

ISD Student Equity Council — August 2021 Monthly Report

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Students of Color

The Students of Color Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 19 active members. We have dedicated work to four project groups: Racial Awareness Art, Student Interviews, Teacher Development, and BIPOC Enforcement.

The Racial Awareness Art Project works to uplift artists of color from within our school district and from history. In August we worked out the budgeting aspects of our physical zine, taking into account things like printing costs and artist compensation. The group continued to work on articles that will be uploaded on the new council website. Lastly, we began designing posts to showcase student art on our Instagram account. In September we will finalize budgets/funding specifics for the zine and start looking at printing possibilities.

The Student Interviews Project was started to shed light on the experiences of BIPOC students within our district. The group has started organizing in-person interview details such as location, times, and matching up interviewers to interviewees. In September the group will begin the interview process both online and in-person.

The Development for Teachers in Racist Situations Project aims to create an informational workshop type event to help educate teachers on how to best combat racism in their classrooms. We continued to create presentations using the research that had been done in previous months. Along with the presentations, we have been drafting scripts that include detailed research to ensure that the teachers have an in-depth and informing experience. This month we will continue transferring research to Google Slides. We will also be giving and receiving feedback within the group to create as high quality presentations as possible.

The BIPOC Enforcement Project was newly started this month and hopes to bring in BIPOC speakers to help encourage BIPOC students to pursue careers that society claims they shouldn't go into. In August we started working on the project outline to start brainstorming how we want this project to work and ensure group members are on the same page. In September we will start talking about the careers we specifically want to focus on as well as people and groups we want to reach out to when looking for speakers.

LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 13 active members. We have dedicated work to four project groups, and two affinity projects: Amenities

and Clothing, Curriculum, Books, Names and Pronouns, and the Organizational Project, and the LGBT-Q&A Project.

The Amenities and Clothing Project is currently working in a sort of asynchronous format. Our projects have remained the same from what we were working on during the Summer, and our next steps are to find the actual resources we would like to provide. The Organizational project has made steps in connecting with LGBTQ+ organizations in the area and we hope they are able to help aid this group and its projects. We are mainly focusing on our resources project, working on gathering set sites, areas, safe spaces, etc.

The Books Project is currently working on reaching out to LGBTQ+ authors about possibly speaking at council-run events to promote and educate others about LGBTQ+ literature, as well as revising and editing our "The Importance of LGBTQ+ Literature" powerpoint so that we can present it to more high school staff and students. Multiple of our meetings have been brief updates followed by asynchronous work, which has included researching authors, drafting emails to authors, reaching out to schools, and improving our powerpoint. In upcoming meetings, we hope to send out our author emails and finalize the presentation.

The Curriculum Project is currently working on creating a guide for health teachers about a variety of LGBTQ+ topics. The goal of the project is to educate teachers about inclusive vs. exclusive vocabulary, LGBTQ+ sexual health and healthcare resources, and medical transition in order to better support queer students, and better inform their cisnet classmates. When the guide is finished, it will be distributed to as many health teachers in the district as possible, in order for them to implement the ideas within the guide in their teachings. So far, we have thoroughly completed the sections of the guide pertaining to inclusive language, and are ready to be finalized.

The Names and Pronouns Project has recently transitioned into an asynchronous structure for the time being. Before we moved into this structure, we finished our Normalization via Teachers powerpoint, and the purpose of this project is to help normalize including pronouns in school activities and introductions in the classroom. We are working on a plan to film voiceovers for each slide and will then work towards sending this powerpoint out to staff in the district. We are yet to discuss how we will move forward and which project we will begin to work on next.

The LGBT-Q&A Project has released the form we created, so the public (students, staff, parents, etc.) have access to the project. As of now, we are still awaiting responses, but we

already have our system set up to ensure that once we receive a question, we will have an answer +for the public to see in a timely and well-coordinated manner. In addition, as part of the Affinity Deep Dives that the Outreach group is doing, we will be explaining the project in detail through a social media post to aid in the publicity that the project is receiving.

The Organizational Project aims to to build connections between LGBTQ+ organizations for future projects and collaborations between our affinity group. Our group is planning on meeting with the Lambert House in the near future, in order to discuss how our affinity group's projects can be supported by their organization. We are planning to establish a firm connection with the representative of the organization by introducing the work of our affinity group and Council, and invite future collaboration, as well as advice.

