

In attendance: Dawn Anderson Rascher, Letty Beserra, Jim Collins, Linda Heiden, Rachel Mullins, Debra Stevenson, Susan Strodbeck, Trish Turner

**Multicultural Quiz:**

Dawn spoke about a book she has been reading by Jawanza Kunjufu titled “Black Students, Middle Class Teachers”. Within the book there is a Multicultural Quiz. Dawn printed copies and everyone took a few minutes to review. A copy of the quiz is attached to this email.

Upon review of the quiz, direct answers are not necessarily needed. Most are rhetorical questions prompting discussion. The purpose was to show how media, culture, society and values make an impact on students’ perception, and the areas in education, particularly history, can be considered lacking in regards to other cultures and ethnicities.

**Homework Follow-Up:**

Our homework from the previous meeting was discussed. Several people spoke about what they found in their research and analysis. Dawn wrote these areas of concern on poster board. Below are the areas of concern and causes of achievement gaps:

<i>Rachel- 2 reports, Hispanic students in Cali</i>	<i>Letty- African American students in Cali</i>	<i>Deb- Washington state</i>	<i>Susan- Sociology and community</i>
Low teacher quality or lack of adequate training	Low teacher quality or lack of adequate training	Unbalanced teacher quality	Lack of emphasis that the school is not the only educator
Large class sizes	Large class sizes	Inequality in school funding, materials, facilities, etc	Not having community more involved
Low counselor ratio	Unsuccessful Preschool	Intergenerational poverty	Lack of small children possessing self-regulation skills (sit in a chair, get in line, listen, etc)
Low support staff ratio	Lack of college prep (courses and college info)	Families/Communities not able and not welcome by education system	Low teacher quality or lack of adequate training
Lack of college prep (courses and college info)	Lack of support from parents	Lack of supplemental services (mentoring, tutoring)	Non performing administration
Lack of academic and social support	Lack of support from a teacher who takes a special interest in a student	Lack of support from parents and community	Lack of professional development
Lack of MS prep			
Low college awareness			
Ineffective instructional programs			

Dawn handed out a copy of her research.

Area of Concern	Strategy to Address Gap	Target Audience	Successful Programs
Academic Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Preschool (Attendance concerns)</li> <li>• Extended learning summer and before/after school</li> <li>• Strategically timed interventions, Intervene early, Provide comprehensive long-term support</li> <li>• Expose minority student who are achieving near grade level to advanced and challenging content</li> <li>• Teach the concept of “code switching”, Focus on sharpening and broadening communication skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Community Partners</li> <li>• Teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCSD preschool program</li> <li>• DCSD Stepping Stones</li> <li>• Deb’s Saturday Academy</li> <li>• Thurgood Marshall Learning Center (Rock Island) – MS Princ of the Year 2012 - Phillip Ambrose</li> <li>• AVID – Dr. Tate has worked</li> <li>• HS programs on college campus: Brooklyn Academy</li> <li>• Upward Bound</li> </ul>
Strong Family/Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Outreach</li> <li>• Parent education and involvement</li> <li>• Set expectations of college, Provide families with college knowledge</li> <li>• School/society bridge for students</li> <li>• Provide comprehensive long-term support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Community Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Parenting Certification</li> </ul>
Culturally Supportive Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide teachers PD on addressing the needs of ethnically diverse populations</li> <li>• Socialize African American males</li> <li>• Male Empowerment Sessions, Remember masculinities</li> <li>• Supporting ethnic student organization, Venues for brotherly bonding and peer support</li> <li>• Showcase examples of successful living African American males</li> <li>• “Stereotype Threat” Negative peer pressure, Student performance anxiety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Support</li> <li>• Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu as a consultant</li> <li>• “Image of You” Conference, like QC United (Unity Feast)</li> <li>• Video – like IMAX</li> <li>• School Climate</li> </ul>

After review everyone was in agreement there are many similarities in everyone’s research and the next task is to decide and commit what issues we want to address first and include in our Action Plan.

