

ISD Student Equity Council -- November Monthly Report

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October Monthly Report: [HERE](#)

Students of Color

The Students of Color Affinity Group has officially met three times this month with 18 active members. We are continuing to work in our three project focus groups: Racial Awareness Art, Student Interviews, Development for Teachers in Racist Situations.

The Racial Awareness Art project has been continuing to work on their goals of uplifting artists of color, from ISD students to all underappreciated artists of color in history. They have been contacting artists of color with sizable following on social media to begin to spotlight them on our @isd.equity instagram account. They are also working on collecting the contact information of arts teachers in the district (visual arts, ceramics, theater, creative writing, etc.) to spotlight student artists of color and are currently working on the next steps in regards to networking.

The Student Interviews project has been working on the formatting of the interview, including what questions would be asked, where we can safely interview students, and how to keep those who want to be anonymous. We are currently working on a plan for outreach to students regarding potential interest in sharing their experiences. In order to ensure comfort with the Council, we will be inviting them to join us in a Students of Color meeting. We will also have current Council members do an interview “trailer” so students can view how the interviews would ideally be conducted. With the intent to also include students who wish to remain anonymous, we have included the means of sharing their written story to include in our interview video. Once we send out the student interest form, we will begin the process of getting in contact with students to set up their socially-distanced interview times.

The Development for Teachers in Racist Situations has completed phase one of research and collaboration. After brainstorming which topics are the most prevalent in the district, we did extensive research on each topic and how we are able to present solutions to staff. Our next step is to send out a Google Form to staff across the district to fill out regarding their experiences with racism in the classroom. This form would be optional to teachers, and only teachers who wish to submit questions, concerns, or scenarios will have to submit the form. This will ensure

both student and teacher perspectives are being considered: the students, who are in the classroom, and the teachers, who must uphold the safety of the students. Our Phase two includes altering any previous research we have already done if needed and potentially adding on other topics. With the incorporation of multiple perspectives, research, and further discussion, we will begin to outline how to effectively enact this project to be successful and effective.

LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ Affinity Group has officially met four times this month with 18 active members. We are continuing to work on our four focus groups: Resources and Networking, Names and Pronouns, Books, Curriculum, and Amenities and Clothing.

The Amenities and Clothing subgroup is working on 2 projects simultaneously: the Period Products Project and the Gender Neutral Bathrooms Campaign. The Period Products Project recently partnered with the Women's Empowerment Affinity Group to help implement tampons and pads in girls' bathrooms. The goal is to have a steady and free supply of tampons and pads available in all bathrooms in schools. At the moment, the project is still figuring out the details. The other project is changing the signage for bathrooms to gender neutral. Currently, we are working on finding another contact because the one we initially had wasn't working.

The Curriculum subgroup is in the process of reaching out to General Psychology teachers at each high school to gather information regarding what is taught about gender and sexuality in those classes. They have also been collecting resources regarding the Stonewall Riots of 1969 to create an optional Stonewall lesson plan for high school history teachers.

The Names and Pronouns subgroup has been working on brainstorming new project ideas to pursue throughout this month. We have decided that we will likely be developing something around the idea of the importance of pronouns in zoom names, and will begin drafting out a more developed version of this soon. We have put other projects, such as accessories and ASB card pronoun stickers, on hold until we return to an in person learning environment. We have decided to return to our previous project that has to do with giving students the option to have their preferred names in yearbooks, as we want to attempt to reach out to Liberty and Skyline yearbook teachers about this proposal, now that we have members who have this connection.

The Resources and Networking group has finished establishing the new affinity outreach system. Subgroup specific contacts were found and email template drafts are currently being

written up. Due to the establishment of the new Outreach Group, and the decreasing need for a group designated to resources and networking in the LGBTQ+ Affinity Group, the Resources and Networking group has officially dissolved. The new Outreach representatives within the group are Mak and Solena.

Low-Income & Homelessness

The Low Income and Homelessness Affinity group has officially met three times this month with 11 active members. We are continuing to work in our four projects: The Safe Place Project, Student Survey, Teacher Presentation Project, and the Printing Project.

Our largest project is the Safe Place Project, which has gone through heavy revisions and development with the collaboration of community members. We have contacted district people with the intention of conducting this project through the district with very little progress. We resorted to another ally, the Teen Cafe Garage. This partnership with the Garage has led up to the growth of this project: the formation of a Youth Shelter plan in Issaquah, a “pop-up” Garage in the Renton area, and a permanent Garage space in the Renton and Skyline areas. We will be meeting weekly with Kaylee to continue to develop these plans. As of now, we are crafting a design and formal project proposal. Earlier in November, several members of the affinity group crafted and presented a presentation to the local Kiwanis group at the invitation of city council member Barb de Michele. We presented the experiences low-income students face, the statistics showing the numbers of how they are limited in success, and what our Safe Space project currently entails. After this meeting, we have met with community groups who are interested in aiding with the project.

