

Wooster City Schools
Diversity Task Force
1-26-21
5:30 pm
Minutes
Zoom Meeting

Present: Steve Shapiro, Co-chair, Yvonne Williams, Co-chair, Michael Tefs, Scott Miller, David Noble, Danni Schantz, April Gamble, Scott Gregory, Rachel Relle, Marin Dixon, Luke Pomfret, Clay Price, Cameron Maneese, Karen Arbogast, Julianna Hamad, and Rich Leone
Guests: Tyler Keener, Nancy Johnson, and Jody Starcher

1. Welcome and Introductions – Shapiro called the meeting to order at 5:37pm. He introduced two new members to the Diversity Task Force: Marin Dixon, Wooster High School class of 2023 and Student Council Representative and Scott Gregory, representing the NAACP.
2. Exceptions to the agenda – Shapiro - None
3. 20-21 School Year – Tefs gave an update on previous deliverables.
 - a. Civil Rights Class – Update – Tyler Keener, Principal of Wooster High School gave a brief overview of the course. Due to COVID it was not offered the first semester. Twelve students are signed up for it now. Brian Questel has the students read *Just Mercy* and *A Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*. Along with looking the 1964 Civil Rights Act, it also looks at equity, poverty and long-term incarceration.
 - b. Student Council – Update – Tefs reintroduced Luke Pomfret, Class of 2022 and Marin Dixon, Class of 2023. They are on the WHS Student Council. While the Student Council has not met in person this school year, they have met virtually via ZOOM. Tefs met and reviewed the work of the DTF in November.
4. Review New Deliverables – Tefs
 - a. Formal implicit bias training will be delivered to all employees and students between 2020 and 2024, with 25% being trained each year – Tefs reported that Wooster City School District is working with the OSU Kirwan Institute to provide implicit bias trainings to the faculty and staff. The training was to begin the first semester this year, but due to COVID it was put on hold. Kirwan Institute would like the training to be in-person. In lieu of this, they are creating virtual trainings that could begin in the second semester. Tefs reported that interest in taking the training is high, and he does not believe they will have any trouble filling the course.
 - b. Increase NAACP membership with three new WCSD faculty members – Tefs reported that 7 faculty / staff have become members of the NAACP.
 - c. WCSD faculty member needs to be appointed to the DTF – Lexi Pacheco, Grade 2 at Cornerstone Elementary School will join the DTF.

5. Recruitment 2021 – Update – Nancy Johnson, WCSD Human Resources, reported that due to COVID, last year’s recruitment fairs were cancelled. This year recruitment fairs will be virtual. They plan on attending job fairs in NE Ohio, NW Ohio, and OSU. Ms. Jonson reported that unlike last year, there will be several positions to fill. Clay Price will attend recruitment activities, along with WCSD administration.
6. Wayne County Racial Justice Coalition Proposals – Williams reviewed the WCRJC recommendations. These were sent to the DTF in August 2020. There was a belief that several of their recommendations were in process, especially ones incorporating implicit bias training as an ongoing process and not just a one-time event. The curriculum review was discussed and is ongoing (see discussion below). Recruitment of historically marginalized groups was noted and is a primary part to the original purpose of the Diversity Task Force. Conversation took place about how to introduce a “common read” and make it one for the whole community. More discussion and planning are required. Regarding the social-emotional learning recommendation, there was discussion about The Leader in Me. WCSD feels this is a highly successful program in the elementary and middle school. It is not in place in the high school. There is no plan to change their commitment to The Leader in Me at this time. It was suggested that perhaps some other program could be considered for implementation at the high school. This needs further consideration and exploration.
7. Questions from DTF membership -

Danni Schantz asked how new textbooks are reviewed and if the selection process looked at issues of equity and bias.

Scott Miller discussed how textbooks were reviewed at the state level and that he participated in state review of 10th grade history standards. His committee looked at history textbooks that included Stonewall Riots and other LBGQT history, but the State Board of Education voted against approving them for use in Ohio public schools.

Tefs noted that textbooks do go through a review process at the WCSD and need to meet ODE standards, but he emphasized that while we need to look at what is included in a textbook, we need to be cognizant of what is “not” included as well. He noted that if they don’t teach about Selma in the book we are using, it is incumbent on the teacher to supplement and make sure that history is there.

April Gamble stated that WCSD parents have asked that sporting events not be scheduled on Yom Kippur. Tefs indicated that this should not happen and will look at the scheduling of sporting events to prevent this in the future.

Gamble also asked if the WCSD could introduce personal pronouns (she, her, hers) to staff and faculty names and titles? She noted that most colleges are now using them, and it would be good to get students use to them.

Schantz, asked Tefs how is school going during COVID?

Tefs noted that there were many lessons learned from this experience. One was that the Zoom technology was not as versatile as it could be. Production value could be and will be better. He anticipates that the Generals Academy will continue to offer remote learning during and after the pandemic. He also stated that we may see parent-teacher conferences

remain virtual and that BOE meetings may continue to offer remote access, even when they return to in-person meetings.

Next Steering Committee Meeting: February 18, 2021 at 1:00pm

Diversity Task Force Annual Report: July 27, 2021 at 5:30

Wooster City School District Board of Education: July 27, 2021 at 7:00 pm

There being no more business the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Maneese