

Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee Meeting

January 20, 2017
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
MISD Board Room

Members Present: Aisha Jumaan, Andrew Ackley, Julie Ogata-Ciobanu, Chouchanik Airapetian, Chris Mochel, Eunyoung Kim, Jolene Cook, Robin Li, David D’Souza, Ed Holmes, Wayne Perryman, Ruth Saunders, Benson Wong, Natalie Woods, Steve Pellerine, Tumaini Coker, Erin Battersby, Dr. Gary Plano, Fred Rundle, Craig Degginger.
Members Absent: Simmi Kher, Alex Hart (On Leave), Irene Rajaqopal, Ana Simoes, Tahmina Watson (Excused).

Welcome and Check-in:

Dr. Plano called the meeting to order at 12 noon.

Restatement of S-DAC Norms and Expectations

To help facilitate an effective meeting, Dr. Plano reread the norms and expectations previously adopted by the committee.

Review and approve minutes from the November 18, 2016 meeting

ACTION ITEM	APPROVED with one abstention
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The committee reviewed minutes of the November 18, 2016 meeting. Following clarifying questions by Jolene Cook, the minutes were approved, with Jolene abstaining and no one voting against.

Discussion and possible action on Charter revision

Dr. Plano presented the draft revisions to the Charter as had been discussed at the October meeting. He was asked if he expected the committee’s work would continue under the new superintendent and he indicated how important the Committee’s work is and to the best of his knowledge it would continue after his departure on June 30, 2017.

The committee then reviewed the draft charter language on the screen and went through it line by line, making editorial changes as a group and coming to consensus on this revised language:

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 we view diversity broadly, this 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.

Dr. Plano reviewed the three (3) action steps along with the status of each of those actions, which we developed as part of the S-DAC Charter.

The committee will consider adoption of the revised charter at the February 24 meeting.

Restorative Justice Concept

This item was held over from the November meeting. Robin Wilt and Eunyoung Kim previously met with Dr. Plano to discuss this topic.

Eunyoung described the concept, which allows the aggressor, victim and their respective families to gather for a conference that follows a specific protocol and is led by a trained mediator. She supports this concept of creating a safe forum for the parties to express their feelings without stigmatizing or shaming the aggressor.

Dr. Plano said he has been exploring where and how this proposal could be included in district policy. He explained the various types of student misconduct, including the definitions of harassment, intimidation and bullying. This would not necessarily replace a suspension depending on the severity of the incident, but could provide a potential alternative if families agreed to participate.

Ruth Saunders said she was in favor of such a policy, providing an alternate form of resolution and an opportunity for building trust between the District and families.

Rev. Wayne Perryman said he sees this a potential replacement for a long process for solving these problems, saying the current process is too long. He dislikes the word bullying, as it's too stigmatizing, saying it should be called unacceptable behavior.

Eunyoung said Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (MIYFS) is on board with the process/concept. Dr. Plano pointed out the MIYFS staff person at each school would be the likely mediator in such a process.

Erin Battersby is the district's HIB officer and works with the schools on many of these investigations. She said this concept could provide a new tool, perhaps a hybrid that might include discipline, saying that each situation is unique but the more tools you have the better. It was suggested that she might want to ask families previously in this situation if they would liked to have used this option.

Dr. Plano said the committee will continue the discussion at the next meeting, and Fred Rundle will bring back information on discipline by demographic categories for the committee to review.

It was agreed to extend the meeting by 20 minutes in order to hear from school teams.

Diversity and Equity Presentation by School Teams

MIHS

Associate Principal Henterson Carlisle and administrative intern/teacher Erica Hill presented. Henterson showed a PowerPoint presentation on Equality vs. Equity that was earlier presented to KingCo leadership. The presentation graphically shows the differences between equality and equity.

The image from his presentation can be viewed here:

<http://culturalorganizing.org/the-problem-with-that-equity-vs-equality-graphic/>

IMS

Teacher Kathy Shaner distributed information from the middle school's diversity team.

One of the committee's ongoing activities is to look at curriculum and see if it reflects the culture of the school. For example, during February the social studies curriculum will be reviewed.

Dr. Caprice Hollins presented a Parent Edge talk at IMS on talking to children about issues of race, and the following day she spoke to three grade-level assemblies about ways to make a difference in the school. Each group heard her "Where I'm From" poem and were taught ways to handle conversations about uncomfortable comments. Every class at IMS developed a lesson that day based on MLK, diversity and equity.

The elementary team was unable to attend this meeting and will report again in March with the other teams.

Member topics

Dr. Plano asked the committee if they had topics for the next meeting. Eunyong Kim asked that the current Nextdoor.com thread on allegations of institutional racism be discussed, and a majority of the Committee agreed.

Closing reminders

Rev. Perryman encouraged committee members to see the motion picture "Hidden Figures" and Tumaini Coker noted the Jacob Lawrence exhibit at Seattle Art Museum and the play "A Snowy Day" at Seattle Children's Theater.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Next meeting, February 24, 2017, 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.