

Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Committee Meeting

[WAPS Webpage for the DEI Committee](#)



Meeting Date:	Tuesday, April 23, 2024
Meeting Time:	6:00 P.M.
Meeting Location:	WSHS Learning Commons
Membership List:	<u>DEI Membership</u>
Members Present:	Kelly Fluharty, Marci Hitz, Maurella Cunningham, Heidi Monson, Michael Hanratty, Wendy Harward, Luke Madsen, Adele Jacobsen, Stephanie Smith, Pete Watkins, Brad Berzinski
Members Absent:	Mariyah Rumpca-Veronese
Other Attendees:	

<i>Our Vision:</i> A safe and inclusive community of compassionate, curious and resilient lifelong learners..	<i>Our Mission:</i> Inspire, curiosity, empower resilience, engage community.
<i>District Belief Statements:</i> • We believe that public schools should serve and engage students, families, staff and the community. • We believe learning and teaching is maximized in a safe, respectful and inclusive environment. • We believe every individual's diversity and experience is valued. • We believe healthy relationships are crucial for the success of our schools. • We believe that every student can achieve to the best of their ability. • We believe all decisions should be focused on students and their success.	<i>Core Values:</i> • Safety: Everyone's physical and emotional well-being is a priority. • Integrity: Everyone does the right thing and makes positive choices, even if it is difficult. • Inclusivity: Everyone belongs, is valued and is heard. • Equity: Everyone has the opportunities, access, information and support provided in the individual way they need it. • Respect: Everyone's differences are recognized, acknowledged and celebrated.

Committee Collective Commitments:

1. Raise hand for turn to speak.
2. Be comfortable with discomfort.
3. Receive the experiences of others and believe that it is true for them.
4. Regularly provide time to check in with members on what they are experiencing or have shared with them.
5. Free flow (no need for Robert's Rules)
6. Be specific in what you are speaking about in terms of identity, difference, and other terms/concepts; ask for clarification if you need it

<u>Agenda Item:</u>	<u>Type:</u> • Procedural, • Information, • Brainstorm, • Recommendation <u>(Minutes)</u>	<u>Discussion/Action:</u>
Call to Order	Procedural	Called to order by Michael Hanratty at 6:04PM Review Committee Collective Commitments: 1. Raise hand for turn to speak. 2. Be comfortable with discomfort. 3. Receive the experiences of others and believe that it is true for them. 4. Regularly provide time to check in with members on what they are experiencing or have shared with them. 5. Free flow (no need for Robert's Rules) 6. Be specific in what you are speaking about in terms of identity, difference, and other terms/concepts; ask for clarification if you need it. Committee Guidelines
Assign notetaker	Procedural	Kelly Fluharty assigned at previous meeting.
Public Comment	Information	Individuals interested in addressing the DEI School Board committee are allowed up to 3 minutes for their public comments. The following speech will not be allowed: slander, defamation, profanity, personal attacks, or revelations of private data.
DEI Committee Meeting Minutes	Procedural-Recommendation	DEI February 27 Agenda with Minutes

Equity Plan Update	Information	Supt. Berzinski: Provided update on following goals. Goal 1: Monthly commitment to data study and sharing with DEI Committee Supt. Berzinski: Intent is to provide meaningful data to review with the committee each month. Goal 2: Development of a 3 year professional development plan. How does DEI work fit into this plan? Discussion regarding PD opportunities for district leaders. Supt. Berzinski: WAPS has received feedback that PD is “scattershot” so trying to have a more intentional 3-year plan, underway with the leadership team. Goal 3: Development of Grow Your Own-Adult Pathways. WAPS has received a 5 year grant through MDE to support the recruitment and education of candidates of color. The funds are specifically geared towards supporting college tuition and related expenses for candidates of color seeking to enter or grow their capacity in the field of education. Supt. Berzinski: WAPS has received a 5 year grant through MDE to support recruitment of candidates of color - in year one this year. Prior HR director initiated this process, and are in early stages of getting this initiated. One employee is taking advantage of this funding and another potential candidate. Funding supports tuition, books and other education expenses. It also provides stipend support while balancing school, work, etc. It is not just for existing employees, it can also be used by community members. Intent is moving folks to licensed teacher status. There will be a mid-point check-in to assess progress and assess the remainder of the award if progressing meaningfully. Must have post-secondary partners as a condition of the grant - these are WSU and St. Mary's. And 80% of funds must be expended for candidates of color. Dr. Cunningham asked if someone would have to start this fall if they wanted to graduate by the end of the grant. Supt. Berzinski responded, Yes, if they want to take advantage of 4 years of funding. Goal 4: Continued development of student voice/engagement work at the high school level Supt. Berzinski: This is underway in the buildings and looks different for each level of learning. Dr. Cunningham: Asked what is the status of the groups that were mentioned at the last meeting. Principal Madsen indicated that, yes, both have continued and are still meeting. The men's group that is meeting with the WSU students may end shortly because the WSU semester is winding down. Dr. Cunningham asked if there is any specific curriculum or
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		structure in these conversations. Principal Madsen responded that in the Fall, there are plans to bring in a book group. Groups are largely centered on info gathering and identifying a student generated direction. Goal 5: Community connection: What role can the DEI committee play in building these connections? Supt. Berzinski: Sees the DEI Committee as an important conduit to making bridges between WAPS and community partners. Dr. Cunningham offered that ROAR has been conducting ongoing community conversations and there is an additional one scheduled this Saturday. Dr. Cunningham invited WAPS to attend as this would be an important setting for engaging with community members. Similarly, with future Our Voices events, it is important to have WAPS representation. Additionally, with the WAPS grant, it is important to have a plan for retention of new educators joining the district. Dr. Cunningham asked Ms. Jacobsen about prior discussion related to a DEI student group in the District. Prin. Madsen shared that he did approach the GSA, but this has since disbanded. Ms. Jacobsen added that she had prior discussion with someone under the impression that the person was going to initiate a group, but there has been no follow-up to her knowledge.
Data Sharing	Information	Big picture district data from MDE Report Card 1. District demographics 2. Attendance trends Supt. Berzinski: Who goes to this school? Data packet was reviewed. This is parent reported data during the registration process. Noted that there were 5.2% of English language learners that are largely Spanish-speaking. It was noted that this is a fairly stable consistently enrolled population year over year. Newest students are most frequently from Central America, there is also a small population of Afghan students. There are 22.4% that qualify for SPED, this is noted to be a “high” number. Ms. Harward noted that this group is also growing in other Districts, but Winona has led this and there is work being done to understand why that is. She also offered detail on the differences between 504 and special education status. Supt. Berzinski also noted the large number of choices of schools in Winona, and many of the other schools do not provide full special education services. Many of those schools also use WAPS to support their students in need of those services in non-public schools. Supt. Berzinsk also noted that the free and reduced data will need to be replaced since free lunch is a state funded program now for all students. He also noted that the “homeless”

