

PDAC MEETING
How can we welcome families of diverse socio-economic statuses/resources and abilities?
February 24, 2014
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

PDAC co-chairs, Saily Joshi and Sindy Mondesir welcomed group to the meeting. Discussed that our district is “rich w/ resources” and experiences the panelists bring to the discussion today. Meeting format a bit differently, with panel discussions, a presentation and general discussion at the end.

Meeting Norms

What do we ask of our guests/participants?

1. Be on time
2. Be relevant – It’s about equity...

How do we communicate? How do we share concerns?

1. Be open – what are your thoughts?
2. Be honest – Let’s keep it real.
3. Be respectful – Remember we all have feelings.

A reminder that sometimes what we discuss regarding educational equity and diversity can be difficult subjects, but we must remember to be honest and respectful.

Multicultural Reading Night

Ivette Dubiel, Director of Equity in 204, shared that PDAC continues to work with different parent groups, and BPAC & PDAC are working together on the first annual “Multicultural Reading Night” for Thursday, April 9th, 6:30-8:30 pm at McCarty Elementary. Flyers are available at the table and RSVPs are requested. Readers from various languages will be present, books will be available for purchase, free book giveaways for elementary-aged students, raffles and more.

Panelists (for more information about the panelists, please see the ‘Panelists Bio Document’)

- Amit Thaker – Linden Oaks – Director of Business Development --- psychiatric hospital, Naperville, other sites, - behavioral health, outpatient programs, therapies, - liaison to treatment perspective
- Brandon Pettigrew- Northern Illinois Food Bank – umbrella to 800 food centers, 13 counties; Naperville often considered upper end, but certainly needs too
- Jason Altenbern – Community Relations Coordinator – link up agencies with schools based on identified needs (monthly needs assessment – then find organizations to bridge with students in need) – wants child to not feel cold, hungry, wet and works to fill those basic needs
- Kathleen Panagopoulos – VP SNPTA – first SNPTA in Illinois – designed to reach out to 3000 families with IEP’s in district. IEP often starts in preschool. Fear they don’t reach enough people, young, older, Fox Valley Institute and is working to help parents too.

- Stephen Garlington – Equity and Excellence Consultant – DuPage Regional Office of Education – 6 years ago formed E&E, want to end achievement gap, clinical truancy – alcohol, emotional issues, International Guard, program to end suicides. Looks forward to robust conversation.

Panelists Discussion

- If you don't know what questions to ask or where to turn, start with the teacher or front desk staff in a school.
- It's ok to speak candidly. There are abundance of resources online via the city, townships and civic agencies. There are fairly intuitive links.
- Sometimes talking with one person can open up other opportunities.
- We need teachers to teach, but can provide guidance/direction through social worker. We can turn to neighborhood churches for instance. We need to break down ignorance of resources, of the stigma with poverty. There are solution! Some families have bigger needs than others and sometimes there are bumps in the road to help, but for the most, assistance is available. For instance worked with principal on getting needed snacks. Jason working with schools at a macro level. The social workers are really at the frontline, Jason can look for organizations with appropriate resources, make connections with that family and community organization.
- Other times, there are things that fall under the radar like the need for calculators. We have worked with Walmart grant and IPEF donated \$40,000 for ED.
- Things not always published, but great things are happening. With getting needed resources, answer may not always be first, but 3rd or 4th time around organization is usually quick to help.
- Kathleen says that one of the biggest issue for parents is TIME. They have to get their child(ren) to therapy first, clubs if possible, and so on. Challenge is in connections. First and front response is SPED teachers to talk about issues and they are able to connect you with parents of children with similar issues.
- Brandon states families must have their basic needs met – food, water, shelter. There are many people here that don't have these things. About 70,000 people living in poverty in this county. Food is insecure. It's a missed population that cannot get resources sometimes because income considered too high for help, but too low to live in 204. *Loaves and Fishes* is a blessing. One in seven kids in Naperville don't have enough food. One in six kids in 204 don't have enough food.
- Amit says from behavioral perspective, there is stigma associated with it. People delay help they need until they can no longer function. For example, cancer patients know when to get help and considered norm. Mental health patients, on the other hand, don't often have family support. It is kept as a secret and often times, people don't know where to get help. Needs to be a sense of urgency to get help before you become a patient. Don't put it off! People sometimes put off because they don't have money and tend to wait. Today, anyone can walk in to get assessment at Linden Oaks. Linden Oaks has become a psychiatric ER. For instance, if patient with suicidal thoughts comes in, that patient with be bumped in front of a kid with school anxiety refusing to attend school. We create avenues to reach out. We are also doing more online. There are research based assessments that measure anxiety, addiction and more to bring awareness and urgency to people. It's a five minutes online survey tool. Someone that takes it can still call if desired. Trying hard to increase access. It's like CPR for mental health...someone for instance suffering from a heart attack, there will likely be people in the room who know what to do, but someone suffering from psychotic breakdown will run out the door. We need to teach mental health first aid, reduce stigma, increase awareness and increase access.
- Another issues seen often at Linden Oaks with adolescents and adults perspective is opiate addiction (pain pills). People talk about heroine, but that is usually the last stop. We must stop

the addiction before it get to heroin. Famous athlete that shared with his progression to heroin addiction started at drinking from red solo cups in his basement at the age of 17.