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.

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 month of August we have been working towards both our Safe Space and Youth Home Project. For the Safe Space portion, we have been doing research for our case and needs statement. We are focusing on doing demographic research on schools in the Renton area. For the Youth Home, we have started to work with the mutual aid organization, Super Familia, in hopes to get more voices in our project. We have also started sorting our must haves and can't haves for our Youth Home, and with that we are beginning to formulate a business plan.

The Resources Project works to bring free and low-cost resources to low income and physically displaced youth. Currently, we are working on a plan that would provide low-cost and free extracurriculars to students in the Issaquah School District. With combined research and communication with the district, we hope to have the district partner with various outside organizations (relating to arts, sports, etc) to make free and low cost extracurriculars possible for students.

The Outreach Project works to outreach to our target demographic in order to have representation. Currently, our affinity group lacks low-income and physically displaced youth, so we dedicated an entire project to change that. In the month of August, we have been focusing on Fall Term outreach with the rest of the council. We decided to bring back the Survey Project because it both advertises our council and gives us research for the Resources Project.

Mental Health & Illness

The Mental Health & Illness Affinity Group has officially met 5 times this month with -- 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. We spent most of our meetings discussing next steps and barriers for implementing the check-in form, completed a project proposal/request for the district, and brainstormed possible meetings with counselors or building equity leads to clear up staff roles and the check-in form's purpose.

The Destigmatizing Mental Illness Project is working on destigmatizing and creating awareness for mental illness by creating shareable content on the @isd.equity Instagram as well as contributing journalistic articles to our upcoming public relations initiative, which will be published on the Council's website. This group also focuses on curriculum reform, focusing on destigmatizing mental illness by improving the learning approach to and representation of these illnesses in the health curriculum. We continued finalizing our Health Teaching Presentation, to be delivered to various health teachers throughout ISD schools, about the significance of verbally executing the health education in a way that preserves a safe, inclusive environment in classrooms. The group will begin outreach efforts next month to schedule this presentation!

The Calming Room Project aims to create a physical space in schools for students to go to when they experience mental health-related conflicts that interfere with their engagement in the classroom. In August the group continued working on logistical details about the calming room. We created a form to receive input from our district's students about the Calming Room to get a better idea of how we want the room to function. We also wrote a project proposal for teacher allies in hopes of receiving feedback and future support. Lastly, we began drafting emails

to equity-related clubs within our district to let them know about our project and the student input form. In September we will be looking through the student input and adjusting our plan for the Calming Room to best fit the needs of students.

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. The project is still on hold partly due to uncertainties about how the guide conflicts with the CBA, changes due for transition back to in-person school, and low project membership. However, a few board members were able to meet with the IEA president and we have a clearer outline of how to propose the guide to the teacher union and negotiate so it doesn't conflict with the CBA and district limitations.

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. The group continued research about 504 plans and finalized our next steps; we are looking to meet with Pam Ridenour, the Director of Student Interventions, to discuss equitable solutions by providing them the student perspective on how effectively current 504 plans address mental health and disability accommodations. While we wait to set up this meeting, we will brainstorm other organizations to contact and ways to spread awareness about 504 plans to more of the student body and minorities' families.

Immigrants & Culture

The Immigrants and Culture Affinity Group has officially met 5 times this month with 10 active members. We are continuing work on our four project groups: Immigrant History, the Immigrant Guidebook, Cultural Decorations, and the Food Awareness project. The Crayon project has also made a return from its hiatus last year.

The Immigrant History Project is working to educate council members, other ISD students, and the general community about the history of immigration and how relevant topics impact immigrants in contemporary times. We believe that a lack of understanding around the immigration process and reasons for immigration is what turns into a lack of compassion and xenophobia. So, to address this, the project group does research, hosts discussions, and writes

articles for the council website. A colonialism article is currently in its final development stages, and our website has released its rehaul, so this is due to launch soon!

