

# PDAC Meeting 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.*

**Topic:** How can we welcome families of diverse race and ethnicities?

**Date:** November 18, 2014

**Time:** 7:00-9:00 PM

**Location:** CEC

## **Welcome**

- Diversity = your story. Diversity includes race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, social class, immigrant status, sexual orientation, economic status, special needs, urban/suburban, language, learning styles, individual experiences
- District #204 Demographics are very diverse. Caucasians only represent 53% of the total student population. Check website – [www.ipsd.org](http://www.ipsd.org) under School Report Cards for complete breakdown of district student demographics.

**Guest Panel Present:** Krishna Bansal, Stephen Garlington, Rick Guzman, Josie Tanksley, Linda Yang

LY – Diversity is important in the workplace

JT – What kind of world are we building for our children? Children need to thrive and diversity is important. As a member of the Hispanic community, we are working with parents in Aurora to help them gain college entrance. It is important to belong.

RG – It is important to look at educational diversity. How do we create a welcoming atmosphere? – It is important to embrace and celebrate differences. Differences serve to point out commonalities. The city of Aurora has been creating advisory groups in order to further understand ethnicity and culture.

SG – ROE – Equity in Excellence - It is important to close the academic achievement gap. It is important to keep it real. At times, African American students struggle not to act white. We are in a global world. We do a disservice if we do not help students navigate a multi-cultural world.

KB – When you see over 30% of our students that our Asian, it is a sign of a very good school district. ☺ To make a more welcome school – we must acknowledge our differences, our culture, and life styles. Education needs to occur. Do we need to have specific forums for our different races and ethnicities? With our first generation parents, we need to educate and create awareness.

## **Conclusions**

- The American education system and its social customs and values are often much different than the experiences of our first generation parents to the United States. Communication and awareness is key.
- We need to convince our parents that we really want them to be involved.
- Educators need to be aware and not take it for granted that our parents from diverse backgrounds understand the educational system or how the social components of a school (ex. Market Day, Fun Fair) work.
- Invitation and outreach efforts to school programs are important and necessary to encourage participation.
- We need to think out of the box in regards to our activities in order to encourage our parents to participate especially those with language and cultural differences.

## **Suggestions from Small Group Discussions**

- Several suggestions were offered during discussion. They included:
  - School cultural fairs
  - PTA welcome committees for new parents – Welcome coffee or tea
  - Welcome sign in different languages at front of school
  - New parent surveys
  - Scheduling staff development for teachers provided by parents from diverse backgrounds throughout the year to help enlighten staff on educational, religious and cultural differences
  - Pictures on the walls that reflect the total school population
  - One to one welcoming from the PTA
  - Tap into high school students to assist younger children with the transition
  - It is important to streamline our ideas in order that they can be more systemic.

## **Open Discussion**

- It is important to recruit and retain staff representative of our students demographically.
- Teacher evaluation under the Charlotte Danielson model and the new state of Illinois model will measure student growth. Teachers will need to be more culturally competent. Developing authentic relationships will be important if growth is to occur.
- A Board of Education goal is in place to address the achievement gap.
- Keep the momentum going. Bring a friend to the next meeting!

**Action Item** - School Liaisons should schedule a meeting with their building administration