

Brooks Diversity Committee
Meeting Minutes
12/12/2017

Attendees: Renee Dixon, Shawna Seaton-George, RaMonda Horton, April Capuder, Julie Orton, Cynthia Blair, Joy, Dana Balazar, Grandma Irma, Paul Moore, Dana Anderson

Meeting was called to order by Renee Dixon at 7:21 pm. Shawna asked everyone to introduce themselves. Introductions were made and everyone shared why they were interested in being a part of the Brooks diversity committee.

Agenda:

1. Introductions:
2. Review history of Diversity Counsel and Brooks Diversity Committee:
3. Discussion of what the Brooks Diversity Committee can/should offer

Notes:

1. Shawna reviewed the history, structure, and mission of the district DIVCO. There was discussion regarding how and why the DIVCO was formed. Renee provided an overview of how the district DIVCO, school diversity committees, and PTO were designed to be collaborative and integrated resources.
2. Dana B. raised the question of whether or not there was any data available to help determine what types of things the diversity committee should be addressing. This generated additional discussion on the survey that was used to gather feedback on district 97 community needs. Joy asked if there was any information pertaining to demographic breakdown of responses to survey questions. At this time that information is not available. April reviewed the individual survey questions with all present. The general consensus was that the survey was very broad and that there might need to be some additional efforts to identify specific needs related to diversity and the Brooks community. Julie asked if there was a DIVCO survey committee that would possibly be addressing this issue for the upcoming year, Renee indicated that she would speak with Makesha (district DIVCO chair) to obtain this information.
3. Shawna reviewed the mission of the Brooks diversity committee, also noting that the committee was still very new. Julie asked Renee to provide information on the types of events and activities that the Diversity committee was looking to carry out for the upcoming year. Renee went into detail about forming a welcoming committee that would help address creating a warm and welcoming environment for all Brooks families and students. Renee also brought up the need for a transition event. Joy provided information on the model for a transition event that had been used for Julian/OPRF (What I Wish I Knew) and made suggestions for how we might think about approaching a transition event for

Brooks students. Julie suggested incorporating the welcome committee into current events.

4. Dana B. put forth additional questions related to a vision statement (Our differences make us stronger?) and strategic planning for fulfilling the purpose of the committee (1-2 years). RaMonda indicated that strategic planning for how to address the mission and purpose was one of the things that the committee would like to address but that this would be the purpose of future meetings in the hopes of gathering feedback from others outside of the co-chairs. Renee and Joy highlighted the importance of outreach and building membership (with some suggestions). Renee also indicated that the diversity committee should be about more than just respecting differences. She discussed issues related to unity, access, transparency, and honest discussions about race. Cynthia indicated that in thinking about a vision and mission that we also might want to consider including some wording to address helping Brooks students and parents feel supported. She shared an example of one of the type of issues that might fall under this umbrella. Paul also shared an example of his concern about how peer relations change from elementary to high school with a noticeable racial divide. Dana A. discussed the importance of access for parents and students new to Brooks and Oak Park. Renee also emphasized the importance of making sure that we are allowing students to have a voice in the process. There was discussion on how to elicit student feedback (Joy mentioned-student liason).
5. Shawna also discussed how we might collaborate with Lincoln on carrying out a speaker event with Amanda Lewis and Stacey Gibson (How to talk with your children about race).

Action Items;

1. Set a monthly date for discussion and planning (consider continuing on 3rd Tuesday of each month.
2. Obtain more detailed information re: results of the DivCo survey to help guide Brooks Diversity Committee
3. Revise Vision and Mission Statement language to reflect the need to provide additional supports to students and families in order to meet the D97 Vision: **“Create a positive learning environment for all District 97 students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child”**.
4. Establish a set of clear goals for the remainder of the academic year.
5. Identify roles, objectives and means of communication between meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm

Minutes submitted by R. Horton