		indicator report is clearly incorrect as it is not zero for the district. Supt. Berzinsk then reviewed the packet “The number of students attending school regularly”. Consistent attendance is defined by MDE as 90% attendance by a student. Average daily snapshot is closer to 94%. There are two different ways to measure this. It was noted that W-K has the highest rate, and the ALC has the lowest rate using the MDE defined measure of 90% attendance at the student level. It is important to convince both parents and students that attendance is important. Supt. Berzinski also discussed how the district works with truancy court, and using restorative justice practices (seven unexcused absences). Ideally, the District is engaging with the family early to prevent escalation and cases are evaluated on a case by case basis. Dr. Cunningham also inquired about the use of truancy court and would like to investigate this process on a future agenda. Mrs. Monson asked if schools track pre planned absences and vacations, and wondered if there were economic drivers between differences in attendance rates across schools. Mrs. Hitz also noted that the highest free and reduced rate at W-K is also the school with highest attendance, and that there could be economic reasons (access to child care, free meals, etc.). Mr. Watkins also noted that it will be interesting to see what happens around absences during spring break with the new calendar next year. Mrs. Monson asked if the DEI committee could talk to someone from the ALC to understand what resources are available. Dr. Cuningham also noted overrepresentation of students of color and indigenous students at the ALC in comparison to students districtwide. She also asked about what are the specific next steps after having reviewed this data. Supt. Berzinski responded that when issues arise these would need to be responded to. Dr. Cunningham requested to look at the SPED data disaggregated by race. Ms. Harward noted that at the elementary schools, WAPS has received grant funding to slow down the process of shifting students into a SPED setting. She also noted that there is a relatively high graduation rate and engagement at the ALC. Ms. Smith offered insights into how the educational approach has shifted over time at the ALC.
Review Committee Guidelines	Discussion	Current Committee Guidelines Proposed Committee Guidelines Mr. Hanratty reviewed the proposed changes to the committee guidelines. He noted that the pronouns were updated, there is a proposed removal of language under resignation/termination, a proposed change to remove June/July meetings, a proposed change to the meeting duration, and a proposed change to the quorum. Mrs. Fluharty voiced disagreement with striking the proposed changes to the quorum. Mrs.

		Cunningham also raised concern that there are low numbers of staff represented as well Mr. Watkins also added that he has received feedback from former members that didn't appreciate the long meetings that didn't feel productive. Ms. Hitz asked what is being done to recruit committee members. She also mentioned that there are plenty of community events like the ROAR community conversation coming up. Mrs. Fluharty added that there are lots of WAPS events that the committee could table at, and would personally be willing to do. She also added that it is important that we have the community role and committee goals clearly defined. Dr. Cunningham added that there is a need for greater student involvement, and added that she would also be willing to work on outreach. Mr. Hanratty stated that it seemed like that there was not interest at this time to change quorum minimums. Mr. Watkins noted that it was hard to build the committee back up if there continues to be canceled meetings due to lack of quorum. Mrs. Monson asked about what the follow-up actions are regarding recruitment. Who can help in the District? Supt. Berzinski noted that community engagement is a challenge across many different types of committees/groups, and was unaware of what was done previously to recruit new members. Mr. Watkins noted that one approach could be generating a list of potentially interested individuals and do targeted and personal outreach to those individuals. Mr. Hanratty noted that it has been a while since any social media posts, or announcements were made. Ms. Jacobsen noted that this is an intimidating setting for students and that the time is not conducive to many student schedules.
Assign future notetaker	Procedural	Assign notetaker for next meeting: Dr. Cunningham volunteered to be notetaker for the next meeting.
Future Agenda Items (including items from public comment)	Information	Next Meeting: 1. May 28, 6:00pm Dr. Cunningham noted that AIPAC is requesting a response from the District before it is publicly announced, this was related to the committee's vote of noncompliance for the District. AIPAC was unaware that this was to appear on the School Board agenda and was caught off guard when the press reached out for response. She would like to discuss creating a process for the next meeting. The intention is to understand how WAPS intends to maintain positive relationships with community members and community-involved committees. Discussion followed, Mr. Hanratty suggested that the most effective way to address this would be to bring this to the attention of the Board chair.

		Dr. Cunningham also offered that she has examples of other school districts equity actions plans for review at a future meeting.
Adjournment	Procedural	Adjourned at 7:47PM.