**Early Childhood Education:**

Susan elaborated on her research and findings, stressing the importance that school is not only, the *only* educator, but the parent and the community are actually the *first* educator in a student’s life. This has the ability to have a student start their education career very successful, or it can hinder the student greatly, creating the achievement gap before a student ever steps into an education environment.

Susan stated early childhood education is essential and the importance of young children needing to learn self-regulation skills, such as sitting in a chair, getting in line, listen and raising hands. Without these skills, the children are at a disadvantage and will suffer. She stressed that achievement is not just a school issue, but that all stakeholders need to be involved.

Rachel further elaborated on this topic, pointing out early kindergarten readiness is a big concern, and this can be something we can start our focus.

She also pointed out the important observation that the achievement gap tends to start out as a socio economic issue, but then as a student gets older it widens and falls into an ethnicity category.

This prompts the question; Why so some White children who come into the District already disadvantaged because of their socio economic status overcome the achievement gap and fall into normal testing range, while African American or Hispanic children continue to stay below average in the testing categories?

Deb agreed early childhood education and student readiness is important for the student to start out their education career successful.

Dawn spoke about the preschool attendance concerns. Children can receive such a huge advantage if they attend preschool and learn various skills, such as the self-regulation skills Susan spoke about earlier.

The concern is preschool attendance. Studies show a child should attend preschool 80% of the time to be better prepared, in DCSD very few students attend preschool at this rate.

Some issues cannot be avoided, such as illnesses, which is common for children that age and entering a preschool. What can be addressed is parent knowledge. We need to push to the parent the importance of attendance and give them the basic knowledge of how important preschool is for their child's success.

Everyone was in agreement early childhood education should be one of our concerns and further discussion, strategies and programs will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Discussion:**

Suggestions were made about closing the achievement gap:

Jim spoke about the possibility of working with St. Ambrose University and their Upward Bound program. Jim stated St. Ambrose has been looking into extending and enhancing this program and this could be an excellent opportunity DCSC can take advantage of.

Deb spoke about the concern of lack of teacher involvement and encouragement, in regards to students of ethnic backgrounds. She said teacher training and professional development should be one of our main concerns and everyone was in agreement. She then distributed copies of an article about a student suspended for an essay she wrote on Frederick Douglass. A copy of the article is attached to this email.

Extended summer learning, before and after school learning and strategically timed interventions were also suggested.

The concern was brought up about addressing parents who don't want their children to be successful. Trish asked the question; how do we address the parents that don't want to have their children be successful? Deb suggested the usage of the program Black Parenting, or something similar. It has been very successful and was used in the past by the District. It is offered to parents, and it's free.

Linda spoke about her first experiences when she went to Smart. She observed students loading a bus for a field trip in total chaos. The fact the school didn't have assemblies, simply because the crowd was unmanageable. Or when walking down a hall no one spoke to teachers and principals. Linda spoke about rising to these challenges, and now students stand in line for busses, enter and exit assemblies in an orderly fashion, and say hello and make eye contact in the halls! All these changes Linda said show changes can be achieved.

Linda also pointed out they have started a program at Smart, looking for successful minorities who graduated from Smart for possible interviews.

Jim spoke about St. Ambrose University hosting a Multicultural Week during the week of March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012. This can be an excellent opportunity for information on organizations and programs St. Ambrose offers that may be of assistance to the Equity Committee. Jim said details are still forth coming, however once he receives information he will pass it on.

Additional handouts we discussed are included in this email. Please review.

**Follow-Up:**

Reminder, Dr. Tate expects an Action Plan to be submitted by this committee by the end of the 2011-2012 school year!

Because of the short timeline and expectations, it has already been agreed additional meetings needs to be scheduled. There is much work to be done, and for the Action Plan to be successful, it must be REALISTIC, SPECIFIC, AND MEASURABLE.

**The next meeting is scheduled for 04-03-12 at the ASC building in the Board Room from 5pm-7pm.**

**04-03-12 Meeting:**

At the 04-03-12 meeting we will have the *final* discussion on what areas we want to include in our Action Plan. We will also decide what area we will focus on *first* and strategies and resources to use for this first area of concern.