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West Islip Union Free School District

Equity Committee Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2024

The meeting commenced at 5:31 p.m. in the Library Media Center at West Islip High School.

Mrs. Morrison welcomed all committee members. The attendance sheet was circulated and all members were asked to sign in.

Each committee member was provided with an overview of the results from the student experience surveys (3-5, 6-8, 9-12).

The following information was shared related to the number of student respondents:

Gr. 3-5	358 out of 813 eligible students
Gr. 6-8	588 out of 843 eligible students
Gr. 9-12	458 out of 1201 eligible students

The following “themes” emerged from the data collected from the Gr. 3-5 survey responses:

- *70-75% of the students that responded evidenced that they are comfortable, happy and included at school.*
- *25-29% of the students that responded expressed the need for additional considerations on the part of the district to feel comfortable, happy and accepted at school.*
- *The results evidenced that:*
 - Students like coming to school to see friends and teachers*
 - Students enjoy hands on learning activities*
 - The district needs to continue to assess how math and reading instruction/support is provided to students to ensure that all students feel supported*
- *82 students provided their names and requested to be contacted by a staff member in regard to the survey.*

The following “themes” emerged from the data collected from the Gr. 6-8 survey responses:

- 72-84% of the students that responded evidenced that they are comfortable, happy and included at school.
- 16-28% of the students that responded expressed the need for additional considerations on the part of the district to feel comfortable, happy and accepted at school.
- The district needs ongoing addressment of the following:
 - Bullying
 - Being accepting of those that are different from them
 - Ensuring that students feel safe sharing their identity and interests
 - Addressing issues related to gym class (some students report being made fun of for not being athletic)
 - Welcoming hallway decorations, colors and displays
 - Celebrate/Acknowledge: Diwali, Pongal, Bhogi and Holi
 - Celebrate/Acknowledge various cultures/religions
 - Students enjoy hands on learning experiences
- 21 students provided their names and requested to be contacted by a staff member in regard to the survey. The middle school will start reaching out to the students this week.

The following “themes” emerged from the data collected from the Gr. 9-12 survey responses:

- 76-86% of the students that responded evidenced that they are comfortable, happy and included at school.
- 15-24% of the students that responded expressed the need for additional considerations on the part of the district to feel comfortable, happy and accepted at school.
- The district needs ongoing addressment of the following:
 - Bullying
 - Representing all cultures
 - Supporting and encouraging tolerance of differences
 - Support differences in sexuality, physical appearance and religion
 - Not judging others based on their disability
 - Welcoming hallway decorations, colors and displays
 - Consideration for emotional support animals
 - Addressing vaping in the bathrooms
 - Increase cultural inclusivity (Turkish and Islamic cultures)
 - Make sure that economics does not prohibit student participation in extracurricular experiences
 - Students enjoy hands on, real world learning experiences
 - Consider selling a variety of food in the cafeteria that represents different cultures
- 6 students provided their names and requested to be contacted by a staff member in regard to the survey. The high school will start reaching out to the students next week.

Throughout the overview of the aforementioned information, Mrs. Morrison continuously noted that while the feedback evidenced that the district is doing well by a majority of the students, that the focus needs to be on those students/areas for which there is room for improvement.

After overviewing the feedback shared by the students, Mrs. Morrison opened up the meeting for committee members to share their thoughts and input.

A committee member pointed out that a number of students are not doing well and their needs need to be addressed. The same committee member noted that it may have been a mistake to have the surveys be anonymous because follow-up with individual students that noted concerns is not possible. Mrs. Morrison shared that the committee made the decision for the results to be anonymous so that respondents felt comfortable being honest. She also reminded the committee of the students from the various grade levels that left their names at the end of the survey and requested follow-up from a support staff member.

Another committee member shared that we need to come up with ways to bring students (Pre K-12) together. It was noted that every building has celebrated themes throughout the year; but that it would be great to have coordinated themes Pre K-12.

Another committee member shared that we should look for uniform ways as a district to address bullying, acceptance of differences (culture, sexuality, disability) and hallway decorations.

Another committee member shared the idea of having community books talks around books with difficult topics.

At 6:05 p.m. the committee broke off into three groups to discuss the results shared and identify themes that the district should address going forward.

At 6:20 p.m. the whole committee reconvened and shared/discussed the following themes:

Themes:

- Bullying
- Issues with students feeling uncomfortable in Gym (sports not for everyone)
- Inclusivity all students (culture, sexuality, disability)
- Cultural Diversity
- Free Lunch

The meeting concluded at 6:33 p.m. Mrs. Morrison announced the date/location of the next meeting: Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the LMC at West Islip High School

It was noted that at the meeting on 5/16 committee members will discuss the themes that emerged from off of the surveys, and actions that can be taken going forward (the 2024-2025 school year) to address those areas in need of improvement.