

ISD Student Equity Council -- April 2021 Monthly Report

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Students of Color

The Students of Color Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 17 active members. We have dedicated work to four project groups: Racial Awareness Art, Student Interviews, and Teacher Development.

The Racial Awareness Art Project has been continuing to work on our goals of uplifting artists of color, from ISD students to all underappreciated artists of color in history. We are featuring them on our Instagram account, through story and feed posts. We've recently gotten many student submissions of art and hope to do more outreach and promotion to receive more submissions. We are also working to create more educational content on our Instagram feed on art through a racial lens (racist themes in art, art movements by BIPOC groups, etc.), and have started posting them every couple of weeks starting this month. We have also begun brainstorming for a possible zine, hoping that we can tackle that project soon with increased involvement from the student body. We plan on putting up flyers to advertise for student art amongst the physical high schools.

The Student Interviews Project was created to share the stories of ISD students who have experienced racism in the school district to shed light on the urgency and reality of the racism prevalent here. We plan to collect these experiences through a video format, and we have completed the interview questions and are currently working to outreach to get interested interviewees.

The Development for Teachers in Racist Situations Project aims to address the lack of standards and expectations of teacher response when something racist happens in their classroom. We plan to put together a presentation or website that teachers can reference so they can appropriately address racist situations, like when the N-word comes up in literature or when someone says something racially insensitive in class. We have completed our research and are working towards completing the presentation.

LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ Affinity Group has officially met 5 times this month with 11 active members. We have dedicated work to four project groups, and one affinity project: Amenities and Clothing, Curriculum, Names and Pronouns, and the Organizational Project.

Amenities and Clothing has not yet met this month but will be picking its projects back up in the coming weeks with the new onboarded members. Due to the fact that the ISD has now fully transitioned into the hybrid learning schedule, we find it is imperative that we consider the changes made in regards to LGBTQ+ students who are returning back to in-person. To *reiterate* the projects our group has been working on from the beginning of the Fall term: the clothing drive and the gender neutral bathroom options. Alongside this we will continue to work with the Women's Empowerment group on the menstrual products project.

Curriculum is continuing its brainstorm and research phase in regards to what specifically can be changed in the ISD curriculum which can benefit LGBTQ+ students and staff. We plan to do further planning in regards to the actual changes, implementations, and lesson plans once we have the chance to meet with the ISD Curriculum Auditors. Our group continues to function within the council-wide curriculum group asynchronously and aligns research and focus points with other groups as well.

Names and Pronouns has completed the Pronouns Glossary/Pronouns Basics 101 document and will be looking into where we can effectively distribute the document. We plan to include this guide in the May issue of the Council E-News and we hope to find a way to get it to staff and students who need it as well. We are discussing who to reach out to and who can benefit from this guide. Our goal with this is to make this a resource classrooms, teachers, students, community members, and many others can use. Aside from this project we will be working on other projects which we had planned in the beginning of the fall term: yearbook preferred names (already accomplished in IHS), pronouns stickers on ASB cards, and more.

The Organizational Project worked during the 4/29 Affinity meeting and assigned the new members to work groups. We will be finalizing who we want to reach out to to work with in the coming weeks and discussing plans of action in regards to funding and partnership.

Low-Income & Homelessness

The Low-Income and Homelessness Affinity Group has officially met three times this month with 8 active members. We have dedicated work to four project groups: The Safe Space Project, the Resource Project, Social Media Project, and the Outreach Project. In addition to these projects, we also partner with the Women's Empowerment Affinity Group in the Sexual Reproductive Products Project; details listed under Women's Empowerment.

The Safe Space Project is working to create two physical day-centers and safe havens for youth, as well as initiating a Youth Home and a local Youth Shelter to best serve the demographic we are advocating for, in addition to bridging the equitable barriers that low-income and physically displaced youth experience.

This past month we have been focusing work on our Youth Home Project in partnership with Kaylee Jaech and the Youth Home Committee. The Youth Home Committee as a whole is currently interviewing shelters, day centers, and other homelessness organizations, in order to collect research on different methods for developing our "youth home." Us as a group personally, the project group of ISD Equity has been drafting interview questions for interviewing youth and adults who have been through the shelter system and or have experienced homelessness; the value of this being collecting data on what is beneficial for physically displaced youth. In the next month with this project, we plan to finish our interviewing process with the Youth Home Committee and go on to focus on the Safe Space aspect of the project -- our physical day centers. We intend to start our funding plans and outreach to organizations for resources we can implement into our spaces. At this time we will also be looking for locations in order to address this pressing need quickly and efficiently.

The Resources Project centers around research where we have compiled a list of low-cost or free resources to make accessible to youth. We are currently working on outreach methods to reach low-income and physically displaced students who need these resources.

