

Minutes of Equity Action Team Meeting I / Kickoff Picnic

Weds Sept 25, 2019 | 5:30-7:30 pm | Thurgood Marshall Playground and Cafeteria

- Around 25 parents (and additional kids) gathered on the playground and played a Bingo mixer game.
- After the YMCA vacated the cafeteria, families returned to the Cafeteria for a potluck dinner.
- Katie May gave an overview/history of the Equity Action Teams at Thurgood Marshall Elementary.
 - Initially staff had a meeting with various “stations” to discuss with parents what the staff thought were the most important issues at the school.
 - See [timeline](#) for the rest.
 - This year, we are hiring a consultant named Kyana Wheeler (who gave a workshop for the PTA/Equity Action Teams in March 2019) to help the staff, beginning with exploring how to respond to student microaggressions at school. The first workshop with Kyana Wheeler for parents will be at the first general PTA meeting on October 22.
- Katie May introduced this year’s Equity Action Team leaders, each of whom talked about the various Equity Action teams this year:
 - **Gitane Versakos** and **Zakiya Tyson** talked about the work of the “**Fostering Student Community**” team, including working with the staff Social Studies committee to look at field trips and planning Mix It Up lunches.
 - **Andrea Fontana** talked about the work of the “**Racial Equity in HCC**” group, which started at TM under the leadership of Devin Bruckner, and became a district-wide group. The group has been trying to influence the Seattle School Board and District, advocating for equal access to Advanced Learning opportunities for students of color. This past year, this group turned its attention to the work of the Advanced Learning Task Force, of which Devin Bruckner and Ursula White-Oliver (on the current EAT Leadership Team) are members. This very evening the Seattle School Board reviewed the recommendations of the Advanced Learning Task Force. We are looking for people to track the work of the Racial Equity in HCC group, the Advanced Learning Task Force, and the District, to share this with the Equity Action Teams at TM, and to advocate if necessary.
 - **Andrea Fontana** also talked about the “**Conversations about Race**” reading group, on behalf of the lead, **Dionne Malatesta**. The Conversations about Race group was formed to be a place to learn together and grow community as we discuss race and how it impacts our schools, systems, society, and ourselves. We expect to have 5-6 meetings this year, and are looking for folks who are interested in volunteering to steward the discussions. This entails running the meeting by welcoming everyone, introducing the discussion, and asking questions about the piece(s) we read to encourage discussion if needed. You can volunteer to lead one or more discussions, or if you just want to attend, that's great too!
 - **Jennifer Mayton** talked about the “**Gender Equity**” team on behalf of herself and **Venessa Goldberg** (the member of the Leadership team who is also the Co-President of the PTA this year). In the last 2 years we have worked to bring more conversations about consent into the classroom; started Groundbreaking Women Day at TM and created the activities around it; supported staff and teachers in moving towards using

gender neutral language, and more. There is a hope to focus more on LGBTQIA issues this year.

- **Angie Jenkins** talked about the work of the Black Family Advocacy and Support group as a supportive space for African and African-American students and parents to voice concerns and/or offer suggestions to make the school environment more welcoming for black families at TM. All are invited to participate in the gatherings of this group with the understanding that the focus is to support the overall success of our black students.
- **Angie Jenkins** invited everyone to sign up on the sheets for teams that they are interested in, and also to let us know whether they want to help out in other ways. She added that we are looking for people to serve as leads for some of the teams as well. There is also a signup sheet on the table to receive occasional emails about equity-related events, articles, resources. Also, please take a *bookmark*, which has the date of the Kyana Wheeler workshop on it, the Equity Action Team meetings this year, the names of the Leadership Team members, our webpage and email address. She asked if there were any questions.
- **Ursula White-Oliver** arrived from having attended the School Board work session that reviewed the Advanced Learning Task Force recommendations. She characterized the Board as being especially interested in the identification and assessment of Advanced Learning students.
- **Andrea Fontana** again asked if there were any questions, and invited people to contribute donations toward the pizza and refreshments provided tonight. Someone attending said something like, “Good job for all the work you’re doing!” Andrea encouraged everyone to participate in this work. Many of the leaders are working moms, and so we need everyone’s help because “Many hands (make light work).” She thanked everyone for coming, welcomed the new families, invited everyone to stick around, and ask us any questions.