

DAC—Sub-committee

Sub-committee: Culturally Responsive

Who:

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What:

What does culturally responsive mean for Manitou Springs School District 14? What are the current realities of culturally responsive practices for MSSD? What are our best hopes for culturally responsive practices in all aspects of our school district? What are we doing well? What are some areas of growth? What would it mean for culturally responsive practices to be systemic?

When: *(Timeline)*

It is essential for this work to be ongoing and happen regularly.

How: *(Process)*

We defined “culturally responsive” and then brainstormed where we see good things happening and where the problems exist. We determined that the district does not have an existing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative beyond adopting the “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Resolution”. Then we researched how other area school districts are approaching DEI. Our proposal came out of recommendations from these groups.

Proposal: *(Top 2-3 recommendations)*

- Set task force meeting dates for the entire year to ensure that the work continues.
- Define a purpose statement for the work that needs to be done.
- Open an application process to make sure that all stake-holders who want to be a part of the DEI task force have an opportunity to apply.
- Train members of the task force over the summer so that the people leading the work know how this work affects marginalized communities within the district.
- Bring in Dr. Nita Mosby-Tyler from the Equity Project for keynote address for all staff at the beginning of the year.
- Complete the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center (WEEAC) audit in all schools in the district during fall 2021 or the same work through Dr. Nita Mosby-Tyler.
- Use the results of the WEEAC audit to determine areas of growth.

- Give school staff quality, ongoing training in implicit bias, culturally responsive teaching, and other issues that fall under diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- This work needs to be tied to the Curriculum Alignment Team work that began this spring.

Story: *(What is the situation? What are the guiding questions?)*

- Parents, students, and staff have raised concerns about issues in the district, surrounding problematic situations around historically marginalized communities
- We know that these issues still exist and that they need to be addressed
- We recognize that the world is changing
- We want to be cognizant and proactive about these issues, keeping in mind that everyone has different experiences
- The DEI task force was established around 4 years ago and was reintroduced last year. The team did not meet throughout the school year, but will be moving forward.

Interests: *(What are the needs, concerns or desires underlying this issue?)*

When a student, staff member, parent, community member, or visitor walks into an MSSD14 building, they feel represented and celebrated regardless of who they are. The climate of our buildings and the curriculum we teach should be implemented through a culturally responsive lens.

Research: *(What research was conducted? What are the current trends in research and practice?)*

Most school districts are forming DEI committees. We talked to the following people:

- Stacey Brandon of DEI in Cherry Creek
- Dr. Kimbra Smith of DEI in D-11
- Colleen Toomey from the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center (WEEAC)
- Maggie Elias - The Culture of Poverty presentation

Options: *(Brainstorm and list)*

1. *Do what we have always done.*
2. *Progressively move forward to create an inclusive culture that celebrates every stakeholder.*

Criteria:

In order to accomplish this, we all must:

- Have an open mind
- Be willing to seek to understand people and their perspectives
- Everyone has a story--share yours

- Comfort- open communication requires going beyond feelings
- Challenge the status quo
- Freedom to speak boldly
- Recognize the “truth” of others
- Leave your personal preferences at the door

Suggested Implementation Models: *(Ideas or best practices for implementation)*

*Because of the nature of diversity, inclusion, and equity and the value we place on each stakeholder, it is imperative that **all** staff are trained in culturally responsive education and implicit bias. Given the significance of this topic and that fact that our Board of Education made this a charge question, it is our recommendation that the Board devises a plan to support this initiative with resources, time, and accountability. Whatever model the DEI task forces chooses will require commitment for fidelity and finesse.*

Additional Notes: *(Key ideas and discussions that were not part of the proposal but they should not be lost)*

Next Steps:

- All buildings integrated and systematic in our approach (curriculum, clubs, etc.)
- Staff Development and Training
- Conflict Resolution/ Restorative Justice
 - a. Student to Student
 - b. Student to Teacher
 - c. Teacher to Family
- Not aiming for a particular demographic, but celebrating what we have
- Growth in the process of responsiveness
- Engage with the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion taskforce
- Equity Compass Review from WEEAC (Western Educational Equity Assistance Center) with the DE&I taskforce

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