

<b>District Race/Ethnicity Breakdown</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>	<b>13-14</b>	<b>14-15</b>	<b>15-16</b>	<b>16-17</b>
Hispanic/Latino	3.4%	3.6%	3.9%	4.2%	4.1%	4.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian	19.0%	18.6%	18.5%	19.4%	19.4%	20.0%
Black/African American	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
White	72.4%	71.5%	69.8%	67.9%	67.2%	65.7%
Two or More Races	3.3%	4.6%	5.8%	6.9%	7.9%	8.6%

Mercer Island School District’s demographics are changing, including the ethnic and racial diversity of the students and their families. This is enhanced by comparing the race/ethnicity of Kindergarten and Grade 1 students with the race/ethnicity of the Grade 11 and 12 students for the last two years.

<b>District Race/Ethnicity Breakdown</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>		<b>2016-2017</b>	
	<b>Gr K and 1</b>	<b>Gr 11 and 12</b>	<b>Gr K and 1</b>	<b>Gr 11 and 12</b>
Hispanic/Latino	5.9%	3.4%	6.7%	4.1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.8%
Asian	16.3%	21.0%	20.4%	20.7%
Black/African American	0.8%	1.9%	0.8%	1.3%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
White	62.0%	70.4%	60.3%	69.0%
Two or More Races	15.9%	2.7%	11.9%	4.1%

## English Language Learner (ELL) Parent Survey

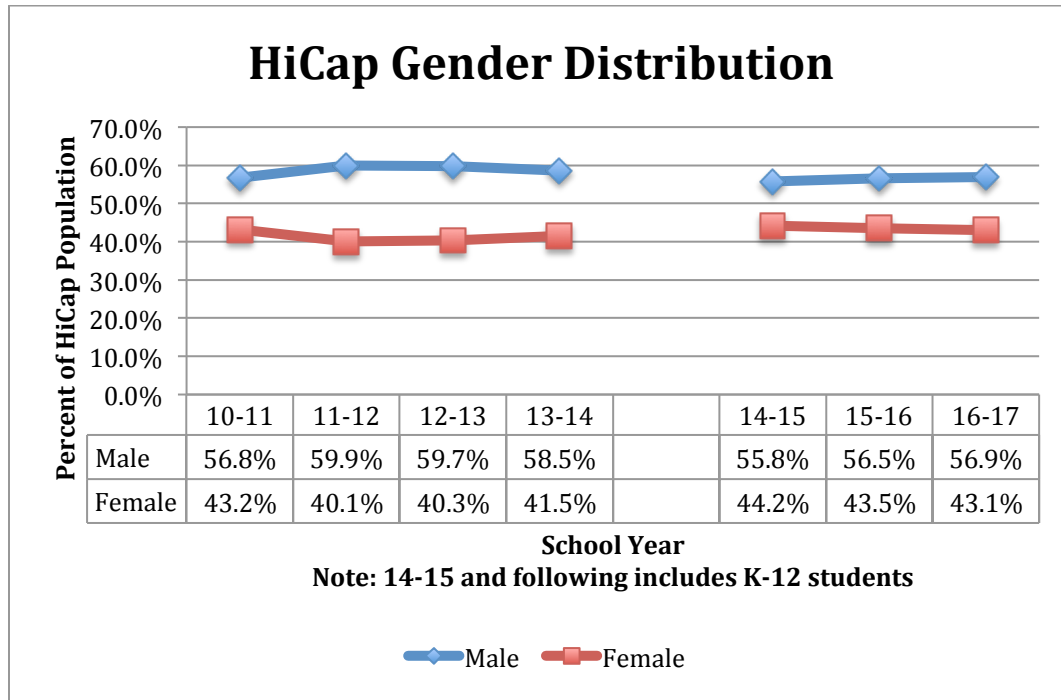
Each ELL family was asked to participate in a survey in alternate years to provide feedback about their experience as a family in the Mercer Island School District as well as the supports afforded to their child(ren). The survey is provided both in their home language as well as English.

