

ISD Student Equity Council — May 2021 Monthly Report

isd.equity@gmail.com

isdequity.wixsite.com/website

Table of Contents

<i>Affinity Groups</i>	<i>Page Number</i>
Students of Color	1
LGBTQ+	2
Low-Income & Homelessness	4
Mental Health & Illness	5
Immigrants & Culture	7
Religious Awareness	8
Women's Empowerment	9
Physical & Cognitive Disabilities	9
First-Gen Students	10
 <i>Council-Wide Projects</i>	
Curriculum	10
Mentorship	10

Students of Color

The Students of Color Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 16 active members. We have dedicated work to four project groups: Racial Awareness Art, Student Interviews, Teacher Development, and BIPOC Vaccine Awareness.

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. This month we continued researching artists of color to create social media posts and articles about. We specifically focused on Asian artists for AAPI heritage month as well as Palestinian artists. We looked into the process of making physical zines as we hope to feature student art in a zine soon. In addition to this, we continued brainstorming for our zine. We found zines made by people of color to use as inspiration and thought of possible prompt ideas and organization/formatting styles. Lastly, we began working to get our flyers up in highschool. We plan to reach out to high school teachers to ask them to help display our flyers throughout their classrooms. In June we will start writing articles based on the research we've done on multiple artists of color. We'll continue finding the zines and other inspirations before making our own. We'll also continue looking into zine-making as we hope to create ours this summer.

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. This month we finished the planning process for our project such as how the interviews will work and what questions will be asked. We have also collected a few interviewers and interviewees. In order to get more participants in this project we started outreach. Part of our outreach was creating posters to help advertise our project to students of color within our district. Next month we will continue our outreach to find more interviewees. We will also begin the interviewing process with them.

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 are putting 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. In May we finished research on topics we previously compiled from teacher feedback. We've begun working on PowerPoints to present to teachers. Each research topic has been given its own PowerPoint and we are working on

condensing all of our research into an easily understandable & brief PowerPoint. Next month we will continue to work on these PowerPoints, possibly adding more information to the research as we find it. After finishing the presentations, we'll begin working on a plan to present them to teachers. This includes practicing how we'll present, deciding on how we want to show these to teachers (Zoom call, emailing a recording, etc.) and reaching out to high schools to determine the best time to give our presentations.

The BIPOC Vaccine Awareness Project is a newly created group that works to create an informational workshop program for BIPOC communities while spreading COVID Vaccine resources. This month we began thinking about the purpose of our project as well as how we want to go through with it. A brief outline was made and we created a general timeline keeping in mind that we want this workshop to take place before most POC get vaccinated. We created a contact list of people of color within the healthcare industry to reach out to and did further research to see who could give a presentation or lead a workshop. Apart from healthcare workers, we found contacts from within our district that could serve as connectors between schools and help make this a district or community wide project. We decided to partner with a City of Issaquah contact, Marisol Visser, who is initiating a similar project; we agreed on a partnership, and within the next month will be collaborating on a concrete plan of execution for the project ideally before June 30th.

LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ Affinity Group has officially met 3 times this month with 11 active members. We have dedicated work to four project groups, and one affinity project: Amenities and Clothing, Curriculum, Books, Names and Pronouns, and the Organizational Project.

Amenities and Clothing is planning to meet as a group to discuss the future of the project and the transitioning of leadership, to come to a consensus together. We are working on two projects to be implemented this Fall, a clothing drive and gender neutral bathrooms. Additionally, we continue to work with the Women's Empowerment group on the menstrual products project.

Curriculum discussed specific questions we plan to ask the ISD Curriculum Auditors and has composed a questions document to record them. Asynchronously, we have been working on intersectional topics as we continue to research 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 Basics/101 and is still working on finding more efficient ways to equitably distribute the resource. Our next step for this “Glossary Project” is to go deeper into more “complicated” pronouns such as emoji pronouns. We also want to jump start on projects we want to launch fully for the Fall given we will be going back in person. At the beginning of the 2020 Fall Term, we had ideas such as offering small pronouns stickers to put on ASB cards. We plan on finding a way to carry this out so it can be distributed with ASB cards and there can be extras in front offices throughout the year. We also want to pick back up the option for there to be a more student accessible gender neutral bathroom in each school. There is also a new school being built and we are looking into the inclusion of a gender neutral bathroom there as well. Alongside this we want to kickstart things such as encouraging teachers to put their pronouns on places such as by their name on their “door nametag” and adding pronouns to emails. We have many other plans such as exploring the options for a physical pronouns guide and we are very excited to get started!

The Organizational Project assessed how to reach out and partner with organizations, and finalized our research stage. Our next step is to establish connections with these organizations to collaborate on projects in partnership with them, and we are on hold until we have closed our outreach to new members.