The Immigrant Guidebook Project seeks to address the lack of support immigrants have in their transition--whether it be hard logistics or hidden curricula. The responsibility to assimilate and navigate the school system--as well as help their parents throughout the process--often falls on immigrant children, whether they are first or second generation. To aid in this process, the project group is currently researching relevant resources and compiling a step-by-step navigation of the school district for a guidebook that all new immigrants can review upon arrival into the district. We are currently writing about key topics such as important sites/navigation, course selection, extracurriculars, and cultural differences.

In Cultural Decorations, we continue to anticipate implementation 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. We are hoping to continue work on our “Cultural Corner” for the 2021-2022 school year as we continue to work on education through social media. The group is starting to meet again to discuss funding and pitching this throughout the district, and we currently are planning to implement this project at all high schools via a council-club structure later in the year. Our research and calendar development will be vital to this.

The social media food series, “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.

Finally, The Crayon Project has made a return to the affinity group! This project started in Fall 2020, went on hiatus due to the pandemic, and has been making a swift return over the last months. The premise of the project is that, as BIPOC ISD students who experience xenophobia and alienation on the basis of where we come from, we believe in self-expression and representation of all cultures. For elementary schoolers specifically, being able to accurately depict oneself is game-changing, and to do so without having to clumsily mix a traditional crayon set together is an important step towards inclusion. We are currently going through grant

requests and are optimistic about bringing multicultural crayons to all district elementary schools within this term. Hopefully, we will be working with the Issaquah Schools Foundation within the next month to accomplish this!

Religious Awareness

The Religious Awareness Affinity Group has officially met 4 times this month with 6 active members. We have dedicated work to four project groups: Holiday Social Media, Destigmatization, Fasting Space, and the Activities Accommodations Project.

The Holiday Social Media Project posted about four holidays this month which were Lughnasadh, Ashura, Raksha Bandhan, and Krishna Janmashtani. We sent out a google form asking council members if they had any holiday post suggestions for September. There were some miscommunications with some posts this month with the social media team, but we got them sorted out and sent out an announcement to clear up any future miscommunications.

The Destigmatization Project is currently on hold while the project lead is on break.

The Multi-Faith Space Project met twice this month and mainly discussed the focus of our project as it is new. We decided to switch our project from the Fasting Space to a Multi-Faith Room instead because of the results of the Instagram poll we uploaded on the ISD Equity Instagram. We also began initial brainstorming and started to research prayer times and also how a lot of other schools implemented prayer rooms and the counter attacks they faced. We also created a google form to receive student input about the room which is linked [HERE](#). If you have input, please submit the form!

The Activities Accommodations Project is working on creating accommodations for various graded school activities (as of right now we have 2 current tasks in progress). These activities require activities that may violate a student's religious beliefs. Additionally, we are researching these various religious restrictions to then transform into either info graphics or video presentations to share to the district equity department.

Women's Empowerment

The Women's Empowerment Affinity group is currently on hold due to lack of members. We anticipate return within the next term!

Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

The Physical and Cognitive Disabilities Affinity group is currently on hold due to lack of members. We are currently working as a temporary project group under Mental Health & Illness to complete our unfinished projects until we are able to get more prospective members.

First-Generation Students

The First-Generation Students Affinity group has officially met 3 times this month with 5 active members. We have dedicated work to one project: The College Guidebook, and are continuously brainstorming more projects for the future.

The College Guidebook Project is continuing its work of researching different areas of the college application process and working on the design aspect of how the guidebook will look once completed. We have been working hard to create a plan for distribution of the book, both physically and electronically, that will be easily accessible and allow it to reach a large audience. We have also decided to contact college and career centers at each school to assist in ensuring students can learn from the guidebook.

Curriculum

The Curriculum council-wide project group has officially met one time this month with 8 active members. We decided on a new working structure for the project, functioning similarly to the Council's outreach group in the way that different affinity groups put in ideas and requests. We additionally decided to start our new bi-weekly meetings during the first week of September.

Mentorship

The Mentorship council-wide project group has officially met three times this month with 8 active members. The group is currently working on addressing the mentoring needs of students taken from our survey. After meeting with an organization to streamline our orientation planning, we've been working on creating a presentation for onboarding new membering into the program. With the implementation of our school clubs, we are hoping to have a plan as to how the Mentorship Program will be implemented into each school soon.