Theme	Indicator	SY 15-16	SY 16-17	SY 17-18
<b>ELL Parent Survey Data</b>	% of parents who agree "I feel welcome when I visit the school."	89	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "I know what language development services my child is receiving."	89	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "I understand how the English language support is helping my child."	93	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "My child is learning the skills and knowledge necessary for success."	93	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "School staff provide extra help when my child needs it."	89	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "School staff recognize my child's academic and personal accomplishments."	89	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "The school's language development program helps my child learn our native language."	58	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "I understand the importance of helping my child learn our native language."	87	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "School staff value my family's culture."	80	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "My child's school makes it easy for me to participate in my child's education."	82	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "School staff use my ideas to improve the school's language development program."	56	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "School staff use the personal and academic information that I provide to help my child."	56	N/A	
	% of parents who agree "Teachers communicate with me about my child's progress in language development and academic subjects."	93	N/A	

The ELL Parent Survey is given in alternate year, so data are not available for 2016-2017 but will be part of the 2017-2018 monitoring report.

## Highly Capable Gender Distribution

Mercer Island School District has been monitoring the gender and race/ethnicity distribution within the Highly Capable Program over the past several years. Aligned to Fundamental 7, the district is presently and has been committed to ensuring equitable access to this district program.



The current gender distribution for the district is 53.5% male and 46.5% female.

## HiCap Gender Distribution by Number of Students

	School Year **							
Gender	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14		14-15	15-16	16-17
Male	137	169	224	339		410	442	441
Female	104	113	151	240		325	340	334

\*\* 2010-2014 represent HiCap Students in grades 3-8, 2014-2015 to present represent HiCap students in grades K-12.

The data above represents HiCap enrollment in 2010-2011 to 2013-2014 as Grades 3-8, and 2014-2015 to present as Grades K-12. The district is committed to identifying the most highly capable students in the district and recognizes that a perfect proportion is not the goal, although monitoring is essential to ensure equitable access for highly capable students.

## HiCap Race and Ethnicity Demographics

	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017	
Ethnicity/Race	Highly Capable Percent	District Percent	Highly Capable Percent	District Percent	Highly Capable Percent	District Percent
All other races*	11.0%	12.7%	13.2%	13.6%	13.5%	14.3%

Asian	24.1%	19.4%	22.8%	19.3%	25.0%	20.0%
White	64.9%	67.8%	64.1%	67.1%	61.4%	65.7%

\* Data are combined because of small numbers of students and represent Hispanic/Latino; American Indian/Alaskan Native; Black/African American; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; Two or More Races students

When analyzing the ethnic/race demographics, the 2016-2017 data reveals that Asian students are slightly overrepresented while White students are under represented. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and two or more races have been combined because of OSPI suppression rules but note a gain over the last two years.

## Academic Course Access

Academic course access was investigated with the use of proportionality metrics for a variety of sub groups. The proportionality index compares the percent enrollment in a specific course with the overall percent of that ethnicity/race, gender or special population in the school. A value of one means that the proportion of students in a specific course matches the overall proportion of the students in the general population. Numbers above or below one represent over representation and under representation respectively. Proportionality was investigated at the course level at MIHS with AP, Honors and CTE courses, at IMS with all electives, and at the elementary level with 5<sup>th</sup> grade accelerated math. The following proportionality indices are based on a sample set of all Honors classes together or all AP classes together.

Gender	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	Honors	AP	Honors	AP	Honors	AP
Female	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1		
Male	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9		

Ethnicity/Race	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	Honors	AP	Honors	AP	Honors	AP
Asian	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.2		
Black/African American	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.5		
Hispanic	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7		
American Indian/Native Alaskan	0.9	1.4	0.5	1.3		
Two or more races	0.9	0.5	1.1	0.4		
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*		
White	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0		

\* n is less than 5 students

Special Programs	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	Honors	AP	Honors	AP	Honors	AP
504 students	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0		
Bilingual Education students	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.3		
Special Education students	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2		

In reviewing these data, it is noted that gender enrollment is proportional to the overall school population. With regards to ethnicity/race, there is underrepresentation of Black/African American and Hispanic students in both AP and Honors courses, and Two or more races in AP courses. 504 students are proportionally represented in

AP and Honors courses, while bilingual students are underrepresented in 2016-2017. While the proportionality numbers for special education students is low, they do indicate that special education students are accessing the Honors and AP curricula.

The High School has been examining these numbers and the students represented. The High School continues to offer opportunities to and encourages all students to access honors and AP courses.

