

Wooster City Schools
Diversity Task Force
Steering Committee Meeting
11-13-2020
1:00pm
NOTES
Zoom Meeting
144 Market St., Wooster

Present: Steve Shapiro, Yvonne Williams, Michael Tefs, and Cameron Maneese

Reminder of DTF recommendations to the Wooster City School Board:

1. The Diversity Task Force recommends that the co-chairs and the facilitator of the DTF continue to meet three times a year. Upon a resignation of a member of the Steering Committee, the NAACP should participate with WCSD in filling the vacancy.
2. The entire membership of the Diversity Task Force should reconvene annually to receive an update on recommendations from The Wooster City School District.
3. It is recommended that the Wooster High School Student Council be updated regularly on the status of Diversity Task Force recommendations. The superintendent should set up a meeting with the Student Council as part of the Student Council agenda, perhaps once a quarter.
4. The Diversity Task Force requested that there be a public report on diversity, at least on the website or other marketing piece. The superintendent will make this report to the BOE at the July meeting.

NOTES

1. **Review July 2020 Annual Report Process -**

The Steering Committee was glad to see so many of the original Task Force present, especially those who had worked on it for two years. Tefs reported that after the July 2020 meeting, he had heard from members of the DTF that they understood the report was impacted by COVID, and that due to COVID hiring was also limited.

Tefs also reported that after the July DTF meeting he heard from some on the DTF that they would like to come together before the July Board of Education annual report so they can hear about the current academic year and prepare the agenda for the July 2021 meeting. To meet this request, it was recommended that the full DTF meet on January 26 at 5:30pm. This will most likely be a Zoom meeting. Maneese to send out a "hold the date" soon and then a full agenda nearer to the January meeting.

In January the WCSD Board of Education schedule will be set along with a date for the July 2021 Diversity Task Force Annual Report to the BOE. All members of the DTF will be formally invited to the July BOE Annual DTF report.

2. New School Year – Update – Tefs

COVID is impacting the new school year. Students are broken in to two separate cohorts, each meeting two days a week. They are then learning remotely and/or attending alternative learning sites. Wednesdays are for professional development. Tefs reported that from a diversity perspective there has not been a lot of conversation on the topic at this time. Please see the new deliverable on Implicit Bias Training under item 6.

3. Civil Rights Class – Update – Tefs

Tefs reported that the course is taking place. The numbers in the class are down because all class sizes have been limited. It is a semester course and the syllabus has been revised after last year's initial offering. Tefs will share the course syllabus with the DTF when they meet in January. Brian Questel is still teaching the course. He has signed up for the OSU Kirwan Implicit Bias Training and would like to incorporate some of it in the current course.

4. Student Council – Update - Tefs

Tefs reported that Student Council has met twice, virtually, in September and October. They had hoped to meet in-person, but this has not happened and Tefs has been unable to join them. He is not sure what their agenda is for the year. He will contact our DTF student representative, Luke Pomfret '22, to find out more. Guidance Counselors have focused on social isolation and discussing ways to improve culture and climate during the pandemic. The Student Council was tasked with considering how to do this and ways to create social connection.

5. Diversity Task Force Representative Changes

With the departure of Scott Brown from the College of Wooster, a College of Wooster representative is needed. Williams will first contact Shadra Smith, Associate Dean of Students. If she is unable to participate, then Williams will approach Kayla Campbell, in the Center for Diversity and Inclusion to see if she can participate. Tefs reported that Ms. Campbell has worked on the WCSD MLK Day celebration.

Williams will also contact Juanita Greene as she will be president of the NAACP in January, replacing John Clay in that role. She will see if Ms. Greene or a designee will represent the NAACP on the Diversity Task Force.

6. Review New Deliverables – The following deliverables were added at the July 2020 meeting of the Diversity Task Force.

- 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 the WCSD is trying to offer 500 employees Implicit Bias training by 2024. They have contracted with OSU Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity to provide this training. Their website is: <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>
There is not a firm commitment on when that training will take place. This type of training is difficult to do virtually. The District is hoping to begin this winter semester. Locally, many of the faculty at ATI-OARDC have taken this training.
- B. **Increase NAACP membership with three new WCSD faculty members.** To date, Tefs believes that seven WCSD faculty have joined. Previously, if there is not increased participation, Tefs has discussed with Scott Miller of the WCSD Union the option of the school paying for memberships and perhaps a supplemental contract to get active participation. The Steering Committee would like to know what grades are currently represented.
- C. **Increased focus on social justice, both by faculty and students.**
This is being addressed in items A and D.
- D. **Develop a more robust restorative justice model, moving away from a punitive response to one centered on responsibility and growth.** Tefs reported that principals of the Middle School and High School are interested in working to increase restorative justice options. They are using The Village Network and Anazao counselors to meet the needs of students in lieu of suspension and expulsion. They spent time this summer looking at discipline data. WCSD rarely suspends or expels a student at this time. Data on this topic should be on the agenda for the January 2021 DTF meeting.

7. Recruitment 2021 – Update

Tefs reported that it is still too early to know what positions will be filled. The District needs to see what the vacancies look like and possible retirements. They are down three employees, and there were no new hires for this academic year 2020-21.

8. Social Emotional Learning / Leader in Me – Update

Tefs reported it is one of the brighter spots during the pandemic. While the High School does not have a Social Emotional learning program, Lighthouse teams are in four elementary schools and the middle school. The Leader in Me is still impacting the culture of the schools. It was requested that there be a report from a Lighthouse Team in January.

9. One Book / Literacy – Update

Tefs to update the DTF at the January 26th meeting.

10. Role of Diversity Task Force and WCSD during the academic year.

It was determined that this question should be put to the full Diversity Task Force at the January 26 meeting.

11. Wayne County Racial Justice Coalition (WCRJC) Proposals -

The WCRJC sent a proposal document for program ideas on August 17, 2020 to the WCSD Board of Education, Dr. Tefs, Scott Miller and Cameron Maneese. Maneese forwarded their proposals to the entire Diversity Task Force as requested. Tefs reported that a representative from the WCRJC has been in touch with him. The Steering Committee acknowledged receipt of the proposals and determined that since there are several Diversity Task Force deliverables pending, the full DTF should discuss the WCRJC proposals at the January meeting.

In other business --

Shapiro asked if the school district kept records of the complaints about bullying, racial discrimination and other negative student-to-student interactions.

Tefs reported that yes, the WCSD keeps records of all disciplinary actions and outcomes and the behavior that required the action. He recommended that the data for academic years 18-19 and 19-20 be consolidated for the January 2021 meeting (adding that the data of 20-21 would throw off an understanding about how pervasive certain behaviors are and how they have been handled). It was requested that this be added to the January 2021 agenda.

Next Full Meeting of the Diversity Task Force: **January 26 at 5:30pm.**

This will be a Zoom Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Cameron Maneese