

Equity Action Teams Meeting
May 31, 2018 6-8pm
Minutes from Meeting

In Attendance: Trinia Washington, Venessa Goldberg, Jenn Joseph, Hilary Dameron, Katie May, Andrea Fontana, Angie Jenkins, Casey Sommers, Jennifer Mayton, Abraham Flaxman, JoyAnn Pardo, Devin Bruckner, Zakiya Tyson, Dionne Malatesta, Ursula White-Oliver

Meeting was started by Principal, Katie May. Katie introduced the Leadership Team from this year and next year:

2017-18 Devin Bruckner, Venessa Goldberg, Angie Jenkins, Katie May, Casey Sommers, Trinia Washington

2018-19 Andrea Fontana, Venessa Goldberg, Angie Jenkins, Katie May, Casey Sommers, Zakiya Tyson.

Katie talked about rotating people off the Leadership Team and having new leadership members join. Those in attendance also introduced themselves and the grade their student(s) are in.

Angie Jenkins led the group in a Connection Activity. She divided people into 3 groups and handed each group a puzzle. The groups had 5 minutes to do their puzzle. Some groups were given the puzzle picture, others were not given the picture until later. After 5 minutes, the groups stopped (just one finished their puzzle). Angie led the large group in a discussion of what the experience was like. People spoke of it being challenging, obstacles to overcome like not having picture to go by, seeing others have advantage, not knowing how or if to join another group when done to help them, etc.

Angie spoke about the puzzle making activity being an analogy:

The work we are doing is hard and unending (sometimes there is no closure). We are all doing puzzles like we are all working for humanity and community. This social justice and equity work looks different depending on the work you are doing. We often wonder: “How do we offer support?” A great way to ask is: “Would you like some help?” Communication is key. As we move into summer is important to remember that there is work left to do done. Think: how do you communicate and offer support in the spaces you are in. Some populations don’t have option to disengage – so we of privilege need to keep on engaging, one piece at a time.

Casey Sommers introduced each of the Equity Action Teams to give brief updates.

Black Family Advocacy and Support Group (Angie Jenkins, Trinia Washington)

BFASG has been working on contributing to recruitment, retention, and hiring staff of color at TM. They had a phone meeting with SPS district leader who highlighted the, “Grow your own program” – Instructional Assistants moving toward teaching positions. Also, four BFSAG members were trained here at TM to serve on district interview panels.

Katie May noted that there has been Diversity training from the SPS Dept of Race and Equity this year. They developed end the opportunity gap modules which included videos and activities. TM staff went through two modules together. Later modules were done by individual teachers on their own time. Katie felt the staff learning the modules together was a far better way to use the module.

BFASG is also working on building engagement. They held a social in February at the Mount Baker Community Center as well as meetings. They will have an End of Year BBQ and a visit to the NAAM in June . BFASG continues to work on ways to engage families and get the word out about events. They didn’t get the response they hoped for from the survey they did. There is discussion of using the back to school ice cream social as a way to connect and get more information out to families. BFASG continues to discuss the balance of keeping events open to everyone but also recognizing it is crucial to have events be a safe place for Black families. Trinia Washington and Angie Jenkins will continue to be the team leaders for BFASG next year.

Facilitating Conversations Around Race and Equity (Dionne Malatesta)

Last year this team helped to run a Families of Color Seattle workshop. People really wanted followup and were excited about the team but it has been difficult to get things off the ground. There was a survey and first book club meeting (reading 2 articles) but not much response.

Dionne is looking forward to getting the book club off the ground this summer and next fall. She will put something in the Pup Press for summer reading: *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijioma Oluo. Two new team leaders, Ursula White-Oliver and Casey Sommers, will join Dionne next year to also help plan another workshop, focusing on race, social justice, and equity.

Gender Equity (Jennifer Mayton)

This team was jump started in January when Zemra (K) came to an Equity Action Team meeting to share her concerns about not having days at TM celebrating women. This spring, the team has been working on Ground Breaking Women’s Day which will be held this next Friday, June 8. The day will include an assembly honoring Malala and kite making. Next year’s plans include ideas for International Women’s Day, activities next year by the trimester, and infusing more gender diversity around our other celebrations (i.e. TM Day). Jennifer will continue to be a team lead for this group next year.

Response: It is important to infuse gender and race as much as possible and not always the same people. For example, every month we have events or a special focus. We can bring equity and social justice into the events. Great to have some guidelines about how this might look.

Racial Equity in HCC (Devin Bruckner)

Focusing on district level advocacy (this is not a TM specific team).

District is creating an Advanced Learning Task Force: Task Force will look at Highly Capable (HC) and Advanced Learning/Spectrum services. Hopefully the Task Force will lead to needed improvements. The team will include staff, parents and representatives from community organizations. A handful of TM parents applied to be on the team. The task force application did not seem to have a space to provide a lot of information for those not known, hopefully allowing those more unknown to have a chance to be on the task force and have a voice.