### Boys and Girls Athletic Participation

Mercer Island School District actively monitors participation in athletics at the school and district level. The Title IX Committee meets regularly throughout the year to review the sports and activities offered to the students as well as students taking advantage of these opportunities.

### Number of Sports by Gender

	2014-2015		2015-2016	
	MIHS	IMS	MIHS	IMS
<b>Boys</b>	13	3	13	3
<b>Girls</b>	14	4	14	4
<b>Total</b>	27	7	27	7

### Student Participation in Athletics by Gender

Gender	2014-2015			
	MIHS Number of Participants	MIHS Athletic Program Participation Percent	IMS Number of Participants	IMS Athletic Program Participation Percent
Boys Participating	627	53.6%	205	51.4%
Girls Participating	542	46.4%	194	48.6%
Total	1,169	100%	399	100.0%

Gender	2015-2016			
	MIHS Number of Participants	MIHS Athletic Program Participation Percent	IMS Number of Participants	IMS Athletic Program Participation Percent
Boys Participating	590	52.9%	198	49.3%
Girls Participating	525	47.1%	204	50.7%

Total	1,115	100%	402	100.0%
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### 2015-2016 Additional MIHS Activities not Considered Part of WIAA

Activity	Participants	
	2014-2015	2015-2016
Drill	28	29
Cheer (Girls)	40	34
Cheer/Stuntmen (Boys)	7	9

While boys still outnumber girls in WIAA recognized sports, when Drill and Cheer are taken into consideration the gap is nearly closed. Drill and cheer are non-competitive sports, therefore, WIAA does not recognize these when the district reports for Title IX compliance. The district believes that drill and cheer are activities that should be included in reports for internal monitoring and reporting to local stakeholders.

### Discipline Data

Discipline data are analyzed utilizing the proportionality metrics of ethnicity/race subgroups.

District Race/Ethnicity Breakdown	2014-2015		2015-2016	
	MISD	State	MISD	State*
Hispanic/Latino	1.3	1.1	1.0	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0	2.0	0.0	
Asian	0.7	0.2	0.6	
Black/African American	1.5	2.4	0.0	
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.0	1.3	0.0	
White	1.0	1.4	1.2	
Two or More Races	1.5	0.8	0.5	

\*State data for 2015-2016 will be available in April, 2017.

In 2015-16 the district began the practice of considering all types of suspensions including in school, out of school, athletic suspensions, library violation and Saturday school. In 2015-2016 there was a total of 25 of these incidences. In 2014-2015 there were a total of 57 out of school suspensions. Even without the state data for 2015-2016, the district data show that the district suspends at rates proportional to the specific race/ethnicity proportion when small "N" sizes are taken into the consideration.

### Educational Effectiveness Annual Survey

The Instructional Leadership team also considered the annual Educational Effectiveness Survey of staff, parents and students.

EES Survey Data	Indicator	SY 11-12	SY 12-13	SY 13-14	SY 14-15	SY 15-16
		% of staff who agree "The curriculum we teach reflects the diversity of the community we serve."	55	52	49	45
% of parents who agree "This school has activities to celebrate different		71	64	51	46	46

