

PDAC Meeting
How can we welcome families of diverse structures?
May 19, 2015
Minutes

Mission of PDAC

Focused on student achievement, the mission of the Parent Diversity Advisory Council is to positively impact the academic achievement of a diverse student population through school-specific outreach efforts and initiatives that focus on and directly address disparate academic performance.

Welcome

- Saily and Sindy welcomed the audience to meeting.
- Ivette Dubiel was recognized for her contributions.
- Saily and Sindy thanked the parents, teachers and staff, administration, and for Board for all their efforts.
- Saily reminded the audience about the Equity Champions Nominations. They are due June 30th.
- Sindy recognized Legendary Young Women with Power at Waubonsie Valley High School. She also recognized a program which high school students mentor eighth grade students at Fischer.
- Norms were reviewed – Be on Time – Be Relevant - Be Open –Be Honest- Be Respectful

Celebrations

Several schools shared celebrations.

Cowlishaw Elementary

Cowlishaw shared the activities of their local PDAC group and activities. Cowlishaw conducted a school World Café. Several initiatives and changes in programs resulted from the discussion.

Longwood School

Longwood shared their College Week activities.

Patterson Elementary

Patterson shared their book study activities from last year. The book, Wonder, was discussed. As a result, parent coffees for parents with special needs were held this year. This year, Patterson secured more parents from diverse cultures. Students also planned a Culture Day. Phonetic pronunciations of student names are available for all students.

May Watts Elementary

May Watts's tea chats and the Welcome Committee activities were reviewed. Teachers and administration went to Railway Plaza to engage in discussion with parents who find it difficult to come to school. A parent handbook was developed. A multi-cultural night was also planned.

Hill Middle School

Hill shared their College at 6 activities in September. Hispanic students were able to listen to a Hispanic/ Latino motivational speaker. An achievement gap presentation was held. A multi-cultural night was held. A sixth grade class partnered with a class in India.

Scullen Middle School

Scullen's Messengers Matter activities were shared. A series of activities were taught to the middle school students. Social and emotional skills were emphasized with the students,

Still Middle School

Still shared The Skin I'm In program. The program emphasized the achievement gap awareness with students. Approximately 100 students participated this year. Students were invited from across all the middle schools. Students came on Sunday. A student Board will be added next year.

A Pot Luck dinner was also held.

Metea Valley High School

Metea Valley High School shared their activities. A Hispanic Assembly was held. Students represented Who Am I? during Black History Week. A World Language week was also held. Metea also hope to conduct outreach efforts to parents similar to the Watts program. A Women's Heritage Activity was also held.

Survey Results

Highlight included:

- 85% of the liaisons attended at least 3 meetings
- 95% of the Principals attended the World Café
- Communicating with disenfranchised parents in the school activities were challenges both faced by liaisons and principals.
- Both principals and liaisons felt hearing from panelists who are experts in the field were beneficial.
- Liaisons felt that more discussion with other liaisons and community members would improve the meetings.

Table Discussions

Share your celebrations and reflections toward fulfilling the PDAC mission.

What are some goals or suggestions you have to help fulfill the PDAC mission?

Share Out Highlights

- Increase the participation of men
- It is important to engage with the students.

- Parent engagement needs to increase and it is important to learn from one another.
- Crone/Scullen are attempting to reach out more to their Indian/Asian population
- A student mentor program was shared.
- It is important to continue to welcome people.
- Engaging parents who are disenfranchised continues to be a theme.
- Could PDAC develop a list of activities?
- Surveys have been given to parents across many schools. They have been influential in changing school culture.
- It is important to engage our students.
- A variety of communication modes is needed to better inform parents.

Table/Note-taking Comments

Question: Please share your celebrations and reflections toward fulfilling the PDAC mission.

- Celebrated individuals
- Focused on the kids
- Tolerance tour (student led); social exclusion activity (student led)
- Sister school in India
- Powerful conversations after diversity events
- Some of the most important things can't be measured
- Helping kids make a connection to other people and community
- Focusing on "curriculum of the home" which targets parents who are not usually involved in school
- "If you celebrate the kids, the parents will come."
- Diverse parent information night; focus on getting parents in – dinner helps
- Aim event toward school theme
- Author came in Only One You
- Visuals in school – upcoming theme celebrating diversity (not solidified)
- Surveys
- At lunch – student service clubs; giver fliers
- Multicultural fairs
- Dance
- Assignment notebook include multicultural celebration news
- Invite students to wear Diwali (etc.) clothing
- Connect parents (plan to do it more formally next year)
- After World Café, stuck with that topic – make welcoming - survey for parents with eight questions. Great response to it. Changed staff mindset. Able to think about to improve simply.
- Welcome new families to school in August, can come early to visit school to get acclimated, send communication early, provide juice/cookies for visit
- Parent University
- Schooling in different countries shared with teachers

- Presentation on adoption during a PDW to increase sensitivity to adaptations
- Also have a cultural night for 5th graders
- Parent-student team painting world map on playground
- Pairing parents and mentors
- Welcome banner in multiple languages from all countries, including books
- National flags in school entrance
- Added intro letter for PDAC in parent packet
- Plan for cultural night
- MVHS – use PDAC as avenues to volunteer
- Mentoring program – peer-to-peer
- Personal invitations
- Identifying small steps to celebrate diversity (i.e. Students telling where they are from)
- Messengers Matter
- Global Awareness: book study, build school in Ghana
- Social Emotional – 2nd step intervention program
- Watch Dogs – over 300 dads

Question:

- We do a lot of things in the building, but the community doesn't always know about it.
- We have a student leadership group that led activities, but parents didn't know
- We have a lot of students who are doing their job, and we need to reserve some energy for this group
- We should talk about what's working instead of focusing on what's wrong
- We need to have more courageous conversations
- Get more men involved in participating in school events/meetings
- When you walk into the school (the holiday/equity are celebrated on TV or entrance ways)
- More integration with successful program like PATHS and PAGES and Skin I'm In (replicate programs)
- Get PDAC into the community to go to parents (like Watts at LeCrone)
- Awareness of diversity when our diverse school are integrating with more diversity
- How to welcome new families to the school?
- Reach more families
- Work to narrow the achievement gap
- Make a more inclusive environment for the students
- Events to celebrate diversity
- Communication from the principal
- Round table discussion at each school
- Engage students regarding diversity
- Look for opportunities to talk about culture through ELA. Are there holes?

- Help parents so that they can help students at home overcome language or education barriers
- Teach about Common Core
- Consider what you call something. Maybe rename it...like reading in with parents at night
- Reach out to families who aren't involved, new low income, language barriers, use personal invitation
- Encourage adult ESL classes
- Resource list: i.e. Schools who do cultural night, schools who do World Café
- Liaison learned that activities celebrating diversity was happening but not highlighted
- Asian/Indian population = need to come up with ways to involved and engage those communities
- Looking at special needs populations and how/what we can do more with peer buddies
- Phonetic pronunciations

Final Comments

Thank you to all. Enjoy your summer. Let's continue to have good communication. World Café is October 29th, at Metea Valley High School, exact time to be determined.