This past month, all of our social media posts have been uploaded and we plan on distributing the resources pamphlets that we have designed. We sent out an email to principals and counselors asking if we can have Council members who are attending in-person school to drop off the pamphlets in the offices. We have also brainstormed other ways of outreach, including emails to the PTSA and Garage. In addition, we have planned out a YouTube video

and distributed the work among our members which will hopefully get completed in the next month.

The Outreach Project concentrates on reaching out to our target demographic of low-income and physically displaced students to ensure that we have students in this affinity group who identify as the group we are advocating for.

This past month, we have been working on more direct outreach because we have had no new low-income students join this affinity group. In particular, we have focused on outreach through other youth homes and shelters. We contacted these organizations, encouraging any low-income or physically displaced students to join our affinity group and council.

The Social Media Project focuses on educating people on class issues and capitalism, regarding low-income students in ISD to create class consciousness.

This is a new project so we recently started brainstorming post ideas for our Instagram specifically centering around classism in ISD and the causes of economic disparities. We intend to explore the intersectionality of low-income and physically displaced people and create posts on policing and abolition.

Mental Health & Illness

The Mental Health & Illness Affinity Group has officially met three times this month with 15 active members. We are continuing work on our four project groups: Mental Health Check-In Form, Destigmatizing Mental Illness, and Teacher Presentations.

The Mental Health Check-in Form Project is working on implementing a Google form check-in accessible on every teacher's Canvas page where students can request accommodations like extensions, extra meetings, alternatives, etc. from their teachers if mental-health-related issues are interfering with the students' work. Emails were sent to equity teacher leads from Issaquah, Skyline, and Liberty High Schools to schedule meetings to discuss the implementation of the form at these schools. Ms. King from Liberty replied and on April 28th, the project group described ideally how the form would work and reigned in student testimonies advocating for it. We are awaiting responses from the equity directors from the other two schools.

The Destigmatizing Mental Illness Project is working on destigmatizing and creating awareness for mental illness through social media, creating infographics and shareable content in order to achieve our goal of improving outreach on the isd.equity page on mental illness in

particular. Since the social media aspect is new to this project, we plan to coordinate research for at least 5-10 topics regarding mental illness this month for the social media department to post: everyone is expected to do a fair share of the work. This is also the curriculum subgroup of the Mental Health & Illness Affinity group, focusing on destigmatizing mental illness by improving the learning approach and representation of these illnesses in the health curriculum as well. Health should become a useful course where students gain access to valid resources and a better idea of how to deal with and recognize mental illness in interpersonal relationships and their own mental health. Members of this group have brainstormed a variety of issues in the health curriculum across several ISD schools and are trying to determine who or what standards create the basis for aspects of the health curriculum. This foundation will provide information on who to contact for help during the process.

The Calming Room Project is working on creating & implementing a designated room in high school buildings for students to go to when facing anxiety/panic attacks or depressive episodes. The room would serve as an area for students to calm down and better deal with the symptoms they might be experiencing. Ideally, this room would be in every ISD high school and would be advertised by counselors, teachers, and SEL lessons (as well as through social media). In April, we've begun developing a broad timeline for this project, keeping in mind any obstacles we may face from administration. Our group has also been observing the layout of high schools in our district to find ideal locations for the calming room. We'll continue thinking about physical aspects of the calming room and what our project requires from individual schools. Additionally, as we adjust our timeline, we may do some outreach through social media to receive student input.

The Teacher Presentations Project is working to create a guide accessible for teachers to use in regards to mental health; more specifically the transition to hybrid learning. We work to improve online learning equity and provide a smoother transition into hybrid learning while taking into consideration the equitable issues that it poses and offering solutions to help alleviate them. Although this is a newly started project, we have accomplished a key part of research: student feedback. Via google form, we received 40 suggestions on what specifically teachers can do in order to ease hybrid and online learning. In the upcoming month of May, we hope to have this project finished and implemented. Within the next few weeks, we plan to do outreach to assistant principals to inform them of our idea and receive any feedback or news of any equitable

barriers we may face. In addition to that, we will work to have a draft of the content located in the guide and hopefully finish the graphic design aspect of it.

The 504 Plan Resources Project is currently working towards destigmatizing 504 Plans, expanding awareness and accessibility of them, as well as holding teachers accountable for providing accommodations. We had our first meeting this month and are currently planning to meet with Pam Ridenour (District 504 Coordinator) and discuss the 504 Plan process in greater depth.

Immigrants & Culture

The Immigrants and Culture Affinity Group has officially met 3 times this month with 11 active members. With the onboarding of 4 new members, we are brainstorming new projects to bring into the next month and next term. Meanwhile, we have continued work on three project groups: the Cultural Decorations Project, the Cultural Foods Project, and the Counselor project.