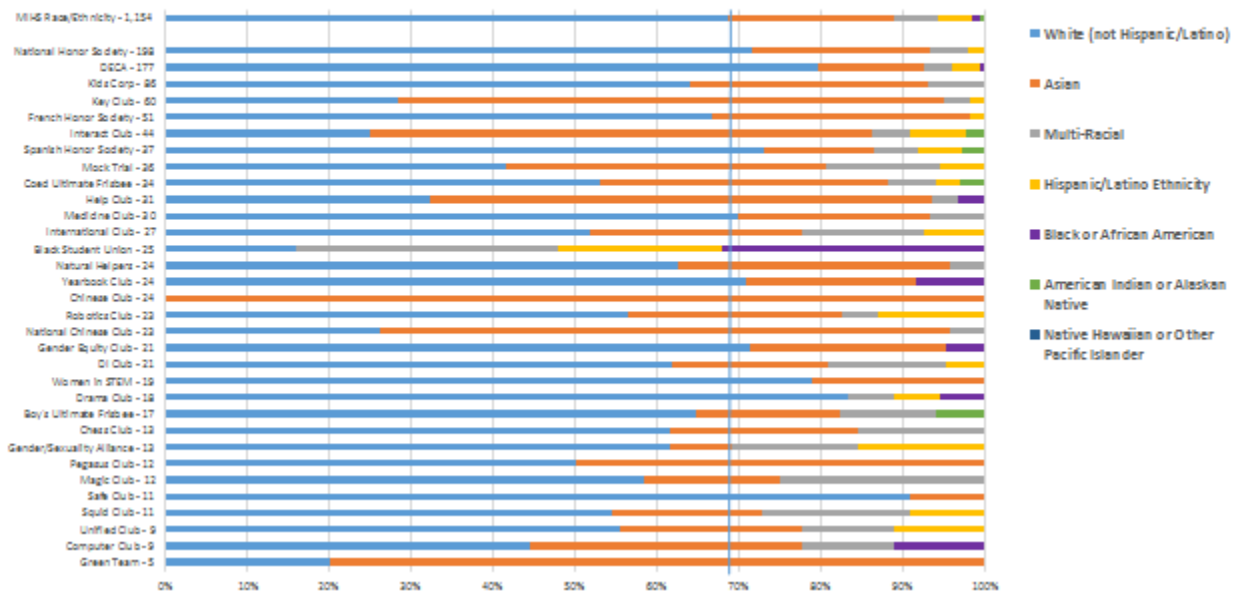
cultures, including mine.”						
% of staff who agree “This school has activities to celebrate the diversity of this community.”	58	54	52	55	52	
% of students who agree “This school has activities to celebrate (culture) student differences.”	53	55	50	50	61	
% of students who agree “The school respects student differences (different cultures) in our community.”	71	80	80	79	71	
% of staff who agree “We have opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies for the diversity represented in our school.”	27	45	41	38	57	
% of staff who agree “We are provided training to meet the needs of a diverse student population in our school.”		40	32	37	52	
% of staff who agree “The school addresses issues of diversity (cultural responsiveness) in a timely and effective manner.”	29	53	46	50	54	

As reported last year, there was work to be done in celebrating differences, updating curricula to address our changing demographics, and providing professional development for teacher around these issues. Surveys shows that student feel there are more opportunities to celebrate differences. Staff are feeling supported in learning new teaching strategies and being provided training to meet the diverse needs of students. There is still work to be done, but the district has made significant strides is meeting the needs of students and staff.

### Individual Schools Data

Individual schools looked at a variety of diversity data during the year. As an example, MIHS delved into ethnicity/race data for clubs and sports. The follow chart shows the ethnicity/race composition of all clubs at MIHS. The overall trend is that clubs are made up a variety of ethnic/race compositions.

**MIHS 2016-17 Clubs by Race/Ethnicity**  
(Clubs Ranked by Participants)



The following summary chart shows the ethnicity/race composition of all clubs and all Spring and Fall 2016 sports.

## Summary of Race/Ethnicity for Clubs & Sports (Ranked by Participants) 2016-2017

	MIHS Overall	MIHS Clubs	MIHS Spring Sports 2016	MIHS Fall Sports 2016
Total Participants	1,453	1,145	433	532
White (not Hispanic/Latino)	68.7%	59.7%	73.9%	76.9%
Asian	20.2%	29.4%	18.2%	13.5%
Multi-Racial	5.4%	6.0%	3.2%	5.6%
Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity	4.1%	3.1%	2.3%	2.8%
Black or African American	1.0%	1.3%	2.1%	0.4%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%

These data show there is significant diversity within the individual clubs that speaks to the value of the clubs in providing more varied experiences for all students at the High School. Overall the race breakdown of sports and clubs is fairly consistent with the race breakdown of the student body. These data were shared with the High School Diversity Action Team.

The overall racial composition of the student body is not easily altered. However, all students benefit when there are many opportunities to be in groups (classes, sports, clubs) where there is more diversity (i.e., less majority white) than exists in the overall student population.

### QUALITATIVE INDICATORS:

The following qualitative data provides snapshots into Fundamental 7 - *Foster and embrace diversity, inclusiveness and equity with a focus on respect and acceptance of every student*. Several but not all will be highlighted at the March 23, 2017 board meeting.

