

Thurgood Marshall Equity Action Team Meeting
Wednesday, May 8, 2019 from 6-8pm in the TM Library

In Attendance:

Joanna Diallo, Katie May, Casey Sommers, Jennifer Mayton, Andrea Fontana, Devin Bruckner, Gitane Versakos, Angie Jenkins, Laurie Jensen, Dan Fey, Trinia Washington, Alan Preston, Zakiya Tyson, Venessa Goldberg, Hollis Amsden, Deron Bryant

6:05 Welcome and Introductions (Andrea)

6:15 Group Norms (Zakiya)

6:20 Connection Activity (Angie) We do these during each meeting in order to build connections and understanding as we do this work. Angie introduced an activity called "Trusted 10." People were asked to put down the names of up to 10 people they trust in their lives, and check categories (gender identity, race, age, education, class, etc.). She asked when done for us to think about what we noticed about who we put down on our lists. Take aways:

- We need to push ourselves out of our comfort zone.
- Be aware of who we surround ourselves with.
- In day to day decision making, we need all voices in the room.
- How do we expand our circle? Who does not have access to things?
- For further reading, see Scott Horton – Three Circles

6:35 Subcommittees

Black Family Advocacy and Support Group

- Met a couple of times, continue to struggle with having more voices at the table
- Working on building relationships/building membership
- Holding events off site in order for people to feel comfortable sharing away from school environment
- Next event: June 15

Conversations Around Race

- Held Kyana Wheeler event in March. Very good feedback. (see further in these meeting notes)
- WMS is working on blending social studies and a commitment to race training/workshops

Fostering Student Community

- Behind the Scenes work: attending meetings with Social Studies Leadership Team
- Pilot of blending HCC/Scholars on field trips (initiative to come forward)
- More mix it up lunches. They have had positive feedback. Looking for someone to lead a Mix it up lunch before the end of the school year (and a couple next year).
- Also looking for parents to help out in social studies classrooms. One possibility is to fold into Class Connectors next year.

Gender Equity

- Met with staff to make plans for Groundbreaking Women Day on Friday, May 31 9:05 Assembly
 - Ms. Serpe's class will present a project during assembly
 - Students will also answer question: "What kinds of things are worth fighting for?"
- There are efforts on the Gender Equity team to:
 - Make sure there are places where gender and race intersect
 - Want to expand consent education at TM: people need permission to expand into another person's space. Lessons have been taught at 4-5th grades. Would like to expand to all grades.

Racial Equity in HCC (district-wide group)

- Things being done:
 - Research into other districts (who is in HCC, how do they access program, what services are offered)
 - Engagement with SPS staff / board
 - Advanced Learning Task Force will meet through 2019. They will work during the summer. Beginning of September: policy and program recommendations will go to Curriculum and Instruction Committee; October: recommendations will go to full School Board. The task force is looking at how students are identified and what services are provided
- Event coming up: Integrated Schools Thursday, May 16 at Garfield HS
- Continue to send emails to SPS via Katie May about experiences with identification, experiences in HC.

Andrea thanked everyone for the work they have done. She recognized that although there is always a long way to go and this work is hard, we should recognize and celebrate the work we accomplished this year!

Conversation about "Racial Equity in our Community" evening with Kyana Wheeler

Andrea gave an overview of the event and Kyana's background and experience. Kyana is focused on organizational and institutional change.

Andrea presented survey results from after the event. Overall people felt it was a valuable evening. 82% would like a future event to focus on talking to their children about race. Others also wanted to continue to talk about the topics Kyana discussed. c. 89% wanted an interactive workshop for everyone with a facilitator. c. 89% of people would like an event that includes parents and staff. Another highly desired choice is an event that includes parents and children. Venessa presented some thoughts from the Leadership Team on how we can go forward next year:

There are different levels of understanding of racism at TM

Many would like to see a culture shift: how do we make changes outside of the Equity Action Teams group/room

We see the benefit of someone outside of our school coming in to help/lead.

Next year we see two paths:

1. Discussion group (books and articles)
2. Series of workshops (led by Kyana Wheeler) the dates would be set ahead of time; build on topics (or stand alone); ideally with staff and parents; kick off event in August could definitely be with staff and parents

Next steps:

- Funding for Kyana Wheeler? Will be sitting down with Kyana and hopefully have her write up ideas. Then we can present ideas for a proposal. This could also provide the information needed for grant funding.
- Another possible source of funds (WMS): Keeping connected to work at WMS. Possibly having someone do an assessment of both schools to see if we are at the same place. There are some advantages to sharing – cost, kids continuing on. However, not the best idea if we are at different places. Could Foster School at UW do a pro bono assessment? (contact: Joanna Diallo)

Other Business and Plans for Next School Year

Other needs discussed for TM:

- PTA: There is difficulty getting people to serve on the PTA Board; we need to see a shift of who is on board and making sure that the board is representative of our school; Two ideas: Class Connectors (personal connections) and teachers inviting families to get involved.
- Teachers of color
- Integrating staff equity team and parent equity team.

Zakiya passed out paper for people to write down ideas: What are some topics you think the Equity Action Teams should address next year? (see attached list)

Casey said that the Leadership Team is looking for new members. Casey is rolling off. People should email or reach out to someone on the Leadership Team for more information.

8pm Meeting adjourned

**What are some topics you think the Equity Action Teams should address next year?
(2019-2020)**

- It would be great to continue to work to gather concerns and address them from the larger school community. Do people not come to meetings because they don't see the relevance for them and their children?
- Saturday or evening workshops for parents and students to learn together about race.
- Culture change with staff and parents with an outside facilitator (i.e. Kyana) For fundraising for this, once we have the cost/scope, could also put out to parents and see if anyone wants to contribute. We wouldn't want this to cannibalize the PTA fundraising, but would love parents to have the opportunity to contribute if they want.
- Racial Equity Focus prioritized on the PTA Board
- Culture shift support from Kyana
- Goals Forward Representation
 - Community outreach
 - Guidance/assessment from Kyana
- Plan/Support/Communication around
- Information accessible, gateway for inviting a more diverse community for decision-making
- Cultural Change- "kindred communities" – staff, parents, kids together
- Leading with racial equity lens – focus on PTA
- Information sharing – how are we communicating with staff, families, district
- Read/learn together – by affinity groups, community book club?
- Recruiting and retaining staff of color
- Looking at structures in our school through a lens of "white supremacy culture" and see where we perpetuate that culture
- Staff and families coming together more to support the work
- How do we foster a culture of connectedness here so it feels like a tight community?
- Connections with students about race- how to talk about race, making race a common topic
- Making the climate and culture of the school welcoming to all
- What are system-wide changes we can make to keep going forward year to year (legacy)
- How do we get more voices from all families?
- Discipline disproportionality
- Cultural training for leaders
- Transparency around school race and equity issues
- How to effect (other) structural/institutional changes at TM (eg. Blending social studies) to help the racial inequity at TM
- To continue to explore how to raise up voices of scholars' parents/families to support scholars students and their needs
- To look at who else is not at the table – needs of PEACE Scholars, recent immigrants, Muslims, esp.
- Representation for the student body to mirror the staff more. This is the #1 issue. It's important for kids to see a diverse staff, both for kids of color and white kids.
- A commitment to racial equity for the PTA.