In Cultural Decorations, we continue to anticipate implementation at the return of in-person school by doing online research and posting about cultural holidays through our Equity Council Instagram. The goal in this project is to help students feel more welcome through representation and educate other students on the various cultures of their peers. And while we are maintaining the ideas of the “Cultural Corner” for when schools return to in-person learning, we continue to be focused on education through social media until then. Our group is currently researching and posting about potential decorations we may bring about schools one day, with a new organization system for this term.

The social media food series, endearingly nicknamed “Cultural Food Fridays,” continues as an ongoing project in recognition of food’s role in culture. Issaquah School District students are encouraged to send in submissions for recipe features on @isd.equity’s Instagram account, anonymous or otherwise, that are then turned into stories and compiled for other students to take inspiration from and bring into their own kitchens. This virtual project is the first step of many in the normalization of cultural foods.

The Counselor Project is the affinity group’s newest addition: an extension of the Curriculum Project, we aim to address the lack of education regarding xenophobia within elementary schools. Xenophobic microaggressions begin to develop at a young age, and specificity is key, because kids need to know that “don’t make fun of cultural food, of accents, of

career types, or family structures” is just as important as “don’t bully.” In this project, we’re hoping to elaborate on the vague anti-bullying campaigns at elementary schools to start kids on the right path at a young age, with a focus on cultural sensitivity. As an extension of the Curriculum project, we are anticipating collaboration with ISD counselors and curriculum auditors to answer our questions and further the development of this project.

Religious Awareness

The Religious Awareness Affinity Group has officially met 3 times this month with 8 active members. We have dedicated work to three project groups: Social Media, Minority Holiday Awareness, and the Curriculum Project.

The Social Media Project has two subsections. The first of which being the Destigmatizing Religious Stereotypes group, has just started working. This project aims to focus on specific widespread stereotypes about various religions, and research them in order to create a post debunking them and explain to our peers how dangerous and offensive they are. We have begun with brainstorming stereotypes and started delegating these to research within our group. The second subsection, the Minority Holidays group, was generated to ensure everyone, no matter their faith, is celebrated and recognized. By utilizing social media to access as many students in the ISD as possible, we are able to get student input on their religious celebrations. With that knowledge, we have researchers who gather information about the holiday and pass it off to the social media team who creates the post and distributes it to the student body. This system will be effective for the duration of the year and will continue to be open for holiday requests. In the past month, we have posted about four religious holidays, Ridván, Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, and Beltane.

The Minority Holiday Awareness has completed the email template for students to proactively inform teachers about holiday and request accommodations. This template will be posted on our website, as well as through our social media platforms. As our second phase of this project, we are working on creating a system in which teachers receive notifications before holidays with suggested accommodations to encourage providing these accommodations, as well as general awareness. This project will promote a safer environment at schools for students, and increase education of both students and teachers regarding these important holidays. We have

sent an email requesting information and proposing this project to deans and principals in order to determine how these notifications could be sent.

The Curriculum Project has recently gotten started with brainstorming. Through the brainstorming session, we hope to identify problems within the current curriculum regarding religious awareness at ISD, and different solutions we as students can create to solve them. Through this project, we aim to get a conversation started within ISD about how we can make these necessary changes and implementations into the curriculum.

Women's Empowerment

The Women's Empowerment Affinity group has officially met 4 times this month with 12 active members. We have dedicated work to two project groups: the Social Media Project and the Sexual Reproductive Products Project.

The Social Media Project... has become more active over the last month. We started a sign-up sheet for posts, and it has been incredibly successful. We've made two (maybe more) posts this month addressing May Day as well as menstrual equity. Our goal with this group is to raise awareness to certain WE inequities and/or events happening through the use of social media posts and stories.

The Sexual Reproductive Products Project... has been continuing our research regarding period products in schools. We also met with Dr. Jessica Wade and got resources from her and a good perspective and information about period products in the UK. Our goal with this group is to have ISD provide *free* menstrual products for all bathrooms in schools. This includes middle schools and high schools. We are also trying to spread awareness to students and staff about why this issue is so important to deal with.

Curriculum

The Curriculum council-wide project group has officially met 1 time this month with 12 active members. We did our usual monthly check-in and discussed the next-steps regarding curriculum changes as a council-wide project. We sent out an email to the ISD Curriculum Auditors requesting to meet with them to discuss our project, our goals, its purpose, and why it is absolutely necessary. We hope to meet with them within the next month.

Mentorship

The Mentorship council-wide project group has officially met 3 times this month with 15 active members. We are currently still fine-tuning and defining our partnership with VOICE mentorship. Before fully starting up the partnership, in order to educate ourselves further on the specific needs of different marginalized groups, we have compiled numerous educational resources specific to different target groups. Using these resources we are creating a condensed resource that we will then use in our work enacting equitable practices within our district's mentorship program. In addition to this research, we are setting up interviews with local as well as national mentorship programs that target certain marginalized groups. Our goal with these interviews is to learn and fully understand how these organizations tailor and meet the needs of underrepresented groups. We hope to continue this research and interviews for the next 1-2 months.