



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

5:30 p.m. -7:00 p.m.

Location: Maple Room at City Hall

Meeting Minutes

Present: Gary Kinzer, Julie Grech Kramer, Mary Hilker-Loch, Adam Brandt, Amy Lark, Krista Sherman, Cortney Ford, Ethan McCallum, and Courtney Miller, LaRue, Liv, LaRue

Welcome

Gary welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly discussed the agenda.

Secondary Level Inclusion Week Debrief and Discussion

High School Teacher Perspective

- The class wasn't into the activities; some wouldn't even do them.
- The kids were not receptive to Inclusion Week. It did not have the expected impact and would like to make some changes to make more of an impact. Teachers are open to new ideas and do not want stop inclusion week.
- Students are placed with a TIES teacher in 9th grade and they stay with that same teacher all four years. It was initially developed to build relationships and provide every student with an adult that they know, can trust and who checks in on them. There is not a lot of time to build relationships with TIES students because they do not spend enough time with them anymore. If we have those relationships, we can have those tough conversations. It feels like TIES is scattered in to be used for random tasks (pictures, testing prep, surveys, ALICE, etc). WIN in high school is placed strategically to get academic help before the end of the trimester. WIN at the high school may not be as effective as we are hoping. Self-selecting may not lead to students getting what they need. When high school staff is surveyed, about half of staff want all TIES and about half want all WIN.
- Students seemed to enjoy the kickoff assembly.
- Some teachers do not do the lessons all days or there is a lack of consistency.
- Some teachers are hesitant to have those conversations, too.
- It's hard to have vulnerable conversations if you haven't built a relationship.
- A teacher noted that she used to love TIES when they met more and had time to build relationships.

- The high school had student leaders lead the lessons previously, but it put a lot of pressure on the student leaders.
- We tried alternating the hour of the day that the lessons take place, but that did not work because teachers said they were losing too much instruction time.
- One challenge is that some students are only in the building in the AM or only in the PM.

Secondary Principal Perspective

- There are some challenges at the middle school, but overall students are a little more open to things at the middle school level.
- At the middle school, it feels easier to be comfortable talking about inclusion with the consistency of Advisory.
- At MMS, WIN is Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday with a consistent teacher for a trimester. Advisory is on Wednesdays with the same teacher for the entire school year.
- There is no urgency to make changes at the middle school level, however, if changes are made at the high school level, the middle school will likely make the same changes.

Student Perspective

Some things that were heard by students:

- Why do we have to do this?
- I don't believe in DEI.
- It's a waste of time.
- By Wednesday, we got sick of it. It was TIES everyday and then knowing that it is Inclusion Week made it less liked.
- People don't want to have conversations like this with people they do not feel comfortable with or do not know well.
- I can tell the teacher is not invested.
- The activity is not engaging.

Biggest Issues

- There is a lack of time to connect with students in TIES since it happens too sporadically.
- HS teachers feel that if they met more consistently, that they would have the bond to be able to do TIES lessons and Inclusion Week.
- The committee feel like it boils down to a lack of relationships with students. The content requires students to feel comfortable in their setting to have the conversation. How do we try to preserve the relationship piece that TIES is built around?

Possible Solutions/Ideas

- Survey students in person, not electronically. Have focus groups, catch people in the hallway. We will get more info from them with open conversations and could ask follow up questions- that is difficult to do with a survey. Have a "Kids Canvas Kids Release day". Pull 12 students from class each hour and

ask them for ideas/opinions. Have them ask their peers. This will be more effective to do immediately after the event.

- Shift to Inclusion everyday rather than a dedicated Inclusion Week.
- Perhaps it would be beneficial to have it built into each trimester in each class. Is there a way to add the inclusion week lessons into the lessons they are already giving in social studies, English etc.?
- Plan differently so the theme the first five weeks of school could be about building relationships and community.
- Is there a way to bring back the old TIES concept?
- Have a 15-minute homeroom each day.
- Let students know why we are doing this. Give them a collective goal. Consider allowing the students to come up with the goal. Consider letting them choose the activities by sending them a survey with choices and have them vote.
- Consider having an inclusion week focus on the January Wellness Wednesday and let kids choose from the five themes.
- What if this group provided plans for Wellness Wednesdays and TIES? Instead of Inclusion Week and Inclusion Everyday, the committee plans relationship building activities. TIES would stay the same for all for years. Maybe create a bank of choices for teachers to choose from. It is suggested to provide 2 choices for them to choose from.
- Disguise it. Do the activities and lessons, but don't make a big deal about the theme. Don't throw the theme in their faces, but still do the activities, lessons, talk, etc. You could refer to it as building relationships/community.
- There may be more teacher buy-in if teachers provide thoughts, ideas and opinions. It is suggested that the DEIB Committee have one meeting dedicated to teacher input and invite teachers to the meeting.
- Instead of TIES/Inclusion week all week, consider doing one day a week for 5 weeks.
- Consider letting students choose the teacher they do Inclusion Week.

Dr. Kinzer, Adam Brandt, Krista Sherman, Cortney Ford and Myriah Lillie will schedule a meeting prior to winter break to discuss this. MHS attendees will reach out to Lisa with preferred dates and times for the meeting. An update will be provided to the DEIB Committee in January.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:00pm. The next meeting is January 13 at 5:30pm.