

Wooster City School District
Diversity Task Force
ANNUAL MEETING
Wooster High School
Large Group Instruction Room
In-Person and Zoom
July 27, 2021
5:30 pm
MINUTES

Present: Steve Shapiro, Co-Chair, Yvonne Williams, Co-Chair, Rachel Relle, Scott Gregory, April Gamble, Scott Miller, Lawrence Walker, Marin Dixon, Gabe Tudor, Kristina Boone and Cameron Maneese

On Zoom: Clay Price and Luke Pomfret

Guests: Brian Questel, Heidi Haas, Nancy Johnson, Sue Herman, Brian Madigan and Molly Richard

1. Welcome and Introductions – Steve Shapiro welcomed the members of the Diversity Task Force to its second annual meeting. Those present introduced themselves.
2. Exceptions to the Agenda - None
3. Maneese reviewed of June 2019 Recommendations to the Wooster Board of Education as follows,
 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 updates 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.
4. **Diversity Task Force Steering Committee** - Cameron Maneese updated the Diversity Task Force on changes to the Steering Committee. As of the June 11th meeting of the Steering Committee, Dr. Kristina Boone of the Board of Education and Rachel Relle will join the Steering Committee. Cameron Maneese will be departing her role as DTF Facilitator and Rachel Relle will become the facilitator beginning in the 2021-22 academic year.

Maneese reminded the DTF that per last year's annual meeting recommendation, notes from Steering Committee meetings will be posted on the WCSD website, under the district tab: <http://www.woostercityschools.org/district/content-page/diversity>

5. **Civil Rights Course** - Brian Questel reported on the second year of the Civil Rights class. Participation numbers were impacted by Covid. Fifteen students participated in the two-semester offering. This was the maximum allowable due to Covid restrictions. It also only met two days a week due to Covid. He had guest speakers Neil Kookoothe and Joe D'Ambrosio. Father Kookoothe worked with Mr. D'Ambrosio to get him off death row for a murder he did not commit. The class always reads *Just Mercy*. Superintendent Tudor noted that it is hoped that the course will grow when class sizes return to normal, and the class can meet five days a week.
6. **Recruitment 2020 - 2021** – Nancy Johnson, Human Services Manager, reported on the 2020-21 recruitment season, beginning with the non-existent recruiting that took place in 2020. While recruitment did take place in the Spring of 2021 it was all virtual. Candidates chose who they wanted to interview with, leaving the schools unable to invite candidates to talk to them. Recruitment is much better in person. Having community member Lawrence Walker is also very helpful. WCSD will attend an in-person job fair at Central State and on October 8th a Department of Education job fair.
7. **Social-Emotional Supports** – Heidi Haas, Director of Student Services, reported that two years before the pandemic Dr. Jessica Griffin came to WCSD to evaluate the mental health and social emotional supports offered in the district. Since then, staff have been trained in trauma responsiveness and the district added new deliverables in 2020 to address the needs of students, families, and staff during the pandemic. She noted there are four main areas the district now has in place. They are: Case Management, Service Coordination, Counseling and Prevention. The District added multiple staff members this year as Family Liaisons which is accessed through Service Coordination. Staff went into homes and connected families with resources. Staff addressed housing and food assistance, technology barriers, transportation issues, parenting skills, getting school materials to students at home, and preventing truancy resulting from the pandemic. Counseling access was enhanced for staff as tele-med options were made available. Mark Woods of Anazao helped to increase this option. The plan is that these services will carry forward in the years to come. Scott Miller noted that he has been with the district for 15 years and these services were not available when he came. He complimented the administration and the BOE and the local agencies who have partnered with the district for expanding services to meet the needs to staff, food insecurity and students in crisis. April Gamble asked what outcome data there was regarding the impact of these supports on academic success and graduation rates, especially among students of color. Superintendent Tudor indicated that while he didn't have that data, he thought that it could be collected and shared at the next Steering Committee meeting. Ms. Haas indicated that WCSD has been selected to complete a survey to track the outcomes for their special education students. While this is a sub-set of the student body, it will provide some outcome data.

8. **Strategic Deliverables** – First, Superintendent Tudor echoed what Scott Miller said and noted that the social-emotional work was impressive, and it represented a district commitment to use its resources to offer wrap-around services for students, families, and staff.

He then reported on three specific DTF deliverables.

- a. Recruitment – Diversifying the teaching and support staff is a priority deliverable for the district. It is hoped that next year will be a better year due to the lifting of barriers mentioned earlier. Conversations are taking place with The College of Wooster Education Department, but it is noted that fewer students are entering education. The question before the district and the community is, “What can we do to become desirable to diverse candidates?” Connecting with College of Wooster Education students while they are in Wooster will be an ongoing strategy as they are familiar with the area. It was noted that recruitment is a measurable metric which can be reviewed every year.
- b. Formal Implicit Bias Training – Implicit Bias Train the Trainer instruction will officially be in place by October or November. The Kirwan Institute of The Ohio State University will be training 20-25 staff members who will then train staff in the district. Well over 25 people are interested in becoming trainers. This will be an in-person training. There are five modules with multiple lessons. A module is a full day training. The training will be weekly and those being trained will be covered by substitutes. It is hoped that by winter break trainers will be ready for spring semester. For more information please see: <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>
- c. Curriculum Lens – This process will make sure that any curriculum coming before the BOE for adoption has been viewed through an equity, acceptance, and inclusion lens. A rubric which will give guidance and standards for this process will be created. This needs to be a strategic part of the WCSD approval process.

Questions from the floor:

Scott Gregory asked if the Kirwan trainings would be ongoing. Superintendent Tudor indicated that they would be. Kirwan would work with WCSD to implement the trainers across the district. Mr. Gregory also asked if WCSD administrators would participate in the trainings. Mr. Tudor indicated that at some point all administrators will be trained, but the numbers limit how many people can become trainer, and that not all administrators will be able to do so at this time.

Sue Herman asked how we involve the community in this strategic plan?

Comments:

- Steve Shapiro thanked Cameron Maneese for her service to the Diversity Task Force.
- Yvonne Williams shared that she thought the reporting was very thorough.
- Steve Shapiro thanked the WCSD administration for their support of this process.
- Lawrence Walker felt that “we are off to a good start,” and hoped everyone took this seriously. Education is where this work must take place.

- Cameron Maneese thanked the DTF for the work it is doing and looked forward to seeing all that will be accomplished in the years to come.
- Kristina Boone suggested that information about implicit bias training be added to the district's recruitment materials.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:23pm.

9. Set Next Meeting - January 25, 2022 – at 5:30 pm
Location TBD

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Maneese