Somers Educational Equity Advisory Team

Staff Lead: Susan Gonzowitz
Board of Education Liaisons: Heidi Cambareri & Amanda Kandel
We are dedicated to the development and maintenance of a climate in all schools that is grounded in diversity, equity and inclusivity. The SCSD Educational Equity Advisory Team will provide input to the superintendent and related committees (e.g. building-based No Place for Hate Committees) for the healthy social, emotional, and intellectual development of ALL children, by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion to support each child in realizing his or her potential.
The District has established a SCSD Educational Equity Advisory Team to be a resource and a springboard to aid the district in better fulfilling the values of the district. We are committed to a fully inclusive educational experience for all students grounded in respect for others and their variety of perspectives. We desire to embrace the multitude of aspects of our students’ identities, including but not limited to, physical/mental ability, religious beliefs, race, sexual orientation, gender, language, and socioeconomic status.
**MISSION**

- The SCSD Educational Equity Advisory Team provides the opportunity for stakeholder voices to be included in the district's pursuit of ensuring a positive educational experience and environment for all students.

**VISION**

- SEEAT will provide input for ensuring an equitable and inclusive learning environment through:
  - Amplifying the stories of the SCSD community that exemplify our successes and challenges with creating equitable learning environments.
  - Reviewing organizational structures to reflect our definition of educational equity.
  - Providing feedback on student learning experiences to ensure that we welcome and affirm all students.
  - Providing feedback on professional learning development designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of our faculty, staff, students and families to better meet the needs of our diverse learning community.

**COMMITMENTS**

- In the service of DEI we will build trust and transparency
- In the service of DEI we will increase partnership across the schools and wider community
- In the service of DEI we will model student-centered thinking
- In the service of DEI we will elevation the voices of our children
Subcommittee One: Student Learning Experiences

The purpose of this committee is to offer feedback on student learning experiences that are designed to welcome all students to share their most honest points of view. The committee will help design a framework for engaging in conversations on controversial topics that already arise in the curriculum and will support the design of a pilot implementation of this framework.
How we will spend our time

- Make Sense of the BOE Controversial Issues (CI) Policy
- Consider what makes a CI
- Determine WHY we discuss CI
- Consider barriers to effective conversations around CI
- Consider what learning environment kids need to discuss CI
- Decompose effective discussion practices
- Determine best practice protocols for discussing CI
- Run a PDSA cycle to test our practice
2022-2023 Collective Agreements

How do we want to feel when we come together?

- Heard
- Respected
- Energized
- Optimistic
- Validated
- Secure
- Safe
- Challenged
- Understood
- Helpful
- Engaged
- Curious
- Accepted
- Proud
- Productive
- Open-Minded

What actions will we take to ensure we feel that way?

- Make it about our kids
- Ask questions
- Be prepared
- Listen to hear not to respond
- Be self-aware and other aware
- Be guided by facts
- Know it’s ok to disagree
- Practice empathy
- Listen to understand, not to respond
- Be supportive and affirming
- Keep confidentiality
- Be willing to change perspectives and understand other points of view
- Be accountable for our actions, words and behaviors
- Challenge ideas, not people
- Show kindness by being firm on issues and soft on people

How will we react when someone makes us feel other than the way we want to?

- Pause and take a breath
- Remember this is for and about the kids
- Know what your purpose is for speaking
- Model the tone and respect you want to feel
- Speak in "I feel..." statements
- Model the change not only with words but also actions
- Ask for clarity and support
- Ask clarifying questions
- Reflect back to the other person “I’m hearing you say...” and “I feel..”
- Pause, take a breath before reacting
- Gather more information and ask for the story behind the emotion
- Go back to a point of agreement
- Address it—that’s not our norm
- Don’t leave without sharing your thinking
1. On one side of the paper write your fullest name
2. On the back write the three aspects of your identity that most define you
3. Share Out:
   • WHY THESE THREE IDENTITIES?
   • WHAT IS YOUR FULLEST NAME?
   • WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF YOUR NAME?
   • DO YOU KNOW WHY IT IS YOUR NAME?
   • DO YOU HAVE ANY NICKNAMES?
   • WHAT DO YOU PREFER TO BE CALLED?
   • HOW SHOULD WE PRONOUNCE IT?
Breakout: What's Your Why?

Tell us why you are on SEEAT and why this committee in particular.

- Is there a story that highlights your why?
- Is there a great or not so great moment that inspired you?
SCSD Board Policy 4810
Adoption Date: November 22, 1993
Reviewed: October 29, 2019

What does it mean?

What do we need to know or be able to do to uphold this policy?
Breakout Rooms: What do we need to know or be able to do to uphold this policy?

Room 1: What does it mean for students?
Room 2: What does it mean for families?
Room 3: What does it mean for teachers?
Room 4: What does it mean for administrators?
Room 5: What does it mean for the Board of Education?
In the Chat:
What is your definition of a controversial issue?
A controversial issue is...

- A topic that is the subject of public argument, disagreement, or disapproval
- A topic with more than one popular or common opinion
- A topic on which there is fundamental disagreement
- A topic that has conflicting opinions on two or more sides of an issue with a substantial number of people on each side
- A topic that can be researched thoroughly
What are controversial issues in classrooms?
Next time...

Why do we discuss controversial issues in school and what are the barriers to doing it well?
Thank Yous & Exit Ticket