### **Theme 1 - Diversity**

**Superintendent Diversity Advisory Committee (S-DAC):** In the late spring of 2014, Mercer Island School District Superintendent Dr. Gary Plano launched the Superintendent Diversity Advisory Committee, comprised of parent and community representatives who advised him on matters of diversity and equity. Since the inaugural meeting in June of 2014, the S-DAC has met nearly every month beginning in September of each academic year. As stated in the S-DAC's Charter, the Mercer Island School District is committed to fostering an environment of diversity and to developing the social identity and academic achievement of every child. While diversity is viewed broadly, the charter sometimes focuses on addressing issues around racial diversity, since it remains a key issue in American society.

To that end, the Mercer Island School District is committed to: the success of every student in each of our schools; equity of educational opportunity; individual empowerment; and fair treatment.

The district also seeks to provide educational programs, which focus on critical thinking and personal narratives that are emotionally connecting, together with school environments that are inclusive, celebratory and respectful of our differences. All artifacts, meeting minutes and work products are found on the S-DAC webpage: <http://www.mercerislandschools.org/Page/11401>

**MIHS Diversity Team:** This year the Mercer Island High School's Diversity Action Team continues to provide opportunities for student and staff engagement around topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This year both



staff and students participated in an implicit bias activity. Participants learned what is *Implicit Bias* and how it affects our everyday interactions. In March MIHS offered a staff development opportunity using breakout sessions. Staff chose two sessions from the following list of offerings; implicit bias Part 2 workshop, Microaggressions workshop, a QSA (Queer Straight Alliance) presentation and What does it really mean to do “equity work”? workshop. In February MIHS offered a student forum during BRIDGES where students volunteered to participate, with over 30 students participating. All of the feedback was positive. As a result, MIHS plans to hold a series of these workshops to allow for students’ voices to be heard through meaningful conversation among each other.

**IMS Diversity Team:** In following the lead of the District Advisory Committee, Islander Middle School has continued the Diversity Advisory Team for the 16-17 school year. The team was comprised of IMS teachers, administrators and parents. For this school year, the committee has focused its work on analyzing the grade 6-8 curriculum to determine whether it supports diversity, equity and inclusion for all IMS students. The group will develop recommendations that IMS curriculum leads will utilize during a review of curriculum.

**Island Park Diversity Team:** Island Park Elementary School has a site-based diversity team consisting of certificated and classified staff (additional parent and student members will be included in the future). The team adopted a Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement that included commitments to:

- Rich Curriculum and classroom activities that reflect our diverse student population
- School events that celebrate and honor our diverse student body and community
- Staff development that enhances skill sets to meet the diverse needs of our learning community
- Staff, student and parent involvement in committees and activities that study, suggest and support diversity initiatives

The team meets monthly to participate in diversity-related book/article studies and monitor diversity initiatives in the areas of staff development, data collection, community and school-wide events, classroom activities, and curriculum. The IP Team focused this year on gender equity. The team is studying current literature on gender equity and access issues in public schools to gain a better understanding of trends and learning implications. The team has created draft language around our school commitment to gender equity. A link to a complete list of current diversity initiatives is posted on the school’s website.

**Lakeridge Diversity Team:** Lakeridge Elementary School continued our diversity work with a site-based diversity team consisting of certificated and classified staff (additional parent and student members will be included in the future). The team adopted a Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement. The team’s objective is to create a school climate that fosters respect, belonging, and value for all, while encouraging participation and connection throughout the organization. The team meets monthly to participate in diversity-related book/article studies and monitor diversity initiatives in the areas of staff development, data collection, community and school-wide events, classroom activities, and curriculum. A link to a complete list of diversity initiatives was posted on the school’s website and communicated to school families.

**Northwood Diversity Action Team:** Northwood created a site-based Diversity Action Team when the school opened this fall. The NW Team focus this year has been to learn more about the students served at Northwood, to continue to develop instructional strategies and curriculum options to engage diverse learners, and to celebrate and honor a diverse community through curricular events and community involvement events. Northwood has had an influx of English Language Learners to the school, and to support them, each grade level has a leader who engaged in six days of training in Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD), a collection of strategies to support English Language Learners in developing language skills alongside content learning. These leaders have led their colleagues in professional development sessions on early release days. Additionally, we have had parent presentations from our community to help our teachers understand the Chinese school system many of our students came from, as well as the communication challenges they face in coming into a U.S. school system. In addition to the all-elementary work we are engaged in with Dr. Caprice Hollins, we have scheduled Ben Ibale to provide a workshop to all staff this Spring: Instructional Strategies for Culturally Competent Classrooms. The PTA has supported our DAT initiatives through a very well-attended International Night, as well as through funding to support in-school assemblies and presentations for our students that help students develop awareness of and appreciation for diversity in our communities.