Books focuses on raising awareness for LGBTQ+ authors and literature in schools. This month the group has been working on two projects - LGBTQ+ author research and a presentation project. We have started researching LGBTQ+ authors and we will eventually narrow down our research to create a series of social media posts on them, with the possibility of turning this into a council-wide project. In addition, on Tuesday, May 25th, we gave a presentation on the Importance of LGBTQ+ Literature to the Building Equity team at SHS, which was then recorded and shown to all the teachers at Skyline. Going forward, we will be focusing on our author research and working to include the rest of the affinity books groups in our social media project.

Low-Income & Homelessness

The Low-Income and Homelessness Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 7 active members. We have dedicated work to three project groups: The Safe Space Project, the Resource 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. In the past month we have focused on our partnership with the garage for our pop up safe spaces. We started meeting regularly with Tiana Perry, who will be dedicating time to work with us on this project. We are currently looking for physical spaces we can potentially rent out and we plan to have a specific location by the end of next month. In addition to this, we will be focusing on the fundraising and donation aspect of the safe spaces.

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. We have specifically been focusing on the distribution of pamphlets in schools and other places in the community. We recently received the approval to distribute pamphlets in schools by Ms. McCormick. In addition, we have contacted places like the Issaquah Food Bank, King County Library, the Garage, Friends of Youth, Starbucks, etc, and we plan on distributing pamphlets there as well once we get the approval from each place. We also hope to get our list of resources available on school websites because they are severely lacking in what resources they offer to students and families.

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. In the past month we have created our year-long application form for the council, allowing our target demographic to apply whenever they are able to.

Mental Health & Illness

The Mental Health & Illness Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 16 active members. We are continuing work on our five project groups: Mental Health Check-In Form, Destigmatizing Mental Illness, 504 Plan Resources, Calming Room, and Teacher Guide.

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 the Building Equity Leads from Issaquah, Skyline, and Liberty High Schools to schedule meetings to discuss the implementation of the form at these schools. We had our follow-up meeting with both Mrs. Yuen and Ms. King on the 19th and compromised on having the check-in form system be an *option* for students to communicate about mental health needs, while teachers who are hesitant about implementing this project would provide an email template instead. The template will operate like the form but we would provide question stems and prompts to help the students construct this email. Teachers are also required by the CBA to check their inboxes and address any student needs within 48 hours, which Ms. King and Mrs. Yuen suggested as a better temporary solution since mandating maintenance of a separate form would be a lengthy, legal process involving the union.

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 Instagram on mental illness in particular. Social media work has been stagnant because our new Public Relations council-wide project has begun a shift to articles to be posted on the council's website rather than on Instagram. Members have been doing individual asynchronous research. 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. We are awaiting an email response from the district curriculum auditors to move forward with reforming the actual curriculum, but we began a small collaboration with the LGBTQ+ curriculum project group on a presentation to health teachers

about language use, tone, or essentially verbal execution of the health curriculum. We hope this will invigorate health teachers to take the content further rather than simply present information to students, create a safer space, and help this course become a supply of resources and a means to combat the stigma surrounding LGBTQ+ identities and mental illness.

The Calming Room Project is working to create a physical space in high schools within our district for students to go to when they're experiencing mental health anxiety & panic attacks or need to deal with the effects of a depressive episode. This month we created a more concrete timeline that we hope to follow throughout this project. We collected maps of high school campuses and looked for ideal locations for the calming room. When looking at maps we kept in mind the list of requirements we hope the room meets, such as being in close proximity to the counselor's office. We looked into the counseling department at high schools and focused on finding out the role of mental health professionals at our school and the specifics of what they do/how they aid students. Lastly we did research on schools that have already implemented a calming room to see how they impacted the students and the school environment. After putting together a list of schools that have calming rooms, we looked at their statistics that support calming rooms and show that they have a positive impact on the students and their academic performance. We hope to start putting together a project proposal for teachers next month. We'll be reaching out to our teachers that we know care about mental health and asking for feedback and support for the project.

The Teacher Guide 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. In the past month we have finished our final draft of the guide and will be focusing on outreach. We will be emailing Sharon Roy for approval and then emailing the guide out to all assistant principals in the district. The first round of the project should be done by the end of June, but we plan to update it each term.

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. This month the project group worked to secure a meeting with those who oversee 504 plans at a district level. The outreach was successful and a meeting is set for

this June. The council worked on creating a presentation that would stand against inequities in 504 plan assignments. Furthermore, the 504 plan resource project talked about ways we could help students going forward by meeting their needs with the potential for school wide lessons.

Immigrants & Culture

The Immigrants and Culture Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 10 active members. This month has allowed us to discuss recent immigrant issues with our newest members, inspiring the formation of two new project groups: Immigrant History, and the Immigrant Guidebook. Each of these two are in the early development stages, but the Affinity Group will continue to work on them moving into June. 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, an extension of the Curriculum Project, hopes to elaborate on the vague anti-bullying campaigns at elementary schools with a focus on cultural sensitivity and the immigrant experience, to combat xenophobia from a young age. In this, we are aiming to address the lack of education regarding xenophobia within elementary schools, so obtaining feedback

from auditors and counselors is a part of that. We are anticipating collaboration and feedback soon.

