



## Board of Education Administrative Report

Title of Report: Diversity and Equity Plan Update 2019

Board Meeting Date: 10/28/19

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Action

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Report

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Information

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Discussion

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### ***Executive Summary***

The Somers Diversity and Equity council was created in 2017 to identify, address and provide support to the district on issues of diversity and equity. A long range plan was created that addresses these issues, audience affected, what support/resources are needed and the plan to remediate.

A purpose statement was developed which reads:

*The Somers Diversity and Equity council works to cultivate a just and fair learning community characterized by culturally responsive learners who embrace each other's perspectives. We aim to create opportunities for engagement, education, and discourse related to issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. (adapted from NIRSA)*

The committee guides its work on three main essential questions:

1. How do awareness, knowledge, and understanding of one's own racial and cultural identity promote effective teaching, leading and learning?
2. How do awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the racial and cultural identity of students and staff promote effective teaching, leading and learning?
3. How can adults establish learning environments that are conscious of race and culture to ensure implementation of culturally responsive practices, policies and procedures

This report continues with a summary of the last two years's initiatives.

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### ***Report***



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### **2017-2018**

- Implicit Bias Workshop- This workshop was a district-wide initiative in which staff engaged in conversations about diversity, their own bias and beginning strategies to have difficult conversations around race and equity with students and each other
- Diversity/Equity training -This workshop was a continuation of the previous workshop where staff was provided scenarios of difficult situations that might have occurred in their classroom. Staff discussed how to handle the situations through group discussion and facilitation by the CREC consultant
- Systemic Racism Conference- Representation from the district attended this conference which included multiple breakout sessions that addressed topics of race and equity in our schools.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)- Training which includes curriculum strategies that are responsive to the needs of all students.
- Restorative Circles- Facilitated conversation where students and staff have the opportunity to have their voices heard. Initial training done by Suzy Williams (SHS Social worker)
- Unity team (SHS)- a student group that was established to help facilitate diversity programs at SHS
- African Workshop (MBA)- Program on African drumming, music, dance and poetry for 7th grade. This is a full day, continuing event.

### **2018-2019**

- Restorative Circles- Facilitated conversation where students and staff have the opportunity to have their voices heard. Continued training done by Suzy Williams (SHS Social worker)
- Diversity/Equity training -This workshop was a continuation of the previous workshop where staff was provided scenarios of difficult situations that might have occurred in their classroom. Staff discussed how to handle the situations through group discussion and facilitation by the CREC consultant. (Continuation of previous year's training for all staff)
- YES Youth Summit- Summit for HS and MS students revolving around race conversations
- Focus group- Facilitated by CREC, students were given the opportunity to discuss events which occurred at the HS. CREC gathered feedback to be used in continuing the action plan.
- Systemic Racism Conference- Representation from the district attended this conference which included multiple breakout sessions that addressed topics of race and equity in our schools.



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- African Workshop (MBA)- Program on African drumming, music, dance and poetry for 7th grade. This is a full day, continuing event.

2019-2020

- Restorative Circles- Restorative Practices are a framework for building community and for responding to challenging behavior through authentic dialogue, coming to understanding, and making things right. It involves facilitated conversation where students and staff have the opportunity to have their voices heard. This particular training involves both students and teachers. Training to be done by SERC (State Education Resource Center). Social workers and Psychologists from MBA and SES will also be in attendance to learn the strategies used and protocols.
- Equity training- HS staff will engage in facilitated conversations around race, equity and strategies they can use to facilitating courageous conversations in the classroom
- Community Dialogues- Conversations involving members of the Somers community and CREC
- Systemic Racism Conference- Representation from the district attended this conference which included multiple breakout sessions that addressed topics of race and equity in our schools.
- YES Youth Summit- Summit for HS and MS students revolving around race conversations (Scheduled for late winter)
- African Workshop (MBA)- Program on African drumming, music, dance and poetry for 7th grade. This is a full day, continuing event.