

DRAFT -- Thurgood Marshall PTA General Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2016, 6:30pm-8:20pm

Attendees (as listed on sign-in sheets): Tania Westby, Patty Pearson, Brenda Fackler, Bill Brewster, Cliff Meyer, Kimberlee Barber, Ken Woodruff, Jamie Fackler, Angie Jenkins, Lisa Schaible, Robin Glassberg, Darryl Bingham, Lita Hawkins, Tara Urs, Guyanthany Parramore, Kivora Parramore, Ann McNally, Ruth Levine, Terra Dingane, Katie Egolf, Devin Bruckner, Briana Wicks, Patricia Iturbide, Carroll Washington, Angie Mavron, Roman Vaney, Lauri Nakamoto, Mary Kimball, Shari Powell, Cora Glass, Merilee Hudson, Bianca Gomez, Samantha Egelhoff, Sarah Pritchett, Katie May, Laurie Kazanjian, Sabrina Kovacs-Storlie, Michael Tolley, Stephan Blanford, Anita Morales, Matthew Okun, Trish Campbell, Emijah Smith

Welcome, Upcoming Calendar, and PTA Business – Jamie Fackler, Co-President

Jamie welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly reviewed the upcoming PTA events and volunteer opportunities at TM. He highlighted the need for Pancake Breakfast volunteers and a Pup Press Editor. See back of attached agenda for list of events and volunteer opportunities. Jamie also noted the upcoming Schools First Levy and PTA Focus Day and encouraged attendees to learn more via the handouts on the sign-in table.

Bill Brewster made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 13, 2015 general membership meeting. Cliff Meyer seconded the motion. The minutes were approved via voice vote.

Creative Advantage and the Arts at TM – Bianca Gomez, TM 3rd grade teacher

Bianca gave a quick overview of the work of the TM Arts team and how it is leveraging Creative Advantage grant money to increase access to arts for all students and develop an arts vision for our school. The Arts team wants to encourage students to think of themselves as artists and explore their identity through the arts. One goal is to have more arts during the school day as opposed to before/after school enrichment. To that end, TM teachers have completed professional development opportunities to learn how to better integrate arts into their classroom. The Arts team surveyed students and learned there was a desire for more dance opportunities. With Creative Advantage Funds, TM has added a free dance class series before school on Fridays. Bianca noted that attendees could learn more at the Creative Advantage website (creativeadvantageseattle.org).

Introductions and Thurgood Marshall's role as part of Racial Equity Cohort -- Katie May, Principal

Principal May noted that we were fortunate to have with us a panel of experts who can speak to many aspects of the district's work in creating an equitable environment for our students. TM has three unique programs, but one learning community. We enjoy a diverse school population with a full range of socioeconomic levels, academic abilities, and racial and cultural representation. We think about equity as making sure each student has what they need to be successful, which is different than the same supports for every student. We've had an equity team since the spring of 2014 and have focused our efforts in three areas.

1) Gap Closing: We reviewed data and assigned building and PTA resources to literacy tutoring at the Kindergarten and 1st grade general education classrooms. We reviewed data for all students to make sure all students are meeting expected growth targets, regardless of where they begin. We formed cross-program teacher learning communities around grade level standards so all students have access to rigorous instruction.

2) Climate: We've created school-wide expectations for all students based on our motto: "Keeping it R.E.A.L." (Resilient, Empathetic, Accountable, Lifelong Learners). We've partnered with Sound Discipline to help us find any disproportionality in discipline that needs to be addressed. We've restructured our Building Leadership Team to have representation from each of our three programs and we've added regular staff training on equity. We have found new ways to have authentic interactions between students across programs.

3) Partnerships: Examples of TM partnerships include the NW African American Museum and Coyote Central, which helped us celebrate Thurgood Marshall Day and created our "Pillars of Equality" art installation. We also partnered with Invest in Youth for Grade 3-5 tutoring, and Creative Advantage, Seattle Children's Theater

and Pacific Northwest Ballet for arts enrichment, as Bianca discussed earlier. Lastly, we've created a Bullpup Parents community group for sharing information and having a place for parents who have been historically underrepresented at TM PTA meetings.

As a school community, we read "Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People," and hosted its co-author, Dr. Anthony Greenwald, at a PTA meeting in order to engage staff and parents in our equity-focused work. Katie noted that we try to keep equity in the forefront as we make even basic decisions that will impact groups of students – in our scheduling, in how we communicate with families, and in how we allocate resources.

Equity Panel – Katie May and Special Guests

Katie began by thanking all the panelists for coming tonight and gave a brief introduction for each of them.

Panel members included:

Michael Tolley, SPS Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Stephan Blanford, Seattle School Board Director

Anita Morales, SPS Equity and Race Relations Specialist, coach for TM Staff

Matthew Okun, SPS Consulting Teacher, Advanced Learning Office

Trish Campbell, SPS Central Regional Supervisor, Special Education

Emijah Smith, Parent Advocate and Facilitator for African American Parent Gatherings series

Each panelist spent about five minutes discussing their background and their current work on race and equity within the Seattle School District. For many, their personal background led to the race and equity work they're doing professionally today. Topics included the district strategic plan to address the opportunity gap, the changes that have been made to the Advanced Learning eligibility testing process to increase equity, professional development training for teachers and administrators on equity, school equity teams at SPS schools, and Special Education equity issues.

After these initial presentations, meeting attendees formed small groups and discussed the issues raised by the panel and their own perspectives on the topic of equity. This small group work was followed by a Q&A session with the panel. Issues discussed included: the racial bias of the CogAT test and the stigma of labeling, the racial makeup of the Highly Capable Program, the appeals process for the Advanced Learning Program, institutional racism within SPS, the racial equity analysis tool, the quality of the Advanced Learning eligibility testing, the geographic segregation of Seattle, the loss of Title 1 Funding at Thurgood Marshall with the introduction of the Highly Capable Program, and the need for legislators to fully fund public education.

Katie thanked the panel for their time and information. She noted that there will be another event in February as part of TM's ongoing discussion on race and equity.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.