- With girls, we often see school pressures, socially related, eating disorders; however, we are also seeing eating disorders more and more with boys.
- May Watts parent – works for Suicide Prevention program – 90 minute long- “More than Sad” - talk about anxiety, etc.; Naperville has leg up – tight-knit community; Knowledge, care, & tell (KCT), - Time – how do you take time out for health programs? Schools must do a lot.
- Research has found that sex abuse and eating disorders are connected, especially among males with increasing eating disorders.
- It’s important to understand with mental issues, it is not like a heart issue that can simply be fixed by surgery and food intake changes; mental health caused by many intertwining factors and we work to get to address all of those factors.
- There is a lot of cultural stigma too that is you need mental health, it’s not allowed. Frowned upon. Stigma!
- Lots of online tools to help. Linden Oaks created back and forth text for kids.
- Stephen says there are many situational vs. generational poverty factors. We have to work in building relationships which is critical. Build on school culture. Not all feel connected. Some don’t understand school worldview. We need to make students feel they were somebody, give sense of self-respect to kids. Amenities like a kid needing a coat is a microcosm of deeper needs when it comes to food and security. What about illness? Medicine or heat bill? Did he have the coat 4 months later or was it sold? How do we get them to community resources like ILHEAP, etc?
- We are here for the academic achievement of students according to Stephen. To teach & train kids to make a living and contributing citizen. We look at assessments like ISAT, PSAT and now PARCC to make determination. There are disproportionate ED (economically disadvantaged) students that are not achieving. We have a responsibility to teach them too. To avoid letting them go down the drain of on society. The impact of poverty affects brain development, especially early on with word gaps in kindergarten because vocabulary is far below. We must mediate these differences. What can we do? What is the future story? We need to have the idea that education is a stepping stone. How do we accommodate kids of financial diversity? We begin with things like resources..... Coat, food, mental health, and day to day survival.
- How does district combine information from one child to other children living in same address? We do maintain a database in district of needs to help social workers connect all the dots.

Presentation by Stephen Garlington: *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* by Dr. Ruby K. Payne

- When you talk about kids making AYP, etc., you see a tremendous disparity. Relationship helps kids thrive. Kids must believe it. How do we develop relationships with these ED kids? Most people in this room are not in generational poverty so how do you get to understand these kids? Point in sharing this information is that our policies are great, but we need to become more culturally competent with ED kids, kids who speak Spanish and so on. Typically people talk about ethnicity, and neglect financial diversity.
- Mental Model for Poverty means people need to survive is often thrived on relationships with others. They have to plan day by day. Students bring hidden rules to schools and if they are told, “You know better than that,” but maybe they don’t. Middle class is all about achievement (eg. so and so is going to Yale). That’s it! Middle class have career ladder, but poverty mentality may not understand why school is so important. Must teach it. If rich, who can you work with to maintain your status? Schools & businesses operate from middle class norms and values. Do not

tolerate double-negatives, but that's normal language in poverty. We need mediate this Again, hidden rules from class in which they were raised (eg. "That's whack!"). Don't shame them, teach them!

- Poverty - survival, relation, entertainment;
- Middle – achievement
- High- political connections
- Get out of poverty - education, relationships, employment, mutual respect, support, high expectations, insistence (poor babies...,), don't make excuses for them. Failure is not an option.
- Analyze resources, make interventions. Why? Interventions don't work if they are based on resources that are not available. Authentic relationships will tell you of issues. The extent to which an individual does without resources.
- 9 Resources – financial; emotional; mental; spiritual; physical; support systems; relationships/role models; knowledge of hidden rules; and, formal register (need to learn standard English, vocabulary, negotiation skills in school & work settings; be bilingual)
- Tammy's Story Video Clip – about poverty-stricken family. Mom with two sons. Watch the video and examine resources the family has/not have. Does Matt have a future story? All kids need to be exposed to conversation of a future story. Internalized will motivate
- (Watched video clip)
- Discussion following video clip: People don't treat her well, even her own children. Friends think she should stay at home with kids. She has goal from age 5 to be teacher. Son embarrassed of mom, especially in how she dresses. Older brother avoids younger brother because of how he dresses. Mom says sons thinks he's in a different class. Older son, Matt, has awards and plans to go to college. Mom lacks basic needs. Their future story?...Matt realizes not Harvard, but college. Sometimes parents may not want "that junk" put into kids heads, setting them up for failure, but have to develop those relationships with kids. Trust. Mutual respect. Failure is not an option. Do assessments early on, get idea where they are lacking, remediate with resources, schools can't provide everything. Discern between poverty and ADHD, etc. How tap into resources? How do we empower these kids? Charity is not sustainable.

Closing

- Next PDAC meeting: March 17th. The topic is "How can we welcome families of diverse religions?"
- Visit district's PDAC subpage for minutes, detailed information about the panelists, articles and more as well as FB page maintained by Sindy and Saily