

AWSP Diversity Task Force  
Monday March 7, 2011  
Doubletree Guest Suites Southcenter  
Meeting Notes

Attendees: Oksana Britsova, The Center School, Seattle PS  
Wendell Ellis, Renton High, Renton SD  
Ismael Flores , Washington Middle, Yakima SD  
Wayne Hamasaki, Sunset Elementary, Issaquah SD  
Heidi Hellner-Gomez, Sun Valley Elementary, Sunnyside SD  
Karen Johnson, Evergreen Forest Elementary, North Thurston PS  
Rebekah Kim, Midway Elementary, Highline SD  
Karen Remy-Anderson, River Ridge High, North Thurston PS  
Doug Rogers, Sierra Vista Middle, Sunnyside SD  
Theresa Shinn, Wapato Middle, Wapato SD  
Patricia Thomas, Browns Point Elementary, Tacoma PS  
Judy Yasutake, Sylvester Middle, Highline SD  
Bruce Walton, Pleasant Glade Elementary, North Thurston PS  
Sharon Green, Director of Diversity Initiatives and Services, AWSP (staff)  
Linda Thomas, Legislation, Intern and High School Programs, AWSP (staff)

Unable to Attend: Cameron Grow, Lincoln Middle, Pullman SD  
Jesely Alvarez Masencup, Hamilton International Middle, Seattle PS  
Anitra Pinchback-Jones, Daniel Bagley Elementary, Seattle PS

Sharon opened the meeting at 9 a.m. She reviewed the agenda and made mention of the meeting norms as outlined on the agenda. It's recommended that the Diversity Task Force adopt these norms to ensure meaningful conversations during the DTF meetings.

### **Board Reports**

Wayne Hamasaki represents DTF on the ESPAW Board. The Board meets four times a year and has about 40 people on it. He said it's a great opportunity to meet and network with principals across the state. At last October's meeting, he asked them to give a snapshot of what diversity looks like in their schools. Then they reported back at the January meeting. Wayne said this experience has made him realize how much work the Task Force has to do and so little time to get it done. Perhaps, the Task Force needs to meet more than twice a year.

Karen Remy-Anderson represents DTF on the WASSP Rep Council. In October she let them know they would be receiving a survey and encouraged them to respond. She also feels the Task Force doesn't have enough meeting time to be able to get the work done.

### **Principal Evaluation – Criteria 8. Closing the Gap**

As part of the Principal Evaluation Legislation, the Legislature has added an eighth criteria to the previous list of seven. The Diversity Task Force has been charged with creating a one-page cover sheet (maximum of 450 words) that defines Closing the Gap. The document will consist of three sections:

- 1<sup>st</sup> subhead will be a narrative addressing this statement: Demonstrate a Commitment to Closing the Achievement Gap.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> subhead will list the WAC.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> subhead will list links to resources/research.

After some discussion, the group thought it would work best to approach it by answering the what, why and how. Small groups were formed to brainstorm ideas.

In reporting back, here are some thoughts shared by attendees.

- Knowledge/skills – a link to Erin Jones – the gaps are going to be defined. Gaps are not the same everywhere. Importance of data.
- There are outside forces that we can't control – socio-economic is one. It does hamper our work.
- What does it mean to close the gap in general?
- What is diversity and what form does it come in – we are seeking ways to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.
- How do we achieve excellence for all students?
- What are the pillars
  - ~ rigor (readiness)
  - ~ relevance (curriculum for all students)
  - ~ relationship (more fluid, not able to see)
- It is important for all stakeholders to be competent in meeting the needs of all learners coming from various backgrounds such as socio-economical, cultural, religious, and gender.
- Do we really understand the impact of this being a social justice issue?

After much discussion and editing, the group created the following statement:

*“The demographics of Washington state population are changing rapidly. It is important for all stakeholders to be competent in meeting the needs of all learners coming from various backgrounds such as socio-economical, cultural, religious, and gender. Current data indicates significant gaps in student achievement.*

*An effective administrator demonstrates a commitment to closing the achievement gap by using research-based practices in the areas of data analysis, instructional leadership, family engagement and student support in meeting academic, physical, social-emotional and cultural needs.*

*Instructional leaders builds a common understanding of high quality instruction that ensures equitable teaching practices, monitors student progress, and uses data to drive decisions. Data analysis provides information to identify gaps in student learning and brings relevancy and creates urgency of the work of instructional leaders. The awareness of our students' needs should drive our instructional goals within the School Improvement Plan. These goals prioritize professional development needs and how the administrators support all staff.*

*Engaging families and the community in our children's education enhances the experience of our students. Effective building administrators implement strategies to build meaningful school-community partnerships. By building a culture of competent community learners, students will be prepared for their future academic pathway.”*

This statement will be taken back to AWSP executive staff for fine editing and to coordinate with the cover sheets of the other seven criteria.

### **Diversity Strategies for NSPRA Article**

Sharon asked for input from Task Force members on ways they are developing trust with culturally diverse parents. Ideas will be shared for insertion in the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) magazine.

- Doug – they are working with Donna Beegle and have created a poverty task force.
- Theresa – asking parents to be involved in committees to create definitions for diversity issues.
- In eastern Washington, there are a lot of Spanish speaking radio stations – districts use them for school announcements and interviews with principals – callers can ask questions without feeling intimidated because they aren't face to face.
- Ismael – created a Spanish forum (this could be done in any language)
- Bruce – use community members to engage with parents (find the social communicator, for example, in an apartment complex) to get them to turn out for events.
- Patricia - use parents by finding their passion; then use that passion to engage them in involvement (for example, making hygiene packets for kids); sometimes use past parents with this approach.
- Oksana – transition for 9<sup>th</sup> graders – principal and counselor had one-on-one meeting with each 9<sup>th</sup> grader's family.
- Patricia – superintendent's breakfast initially started as a time for the superintendent to share but evolved into parents giving feedback to superintendent.
- Engage students – parents will follow
- Judy – attends community events – the principal is a real person who is part of their community.
- Oksana – sends positive post cards home. Cards are the artwork of the students. She runs a set of student labels so cards aren't sent to the same students.
- Provide food, childcare and a place for older kids to go – those elements will bring the parents in.

### **GPS Strategies**

AWSP is in need of strategies from the Diversity Task Force that focus on closing the gap. Please share any ideas you have with the new communications director, Linda Farmer ([lindaf@awsp.org](mailto:lindaf@awsp.org)) so they can be added to the GPS webpage.

**Diversity Sessions** will again be held at the New Principals'/New Assistant Principals' Workshop in July. Sharon noted the importance of preparing new administrators for cultural/diversity issues. The session will be on Tuesday, July 26. If you can join Sharon to help with the session please let her know.

Diversity sessions are also planned for the Principals' conference in Spokane in October as well as the Assistant Principal's Leadership Conference in February of 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

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