**West Mercer Diversity Team:** West Mercer Elementary School created a site-based diversity team during the

2015-2016 school year and has continued its work into the 2016-17 school year. During monthly meetings, the team focuses on questions and activities to build awareness, knowledge, and skills for both staff and students. West Mercer started the 2016-2017 school year off by looking at “Invitational Education”, celebrating ways that we welcome new families into our classrooms and our school and then focusing on ways we can be even more invitational. West Mercer had a very successful Principal’s Coffee in the fall with many new families represented and the team was able to hear each of their respective voices; where they had come from and what they hoped for, in terms of overall education, learning, and community while their children are at West Mercer. The team reviewed and updated our website, in terms of the West Mercer Diversity Commitment Document and the West Mercer Diversity Initiatives. The school is continuing the work that Dr. Caprice Hollins has done with us as a district elementary staff, and are looking at deepening our understanding of microaggressions. The team took an Equity & Diversity Walk, in terms of who we see represented when we walk the hallways. The team will then take the results of our Equity & Diversity Walk to reflect on how closely what the staff saw aligns with how educationally invitational WM believes it is. In addition, we have invited Ben Ibale to present to staff in March. His presentation will focus on “Instructional Strategies for a Culturally Competent Classrooms”. A number of our members have also attended professional development conferences around the themes of Diversity, Equity and Restorative Justice and we have shared with one another our take-away learning.

**Outside Consultant, Dr. Caprice Hollins:** Dr. Hollins is meeting with all elementary school staff three times this school year. The topics include Implicit Bias in February, Racial Privilege in April and Tool for talking to kids about race in May. Her work with teachers involves educating, sensitizing, and reflecting around issues of race, privilege, stereotype, implicit bias and issues of equity in the schoolhouse. Teacher experience presentations, simulations and discussion during the course of each workshop. Dr. Hollins is also meeting with the elementary administration team and all of the elementary diversity action teams on these dates.

**Island Park’s Fifth Grade Experiences:** Fifth grade students wrote “I Have a Dream” and “I am From” poems that highlighted their personal uniqueness and appreciation of the world’s diversity. They recently completed their yearly outdoor education experience at Islandwood on Bainbridge Island. Part of the camp’s curriculum included a study of the diverse cultures that settled Blakely Harbor. During this learning session, students watched a film on the history of the harbor, discussed the benefits of immigration on the local economy, and hiked down to the harbor to view and talk about how artifacts (cemetery headstones, structural remains) reflect the diversity and contributions of early settlers.

**Island Park Library Collection:** The Island Park library continues its purposeful acquisition of picture books and novels that depict, through illustrations and text, our society and student body’s demographics, while also addressing age appropriate issues of diversity, equity and social justice. Topics include the history of women’s rights, stories of citizens with disabilities, as well as Native American, African American, Latino/Hispanic, and Asian biographies, history, and stories (folk tales, historical fiction, and poetry).

**West Mercer Professional Development:** West Mercer has embraced Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) as a means of support for our many ELL students. Six of our teachers (along with our ELL teacher) participated in six days of intensive training. GLAD strategies are being used throughout the building and our GLAD trained teachers have taken on leadership roles to share these GLAD strategies among the staff.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade LA/SS “Where I’m From” poems—** Modeling after Dr. Caprice Hollins’ poem presented to the students during the Dr. King assembly, students wrote their own poems. They reflected on their interests, challenges, family—everything that makes up their history. The final pieces were shared anonymously, so students became more aware of each others’ experiences while still maintaining the privacy of students who shared personal information. Students left sticky notes to indicate what “windows” (differences they could learn from) and “mirrors” (similarities they could relate to) they observed. The goal of this project was to create greater understanding and connection among the students and to build a platform for understanding that everyone is a product of their background—including the characters in literature and the figures (hidden or venerated) in history.