With the same efforts to accommodate the necessities and desires of Low-Income students, it is best to hear from them outside the council as well. Every student’s experience and how their socioeconomic status impacts them will vary; thus, we have created an optional form for students to anonymously submit their struggles in online and in-person learning, and what would best benefit them from the district and our efforts. We are currently questioning how to get this form out to students effectively, while respecting privacy of student identities. We believe this can best be done through the ISD Equity Department, and have brought up this concern during the 12/7 meeting.

For a more immediate solution to answer the calls for resources, we have additionally crafted the Printing Project. With the quick transition to online learning, we have several concerns for students. Of course, online learning poses a number of inequities, but one that we believe has not been addressed is different learning styles that cannot be accommodated to online. For example, families with financial hardship are limited in how they can make the best of online learning. Particularly, students who are kinesthetic learners, opting for more physical learning styles. While some students have access to printers, physical notes, and study materials, families of financial hardship are limited in resources they can provide for themselves. We have created this project with the following steps: research its importance, create a form for teachers to put on Canvas so students in need of physical notes can submit a request. Administrators/teachers/designated people would follow the form submissions, and print out materials needed by students. The pick-up would be similar to a school's "Materials Pick-Up." As of now, we desire to discuss this with the ISD Equity Department to see the best path of action, contacts, and way to implement our idea.

Yet another way for students to be supported may be directly from teachers themselves, thus we have created the Teacher Presentation Project. After in-depth research of how the pandemic and online learning impacts low-income and physically displaced students, we have crafted a video presentation of the affinity group presenting facts, stories, and ways teachers can support low-income students. This holds the value of presenting the likely barriers students are facing, for teachers to acknowledge and be aware of why certain students may be struggling or underperforming. This helps create a teacher-student relationship that understands the obstacles some students endure outside the classroom. All that is needed is the effective way to send out this presentation for teachers to view at their own time and desire.

Mental Health & Illness

The Mental Health & Illness Affinity Group has officially met four times this month with 20 active members. We are continuing to work on our three projects: 504 Plan Accessibility, Mental Health Check-in Form, and Destigmatizing Mental Illness in Curriculum.

The 504 Plan Accessibility project has goals of making students aware of 504 Plans and how to get one if needed. Currently this group is working on getting the information put out via a Canvas announcement to all high schools. Additionally, an Instagram post request was put in to

get this information out on our social media. Once these two announcements are put out, this project will be wrapped up.

Our members working on the Mental Health Check-in Form project are pushing a simple Google form that would be accessible on every high-school teacher's virtual instruction webpage (most likely Canvas) and provide a more comfortable medium for students to request accommodations from their more vigorous classes in the case of mental health/equity-related issues inhibiting students from completing their work. Teachers will be able to collect this information in a specific spot, about students' needs and struggles conveniently, and at any point during the week or school year. We are moving on to outreach; presenting our check-in form final draft to the appropriate personnel and anticipating a response or perhaps feedback. Once we receive a go ahead we are planning on looking into how to effectively distribute the form to teachers. We plan to wait 1-3 months after the form is in place, then make any necessary adjustments based on teacher and student feedback.

The Destigmatizing Mental Illness project is currently utilizing school's SEL lessons to spread greater awareness of mental health struggles students could be dealing with, which we have been brainstorming; this would involve incorporating student voices and experiences, providing helpful coping mechanisms, ensuring the content is accurate and counters the stigma around mental health, as well as other details concerning format or graphics. Our next step is to create a mock up of one (SEL lessons) to show to principals as an example of what we want in future presentations. Currently we are working toward persuading ISD high school administrations or principals to allow students to chime in the SEL lesson-planning process; this could include members of our affinity group and a select group of diverse, passionate and educated students from each school.

Immigrants & Culture

The Immigrants and Culture Affinity Group has officially met three times this month with 12 active members. We are continuing to work in our three project focus groups: Crayons, Cultural Decorations, and Social Media Food.

For our Crayons Project, we have solidified our proposal for our project. Our goal is to distribute multi-skin colored crayons to ISD elementary schools to make students of color feel more inclusive. As students of color in the district, we remember the elementary days when we

would have to choose from crayons that would not fit our skin tone. Our overall plan is to get information on the number of crayons we will need and we have this. We took each elementary school, the number of average students the year before, and the current number of teachers. We have concluded that we would need 1068 packs of multi-colored crayons. Then we would want to purchase crayons and need help with the funding. Finally, we would distribute the crayons to schools and be able to put them into school supply lists.

For our Cultural Decorations Project, we have created two different plans for an in-person and online school. For in-person, our goal is to have culturally inclusive decorations starting with all ISD high schools. Especially, we want to create a 'Cultural Corner' at each school. We would utilize display cases and preferably have them close to the entrance of the school. We would start this when in-person schooling begins. Then we would collaborate with ASB's at each high school and change it each month. We want each school to positively represent the cultures of their students. For online school, we have now added to our social media's amazing holiday posts. We will have an extra slide illustrating the decorations that people that celebrate that holiday would use.