Religious Awareness

The Religious Awareness Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 7 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 being the Destigmatizing Religious Stereotypes group, aims to focus on specific widespread stereotypes about various religions, and research them in order to debunk them and explain to our peers how dangerous and offensive they are. We have decided which stereotypes will be debunked through posts or articles. Additionally, the Holiday Post subsection posted about Eid on 5/12 as well as Cinco de Mayo on 5/5. We are continuing on our goal to spread awareness for holidays from different religions within ISD to help more students feel heard and welcome. We are currently beginning our research for the Summer 2021 holidays, as we have already posted holidays leading up to the end of the school year/the month of June. A document was also compiled to list possible accommodations for the June holidays which will be used for E-News.

The Minority Holiday Awareness is 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. After gathering information and examples regarding the current equity e-news that has been sent out to staff, we brainstormed, and will suggest feedback regarding changes to the newsletter. We will continue this process, and are hoping to be able to update the newsletter to allow for better readability.

The Curriculum Project is working on identifying 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 provide feedback to ISD about how we can make these necessary changes and implementations into the curriculum. This month, we continued brainstorming questions related to religious awareness equity issues to ask curriculum

auditors, and are waiting to hear back from the auditors and meet as a council-wide project group before moving forwards with the project.

Women's Empowerment

The Women's Empowerment Affinity group has officially met 4 times this month with 10 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 been working on compiling notes and information about women's empowerment related inequities that we want to spread awareness about. We have been focusing a lot on menstrual products and how they tie into low income and homelessness, as that is an affinity group we've been collaborating with for the past couple months. We have plans in the future to create posts about intersectionality among women and much more.

The Sexual Reproductive Products Project has been continuing our research regarding menstrual products being provided in schools. We just recently got news that the state of Washington implemented a law that all women and gender-inclusive restrooms in schools are required to provide menstrual products for free. We as a group are now focused on expanding that law to men's restrooms as well, as there are men that have menstrual cycles. Our next step for this project will be to contact ISD and see when this law will be implemented (as we know that most schools still aren't providing any products) and also figure out how to compile our research and find a good way to communicate and emphasize the importance of free menstrual products in men's restrooms as well.

Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

The Physical and Cognitive Disabilities Affinity group has officially met 4 times this month with 6 active members. We are currently working on two projects: Staff Empathy and Guide/SEL Lesson.

The Staff Empathy Project focuses on increasing empathy/awareness for disabled students in the ISD staff. We plan to make a presentation that covers education, misconceptions, and accommodations. We finished our research this month and will move forward by completing and finalizing the visual presentation. Following that, we want to reach out to ISD staff administration to share and present this to staff, as well as giving them a copy to (hopefully)

show to new staff members later on. Our goal is to present this to staff in August 2021.

The Guide/SEL Lesson Project focuses on student body awareness/de-stigmatization through an SEL lesson on interacting with disabled students. Many people treat people with disabilities like small children- use a condescending tone, act as if they can't swear or use adult topics around them, be insistent to help them even if they've clearly stated they do not need help, etc. We want to teach students that they are still *people*, your disabled peers are your age and the way they interact with them shouldn't be so different than they would any other peer. This month we have completed research and begun building our presentation.

First-Generation Students

The First-Generation Students Affinity group has officially met 2 times this month with 7 active members. We currently have 1 general project idea, which mainly surrounds a seminar with education regarding post-high school plans and a question and answer alumni panel.

Before starting up an official project, since our group consists of mainly 2nd and 3rd generation students, we are currently brainstorming gaps in knowledge and researching in order to gain a full understanding of specific terms and processes. Some examples of research topics include types of schools, FASFA, Financial Aid, etc.

Curriculum

The Curriculum council-wide project group has officially met one time this month with 10 active members. This group is focusing on implementing curriculum changes by collaborating with district officials on behalf of all Affinity Groups. We are still waiting for a response from the curriculum auditors and brought this up to Sharon. We compiled questions we would like the auditors to answer when the council meets with them and asked affinity leads to ask members if they had any affinity-specific questions as well.

Mentorship

The Mentorship council-wide project group has officially met 4 times this month with 13 active members. We are currently still defining our partnership with VOICE mentorship as we learn about their plans and funding for the 2021-2022 school year. We have paused research on educational resources on target marginalized groups for the month of May. We will be resuming

this in June. We sent out emails to local and national mentorship programs and were able to schedule interviews with UCI Counseling Center Mentoring Program and MENTOR National. Both programs would like to continue working with us and will remain as contact points for inquiries and resources. We drafted follow-up emails to the organizations we have not heard back from, and hope to still schedule interviews with them over the next month or so. We also started looking at how safe spaces can impact mentorship and youth development. We currently have a plan to learn more about safe spaces in the ISD area and will probably be taking action on this in the next 1-2 months.