**8th Grade Values Assignment:** In this lesson, IMS 8th grade students analyzed opinion surveys and polls from various countries, examining the values the people in the countries hold. After analyzing the data,

students reflected on their own personal values, drawing connections and explaining where these values stem from. Through this project, students reflected on where their values come from and how they see them present in their daily lives. Students share their values with the classroom.

**IMS MLK Recognition Efforts: MLK Day recognition (January 2017):** In recognition of MLK day, all IMS students attended grade-level presentations in the library by Dr. Caprice Hollins. Dr. Hollins, in her presentation, shared her background, thoughts on diversity, and how students can be supportive of diversity. IMS students were engaged and very thoughtful during the presentation. In addition, all staff members were directed to find a connection to MLK in their lessons for the day. We wanted our students to experience the mission and goals of MLK in every class period they attended and to see that there can be a connection from his message and actions into every fiber of today's society. We provided some support resources that teachers could consider using in their lesson planning. Teachers were to do more than just mention MLK, but to truly focus on his legacy. We were very proud of our teachers and the events from this day.

**Bronx Masquerade:** In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students use the novel *Bronx Masquerade* to analyze the poetry of 18 different narrators. By studying these poems and their accompanying prose journal entries, our students see the 18 speakers through their unique lenses: gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and many more. Each narrator tells his/her/their own story of struggle and triumph, and as readers, we begin to see the important portrait created by such a diverse group. In this process, we also learn to empathize with the many challenges both new and familiar to us; we see the human behind the stereotypes of our own society. In the end of the unit, the lens is then turned inward. Students create their own poems to bring voice to their stories. As in the novel, these poems are shared, and in turn, students see the portrait of their class too.

**MIHS MLK Assembly (January 2017):** The MIHS Black Student Union (BSU), in its first full year of operation, ran the MIHS MLK recognition assembly. The BSU President and Co-President were the masters of ceremony. BSU members read first-person biographies of lesser known famous African Americans. MIHS students were active listeners in these presentations. Students shared a timeline of Martin Luther King's accomplishments and his six principles of nonviolence. The BSU President from Garfield High School was a featured guest presenter and she spoke about being actively involved in shaping the world we live in. Finally, a student performed a moving rendition of "I know where I've been." This proved to be a powerful and rewarding assembly for all.

**MIHS English Department's Addition of Diverse Texts at all Grade Levels:** As a component of their work on the MIHS School Improvement Plan and following-up on Board conversation from last fall (2016), the MIHS English Department collaborated this year to identify the need to add diverse voices and perspectives to their core course reading lists. In coordination with building and district leadership, the department has agreed to add a new diverse text (as a core required text) at each grade level next year in grades 9-12. Each grade level team is currently reviewing potential new texts and will complete the review, submit a request to the Instructional Materials Committee this spring, and then collaborate to devise a common unit centered on the new texts for implementation in the 2017-2018 school year. Additional information will be provided to the School Board as part of the OE-9 report in May.

**MIHS August Wilson Monologue Competition:** For the past several years MIHS Drama Teacher, Daniela Melgar has partnered with the Seattle Repertory Theatre to provide students with the opportunity to participate in the National August Wilson Monologue Competition. A representative from the theatre attended Melgar's Drama class to share with students some history of August Wilson's work and to explain the importance of having students of all races read and perform his work. Students learned that Wilson's characters were intended to be portrayed by black actors and they discuss the value of studying his work and characters as actors have studied the likes of Shakespeare's work for centuries, which was written almost exclusively for white actors. Students also learned the importance of embracing a character and his/her unique qualities and traits so they can attempt to accurately portray them on stage - regardless of their race. During the four week unit students chose, memorized, rehearsed and performed individual Wilson monologues. This year several of Melgar's Drama 2 students competed in the Seattle competition and two of them, Julian Morgan and Rachel Ayzenberg, were selected to participate in the finals March 3, 2017 at the Seattle Repertory Theatre.

## Theme 2 - Inclusiveness

**Student Mentor Program:** One of the most popular elective courses at Islander is the student mentor program. Student mentors help peers with special needs by participating in electives, working on academic skills and assisting in social settings. The student mentors explore issues involving diversity and learning leadership skills. Assignments include student goal setting and a final reflective essay. Motivation, compassion, initiative and responsibility are characteristics needed by student mentors. Over 40 students participate in this program each year as mentors.