For our Social Media Food Project, we are finally going to start our Instagram posts on our ISD Student Equity account. We will highlight different foods from different cultures on social media approximately every week. The post would include the food, its cultural significance, the ingredients of it, the recipe, and possibly a video of some who was filmed making the recipe.

We are extremely proud of our projects and our members. We are looking forward to continuing our progress.

Religious Awareness

The Religious Awareness Affinity Group has officially met two times this month with 6 active members. This month, we continued our system for students to submit religious/spiritual holidays for posts on our social media to spread awareness along with starting a project to allow students who practice minority religions to share with their teachers how their religion affects them in the classroom.

The holiday social media post system was generated to make sure that 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. We have also collaborated with the immigrants and culture affinity group in order to research and provide information on more culturally relevant holidays. The system will be effective for the duration of the year and will continue to be open. In the past month, we have posted about Navratri, Samhain, and Diwali.

For our minority holiday awareness system, we have reached out to the ISD Equity Department to inquire about current systems that are in place to inform teachers about how a religion could affect students in the classroom. In addition to the currently in place calendar, we want to add information regarding suggested accommodations for students who celebrate this holiday. We will propose a system where students can directly inform their teachers about a certain holiday and with that knowledge, teachers will be able to proactively excuse some students from homework for the duration of the holiday.

Women's Empowerment

The Women's Empowerment Affinity group has met three times this month with 10 active members. This month, we developed and decided on what we want our affinity group to look like, as well as brainstorm for future projects. We have divided up into 4 project groups: Curriculum, Social Media, Reproductive Products, and Support Form.

The health curriculum project group's goal is to improve the existing health curriculum that 5th graders, middle, and high schoolers are taught now as well as potentially develop SEL lessons to go along with the improvements. The group believes that the existing curriculum fails to cover topics like discharge, consent vs. coercion, abortions, how to access birth control, emergency contraception, body image, and discussions on body hair to the full extent, or at all. In addition, we want to fill in the blanks in the health curriculum such as which form of birth control fits best, what to expect from taking birth control, the complexities of consent, etc. By adjusting the curriculum and working on these SEL lessons, students will be more educated on these topics and it will be easier for them to formulate their own opinions, and make decisions

about their health in the future. This is a project we can start working on during distance learning easily, and we plan on doing so. Our hope is that by the time we can go back to in person school, we will be well on our way to making these important adjustments to the 5th grade, middle, and high school curriculums.

The topics we desire to cover in the Curriculum project are incredibly important for students to know; because the Curriculum project will be more time intensive, we have created this social media project to ensure students get this information to some depth in the meantime. We have discussed social media ideas to ensure the amplification of gender minorities, women, and topics entailing gender inequities. This is a more immediate plan of action that provides the general student body awareness of inequities, education on these topics, and the amplification of people we typically don't see acknowledged in the school setting. We are compiling topics and researching them--ex: the Pink Tax--and created them into sufficient social media posts with further sources for students to utilize. We are also considering compiling video lessons of students teaching these topics in more depth.

Members in the Sexual Reproductive Products project are working on compiling resources such as birth control access, tampons, pads, diva cups, bras, and more to help those with periods. This is a resource that students have expressed interest in is access to menstrual products in school restrooms. While some schools already have this available in women's restrooms, we want to expand this to all of the high schools with the future goal of having these resources in restrooms for any gender. This is especially important to students whose gender identity does not align with their assigned sex at birth as it can potentially relieve some of the gender dysphoria related to having menstrual cycles. Although this project cannot take place immediately due to the remote environment, we hope that throughout the next year, we will be able to make these products accessible. At the schools which do not have this resource system in place at all, a 'trial run' to evaluate student demand for these products could be beneficial. For all schools, we will push for administration to understand the importance this holds and aid us in implementing this for all restrooms on the high school campuses. This is also a motion that we can move forward with at the middle school level.

The Sexual Harassment Support Form was created to allow a person to report sexual assault or other uncomfortable situations. The goal of this project is to provide students a way to share their stories or encounters with sexual harassment in a way that is comfortable for

everyone. Sexual harassment encounters happen too often, and not enough people speak up because of fear. By creating a form, students are given the opportunity to express themselves while not having to talk in-person, for that is something that a lot of people aim to avoid. We want people's stories to be heard, no matter the way it's communicated. Though this form can't be released until we are back to in-person learning, this remote learning environment is a great time to start it. By the time schools go back to in-person, we want to have this form fully assembled and finalized so it can be accessible right away. This applies to both high schools and middle schools.

Physical & Cognitive Disabilities

N/A

Book Drive

The Book Drive is a council-wide project, with the goal of providing the ISD community with diverse, representative, and educational books. We have all of our affinity groups working on this with some groups focusing on books about racial justice, lgbt+ representation, and surrounding a positive representation of mental illness and mental disability. We are all compiling and adding to a list of books. We have decided to partner with a current ISD project and help them with their mission to implement representative books. We are super proud of our progress and our future work with the district.