Universal testing changes: Unfortunately, second graders tested this spring with a non-verbal test will need to wait until the Fall to go onto full testing (invited to apply, have to register through the Source, making it difficult), so they would not be able to enter HC until 4th grade

Trying to get word out about HC process: Application process has been so hard. REWA families were frustrated and staff are hesitant to go do it again.

High School pathways work in the fall: One of the results...they approved a plan to make a plan to improve equity in access at local schools as well as entry into program.

How do we get others involved: One idea for outreach -- Going to public library sitting with people to help them through the process. Idea: Rally at the library, bring your report card (to help with filling out forms).

Summary: Very divisive environment. But conversation has shifted. We are closer to a tipping point to change. What that change looks like is difficult to agree upon-- identification, what is the service, where is the service offered?

Social Studies (Katie May)

We are considering not having the Social Studies Team as an equity team. Staff will have a lot of time to work on Social Studies during the 2018-19 school year. They are using new student engagement guidelines and lessons and planning using a template.

Response: Due to the fact that Social Studies is one of the places where our community comes together, can we continue having a team to rally behind it and shore it up? The leadership team will talk about ways to continue the Social Studies team to make it beneficial to students, staff, and families. Some ideas: recruiting volunteers to help in classrooms during Social Studies time, spreading word (through articles or word of mouth) about what is happening during Social Studies time.

Supporting Our Scholars

The Supporting Our Scholars team does not currently have a team lead. There is talk about it being important to have this group, but also that it lends itself to creating a more separate (Scholars, AC Scholars) environment.

Venessa Goldberg and Trinia Washington led the group in Reflection and Share about how equity work is going. Venessa shared how engagement has dropped across the board (leaders of different groups, PTA, fundraising). Trinia and Venessa engaged the group in discussions around the following questions:

What could be have been better?

- People feel that “those people” are doing the work and they need to “bless my stuff.”
- People get a message there is a right way and a wrong way

Are you willing to be a leader and owning it?

- Some people are coming and absorbing. They want to help and learn more. Give me a job and I'll do it!

Why people are not doing work?

- Do people think things look better at TM?
- Full time jobs and busy lives. It is easy to get busy with day to day lives.
- Hard to be involved in work and know what to do.
- People are going a million different directions and burning out.

Next Year – What do we need to focus on?

Scholars and AC Scholars Interactions and Relationships – One parent spoke about Social Studies and how it should be something that the Equity Action Teams are focusing on. Segregation – workgroups are even segregated (Racial Equity in HCC, Supporting our Scholars). “Can we still do work in social studies area to shore it up and go after other subjects?”

Katie May spoke about the data that has been collected from teachers and how there is anecdotal evidence that there are more interactions and relationships between Scholars and AC Scholars students. The playground seems to have a lot of potential for building these interactions and relationships. Next year, Play Works program is being implemented. Katie feels that this is the next toehold. There is also still work to be done in social studies.

Huge diversity of opinions in our school: We need places (facilitating conversations?) to have these hard conversations. There needs to be a safe place for parents to bring concerns. How does info get brought to admin or equity action teams? The group discussed the following ideas to gather feedback and give a variety of places for people to make suggestions, comments.

- Identified piece: email generic email address (something like: equityaction@gmail.com) or form on the website to fill out and include e-mail address if they'd like a response
- Anonymous piece: anonymous physical box near office or form on the website to fill out

Building the Structure and Vision of the Equity Action Teams: Ursula discussed recommendations for next year:

- Vision is visible, Understand where we're going, what we need to do. Ask: What determines equity at TM for families and for the school
- Set up Standard Operating Procedures
- SOPs and a Vision will bring people in, and then you build leaders from there.
- Find what people do well and use that.
- Create a Feedback and Communications group
- Create ways for people to give anonymous and identified feedback.
- Make a portion of meeting time educational.

Casey Sommers led the group in brainstorming summer ideas: The group came up with some easy ways to keep the momentum and connecting going over the summer. This list and contact information will be shared with the larger TM community so others can get involved.

- All Equity Action Teams: Summer Community BBQ in August
 - Children's Play Garden? Week of Jump Start Aug 20-24? (Andrea Fontana)
- Black Family Advocacy and Support Group (Angie Jenkins, Trinia Washington)
 - Out and About in Community: will be sending out emails for doing simple, fun activities
 - Meet to plan for next year – Kick off social meeting in the fall
- Facilitating Conversations Around Race and Equity (Dionne Malatesta, Ursula White-Oliver, Casey Sommers)
 - Book Club read over the summer: Do You Want to Talk About Race? By Ijuoma Oluo (meet in the fall to discuss)
 - Meet for coffee to establish group norms and investigate workshop ideas
- Gender Equity (Jennifer Mayton)
 - Meet to talk about trimester goals and dates
- Racial Equity in HCC (Devin Bruckner)
 - Community Events/Outreach
 - Outreach to families at Jump Start
- Supporting Our Scholars (TBD)

Katie May adjourned the meeting at 8:10.