**Yoga:** IMS 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade yoga students are challenged to demonstrate their end of the trimester learning by creating their own instructional video. As part of the process, the class evaluates an array of yoga instructional videos to see what they want to, "take with them," or "leave behind," in relation to pose selection, narrative delivery, and background, for when they create their own video. The students help develop the criteria for meeting standard on the assignment rubric, and self-assess their own video based on the rubric. In addition, this lesson illuminates the lack of diversity within the yoga videos currently produced, as most of the school appropriate videos feature middle-aged, Caucasian, women. During class discussions students engage in conversation about their findings, and express their desire for their own instructional videos to appeal to teenagers, and represent the diversity within our population.

**Unified Sports Teams & Unified Club:** The MIHS unified basketball and soccer teams continue to thrive in their fourth year. Students with disabilities play basketball and soccer competitively with their peers in the Unified League. There has been so much enthusiasm for the unified teams that students have also created a Unified Club to provide additional opportunities for students of all abilities to connect, socialize, and support each other. This year our unified basketball team won the Unified Washington State Basketball Championship!

**English & Writing and Literature Foundations English Partnership:** PLP teacher Kelsey Boosman and students in her PLP English class at MIHS have teamed with Resource teacher Andrea Confalone and students in her Writing and Literature Foundations class to create a multi-leveled, differentiated English class to provide a less restrictive environment for students' reading and writing instruction. PLP students join the Foundations class for a shared grade level reading experience. Students in the partnered classes are currently reading Shakespeare's *Othello* and all students participate in reading the play aloud. Roles are carefully assigned to suit each student's reading ability so as to foster an environment where all student voices are heard. Whole-class discussion occurs as all the students read together. When writing instruction begins, the groups may be separated as the outcomes/goals differ for each group. All students have the same expectations for weekly vocabulary although testing is differentiated for individual students. By teaming these two traditionally separate courses, we have reduced the need for peer tutors and adults supporting students in a 1:1 capacity. Additionally, students are benefiting from working with same aged peers in grade level content and in some cases serving as leaders for peers who previously relied on adult support for understanding.

## Theme 3 - Equity

**Ben Ibale Events:** Mercer Island School District continues to utilize outside resources to building knowledge and comfort in our staff around themes of equity. Ben Ibale visited all elementary schools in the fall of 2016 to meet with staff members leading a workshop on equity topics as part of ongoing professional development for our staff and parents.

**Sixth grade extended core classes:** In ExCore (extended core) classes, teachers focus on reading literature that include themes of diversity. Often, students see themselves in the lives and experiences of the protagonists, and for students who don't easily identify with the main character, reading about it is a practice in empathy building and experiencing the world through another lens. Through class read-aloud or literature circles, students read about characters who struggle with racism, sexism, ableism, and other difficult issues. Students engage with these tough topics through self reflections, written responses, partner sharing, and class-wide discussions. The challenging situations and the work students do with them dovetails perfectly with our foundational character-building curriculum. Students often bring up the eight character essentials (honesty, forgiveness, selflessness, humility, respect, kindness, commitment, and patience) and discuss what aspect of

character that the fictional characters in the books are demonstrating or lacking. The diversity in literature curriculum both gives students a better understanding of their world and the struggles people face, and also a better understanding of themselves and who they want to be.

**Shifting the Culture of Diversity in Instruction:** The staff at MIHS recently made an important decision to integrate a diverse lens into all of the work throughout the year. Instead of focusing on a one-month celebration of black history, the staff is intentionally focusing on how to integrate cultural awareness within each unit. This is a shift that takes time, but through the work of our Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee and the high school's Diversity Action Team (DAT), we are creating professional development opportunities that focus on embedding cultural awareness within the curriculum. As one English teacher stated, "Every month of the school year, my classes discuss the same issues Dr. King raised. As I approach my 30th year of teaching, I realize that I have found ways to discuss gender and race issues through nearly every book and learning unit." Another English teacher stated, "In late January/early-February, my English 11 students learned about the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, and Louis Armstrong. I have also been working through the year and will continue to work through the year to include other marginalized voices in my classes."